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Hosea's Final Word

Hosea 14:9, Overview of Book

As we read the prophets, we often have to remind ourselves that this material is for us. While the New Testament reminds us of this on several occasions (Romans 15:4) and preachers are quick to make application, ancient writers don't always seem to be concerned about who will read after them. Hosea, however, wants us to know that his message is ultimately for any who reads his prophecies. We could sum up his book this way:

God jealously pursues his unfaithful people when they abandon him for the worship of idols.

But Hosea is transparent that this task won't be easy. Seeing how his prophecies apply to our lives is going to take wisdom, understanding, discernment, and knowledge. It's going to require faith, believing from the outset that God is right and choosing to follow his Word, or else we will stumble at what this often challenging and at times perplexing book will have for us.

Outline

1-3	The Parable of the Prostitute
4:1-6:3	First Cycle of Judgment and Hope
6:4-11:11	Second Cycle of Judgment and Hope
11:12-14:8	Third Cycle of Judgment and Hope
14:9	Final Admonition

Themes

Idolatry

- Idols are things we look to for pleasure (4:10-11)
- Idols are things we look to for protection (7:11)
- Idols are things we look to for prosperity (2:12)

Sin

- Social sin – political rebellion, treachery, deceitfulness (4:1-3, 6:8-9; 7:1-3)
- Sexual sin – (4:14)
- Spiritual sin – ignoring God for idols (4:1-3, 4:12-13)

Worship

- Beware worship that is syncretistic (2:16)
- Beware worship that is hypocritical (8:2-3)
- Beware worship that is ritualistic (5:6-7)

Judgment

- God is viewed as a
 - Jealous husband (2:1-13)
 - Conflicted father (11:1-8)
 - Wild animal (5:14, 11:10)
- God judges by
 - Allowing us to taste the bitter end of our ways (5:12; 7:5-7; 8:7).
 - Causing our idols to fail (9:14, 10:6-8; 13:15)
 - Bringing disaster along our path (2:11-13)

Hope

- God's discipline is a sign of God's love, because God's discipline is redemptive (5:14-15).
- God desires to reverse his punishment and bless where before he had cursed (2:21-23; 14:4-7).

Repentance

- Repentance is a turning, from God and to sin (6:1; 14:1).
- Repentance is all about our relationship with God.

Final Thoughts

- God cares about more than just what you do; he cares about what you love (9:10).
- You can worship God without being right with God (6:6).
- Material blessings can quickly turn your heart away from God (10:1).
- God loves his people too much to let them go (3:1-5).

*What am I to you, that you should command me to love you
and, if I do not, you should be angry with me and threaten
great miseries? - Augustine*