

"RETURN TO GOD"

HOSEA 14:1-9

INTRO: As we enter into 2024 as a local church, the theme we want to keep before us is: **RETURN TO GOD – HIS WORD, HIS WILL, HIS WAY.** Now that may sound a bit elementary to some, but it is truly **A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT THAT WE ALL SHOULD CONSIDER BECAUSE EVERY ONE OF US, WHO KNOW THE LORD, WILL STRAY FROM GOD'S WILL FROM TIME TO TIME WHICH REQUIRES THAT WE RETURN TO HIM. AND IF WE DON'T KEEP OURSELVES IN CHECK, EVENTUALLY WE FIND THAT WE ARE FAR FROM GOD'S WORD, WILL AND WAY, WHICH BRINGS DISHONOR AND DISGRACE TO HIS NAME.** The idea behind the theme, **RETURN TO GOD**, is that on a consistent basis, in both our personal and church life, we would do well to daily examine our walk with the Lord, and if in **ANY WAY** we have or are deviating from God's expectations, then we **MUST RETURN TO HIM** immediately, lest we find ourselves more aligned with the world, the flesh and the devil rather than with God's plan for our lives.

WARNING: **EVERY DAY, OUR THREE-FOLD ENEMY, THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL, IS AT WORK TO GET US AWAY FROM GOD'S WORD, WILL AND WAY. AND MANY TIMES, THOSE DISTRACTIONS ARE STEALTH AND SLY, AND IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL, WE WILL FIND OURSELVES IN SIN AND SPIRITUAL COMPROMISE, FAR FROM THE CENTER OF GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES. THUS, OUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO STAY CLOSE TO GOD, AND IF WE DO STRAY FROM HIM IN ANY WAY, THEN WE SHOULD RETURN TO HIM BEFORE ANY MAJOR SPIRITUAL DAMAGE COMES OUR WAY.**

THE BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

- 1) Hosea was a prophet to the TEN NORTHERN TRIBES OF ISRAEL and prophesied from about 785 to 725 BC. He was a contemporary of Amos, Isaiah, and Micah.
- 2) Although Israel was GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE, they had strayed from His **WORD, WILL AND WAY**, and became very sinful. Note Hosea 4:1-7.
- 3) God raised up Hosea to call upon Israel to **RETURN TO HIM**, though they never did at that period of time. Eventually they will **RETURN TO GOD** in the **MILLENNIUM**. Note Romans 11:25-29.

THE APPLICATION OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA TO US TODAY

- 1) We must remember that Israel and the Church are two separate entities in God's program.
-Note 1 Corinthians 10:32
- 2) God promises Israel a **KINGDOM** that is yet to come in the **Millennium**. The Church is the **CURRENT PROGRAM** of God in this dispensation.
-Note Ephesians 3:10.
- 3) Principles that are given by God to Israel that relate to living in obedience to Him are certainly applicable to the church today, including a call to **RETURN TO HIM** when we have departed from His **WORD, WILL AND WAY!**

RETURN TO GOD

I. THE CALL TO THE RETURN TO GOD – VS. 1

NOTE: The call for Israel to return to God came because of their **INIQUITY**, which is one of **TEN WORDS** used to describe sin in the Bible. Biblically speaking, **INIQUITY REFERS TO THAT WHICH IS "ALTOGETHER WRONG ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD"** including actions, attitudes, and activities.

- A. The Possibility of Personal Iniquities – Iniquities are possible for us all.
- B. The Problem of Personal Iniquities – Iniquities dishonor God greatly.
- C. The Prevention of Personal Iniquities – A constant check is needed.

(Psalm 139:23,24)

II. THE COURSE TO THE RETURN TO GOD – VS. 2

- A. Return to God by Words of Confession – **"TAKE WITH YOU WORDS"**
-Psalm 51:4; 1 John 1:9
- B. Return to God by Actions of Repentance – **"TURN TO THE LORD"**
-Revelation 2:5

- C. Return to God by Expressions of Praise – “**RENDER THE CALVES OF OUR LIPS**”
-Psalm 51: 14,15

III. THE CONSOLATION OF THE RETURN TO GOD – VS. 3

- A. The Consolation of Returning to God does not come through Fleshly Means
-Asshur (Assyria), Horses (Egypt), Work of our Hands (Idols)
- B. The Consolation of Returning to God comes through Divine Mercy
-God’s **MERCY** is forever, immediate, and complete!

IV. THE COVENANT OF THE RETURN TO GOD – VSS. 4-8

- A. God, through Hosea, made a covenant with Israel that when they **RETURN TO HIM**, He will **RESTORE, REVIVE AND REFRESH THEM – THE MILLENNIUM.**

NOTE: God covenants (through symbols) that He will give **TEN THINGS** upon returning to Him:

-Healing (Vs. 4), Love (Vs. 4), Restrained Anger (Vs. 4), Spiritual Refreshment (Vs. 5) Spiritual Growth (Vs. 5), Spiritual Stability (Vs. 5), Renewed Glory (Vs. 6), Spiritual Beauty (Vs. 6), Spiritual Revival (Vs. 7), A Pleasant Testimony (Vs. 7).

- B. God, through the application of Hosea’s message, covenants with us that when we **RETURN TO HIM**, He will **RESTORE, REVIVE AND REFRESH US – NOW.**

-WITH THE SAME SYMBOLIC GIFTS, HE PROMISED ISRAEL-

V. THE COUNSEL FOR THE RETURN TO GOD – VS. 9

- A. The Wisdom of the Repentant
-The Spiritually Wise person will **RETURN TO GOD.**
- B. The Way of the Rebellious
-The Spiritually Rebellious person will **FALL INTO MORE INIQUITY.**

LESSON/APPLICATION

QUESTION: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

- 1) As Individuals – Examine, Evaluate, Return Regularly
- 2) As a Church – Examine, Evaluate, Return Regularly