



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.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.³ They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.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.⁵ In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners.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.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.⁸ Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.⁹ Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.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.¹¹ Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.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.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.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.¹⁵ Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.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. (Hosea 7:1-16)

Today's text is quite interesting with even a touch of humor in the definition of one term that has modern application, but we will cover that at verse 8. But the whole of God's counsel has application to the serious state of decadence of the American nation and people of today. We do not read the Scriptures merely as some matter of historical significance, but with a genuine understanding that every word applies to the contemporary scene as well.

The text opens with a lamentation against Israel for the sins of Ephraim. *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 7:1) They have made foreign alliances with ungodly nations round about and have also dealt with unjust weights in their dealings with the people. (Does this sound indicative of the current American political scene?) The daily reports coming from the governing monarch are false, and each man deals falsely with the other. Fake news was even in play in those bygone days. Those who are inside Israel are thieves. They steal the substance of the people; and those beyond Israel's borders rob and ruin the economy as well. So the enemy is both WITHIN, and WITHOUT, Israel. Consider our own political conditions today. We have thieves in government who spend outrageous monies on frivolous projects to benefit their political friends. Then, these same culprits make trade agreements with foreign powers that are termed 'Free Trade.' To be sure, that trade has been free to the foreign governments with which they are made, but allow the American enterprises of the people to be legally raped through imbalanced and unfair production policies of foreign governments which compete with an America economy that is bound hand and foot by tariffs and other policies imposed on their foreign exports at port of entry on foreign shores. Free Trade is not necessarily FAIR TRADE!

We may forget our flagrant sins, but God does not! *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.* (7:2)

We realize more fully the magnitude of God's wrath when our own sinful and licentious deeds overwhelm us so that we are, as the French say, '*hoisted upon our own petard.*' Our sins are always before the face of God, but when they grow to such an abhorrent abundance as our modern sins, and those of old Israel, God will no longer brood them in restraint.

We have pointed out how God views adultery and idolatry in the same sense. They are the same in meaning. One (adultery) is unfaithfulness to one's legitimately married spouse by the law of man; the other (idolatry) is infidelity of the church and her members to her own legitimately appointed Bridegroom which is Christ. *They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.* (7:3) See how the ruler is made glad with the sinful excesses and wickedness of the adulterers among his people? Does this not remind us of the same implication of having pleasure in the sexual sins of our day noted in Romans? *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers,*

without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: **Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**

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. In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners. 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. 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. (7:4-7) Leaven is always used to indicate the homogeneous proliferation of sin throughout society. As leaven spreads uniformly throughout the bread until all is leavened, so does sin grow from small streams until the dam is breached. Leaven represents sin or false doctrine. That is the reason we use unleavened bread (wafers) in our Holy Communion Service. *How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?* Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12)

Here is the bit of humor, though pregnant truth, of which I spoke earlier: *Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a **cake not turned.*** (7:8) See, the people of Israel had '**half-baked**' politicians in their day just as we surely do in our day! *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.* (7:9) Do we not have 'strangers' entering our borders uninvited who sap our strength and bear a heavy burden on our economy. There is a constant chorus of denial that these illegals are a burden when the truth is so overwhelmingly obvious. *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.* (7:10) In America, we are constantly seeking answers for our dilemma in Europe, Asia, or the Middle East. *Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.* (7:11) Are you kidding me! I almost question the veracity of the translations of the word 'DOVE' in the text as I know no dove with so little sense as to run to cat for protection and counsel. We have openly defied God's Law concerning abortion and homosexual marriages – and in a thousand other ways.

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. 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. (7:12-13) The pride of the blessed nation, whether Israel or modern America, will be brought down from flight as with a net – the net of national debt, war, disease, fires, quakes, and famine. *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. Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. 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.* The arms of the United States have been strengthened to exceed all powers on earth, yet, we fail to credit God who blessed us and we account it to our own merit in arrogant pride. The Land of Egypt always represents bondage. We have dealt comfortable with the descendants of Hagar (Arab and Muslim nations) and we shall soon suffer their bondage as a result unless we repent.