The Book of Hosea

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 7**

* **7:1-7– Ephraim’s Sin Remembered**
* **Verse 1**– The picture in this verse is like that of a surgeon or doctor seeking to heal a patient of its wounds and diseases. The doctor may not fully know or understand how bad the disease is until he/she goes in for a surgical look.
* God’s desire was to heal His people and He sent them prophets time and time again in order to begin that process, but the people would demonstrate their desire for sin and evil instead. They even killed some of the prophets (Matt. 23:37) because they proclaimed repentance.
* The iniquity of the Northern Kingdom and in particular that of Samaria was overwhelming and it illustrated a complete lack of morals in the land. Dealing falsely (Amos 8:4-6), thieves breaking in to steal and bandits raiding people (Hos. 6:9) are just some of the sins we see them involved in.
* Samaria was the capital of the Northern Kingdom and a stronghold for the people, but it was also in a lot of ways their center for sin and evil. They are morally depraved and do not know how to do right (Amos 3:9-10).
* **Verse 2**– As in Hos. 5:3-4, the idea is that the people may think that God does not know what they are up to and that they can act with impunity. The point that God makes is that He knows all that they do, and He will judge them according to their deeds (Job. 34:22; Psa. 94:9-13).
* Their deeds are so blatant, so appalling and so overwhelming that its pictured as being in God’s face. No matter where He turns, their sin and evil testify against them (Jer. 16:17). As God looks down at Israel all He sees is sin.
* **Verse 3**– The rulers and authority figures of the nation are also personally involved in the practice of sin and evil. An evil king is happiest when the nation is given over to sin and evil as himself. Their consciences would rest easy.
* Rulers in positions such as these are supposed to do justice, stem any evil and bring to justice those who do evil (2 Sam. 8:15; Psa. 72:2-4; Rom. 13:3-4). The government and authority figures should be sought for justice and righteousness.
* **Verse 4**– The people are all adulterers (rulers and citizens alike) in the sense that they are unfaithful to God which probably also included physical adultery (Jer. 9:2; 23:10). Their passion for this is compared to the heat of a baker’s oven.
* A baker would usually have to care for the fire throughout the baking process so as to keep it hot enough so that when the time came for the bread to be baked it would be at the appropriate temperature. It took a certain kind of method and planning to achieve such success.
* Likewise, the people are constantly thinking of the best ways and means to do their evil and to practice sin. Their passion for evil burns continuously like a fire. They don’t need to give it special attention because this is what they do (Prov. 4:16-17)!
* **Verse 5**– *“The day of the King”* may be referring to a particular occasion for celebration such as the King’s birthday or the anniversary of his coronation. On this day, the rulers got drunk to the point of sickness (Prov. 20:1; 31:4-5; Isa. 28:7).
* In their drunkenness they were involved along with the evil men in doing evil and harming the people (Prov. 13:20). Rulers and kings under such circumstances cannot make proper decisions and do justice.
* **Verse 6**– The imagery of verse 4 and the baker’s oven continues here. The ideas are very similar to one another. The rulers plot in anger, raging with passions seeking to commit evil as best as they can (methodical). After their thoughts smolder all night the fire rages in the morning (Psa. 10:8-9; Mic. 2:1).
* **Verse 7**– This verse is probably describing the chaos that took place in terms of the assassination of the Kings. Of last 6 kings of Israel (Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea), 4 were murdered by his predecessor.
* Servants and princes plot against rulers only to have the same done to them. The proverbial *“You live by the sword, you will die by the sword”* occurs here. All of their kings are fallen and yet they don’t turn to God.
* In light of such chaos, confusion and national disaster, who else can we turn to but God? Who else can save and deliver like He can (Job 36:13; Isa. 9:13; Jer. 32:17-19)? This sets us up for what occurs in the next section.
* **7:8-16– A heterogeneous people**
* **Verse 8**– The northern kingdom (a covenant nation) has now mixed itself in among the nations. Israel was supposed to stand out among other nations and to be a holy nation to God (Lev. 20:22-26; Num. 23:9) but through idolatry, intermarriages and political alliances they have becomes just like the pagan nations around them (Ez. 9:1, 12; Neh. 13:23-25; Psa. 106:35).
