

Hosea 7:1 ¶ When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

Hosea 7:2 And they consider not in their hearts *that* I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

This chapter starts with the LORD expressing His desire to heal Israel, but His righteousness and justice will not allow Him to do so in light of their lack of repentance and continuance in sin. The land is full of liars, thieves and marauding gangs. They don't even seem to be aware of the fact that YHWH sees everything and knows all about their sin.

I wonder how descriptive this attitude is of many in the professing church today. Do we really comprehend the truth that God sees everything we do? Nothing we do is hidden from Him. From personal experience I can say it takes work to focus on that truth when one is making choices about how to utilize his/her time. The Psalmist words it beautifully.

Psalms 139:7–12 “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

Psalms 11:4 “The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.”

Psalms 90:8 “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.”

Hosea 7:3 They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

Hosea 7:4 They *are* all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, *who* ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened.

These are verses that speak to the decadence of the rulers of the people—their kings and princes. The wording indicates that the moral culture is a result of following the lead of these adulterous rulers. I think that the main focus is on spiritual adultery, but physical adultery is part of that lifestyle. The word picture from verse 4 describes a people full of fleshly passion that is fueled from within and needs little outside encouragement to flame into action. In other words, they have lost self-control.

Sadly, this characterizes the leaders of America as a whole more and more with each passing day.

Hosea 7:5 In the day of our king the princes have made *him* sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorers.

Hosea 7:6 For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.

Hosea 7:7 They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: *there is none among them that calleth unto me.*

These verses seem to be describing times of celebration in which the king drinks too much at the urging of his princes. They do not seem to understand that lack of control puts one in danger from others with ambitions for power. Plots are made that often result in partnerships in intrigue that result in the murder of the king. None of the leaders are smart enough to recognize that their only hope is to call out to God for His help from hearts of repentance.

JFB made note of the murder of five kings that illustrate the truth of verse 7-- Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah.

Hosea 7:8 ¶ Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.

Hosea 7:9 Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth *it* not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

The people of Israel had embraced the people and culture of other nations. It had resulted in their acting like a “cake not turned”—half-baked, without proper reasoning. They did not seem to understand that their strength was only secure in a covenant relationship with God. The prophet compares their actions to those of people who are growing old and infirm but don’t realize it.

I am getting older now and my body can’t keep up with what my spirit wants to do sometimes. Those who are growing older should possess more wisdom than to follow the unbridled passions of or act with the foolish thinking that often are part of the process of maturing from child to adult.

Hosea 7:10 And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

Hosea 7:11 Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

Hosea 7:12 When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.

The arrogant and disdainful attitudes of the people testify to their disrespect and complete disregard of the LORD “their God.” They are not about to repent and turn from their sin. When they need help, they choose to turn to Egypt and Assyria, impotent men in light of the power of Almighty God. The LORD declares that they cannot escape His judgment. They are as helpless birds (silly doves) before Him, and will face His judgment as declared by His prophets.

Hosea 7:13 Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

Hosea 7:14 And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, *and* they rebel against me.

Hosea 7:15 Though I have bound *and* strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.

Hosea 7:16 They return, *but* not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this *shall be* their derision in the land of Egypt.

God does not joy in judging His people, but He is the righteous judge. Their rebellion and lack of repentance call for His judgment. Not only have they acted in rebellion against God, they have testified falsely against Him. Though YHWH is the One who can heal the land and cause it to produce bountifully, they choose instead to seek the help of false gods that have no authority over the creation. In spite of the many ways God has shown Himself strong for His people since their establishment as a nation, they are determined in their rebellion.

The NLT gave good sense for verse 16: *“They look everywhere except to heaven, to the Most High. They are like a crooked bow that always misses its target. Their leaders will be killed by their enemies because of their insolence toward me. Then the people of Egypt will laugh at them.”*

I liked David Guzik’s comment on this section: *“Israel saw their problem, but not their sin. When God's hand is against man, he easily sees he has a problem but often does not see it as sin against the LORD. So when Israel had problems, they wailed upon their beds, but not to the LORD. They sought remedies, but not from the Most High.”*