



THE BLESSING OF A REPENTANT HEART

E. GLENN WAGNER

(Psalm 51)

From naughty children to sneaky politicians, nobody likes to get caught. When people deny sin, hide it, or blame someone or something outside of themselves, their sin will eventually consume and drain them. David wrote, "When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. . . . My vitality was turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. 32:3, 4).

A STORY OF SIN AND REPENTANCE

After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba and she became pregnant, he tried to cover his mistake by summoning her husband, Uriah, from the battlefield. However, the plan didn't work because of Uriah's integrity. Uriah refused to take comfort with his wife while his fellow soldiers were suffering the hardships of battle. So David sent Uriah to the front lines in order to make sure that he would be killed in combat (2 Sam. 11). David's secret was safe, but only for the moment. God later sent Nathan the prophet to confront the king about his sin. Nathan's stinging rebuke exposed the king's sin. Faced with the truth, David acknowledged his sin and repented immediately. In time, David discovered the blessing of repentance.

In Psalm 51, written after his encounter with Nathan, David acknowledged that his sin was an offense against God's standard of righteousness and that he needed to repent. David begged for God's mercy on the basis of God's own lovingkindness, and because of the history of mercies God had shown so many times before. David asked God to wash him and make him clean. His plea was that he knew he had sinned, and he knew the sin was ultimately against God Himself. He knew full well that

God is perfect and blameless, and therefore the perfect source of mercy for a blameworthy sinner.

RECOGNIZING SIN

Repentance begins with recognizing sin. That occurs through the process of people's conscience moving them to understand that they have done wrong. It can also occur through the words of another person (such as Nathan to King David), or through reading God's Word. When sin is revealed, sorrow is a common response. But sorrow alone cannot bring forgiveness and set people free. Confession may be good for the soul, but only confession that leads to genuine repentance has lasting results. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation." Godly sorrow results in conviction. Because sin separates people from God, He wants to help them deal with sin when it occurs. Believers who are sensitive to God's guidance will become sensitive to their own sins, for God will reveal their sins to them.

Christians are set free from the power of sin through repentance. They still struggle with sin (Rom. 7:15-20), but they are able to recognize their sin, repent, and restore their relationship with God.

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REPENTING FROM SIN

Repentance releases people from the power of sin in their lives. Repentance strengthens people's relationships with God and with others. Repentance brings healing and sets people free. Genuine repentance occurs only when people accept responsibility for their wrong choices and actions and confess their sin to God. In this way, nothing is hidden, nothing is held back. In the process of repentance, sin is abandoned and righteousness is embraced. David knew that true repentance would have to go beyond formalities like sacrifices and burnt offerings. "The sacrifices of God," said David, "are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Ps. 51:16, 17).

When repentance is genuine, God can use our humility to reach and teach others. Out of personal brokenness, we, as repentant sinners who have been restored, are able to instruct others on the path to repentance. "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways," said David, "and sinners shall be converted to You." If God would deliver him from the guilt of bloodshed, David promised that his tongue would sing aloud of God's righteousness (Ps. 51:13, 14).

At times people refuse to repent because their hearts are hard. But who are they trying to fool? "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). Out of His kindness, God calls people to repent and turn from sin. In His patience, He waits for them to respond. It is not God's plan for anyone to perish apart from Him, and He patiently waits for people to respond to His grace (2 Pet. 3:9).

GOD'S REMEDY FOR SIN

Sin is a self-inflicted wound to the soul. God's remedy for sin is to bring it into the

open—through confession and repentance—so that it can be cleansed and healed. Repentance brings life to the soul by removing every impediment from a person's relationship to God. The key is not that we must keep tabs on every sin and be sure to confess each one by name in order to "be clean." The key is that we have an understanding of our basic sinfulness and an attitude of openness to God whereby, when we sin and He reveals it to us, we are quick to repent and change our ways.

We can succumb to the deceptions of sin and reap death as a result, or we can confess our sin in godly repentance and be purified by our heavenly Father. When we allow God to purify our hearts, the result is joy, gladness, and an unhindered relationship with Him.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of repentance include:

- Ezekiel 33:10-16
- Matthew 9:13
- Luke 3:8; 13:1-8; 15:7, 10; 17:3, 4; 24:44-49
- Acts 3:19; 11:18; 26:20
- 1 John 1:9

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on repentance at 2 Corinthians 7:7-10 on page 1528. See also the personality profile of the thief on the cross on page 1361.

