

Hosea 12:1-9 +14:9-10

We've read this before - God is angry with backsliding Judah.

Hosea 12:2 - "The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him."

Hosea 12:8 (NET) - "Ephraim boasts, 'I am very rich! I have become wealthy! In all that I have done to gain my wealth, no one can accuse me of any offense that is actually sinful.'"

Contrast this with the repentance of Judah in Genesis 38:26.

Hosea 14:8-9 (NET)- "O Ephraim, I do not want to have anything to do with idols anymore! I will answer him and care for him. I am like a luxuriant cypress tree; your fruitfulness comes from me!

Who is wise? Let him discern these things! Who is discerning? Let him understand them! For the ways of the LORD are right; the godly walk in them, but in them the rebellious stumble."

KJV has Ephraim say this:

Hosea 14:8-9 (KJV) - "Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found."

Wisdom, Discernment and Understanding

Hosea 14:9 - "Who is wise? Let him discern these things! Who is discerning? Let him understand them!"

The Talmud says "if a person is unworthy, the Torah becomes a portion of death for him; if he is worthy it is a portion of life."

"Whoever gives attention to the Law on account of the Law itself, to him it becomes an aromatic of life (עם חיים cam chayim), but to him who does not attend to the Law on account of the Law itself, to him it becomes an aromatic of death (עם מות cam mowt)" (Taarieth, fol. 7, 1,)

"It is said, "As the bee brings home honey to the owner, but stings others, so it is with the words of the Law." (Debarim Rabba, sec. 1, fol. 248)

"They (the words of the Law) are a savor of life to Israel, but a savor of death to the people of this world."

"The word of the Law which proceeds out of the mouth of God is an odor of life to the Israelites, but an odor of death to the Gentiles" (Vajikra Rabba, fol. 147. 1.)

Paul agrees, and applies this to us, the Lord's body, the "living letters" of the preaching of the Gospel:

2 Corinthians 2:15-16 - "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"

An even finer distinction:

You can have an intellectual grasp of the Law but without understanding, like Solomon, who was given wisdom but lacked discernment when it came to women and concubines.

The Spirit working through our hearts reveals the true nature of the law.

Jeremiah 31:33 - "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts"

Without this, we start rationalizing and say, like Ephraim:

Hosea 12:8 - "no one can accuse me of any offense that is actually sinful."

This is the bottom line of walking in repentance -