* The image of a cake not being turned is significant to this section. It’s like a pancake which needs to properly cook on both sides. However, in this case, Israel if fully burnt on one side and completely raw (uncooked) on the other.
* The point is that they are a half-hearted, half-fed and half-cultured society (1 Kings 18:21; Rev. 3:15-16). They have one foot in and one foot out in their service to God and their idols.
* **Verse 9**– The strangers referred to in this verse no doubt refers to the foreign nations Israel turned to for help (Assyria, Egypt etc.) These nations in the eyes of the Israelites were stronger than God so they turned to them for help but in the end these very alliances caused their demise (2 Kings 15:19-20; 2 Chron. 28:16-25).
* The idea behind the gray hairs is rapid aging. Israel’s alliances and turning to foreigners for help, sped up the process of their demise and destruction. This is like the person whose constant desire is for physical satisfaction no matter the cost. Such a lifestyle brings about unnecessary aging, problems and sicknesses.
* The phrase *“he does not know it”* is twice used in this verse to paint a sad picture (Judg. 16:20). Israel thinks she is still the cream of the crop and its alliances with foreigners will make them stronger than ever. Yet she does not know her judgment and demise are near.
* **Verse 10**– Israel’s pride is called out once again (For more information see Hos. 5:5). Their pride has caused them to stumble and suffer severely (Isa. 3:9) yet they have not called out to God for help and they don’t look to return to Him.
* **Verse 11**– The northern Kingdom is pictured here as a silly dove. The dove is considered to be a simple animal and Jesus uses this illustration in a good sense in Matt. 10:16. God however uses it in Hosea in a negative sense.
* Their seeking for help from Assyria (2 Kings 15:19-20) and Egypt (2 Kings 17:3-4) is the folly that the image of the dove is used to describe. They turned to the very nations who wanted to harm them and conquer them and later did (2 Kings 16:5-9).
* Israel, like a dove, does not know where to turn for help (Isa. 1:3). In a state of panic and complete ignorance they turn to the nations who, at face value, seem to be powerful enough to help but the decision is made to their own demise.
* **Verse 12**– As they turn to these nations for help and in particular, Assyria, God will hunt them down and catch them in His nets (Lev. 26:17). He will use Assyria to bring this about since He has spoken this is what will take place (Isa. 10:5-7).
* **Verse 13**– God pronounces a woe upon the people because they have strayed from Him. One can either be the follower of enemy of God and Israel has become His enemy (Isa. 31:1; Ezek. 16:23). The pronouncement of a woe usually indicates the inevitability of incoming calamity.
* The only thing Israel deserves now is the destruction that God says they will get because they have rebelled against Him. God would like to redeem them as He had done before (Deut. 15:15) but their lies would not allow for it (Ex. 24:3, 7).
* **Verse 14**– The Israelites in despair do not cry out to God from their heart. They cry out only because they want more material satisfaction which they earlier attributed to their idols (Hos. 2:5, 8-10). *“Their heartless performance of howling for the material blessings sought from the idols but denied them by God is given as an additional reason for the woe and destruction of the last verse”* (Graham).
* They wail and assemble for physical sustenance rather than the sustenance needed for the soul to live (Matt. 5:6; Jn. 6:26-27). After all this, the text shows us they aren’t in it for God rather they are in it for themselves.
* **Verse 15**– Like a parent training a young child, God trained and strengthened Israel’s arm (picture of power and strength) time and time again (2 Kings 13:23; Psa. 106:43-45). Even though God did them good, they seek to do Him evil (Psa. 2:1; Rom. 1:21).
* **Verse 16**– When Israel turns, they go every possible way except that which leads back to God. Arrows shot from a deceitful bow will always miss the target. Likewise, Israel missed the mark perpetually (Psa. 78:57).
* Due to this, Israel’s leaders and all the people will fall (Deut. 28:32). They will all be judged because of their rude and disrespectful behavior towards God and each other. They will be a laughing stock in Egypt (Deut. 28:37; Isa. 30:1-5).