- 19 Then You shall be pleased with the
sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt
offering;
Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

PSALM 52

THE END OF THE WICKED AND THE PEACE
OF THE GODLY

*To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation^a
of David when Doeg the Edomite went and
told Saul, and said to him, "David has
gone to the house of Ahimelech."*

- 1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God *endures*
continually.
2 Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3 You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking
righteousness. Selah
4 You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.

God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you
out of your dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the
living. Selah
The righteous also shall see and fear,
And shall laugh at him, *saying*,
7 "Here is the man *who* did not make God
his strength,
But trusted in the abundance of his
riches,
And strengthened himself in his
wickedness."

But I *am* like a green olive tree in the
house of God;

- I trust in the mercy of God forever and
ever.
9 I will praise You forever,
Because You have done *it*;
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for *it is* good.

PSALM 53

FOLLY OF THE GODLESS, AND THE
RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

*To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath."
A Contemplation^a of David.*

- 1 The fool has said in his heart,
"*There is no God.*"
They are corrupt, and have done
abominable iniquity;
There is none who does good.
2 God looks down from heaven upon the
children of men,
To see if there are *any* who understand,
who seek God.
3 Every one of them has turned aside;
They have *together* become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.
Have the workers of iniquity no
knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And do not call upon God?
5 There they are in *great* fear
Where no fear was,
For God has scattered the bones of him
who encamps against you;
You have put *them* to shame,
Because God has despised them.

52:title ^aHebrew *Maschil* 53:title ^aHebrew
Maschil

SOUL NOTE



Cleansed (ch. 51) David wrote this psalm after he had been confronted about his sin with Bathsheba. Though sins may differ in kind, they do not differ much in degree when we consider that any sin ruins a person's relationship with God and must be confessed. David confessed his sin and cried out to God to cleanse him.

He had a "broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart" (51:17). Genuine repentance begins with the broken spirit and results in changed behavior. Repentant people confess the sin, ask for God's forgiveness, and then remove the sin from their lives. **Topic: Repentance**

the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.


⁸For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. ⁹Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!* In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. ¹²Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did not do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

THE JOY OF TITUS

¹³Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed.

But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. ¹⁵And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. ¹⁶Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

EXCEL IN GIVING

 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, ⁴imploping us with much urgency that we would receive^a the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. ⁶So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. ⁷But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

8:4 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *that we would receive*, thus changing text to *urgency for the favor and fellowship* . . .

KEY PASSAGE

MORE THAN SORRY

(7:7-10)



Repentance

True repentance begins when people understand the weight of their sins and the great sacrifice Christ made to cover them. Only then will they move to turn away from their sin. Moreover, they need to turn to God for salvation. As Paul wrote, "Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation."

Repentance is more than saying, "I'm sorry"; it carries with it the desire to change one's ways. When people accept Christ and ask Him to forgive their sins, He does so right away. He wipes the slate clean. Does that mean that those Christians will never sin again? Certainly not. Repentance is an ongoing daily process as we seek to live for Christ despite our failures. We need not itemize every sin, fearing that if we forget to repent of one we will be forever lost. But we do need to have a constant attitude of godly sorrow and repentance, seeking to let God change us to become more like Christ.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about repentance on pages 722, 723. See also the personal profile of the thief on the cross on page 1361.

CHRIST OUR PA

⁸I speak not testing the sincerity of others, but of our Lord Jesus Christ, rich, yet for you you through His

¹⁰And in this advantage not only and were desired you also must: *there was a reason may be a comfort* ¹²For if there is accepted according to what

¹³For I do not ceased and you that now at the supply their lack may supply equality. ¹⁵As I much had not heard little had

COLLECTION FOR

¹⁶But thanks earnest care for ¹⁷For he not accepted the collection, but being diligent, he was you of his own ¹⁸And we have with him the whose praise the gospel through only that, but churches to train is administered Himself and to ing this: that a lavish gift which viding honor of the Lord, but

²²And we have whom we have things, but not of the great collection ²³If anyone in manner and fellow our brethren and sengers of the ²⁴Therefore sin

loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.^a ²⁴So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. ²⁵And he released to them^a the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

THE KING ON A CROSS

²⁶Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.

²⁷And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned

and lamented Him. ²⁸But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' ³⁰Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' ^a ³¹For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

23:23 ^aNU-Text omits *and of the chief priests*.

23:25 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *to them*.

23:30 ^aHosea 10:8

PERSONALITY PROFILE



THE THIEF AND HIS SAVIOR

(LUKE 23:42)

Jesus had company when He died. Two criminals shared His fate. Three crosses formed a small group on the brow called Calvary one afternoon. The brief and painful conversation between three dying men led to a change of eternal destination for one of them.

