

“GIVE THE LORD THE BULLS OF YOUR LIPS”

Hosea 14:1-9

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INTRODUCTION

What a refreshing conclusion to the Book of Hosea this fourteenth chapter is! Wood expresses it well:

In beauty of expression these final words of Hosea rank with the memorable chapters of the OT. Like *the rainbow after a storm, they promise Israel's final restoration*. Here is the full flowering of God's unfailing love for his *faithless* people, the triumph of his grace, the assurance of his healing—all described in **imagery that reveals the loving heart of God.**”

The Lord does not give up on His people! Despite all their sins and rebellion; despite all the necessary judgment upon them; despite all the years of ruin and devastation; here the Lord tells of a future time when Israel, His people, will truly **repent**, be **restored**, and once and for all **repudiate** idolatry and live in the wisdom of **righteousness**.

If you have gone astray, there is hope; God never gives up on His people.

Return to the Lord and give Him the “bulls of your lips”—sincere words of repentance and praise.

I. REPENTANCE (1-3)

A. Return to the Lord (twice in vv. 1-2)

1. His character assures your acceptance:
 - Yahweh—the “LORD”, the faithful covenant God
 - Elohim—God—“**your** God”
2. Your iniquity and guilt and ruin demands your return—“you have stumbled because of your iniquity.”

B. Take humble words of repentance with you—instead of animal sacrifices—even bulls.

1. “Forgive me”—take away “**all**” my sin and guilt
2. “Receive the good”—that is the offering of repentance and praise, the “sacrifice of our lips”; the only good thing we can bring!
3. “Let us present our lips—the bulls” (as the consequence of our acceptance—not the condition).
 - The verb has the idea of “making something good—paying, completing some responsibility, finishing it.
 - Here the reference is likely to promises or vows to give the Lord the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise—**Hebrews 13:15** is a reference to this passage.
 - Yet we must render “bulls” literally here—not following the LXX with “fruit”
4. We will no longer rely upon human alliances for our safety (3)
 - Assyria will not save us.
 - Egypt will not help us—“we won’t ride on horses”

5. We will no longer practice idolatry: “Nor will we again say ‘Our god’ to the work of our hands”
6. We are helpless and fully dependent like an “orphan”—such a one is shown “compassion”

II. RESTORATION (4-7)

A. God’s Response (4)

1. **I will heal** their “backsliding, apostasy, turning back.”—No one else can do this.
2. **I will** freely and voluntarily love them.
3. **I can** do so because “my anger has turned away from them.”—implied here is that atonement has occurred that enables Him to freely forgive and be satisfied with them.

B. God’s Blessing upon His people (5-7) [Notice the many similes used here.

1. As the dew—so will I be to Israel.
2. As the lily—so will Israel (he) blossom
3. As the [cedars of] Lebanon he will “strike down his roots”.
4. His shoots—young branches, suckers—will sprout (lit. “go”) into a lavish growth (6a)
5. As the olive tree will be his majestic **splendor**
6. As [the cedars and flowers] of Lebanon will be **his fragrance**.
7. Dwellers under Israel (as a tree—olive) will cause grain to live again (7).
 - These dwellers are the individual Israelites.
 - Note the variation here—they are not said to be “as grain.”
8. As the vine they will blossom [same word as in v. 5].
9. As the wine of Lebanon (**third reference to Lebanon**) will be his *remembrance* or *memorial*—his renown.

Keil well sums all of these qualities: the *rooting* represents *stability*; the *spreading* of branches shows *propagation and multitude of inhabitants*; the *splendor* of the olive tree shows *beauty and glory* that is constant and lasting; the *fragrance* represents *hilarity and loveliness* (p. 917).

So in this one verse we have the usual terms that refer to productive crops in Israel—“grain”, “vine”, and “wine”. It is not said directly that they will raise vines or produce “wine”, but such is implied in these comparisons when there is a direct statement referring to the raising of grain.

III. REPUDIATION (OF PAST WICKEDNESS—IDOLATRY—V. 8)

A. No more tolerance of idolatry--“What more have I to do with idols?”--neither will you!

There is a change when one becomes a believer.

B. No more need for substitutes—God is all the believer needs.

1. **I** [very emphatic] am the One who answers you.
2. I am the one who regard you with watchful care.
3. **I** [very emphatic] **am like** a “luxuriant cypress tree”—the word “luxuriant” was often used for the site of idolatrous worship practices—Yahweh is their provision.

4. From **ME** comes all your fruit—from no one or nowhere else.

IV. RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. The wise person understands all the things taught by Hosea.
- B. THE discerning [same root as “understands] person will know truly [and practice] them [these same teachings].
- C. The righteous person walks in the “ways of the Lord”—for they are “upright, straight.”
- D. The transgressor stumbles in them.

Here we see the usual contrast of the two ways—one of **life** the other of **death**.

These ways are not only “**the ways which He prescribes for them**, but also **his guidance of them**.” (918). They are the ways of God in guiding and governing men.

Those whose hearts are submissive to learn the Lord’s ways and then to follow them are blessed indeed

CONCLUSION

Repentance and turning back to the Lord results in full restoration of divine blessings, and manifests itself in the repudiation of past ways of wickedness, and in the understanding and acceptance of and walking in God’s ways.

Unfortunately, the unsaved wicked who continue to transgress will stumble (in ruin and judgment) God’s ways.

Do you want God’s full blessing in your life?

- Turn to Him.
- Walk in His ways.
- Repudiate the past wickedness.
- Be fully restored in blessedness.