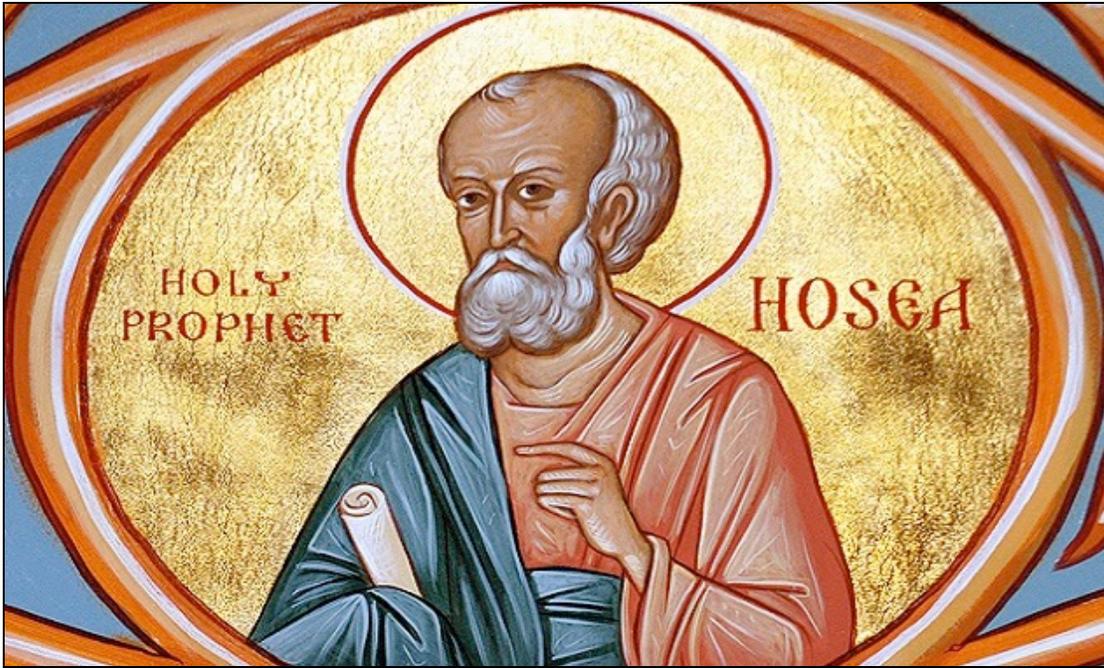


# HOSEA 13, 14: RETURN TO THE LORD



T. M. MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Hosea 13, 14: Return to the Lord*

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## Hosea 13, 14: Return to the Lord

For all the betrayal, rebellion, wrath, and judgment Hosea parades before the people of Israel, his prophecy ends on a hopeful note: Israel will be reconciled with God, so that they know and follow Him once again.

This will be a great work of God's grace at some unspecified time in the future. For now, God will tear and destroy the nation of Israel, for reasons Hosea has made abundantly clear. Israel will cease to exist as a nation, although God will preserve and ransom a remnant for Himself in days to come.

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We hope you find this study of Hosea instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Dead in Sin

*Week 8, Monday: Israel cannot help but sin*

While Israel may have reluctantly embarked upon a course of worshiping pagan no-gods, now that she has begun, she cannot help herself. The more the people worship and serve false deities, the more they feel compelled to worship and serve them. They believe theirs to be the way of permanence and blessing, but it is the path of judgment and destruction.