One thief mocked Jesus with a challenge, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us" (Luke 23:39). His words convey a desperate bitterness. He had no thought of responsibility or remorse. He died bitter, mocking, and unrepentant.

The other thief reached a different conclusion. He heard Jesus forgive His executioners. He sensed Jesus' innocence. Perhaps he had heard about Jesus elsewhere. He was shocked by the other thief's lack of conscience. "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?" he said (Luke 23:40). The second thief made a beautiful statement of faith that Jesus readily acknowledged. His words illustrate the heart of repentance:

- He accepted responsibility for his own sins. "We receive the due reward of our deeds" (Luke 23:41)
- He recognized the unique character and divinity of Christ. "This Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41). He called Jesus "Lord" and spoke of Jesus' kingdom (Luke 23:42). These phrases all reveal the thief's acceptance of Jesus' special role.
- He called out for salvation from his moral condition, not rescue from the cross. "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).
- His expression did not take forgiveness for granted, but placed his life at the mercy of Jesus.

Jesus' response to the faith of His dying companion is the same response that He gives to anyone who believes in Him whether or not the conversion occurs in the last moments of life. To those with a little longer to live, Jesus' words can be read with a slightly different punctuation. Instead of "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43), Jesus has the authority to declare to anyone who believes in Him, "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise."

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inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. ¹⁶So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. ¹⁷There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸And he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. ¹⁹Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

²⁰"And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. ²¹Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. ²²The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

²³"Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. ²⁴And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and

for the people. ²⁵The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. ²⁶And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. ²⁸Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

²⁹"This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. ³⁰For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. ³¹It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is a statute forever.* ³²And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; ³³then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary,^a and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year." And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

THE SANCTITY OF BLOOD

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, 'This is

16:33 ^aThat is, the Most Holy Place

SOUL NOTE



A Nation Under God (16:32, 33) Once each year the Israelites were to humble themselves by prayer and fasting on the day of atonement. National atonement was a serious matter that involved two sacrifices: A bull would be sacrificed for the priests, and a goat for the people (16:11-19). The blood would be used to purify the holy place, and the bodies of the slaughtered animals would be taken outside the camp and burned (16:27). God promises to honor the nation that honors Him (2 Chr. 7:14). **Topic: Repentance**

JOSIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

22 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. ²And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW

³Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: ⁴"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. ⁵And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who are in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the damages of the house—⁶to carpenters and builders and masons—and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. ⁷However there need be no accounting made with them

of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully."

⁸Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. ⁹So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." ¹⁰Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

¹¹Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. ¹²Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor^a the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, ¹³"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the

22:12 ^aAbdon the son of Micah in 2 Chronicles 34:20

SOUL NOTE



Just One Child (22:1, 2) After the evil reigns of Manasseh and Amon, Josiah became king. Josiah saw the evil legacy left by his grandfather and father, and apparently wanted to rule differently. Somehow Josiah learned about God and chose to serve Him. Perhaps he had learned about God from the godly people in the land. Maybe it was his mother, Jedidah, mentioned here. Someone told this young boy the truth about God, and during his years as king he turned the nation around. We never know how our lives might affect one child who may grow up to serve the Lord.

Topic: Mentoring

SOUL NOTE



Back in Line (22:11) When the Book of the Law was rediscovered in the temple and read to King Josiah, the king "tore his clothes," showing his extreme sorrow over how far the nation had strayed from God's commands. He also realized how angry God must have been at the nation (22:13). Josiah repented for himself and on behalf of the nation, and then acted immediately to bring them back to God. When we are made aware of sin, we should act immediately—repenting and turning our lives around in order to get back in line with God's will. **Topic: Repentance**

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consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

¹⁵"Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered *mortar*; and I will say to you, 'The wall is no *more*, nor those who plastered it, ¹⁶*that is*, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when *there is* no peace,' " says the LORD GOD.

¹⁷"Likewise, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own heart; prophesy against them, ¹⁸and say, 'Thus says the LORD GOD: "Woe to the *women* who sew *magic* charms on their sleeves" and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive? ¹⁹And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"

²⁰"Therefore thus says the LORD GOD: "Behold, I *am* against your *magic* charms by which you hunt souls *there* like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. ²¹I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

²²"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life. ²³Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD." "

IDOLATRY WILL BE PUNISHED

14 Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. ²And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ³"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?

