

Hosea Chapter 14

Verses 1-3: "Calves of our lips:" The word calves (Hebrew *par*, "a young bull or produce"), is best understood metaphorically, referring to the words that the lips produce, in this context praise to the Lord. The nation had used its lips to praise the idolatrous calves; now it will use its lips in praise to the Lord God.

Hosea again urges the people to "return" to God with true "words" of repentance (Psalm 51:16-17). God's incredible grace and love are shown by His eagerness for their return (Joel 2:13).

Hosea 14:1 "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity."

O Israel, return now at length, after thou hast suffered so many evils, to the Lord by true repentance and reformation of conduct. The whole family of Israel, in both its branches, seems to be here addressed.

"For thou hast fallen": From God's love and favor into his displeasure, and consequently into misery, by thine iniquity. Which has involved thee in endless troubles, and will be the cause of thy destruction.

This begins with a plea from God for Israel to repent, and return to God. The truth is that God would look for any signs of repentance from them, because He wants to forgive them. God mentions the reason for their fall as their iniquity.

Hosea 14:2 "Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive [us] graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips."

Israel was invited to return, bringing words of repentance accompanied with obedience, repaying God's gracious acceptance of them with "calves" fruit "of our lips."

Verse 2, reminds me of the following Scripture.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Both Scriptures are a call for prayer of repentance.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"Render the calves of our lips" would be an expression of the sacrifice of praise to God.

Hosea 14:3 "Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, [Ye are] our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

“Fatherless”: God repeatedly demanded mercy for the orphan (Exodus 22:22; Deut. 10:18); consequently, Israel could expect to receive His compassion (Luke 15:17-20).

This is expressing the fact that no world ruler could save them. There is no one who can save them, but God. They renounce also, the idols they had made with their own hands. They will no longer trust in the power of their horses in battle. They realize that only God is merciful.

Verses 4-8: “A green fir tree:” Up to this time Ephraim has been a stench in the nostrils of God. Now, because its sin has been dealt with, it will be pleasing to the Lord; and the fruit will satisfy Him. Hosea close’s his prophecy on a high note. God’s never-changing love for Israel will one day bring about her repentance and restoration to His full favor.

This prophecy of God’s bountiful blessing looks to the great millennial periods of Christ’s righteous and beneficent rule.

The ultimate fulfillment of these blessings must be millennial, since Israel has not repented and will not do so in the manner of verses 2-3 until the end of the Great Tribulation (Zech. 12:10 to 13:1). The Lord’s love is beautifully presented in metaphors taken from the lily, the cedars of Lebanon, and the olive tree.

Hosea 14:4 "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."

“Backsliding”: Apostasy (see note on Proverbs 14:14).

This speaks of God, who has accepted their repentance, and set them in right standing with Himself. It is God's mercy and grace that saves them. God will cause them to love Him. They will no longer be tempted to backslide. They will rest in God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:" "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Verses 5-7: The beautiful pictures of repentant Israel as a “lily” and an “olive tree” illustrate the remarkable transformation in any heart that confesses and turns from sin and then humbly accepts God’s loving gifts of mercy (Psalm 52:8; John 15:4).

Hosea 14:5 "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

The Lord, who have pardoned, and am appeased, "will be as the dew", refresh and water, that they may grow, and that they may be fruitful and flourish, as the dew in those countries, where it was more abundant than with us, and for some months together supplied the want of rain. God will refresh and comfort, and make fruitful in good works, through his grace, for those who return to him.

“Israel”: Those that are trusting people who are not hypocritical; but those who confess, pray, and repent.

"As the lily": Which grows apace, is fragrant, beautiful, and delights in valleys, often grows among thorns; so the Israel of God among troubles in low state, yet comely, and fragrant to the Lord, and grows up in him speedily.

"Lebanon": Put for the trees of Lebanon; as those trees spread forth their roots, grow up to strength, are most beautiful, odoriferous, and durable, cedars in Lebanon are these trees. So shall the true Israel, converted backsliders, be blessed of God. So flourishing and happy shall the church be under Christ.