*Read Hosea 13*

*Meditate on Hosea 13.1-3*

1. The idea of Israel “trembling” (v. 1) as she embarked on the course of idol-worship indicates a measure of uncertainty about the choice. At the beginning, when Jereboam I led the people away from the Davidic king, it might still have been possible to preserve them for the Lord (cf. 1 Kgs. 11.26-39). If you had been an advisor to Jereboam as Israel “trembled” away from Judah, what would you have said to him?
2. Instead of continuing to seek the Lord, Israel “exalted” itself (v. 1). It put its own thoughts, desires, plans, and programs above the Lord and His Word. Are churches sometimes guilty of this same thing? Explain.
3. Once Israel turned to idols, the nation “died” (v. 1). As a result, the people could only sin more and more. What does this suggest about the power of unconfessed sin in a believer’s life?
4. Idolatry in all its forms has a tendency to pull a person deeper into it, the more he engages in it. How can you see that in verse 2? What does this suggest, for example, about the idolatry of materialism today?
5. Those who commit to idolatry have no permanence in their relationship with God (v. 3). What do you suppose that might look like today?

*Summary*

Israel’s choice to turn away from God to the convenient gods of paganism ultimately led to her complete unraveling. It didn’t have to be this way; it never does. Believers must at all times pay careful attention to the truth as they have it in Jesus, because it’s just too easy to be lured away by false teaching and other enticements (Heb. 2.1-3).

*Closing Prayer*

Teach me Your way, O LORD;  
I will walk in Your truth;  
Unite my heart to fear Your name.  
I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.  
For great *is* Your mercy toward me,  
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

Psalm 86.11-13

*Hosea 13, 14: Return to the Lord*

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 2 Swelled Hearts, Shrunken Minds

*Week 8, Tuesday: Israel forgot the Lord*

The prophet does not tire of reminding Israel of all God had done for her as a nation. He made them His people, delivered them from Egypt, cared for them in the wilderness, and delivered them into the land. But their hearts swelled with pride in their achievement, and their minds turned away from the Lord.

*Read Hosea 13*

*Meditate on Hosea 13.4-6*

1. In many places in Scripture God reminds His people of the grace He has showed them in the past. Why does God believe it's important for His people to remember this? What does it say about them that they need so many reminders?
2. God saved His people so that they would know Him (v. 4). How did God envision that working out once they arrived in the land of Canaan?
3. God's grace extends from saving His people to continuing to provide for them (vv. 5, 6). Why do you suppose it was so easy for Israel to fail to see all these blessings as evidences of God's grace? Do you think we appreciate the daily blessings of the Lord as deeply and consistently as we should? Explain.
4. The mention of the "heart" in verse 6 indicates that Israel became prideful about all she had done, including breaking away from Judah. How does pride become established in a believer's heart? What is the antidote to pride?
5. A swelled heart made for a shrunken mind in Israel (v. 6). What caveat does this situation suggest for believers today?

*Summary*

Israel became so full of herself and her agenda that she failed to keep the Lord in mind. She "knew" the Lord, she told herself, but she didn't really "know" Him at all, as we've seen. Israel loved the *blessings* of God rather than God, and when she felt as though she could secure those blessings elsewhere, or by means other than trusting the Lord, she did, and turned her heart away from the Lord.

*Closing Prayer*

Restore us, O God of our salvation,  
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.  
Will You be angry with us forever?  
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?  
Will You not revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You?  
Show us Your mercy, LORD,  
And grant us Your salvation.  
I will hear what God the LORD will speak,  
For He will speak peace  
To His people and to His saints;  
But let them not turn back to folly.  
Surely His salvation *is* near to those who fear Him,

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That glory may dwell in our land.

Psalm 85.4-9

*Observations, notes, questions:*

### 3 Devoured

*Week 8, Wednesday: Israel's complete undoing*

God had warned His people against turning away from Him. He destroyed pagan nations before them, precisely because they were an abomination to Him. Now that Israel had adopted their ways, God was holiness-bound to bring the same judgment to bear against them. God would destroy His people, just as He had promised.

*Read Hosea 13*

*Meditate on Hosea 13.7-13*

1. Verses 7 and 8 are graphic and frightening. Is this really necessary? Who stood to benefit from such a terrifying threat?
2. The same God Who would destroy them would nonetheless be their help (v. 9). Summarize the role of judgment in God's dealings with His people. How does judgment "help" believers?
3. What does it mean for God to be our King (v. 10)? Over how much of our lives is He King? What are the implications of this for our daily lives?
4. Unconfessed sin builds up like a child in a mother's womb (vv. 12, 13). Why is this an excellent way of thinking about unconfessed sin?
5. Failing to confess and repent of our sins makes us "unwise" children (v. 13). Why?