⁴"Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, ⁵that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols." "

⁶"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations. ⁷For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him by Myself. ⁸I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

⁹"And if the prophet is induced to speak anything, I the LORD have induced that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel. ¹⁰And they shall bear their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be the same

13:18 ^aLiterally *over all the joints of My hands*; Vulgate reads *under every elbow*; Septuagint and Targum read *on all elbows of the hands*.

SOUL NOTE



Beyond Sorry (14:6) God told the Israelites to repent of their idolatry.

Repentance is more than saying, "I'm sorry"; it's a complete change of direction in one's life. The first step of true repentance is to recognize that we are moving away from God, pursuing an activity or lifestyle that opposes what He desires.

The second step is to admit the sin to Him and ask for His forgiveness. The third step is to "turn away" from the sin and back to God. There is no true repentance without a change in behavior. **Topic: Repentance**

Give ear, O house of the king!
For yours is the judgment,
Because you have been a snare to
Mizpah

And a net spread on Tabor.

- ² The revolvers are deeply involved in
slaughter,
Though I rebuke them all.
I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hidden from Me;
For now, O Ephraim, you commit
harlotry;
Israel is defiled.

"They do not direct their deeds
Toward turning to their God,
For the spirit of harlotry is in their midst,
And they do not know the LORD.
⁵ The pride of Israel testifies to his face;
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in
their iniquity;
Judah also stumbles with them.

- ⁶ "With their flocks and herds
They shall go to seek the LORD,
But they will not find Him;
He has withdrawn Himself from them.
They have dealt treacherously with the
LORD,
For they have begotten pagan children.
Now a New Moon shall devour them
and their heritage.

"Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud at Beth Aven,
'Look behind you, O Benjamin!'
Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of
rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I make known
what is sure.

- ¹⁰ "The princes of Judah are like those who
remove a landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like
water.

- ¹¹ Ephraim is oppressed and broken in
judgment,
Because he willingly walked by human
precept.

- ¹² Therefore I will be to Ephraim like a
moth,
And to the house of Judah like
rottenness.

- ¹³ "When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah saw his wound,
Then Ephraim went to Assyria
And sent to King Jareb;
Yet he cannot cure you,
Nor heal you of your wound.
¹⁴ For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
And like a young lion to the house of
Judah.
I, even I, will tear them and go away;
I will take them away, and no one shall
rescue.

- ¹⁵ I will return again to My place
Till they acknowledge their offense.
Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek
Me."

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

- 6** Come, and let us return to the LORD;
For He has torn, but He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.
After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight.
³ Let us know,
Let us pursue the knowledge of the
LORD.

SOUL NOTE



Turning Point (6:1-3) In the middle of his prophecies of impending judgment, Hosea called out to the Israelites to repent: "Return to the LORD." With this warning, Hosea was, in effect, saying there was still hope. Despite God's punishment, God would restore those who turned back to Him. He would heal, bind up, and revive—if only they would "pursue the knowledge of the LORD." Sometimes we may feel that we have gone too far—that we have sinned too many times or too seriously to ever be forgiven. Hosea's call to the wicked Israelites demonstrates that if we return to God, He will forgive us. **Topic: Repentance**

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Septuagint, and
Masoretic Text,
and Vulgate; scribal
¹⁴ Compare
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ers shamefully love,

For strong *is the One* who executes His word.
For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible;
Who can endure it?

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

- ¹² "Now, therefore," says the LORD,
"Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."
¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments;
Return to the LORD your God,
For He *is* gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.
¹⁴ Who knows *if* He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?
¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
¹⁶ Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.
¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
Weep between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, "Spare Your people,
O LORD,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where *is* their God?'"

THE LAND REFRESHED

- ¹⁸ Then the LORD will be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.
¹⁹ The LORD will answer and say to His people,
"Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil,
And you will be satisfied by them;
I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations."
²⁰ "But I will remove far from you the northern army,
And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land,
With his face toward the eastern sea
And his back toward the western sea;
His stench will come up,
And his foul odor will rise,
Because he has done monstrous things."
²¹ Fear not, O land;
Be glad and rejoice,
For the LORD has done marvelous things!
²² Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;
For the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit;
The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.
²³ Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,^a
And He will cause the rain to come down for you—
The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first month.

^{2:23} ^aOr the teacher of righteousness



SOUL NOTE

The Invitation (2:12, 13) In the middle of this book filled with warnings and judgment stands a profound picture of God's mercy. Over the clamor of invading armies and devouring locusts, God issues a clear invitation: "Turn to Me with all your heart." In the midst of judgment, God offers mercy to those who repent. "He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Regardless of the circumstances, God says, "Turn to Me." When we call out to our gracious and merciful God, He hears and answers. **Topic: Repentance**

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