

Hosea 14:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Analysis

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things?—(מַיִּצְחָם יִבְנֶן אֱלֹהָה)—Wisdom literature conclusion (cf. Psalm 107:43). **Prudent** (נָבוֹן, navon) means discerning, insightful. True wisdom grasps God's covenant purposes revealed in Hosea's marriage, Israel's adultery, and promised restoration. **The ways of the LORD are right**—(נְשָׁרִים זָרָכִי יְהָוָה)—God's paths are straight, upright, just—vindicating His discipline and mercy. **The just shall walk in them**—(צַדִּיקִים יֵלְכוּ בָּם) —the righteous travel God's covenant road. **But the transgressors shall fall therein** (פְּשָׁעִים) —(כַּפְשָׁלוּ בָּם) —the same message becomes stumbling block to rebels. Hosea's gospel: judgment and grace both reveal God's covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

This wisdom conclusion—'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right'—functioned as Hosea's final appeal to his 8th century audience. Written during Israel's chaotic final decades when political instability, moral corruption, and religious syncretism made discernment difficult, this verse challenged readers to rightly interpret both history and prophecy. The righteous would 'walk in' God's ways while transgressors would 'fall therein'—the same covenant promises that blessed obedience brought judgment on rebellion. This epilogue transformed Hosea from

mere historical prophecy into timeless wisdom literature, requiring each generation to apply its message afresh, recognizing that God's ways remain consistently righteous whether bringing blessing or judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Hosea 14:9 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

מֵ	חָכָם	בְּ	טָבֵל	אַלְהָ	בְּ	טָבֵל	אַלְהָ
H4310	Who is wise	and he shall understand	H2450	H995	H428	and he shall understand	H995
מֵ	יְדַעַת	בְּ	מִשְׁרָם	בְּ	דָּרְכֵי	הַ	מִצְדָּקִים
and he shall know	H3588	H3477	are right	H1870	them for the ways	of the LORD	and the just
H3045			H3068		H3068		H6662
בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	שָׁלֹא	בְּ	שָׁלֹא		
H1980	H0	in them but the transgressors	H6586	shall fall	H3782	H0	

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:29 (References Lord): The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Psalms 107:43 (References Lord): Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

John 8:47 (Parallel theme): He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Daniel 12:10 (Parallel theme): Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Zephaniah 3:5 (Righteousness): The just LORD is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

Jeremiah 9:12 (References Lord): Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?

Deuteronomy 32:4 (Righteousness): He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Isaiah 26:7 (Righteousness): The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

Psalms 119:128 (Parallel theme): Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.

Psalms 119:75 (References Lord): I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.