

### The Good News of Israel's Future Restoration

#### Hosea 14

Hosea 14:1-3 – “O Israel, return to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. <sup>2</sup> Take words with you, and return to the Lord. Say to Him, ‘Take away all iniquity. Receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.’”

<sup>3</sup> Assyria shall not save us. We will not ride on horses, nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, ‘You are our gods.’ For in You the fatherless finds mercy.”

#### Background Notes

Chapter 14 is a wonderful conclusion to the prophecy of Hosea. The prophecy ends on a high note with the restoration of God's people, Israel. Israel will finally repent of her sinful ways and return to the Lord, and God will graciously restore them! Look at verse 3 again: “Assyria shall not save us. We will not ride on horses, nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, ‘You are our gods.’ For in You the fatherless finds mercy.”

The idea here is that Israel will finally come to the position where she is no longer trusting in foreign powers for help, or in her own military forces for security, or in her own technology and strength for deliverance. **Israel will trust in the Lord alone** – and her people will praise Him as well! That's the idea in “*the sacrifices of our lips*” (v2).

But this time has not yet come. The nation of Israel today is still trusting primarily in its own military strength for national security - but in the future there definitely will be a change. In the last days, there will be a great revival, and the nation of Israel will return to the Lord. We may be on the threshold of these last days even now.

In our studies of Hosea we've seen that Hosea's personal life was an object lesson - an illustration of God's relationship with His people Israel. As Gomer, Hosea's wife, ran away and committed physical adultery, so Israel turned away from the Lord and became involved in spiritual adultery with the foreign gods and the foreign pagan religions. But the Lord had Hosea buy his wife back from prostitute slavery (chapter 3), and she was restored to a love relationship with her husband. What a picture of redemption!

In the same way, the Messiah has already paid the price of Israel's redemption, and God will restore His people Israel to Himself. Romans 11 assures us that this great prospect for Israel in the future is not to be interpreted in a “spiritualized” way and allegorized to the Church today. God's promises to Israel are still valid, and they will be fulfilled with Israel. Remember – Israel is Israel! The Church is **not** the “New Israel”! Israel is Israel. In reference to **Israel**, Romans 11:29 says: “*The gifts and the calling are irrevocable.*”

Although the promise of restoration in Hosea 14 was made to Israel, this is the Word of God, and thus there certainly are lessons here for all believers.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. There is a divine path to God's blessing in the present.

Did you notice that in these first three verses of Hosea 14, there are three steps to getting right with the Lord. A right relationship with the Lord is possible because the price of our redemption has already been paid!

#### Step #1: Repentance.

Repentance is not only recognizing and admitting our iniquity. And it's not only being sorry for our sins. Repentance means being willing to change and turn to the Lord.

#### Step #2: Confession.

Notice in verse 2 that our gracious God even gives us the words of confession that we may pray from the heart: *"Take away all iniquity. Receive us graciously."* Have you ever prayed that prayer of confession? If you're not a Christian, you can pray that simple prayer right now and be forgiven.

#### Step #3: Trust.

In verse 3, Israel has come to the end of her rope. She's no longer trusting in her own strength. She's no longer running to some other source for security. Israel is trusting in the Lord alone for her salvation. He is a God of mercy. He alone can save.

That's God's sure three-step method for salvation. Have you taken those three steps for salvation? If you're not a believer, you can trust in Jesus Christ for salvation today!

This is also the three-step method for restoration for believer. Are you a believer, but you've backslidden, and you've strayed away from walking close to the Lord? If you want a path back to God's blessing in your life, here it is: repent, confess, and trust. That is the divinely prescribed path to God's blessing in the present.

### 2. There is a divine program for God's blessing in the future.

Hosea 14:4-8 - *"I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him. <sup>5</sup> I will be like the dew to Israel. He shall grow like the lily, and lengthen his roots like Lebanon. <sup>6</sup> His branches shall spread. His beauty shall be like an olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon. <sup>7</sup> Those who dwell under his shadow shall return. They shall be*

*revived like grain, and grow like a vine. Their scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon.* <sup>8</sup> *“Ephraim shall say, ‘What have I to do anymore with idols?’ I have heard and observed him. I am like a green cypress tree; your fruit is found in Me.”*

<sup>9</sup> *Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right. The righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.”*

Here we have God’s wonderful program for Israel in the future. These are blessings for the restored nation of Israel during the future millennial kingdom of Christ that will be established here on this earth. Israel will no longer be backslidden, far from the Lord, and under the judgment of God (v4). In verses 5-7 we have a wonderful figurative description of Israel’s future fruitfulness, strength, and beauty.

What a contrast to the condition of Israel under God’s judgment that we discussed in chapter 13. Hosea 13:15 says, *“Though he is fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come. The wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness. Then his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up.”* However, Israel will be fruitful once again in the future.

Notice the last line of Hosea 14:8 - ***“Your fruit is found in Me.”*** That’s the key for having a fruitful and productive and meaningful life - for Israel and for us. You can’t do it yourself. You will only be fruitful and productive and have a meaningful life when you draw your strength and direction from the Lord.

In John 13:4-5, the Lord Jesus said: *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*

Abiding in the Lord will be the means of blessing for Israel in the future. Abiding in the Lord is the only means of any blessing and fruitfulness in our lives in the days ahead. There is a divine program for God’s blessing in the future.

## **Practical Application**

### **Do you agree that the ways of the Lord are right?**

*“Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right. The righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them” (v9).*

Have you ever questioned God’s ways? Have you ever thought, “Why does God allow people to seemingly get away with doing wrong?” (Maybe even get away with wrongdoing that has hurt you?) Have you ever questioned, “Why does God allow godly people to die right when it seems when they are most needed?” Or “Why does God allow little babies to be born with severe handicaps?” Or, “Why doesn’t God answer our prayers sooner?” Or, “Why doesn’t God do something

about all the false teaching that's around?" Or, "Why didn't God make the Bible more clear in certain places, so there wouldn't be any controversial passages that cause disagreements and arguments?"

Do you ever question God's ways in any of these areas? Maybe all of us have done so, at one time or another. Maybe you're questioning God's ways about what is happening in your life right now.

Hosea 14:9 says, *"For the ways of the Lord are right."* Do you agree with God's Word?

Ephesians 1:11 says that God *"works all things after the counsel of His will"* – even though we may not understand God's ways or His timing.

In Isaiah 55:8-9, God tells us: *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."*

**God has the big picture. We don't.** Romans 11:33 says, *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"*

Do you agree that God's ways are right? What about God's dealings with the nation Israel, the subject of Hosea's prophecy? What about God's commands and moral laws (the immediate context of Hosea 14:9)? Would you like to change some of God's ways? What about His views on divorce, or His views on the distinctive roles of men and women in the home and in the church? Wouldn't you like to make God a little politically correct?

Would you like to change some of God's ways - or do you agree that God's ways are right? Verse 9 says ***"the righteous obey God's commands and walk in His law."*** The transgressors stumble over God's ways (v9).

Are you wise? Are you understanding and discerning? Do you agree that the ways of the Lord are right?