

20220605 God makes me fruitful

Living in the land of grace Part 3 (Hosea 14:1-9)

¹ Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall!

² Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.

³ Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount war-horses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion."

⁴ "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.

⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots;

⁶ his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

⁷ Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon.

⁸ O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me."

⁹ Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.

The people in the Northern Kingdom of Israel kept serving idols. **Their repeated action reveals three very distinctive traits of Northern kingdom of Israel.**

1. Israel is simply rebellious.
2. Israel is also senseless and thoughtless.

3. Israel is too naïve and weak.

Isaiah 53:6

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;

A NATURAL HUMAN HEART

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ But **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God**, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Jeremiah 17:9

⁹ **The heart is deceitful above all things and "beyond cure"**. Who can understand it?

1. The reality of a natural human heart in the Bible

- (1) It is not able to receive the things of God.
- (2) It cannot be cured.

(Our new beginning in Jesus Christ! That is the theme in the gospel of Jesus Christ.)

2. It (the sinful nature – sin) is the cause of downfall (v1)

¹ Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall!

Romans 1:18-32

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

¹⁹ since what may be known about God is **plain** to them, **because God has made it plain to them.**

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ **Therefore** God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

²⁵ **They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator**--who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ **Because of this**, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.

²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,

³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;

³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 3:23

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

3. How to come back from the downfall? (v2)

² Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.

- Return to God -

4. Three essential understandings to return to God

(1) Understand that 'idolatry will never work'. (v3)

³ Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount war-horses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion."

(2) Understand God's heart (v4)

⁴ "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.

(3) Understand God's promises (vv5-8)

⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots;

⁶ his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

⁷ Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon.

⁸ O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me."

5. Time to choose – which way to choose, the way of the wise or that of the foolish (v9)

⁹ Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.