

Hosea

Chapter 7

when I would heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim is revealed, and the evil deeds of Samaria, for they deal falsely; the thief breaks in, and the bandits raid outside. 2 But they do not consider that I remember all their evil. Now their deeds surround them; they are before my face. 3 By their evil they make the king glad, and the princes by their treachery. 4 They are all adulterers; they are like a heated oven whose baker ceases to stir the fire, from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened. 5 On the day of our king, the princes became sick with the heat of wine; he stretched out his hand with mockers. 6 For with hearts like an oven they approach their intrigue; all night their anger smolders; in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. 7 All of them are hot as an oven, and they devour their rulers. All their kings have fallen, and none of them calls upon me. Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned. 9 Strangers devour his strength, and he knows it not; gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, and he knows it not. 10 The pride of Israel testifies to his face; yet they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him, for all this. 11 Ephraim is like a dove, silly and without sense, calling to Egypt, going to Assyria. 12 As they go, I will spread over them my net; I will bring them down like birds of the heavens; I will discipline them according to the report made to their congregation. 13 Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against me. 14 They do not cry to me from the heart, but they wail upon their beds; for grain and wine they gash themselves; they rebel against me. 15 Although I trained and strengthened their arms, yet they devise evil against me. 16 They return, but not upward; they are like a treacherous bow; their princes shall fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongue. This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

7:1 *Ephraim*. Israel, the northern kingdom. (CSB)

revealed. God sees them. (CSB)

Ironically, the more earnestly the Lord seeks to heal Israel, the more the iniquity of Ephraim becomes evident. (TLSB)

Samaria. Another name for the northern kingdom, of which Samaria was the royal city, selected by Omri to be capital of Israel (1Ki 16:24). (CSB)

Capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, this city reeked of evil deeds. (TLSB)

deal falsely. See Jer 6:13; 8:10; probably refers to both feigned repentance and treacherous foreign alliances. (CSB)

bandits. See 6:9; Ge 49:19; Jer 18:22. (CSB)

Terror reigns in town and countryside, as thieves plunder houses and bandits rob travelers on the highway. (TLSB)

7:2 *I remember.* All is open before the Lord (see Ps 90:8), but the wicked believe God does not see (see Ps 10:6, 11; 14:1; Eze 8:12). (CSB)

Nothing is hidden from the Lord. He sees and remembers even secret misdeeds. (TLSB)

7:3 The deplorable spiritual condition of the nation is revealed in the fact that the king and princes actually delight in the evil being done. (TLSB)

make the king glad. Probably in conjunction with one of the palace revolts (see 2Ki 15:8–30). (CSB)

7:4 Sinful Israel is compared to an oven stoked so hot that the baker no longer needs to stir the fire while kneading the dough and letting it rise. (TLSB)

fire. A metaphor for political intrigue (see vv. 6–7). The fire was banked until ready to use; then it broke out. (CSB)

baker. Perhaps the leader of the conspiracy. (CSB)

7:5 *day of our king.* Probably a coronation or birthday that became a drunken party. King Elah died in drunkenness (1Ki 16:9–10). (CSB)

Likely the day on which an Israelite king ascended the throne. (TLSB)

princes.....sick with.heat of wine. Self-indulgent princes downed so much wine that they became sick. (TLSB)

he. Sadly, the king himself joined with those whose drunken festivities effectively mocked the Lord. (TLSB)

mockers. See Pr 21:24. Isaiah (28:1–8, 14) condemned Israel's drunkenness and her scoffers. (CSB)

7:6–7 Like the fire in an oven that does not go out overnight, so the hearts of those planning intrigue continue to smolder as they sleep, only to blaze up again in the morning. Sinful desires flame up into sinful deeds. (TLSB)

7:6 The intrigue was kept secret until a suitable time. (CSB)

7:7 *rulers ... kings.* Four kings were assassinated in 20 years, Zechariah and Shallum in a seven-month period (2Ki 15:10–15). (CSB)

devour their rulers During Hosea's ministry, four Israelite kings were overthrown within 12 years. (TLSB)

none of them calls upon me. The reason for the shameful situation. (CSB)

Neither king nor prince nor people called on the only One able to help in this time of upheaval. The Lord was utterly forgotten. (TLSB)

For even the great calamities in which they found themselves did not cause them to repent. (Kretzmann)

7:8 *mixes himself with the peoples* – Refers to Israel’s attempts to ally with foreign nations rather than the Lord. These alliances proved to be entangling snares rather than means of escape. (TLSB)

cake not turned. A metaphor describing unwise policies. Baked on hot stones (cf. 1Ki 19:6), the cake was burned on the bottom and raw on the top. (CSB)