This speaks of total restoration.

Luke 12:27 "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Hosea 14:6 "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon."

As the well rooted cedars in Lebanon (see Num. 24:6). This respects the propagation of the church of God, and the interest of Christ in the world, as in the first times of the Gospel, and will be in the latter day; when the Gospel shall be spread everywhere. Churches set up in all places; the Jews converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; and these like spreading branches, and fruitful boughs, abounding in grace and good works.

“And his beauty shall be as the olive tree”: Which lies in its being laden with excellent fruit, and being always green; for which reasons particular believers, and the whole church of God, are sometimes compared to it. Having that fatness in them, with which God and men are honored. And that true grace, which is signified by oil in the vessels of the heart, and is called the unction and anointing of the Holy One. And they persevering in this grace to the end, which is evergreen and durable, immortal, and dies not (see Psalm 52:8). Here again it may be observed, that the trees of Lebanon, though they had strong roots, and spreading branches, yet were not fruitful.

“And his smell as Lebanon”: The mountain famous for cedars, where also were the trees that afford the frankincense, which sweat out that excellent aromatic, and where many more sweetest

flowers grow and perfume the air; such shall the spiritual fragrance of the church be to God and man.

God has completely turned away His anger from Israel and His blessings are upon him. The beauty of growth in the Lord is spoken of here. The olive tree speaks of the Spirit. They will be beautiful, and smell as Lebanon. This is speaking of them becoming the bride.

Song of Solomon 2:13 "The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines [with] the tender grape give a [good] smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

Romans 11:24 "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree?"

Hosea 14:7 "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive [as] the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof [shall be] as the wine of Lebanon."

"Scent ... as the wine of Lebanon": Their "scent" (literally "remembrance") denotes worldwide fame and admiration.

God is the protector here. It is His shadow that protects. It is God who makes the earth produce from the grain of seed we plant. It is His rain and sunshine which brings growth. It is the blessing of God that makes it produce. The beautiful order of a productive plant is spoken of here.

Hosea 14:8 "Ephraim [shall say], What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard [him], and observed him: I [am] like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found."

The Lord, not idols, will care for Israel. He, not Israel, is the tree providing shelter and prosperity, the "luxuriant cypress" from whom her fruitfulness would come.

Ephraim has totally abandoned idol worship, Ephraim has learned his lesson. His safety and help is in God. God's eyes are set on Israel to bless him. The green fir tree speaks of eternal life. God is the provider of all fruit. We must not depend upon anything on this earth for our source. God is our source.

Hosea 14:9 "Who [is] wise, and he shall understand these [things]? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD [are] right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."

Representative of the theme of the book, Hosea's epilogue concludes the prophecy by presenting the reader with two ways of living (Deut. 30:19-20; Psalm Chapter 1). He appeals to all readers to be wise, to choose the Lord's way, for His ways are right (compare Psalm 107:43; Eccl. 12:13-14).

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who are wise accept the salvation offered to them by the Lord, and then walk in that salvation. Those who choose God live in the righteousness that He has provided. Those who reject the Lord shall die in their sin.

Hosea Chapter 14 Questions

1. What is the plea of God in verse 1?
2. Why would God look for any signs of repentance?
3. What does "render the calves of our lips" indicate?
4. What is verse 3 saying about Asshur?
5. They renounce their _____ in verse 3.
6. I will heal their _____.
7. It is God's _____ and _____ that saves them.
8. I will be as the _____ to Israel.
9. What does verse 5 speak of?
10. Verse 6 says, his beauty shall be as the _____ _____.
11. The olive tree speaks of the _____.
12. Who is Romans chapter 11 verse 24 speaking of?
13. Who makes the bare grain produce?
14. What statement does Ephraim make in verse 8?
15. The green fir tree speaks of _____ _____.
16. The _____ of the _____ is the beginning of wisdom.