*Summary*

God must judge His people because He promised to do so. But He will not abandon them. They may have become unwise children, but they were His children. He would help them again – not in this generation, but in an age to come.

*Closing Prayer*

Vindicate me, O LORD,  
For I have walked in my integrity.  
I have also trusted in the LORD;  
I shall not slip.  
Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;  
Try my mind and my heart.  
For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,  
And I have walked in Your truth.  
I have not sat with idolatrous mortals,  
Nor will I go in with hypocrites.  
I have hated the assembly of evildoers,  
And will not sit with the wicked.  
I will wash my hands in innocence;  
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,  
That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,  
And tell of all Your wondrous works.  
LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house,  
And the place where Your glory dwells.

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Do not gather my soul with sinners,  
Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,  
In whose hands *is* a sinister scheme,  
And whose right hand is full of bribes.  
But as for me, I will walk in my integrity;  
Redeem me and be merciful to me.  
My foot stands in an even place;  
In the congregations I will bless the LORD.

Psalm 26

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 4 Ransom and Redemption

*Week 8, Thursday: Redemption is coming*

The wrath of God is not His last Word to His people. It is an important Word, and a sure one. But the promise of ransom and redemption comes with it, to give His people a future and a hope.

*Read Hosea 13*

*Meditate on Hosea 13.14-16*

1. “Ransom” and “redemption” are two sides of the same grace coin. Explain.
2. In verse 14 God turns His wrath to two new objects. What are they? How can you see that this introduces a larger and fuller dimension to God’s promise to ransom and redeem His people?
3. Verse 15 is difficult. Who seems to be referred to by “he”? If “he” is Israel, this is a Word of judgment. But if “he” is death and the grave, how might we understand this verse?
4. The note of terror and sadness returns in verse 16, with its portent of death. But if we read this verse against the backdrop of verses 1 and 15, how can it lead to hope?
5. Death is an instrument in God’s hand. He wields it as He will. But a day is coming when even death will come to its end. How did Paul understand Hosea’s message here (1 Cor. 15.54, 55)? What can we learn from this about reading the prophets in general?

*Summary*

God is not finished with His people yet. A day of ransom and redemption is coming, when even death will hold no power over the people of God. For now, we must endure the consequences of our sin; but we look ahead and hope for the coming day when death will be no more.

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD *is* my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.  
He restores my soul;  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name’s sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You *are* with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
Forever.

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Psalm 23

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 5 Take Words

*Week 8, Friday: God scripts Israel's way back to Him*

The people of Israel were so far gone from the Lord that, in order to restore them to Himself, He would have to give them the words to say.

*Read Hosea 14*

*Meditate on Hosea 14.1-3*

1. God does not merely command His people to do something. He gives them His Word to guide them in how. How can you see that in this passage?
2. What did God want Israel to remember and proclaim concerning Him?
3. What did He want them to remember and proclaim concerning the gods and nations they trusted before?
4. What did He want them to remember and proclaim concerning themselves?
5. God commands us to seek Him, worship Him, and serve Him. What should be the role of His Word in showing us how to do each of these?

*Summary*

Sinful people cannot figure out their own way back to God. Unless He reveals the way, and guides His sinful people in it, they will continue to flounder in their sins. It is yet another indicator of the enormity of God's grace that, in restoring His people to Himself, He empowers them to carry out their responsibility toward Him.

*Closing Prayer*

With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;  
With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;  
With the pure You will show Yourself pure;  
And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.  
For You will save the humble people,  
But will bring down haughty looks.  
For You will light my lamp;  
The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.  
For by You I can run against a troop,  
By my God I can leap over a wall.  
*As for* God, His way *is* perfect;  
The word of the LORD is proven;  
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.  
For who *is* God, except the LORD?  
And who *is* a rock, except our God?