Griddle cake, probably sweetened with honey or a syrup made from grapes, dates, or figs. (TLSB)

Burned on one side and raw on the other, i.e., defective and unusable. (TLSB)

7:9 *Strangers.* Foreign nations (e.g., Assyria and Egypt) are strangers because they do not know the Lord. (TLSB)

gray hairs. He was old before his time, but ignored the danger signals. Tribute to Tiglath-Pileser (2Ki 15:19–20, 29) and to Egypt had sapped the country economically. (CSB)

Sign of aging and loss of vigor. (TLSB)

he knows it not. Sums up the feeble, blinded spiritual condition of Ephraim. (TLSB)

7:10 *pride of Israel testifies to his face.* Israel’s arrogant disdain for the Lord is clear and brings no positive effect. (TLSB)

return. See Amos 4:6–11. (CSB)

Hosea’s emphasis. (TLSB)

7:11 *dove.* See 11:11, where a different image is intended. (CSB)

The people lack discernment. They desperately flutter in all directions, looking for help. Scripture does not always use symbols in the same sense. Contrast with Mt 3:16. (TLSB)

without sense. See Jer 5:21. Menahem turned to Assyria (2Ki 15:19–20), and Pekah to Egypt. Hoshea alternated in allegiance to both (2Ki 17:4). (CSB)

7:12 *my net.* The Lord himself was the hunter—not the nations—and Israel was certain to be caught. (CSB)

Using the foreigners as His instruments to carry out His punishment upon them;. (Kretzmann)

report. The discipline should come as no surprise, since the prophets often warned the assembled people of impending judgment. (TLSB)

7:13–15 *against Me!* The Lord repeats this phrase to show how deeply grieved He is by His children’s sin. (TLSB)

7:13 *Woe.* Often used in conjunction with threats of judgment (see 9:12). (CSB)

Mournful cry heard at the death of a loved one. The Lord laments the destruction of His people. (TLSB)

Destruction. See 9:6; Isa 13:6. (CSB)

redeem. see, e.g., Ex 6:6; Mic 6:4. (CSB)

lies. Possibly of ascribing prosperity and destiny to gods other than the Lord. (CSB)

Insincere. (TLSB)

7:14 *wail.* See Joel 1:13. (CSB)

Might refer to a ritual performed during Baal worship. (TLSB)

gash themselves. On Mount Carmel, the prophets of Baal cut themselves as part of their idolatrous ritual (1Ki 18:28). The Israelites did the same here, hoping to ensure good crops. (TLSB)

7:15 *I trained.* As children (or, perhaps, as troops). (CSB)

The Lord strengthened Israel militarily, yet Israel betrays its ally, the Lord. (TLSB)

strengthened them. Lit. “strengthened their arms” (see Eze 30:24–25). (CSB)

7:16 Israel turned to Baal and to other nations for help rather than to the Lord. (TLSB)

treacherous bow. See Ps 78:57. The arrow missed the mark; Israel missed her purpose for being. (CSB)

Such a weapon is incapable of shooting straight; its arrows do not hit the target. (TLSB)

derision. Egypt would fail to assist Israel and then would belittle God’s power (see Dt 9:28). (CSB)

When Israel’s leaders fell, Egypt laughed in ridicule. (TLSB)

Egypt. See 8:13; 9:6; 11:5. There is no record of a forced exile of large numbers to Egypt. Some captives were taken there (2Ki 23:34; Jer 22:11–14), and some fugitives voluntarily went there (2Ki 25:26; Jer 42–44). A return from Egypt is envisioned in 11:11; Isa 11:11; 27:13; Zec 10:10. (CSB)

Chs 6–7 Though Hosea earnestly encourages Ephraim and Judah to return to the Lord, his pleas continue to fall on deaf ears. Rather than trusting the Lord, Israel’s leaders persist in seeking help from foreign nations such as Assyria and Egypt. Sadly, even committed Christians manifest the same kind of stubbornness and inability to overcome their weaknesses. And so it is that the Lord still deals with us today as He dealt with wayward Israel. He continues to call us to repentance so that we might return to Him, confess our sin, trust in His pardoning love, and again be reminded that Jesus, the Lamb of God, has forgiven us. • Come, then, let us return to the Lord. Let us press on to know Him and His steadfast love. May we humbly pray, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, and grant me peace.” Amen. (TLSB)