

Devotion for Week of August 21, 2022

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Two weeks ago I talked about the Hebrew term for the burden of sin, which literally means to carry something, the idea of sin being a heavy burden that weighs us down. This week I'd like to think about the term for repent, which in Hebrew is *shuv*. It means to turn or return or turn around, and it is used more than one thousand times in the Bible. Sometimes it just means to change direction. But when the Bible uses this term to talk about repentance, it means "returning to God." Psalm 7:12 says this, "If one does not *shuv*, God will whet his sword; he has bent and strung the bow." God wants the people to change their direction and return to Him. They are in danger if they do not.

Hosea 11:5 uses the word twice in one sentence to mean slightly different things: "Will they not *shuv* to Egypt and will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to *shuv*?" The first instance means "return" and the second one means "repent," or "return to God." This is a nice play on the word *shuv*, indicating the punishment for God's people who do not repent – they don't return to God, they return to captivity.

Hosea 14 uses several of the terms related to the burden of sin (*nasa*) and repent (*shuv*):

Shuv (return), O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have fallen because of your sin.

Take words with you and *shuv* (return) to the Lord.

Say to Him: "*nasa* (lift/bear) all guilt and accept what is good...."

I will heal their affliction, generously will I take them back in love;

For My anger has *shuv* (turned away) from them.

Israel is falling under the weight of sin, and it asks God to lift the burden. God requires that they return to Him, and if they do, His anger will be turned away from them. The Old Testament often connects the words sin, burden, and repent in this way. When we find ourselves apart from God, we need to repent in order to return to that relationship. We need to turn around from the wrong path and get back on the right path. When we turn around, we will find Jesus right there waiting to help us find the way.

Jeanne