Psalm 18.25-31

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 6 Life Again!

*Week 8, Saturday: Israel will live again*

Hosea piles up vibrant images of life and fruitfulness to encourage the people to look forward to the Lord's restoring grace.

*Read Hosea 14*

*Meditate on Hosea 14.4-7*

1. How many different images of life can you identify in these verses? List them below:
2. Each of these images says something a little bit different about life. For example, the lily suggests beauty, while the root suggests nourishment and stability. What do the other images suggest?
3. Four verbs describe God's disposition toward Israel, leading to this "rebirth." What are they? Why are these good ways of thinking about the grace of God?
4. Ultimately, God is pointing toward the kind of life that exists where death is no threat and the grave has no power. How do these images of life help us in thinking about the nature of *eternal* life?
5. In what ways do these verses supply a kind of outline of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

*Summary*

God will bring healing and life to His people, so that they dwell in Him without the fear of death hanging over them any more. Hosea's hearers would have been left to ponder this mystery as they trooped off to Assyria in captivity.

*Closing Prayer*

O God, You *are* my God;  
Early will I seek You;  
My soul thirsts for You;  
My flesh longs for You  
In a dry and thirsty land  
Where there is no water.  
So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,  
To see Your power and Your glory.  
Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life,  
My lips shall praise You.  
Thus I will bless You while I live;  
I will lift up my hands in Your name.  
My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,  
And my mouth shall praise *You* with joyful lips.

Psalm 63.1-5

*Observations, notes, questions:*

## 7 Let the People Say

*Week 8, Sunday: A final word to all*

Hosea's last word is an "open" word to all who read the sermons he records in this book. The implication is that Hosea's message has importance beyond Israel of his day to whoever is "prudent" and wants to follow in the Lord's path.

*Read Hosea 14*

*Meditate on Hosea 14.8, 9*

1. Hosea's final word to Israel is again prescriptive (v. 8). Is it good for us to pray and practice saying things like this? Explain.
2. How many different actions or disciplines are involved in verse 8? Explain each.
3. Explain the relationship between understanding, wisdom, and prudence. Why must we long for each of these?
4. If you could summarize the "ways of the Lord" as Hosea taught them, what would those be?
5. How do transgressors "stumble" at the Lord's ways? How do the wise "walk" in them?

*Summary*

Hosea's final words summarize what God expects of all those who would be identified as His people. How would you explain the place of Jesus in what Hosea writes in these verses?

*Closing Prayer*

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever;  
With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.  
For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever;  
Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens."  
"I have made a covenant with My chosen,  
I have sworn to My servant David:  
'Your seed I will establish forever,  
And build up your throne to all generations.'" *Selah*  
And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD;  
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.  
For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD?  
*Who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD?  
God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,  
And to be held in reverence by all *those* around Him.  
O LORD God of hosts,  
Who *is* mighty like You, O LORD?

Psalm 89.1-8

*Hosea 13, 14: Return to the Lord*

*Observations, notes, questions:*

*Questions for discussion*

1. How do judgment and hope work together in God's plan to secure His people to Himself?
2. Suggest some ways of guarding our hearts and minds from turning away from the Lord.
3. How can you see that Jesus fulfills the promised restoration in Hosea's prophecy?
4. What are the opposites of understanding, wisdom, and prudence?
5. What's the most important idea or lesson you take away from Hosea 13 and 14?

*Glory to Glory*

As we look into the mirror of Scripture, we want to see God's glory and our own condition before Him. Then, yielding to the Spirit to teach, convict, and transform us, we can grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Did you see yourself in any ways in Hosea 13 and 14?

What do you learn about God and His glory from these chapters?

What new directions or "next steps" is the Spirit leading you to take?

*Prayer:*

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Thank you.