

Chapter 7

(verse 1-4)

“When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered and the wickedness of Samaria.” The Bible tells us *“be sure your sins will find you out.”* Nothing is hidden from God. All sin is known unto the Godhead. When God would have healed Israel and restored their fellowship with Him, another sin cropped up. Scarcely was one sin blotted out till another was committed.

The first verses of chapter 7 serve to remind us of Israel’s sin. The first one mentioned in verse one is *falsehood*. Are you deceitful? God sure hates deception. Psalm 101:7 reads *“he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.”* One characteristic of a fool is deceit, for we are told in Proverbs 14:8 *“...the folly of fools is deceit.”* How many people do you know that are living a lie? A person living a lie invites thieves and robbers into their life. Be truthful in your life and the thieves and robbers will stay away.

Verse 1 assures us God has good *vision*. Verse two reminds us God has good *memory*. Man forgets that! *“I remember all their wickedness.”* Any person who forgets that God is aware of every sin is living in danger. *“Now their own doings have beset them about.”* They become wrapped up, that is, beset, in their sins. Listen to Proverbs 5:22 which reads *“his own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden (bound) with the cords of his sins.”* Are you a prisoner of your own sins? I have met many who are tied up in their sins. They are slaves to themselves in that it is their own sin that has them bound.

“They consider not in their hearts” in the Hebrew literally reads “they say not to their hearts.” A person can become so entrenched in sin and the deception that sin brings, that they will sin and say in their heart “God didn’t see that and, if he did, he will forget about it.”

Verse 3 is an interesting verse. So wicked had Israel become that they made the king glad with their wickedness. We have that situation today. Entertainers, Hollywood, movie stars, television, and comedians are generally just fabricating lies and perversion to entertain people. How low is a nation when wickedness is *entertaining* instead of *shocking*? Romans 1:32 reads *“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.”* Is sin entertaining to you? Sin is entertaining to much of the world in this age in which we live, just as was so in the day of Hosea.

(Verse 4,6)

Hosea paints for us the picture of Israel's condition using the baker and the dough. Let us consider the fire in the Eastern oven. The baker made his bread in the morning. The night before, he would light the fire in the oven and stock the oven with wood. He would get a good night's sleep, and when he arose the next morning the oven was hot and ready to receive the dough. The oven would be so hot by morning that the baker could ignore it all night knowing it would be ready by morning-time.

Such was the sin of *adultery* in the hearts of the Israelis. The passion for adultery was so great in their heart that they could sleep all night, arise the next morning, and the fire of sin was hotter than when they went to bed! Wow! One of the great problems with sin is this- it never satisfies. One glass of liquor beckons for another glass. One lustful affair beckons for another. Israel had become inflamed with the burning embers of sexual immorality and lust. They had rejected God and His Word and replaced it in their hearts with immorality. A person might commit murder one time and never desire to murder again. Many other sins are likened to murder as well. Sexual immorality and lust are far different. Sexual immorality, like liquor and drugs, is addictive. A womanizing (man-izing) man (woman) will likely go to the grave with lustful desire in them.

(Verse 5)

“The day of our king” likely refers to the king's birthday or perhaps his coronation day. The King was a drunkard. The princes, in order to win the king's favor, gave him bottles of wine. If you are in business with some government officials, you are expected to bring them bottles of wine. The king “*stretched out his hands with scorners.*” This is a picture of the gesture of the drunken revelers as they hold out the cup and *toast* one another. Scoffers were the king's drinking buddies. Proverbs 20:1 tells us that wine is a scoffer: “*wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*”

(Verse 7)

We return to the picture of the oven that we saw in previous verses. Remember, the fire in the oven is started at night and becomes large and blazing hot by daybreak. This paints a picture of how passion begins small and becomes like unto a roaring fire. Several judges and kings were murdered in the Bible-time of Israel. The judges and the kings fell victim to the passion of the people. A plot to murder the king would begin as a small flame. Like the oven, the heat increased until finally the king's life was taken. Note the word “kings” is plural. Read II Kings 15: 10, 14, 25, 30 and you will find 4 kings killed by conspiracy.

Yet, while the kings and judges were being killed, no one called on God. There was utter confusion in government and society and no one was concerned. Today, our men and women are dying in foreign wars and few are concerned. Government is in a state of quarreling and confusion. Few are calling on God.

Reading the Bible history of Israel, we find they were often intrigued by other nations. God's law requires separation. The Bible warns us that one of the greatest weaknesses in the life of a saved person can be lusting after those who walk not after God. The Bible tells us in II Corinthians 6:17 "*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate...*" We remember from the book of Numbers how Balaam taught Balak how to reduce Israel's power lest they defeat his army. Balaam instructed Balak to invite Israel to attend one of their feasts. Israel went to the feast. Of course, it was only their intention to go and watch. However, they eventually bowed down to strange gods just like the heathen! Why attend the feast in the first place?

God ruled over Israel with judges initially. Israel began to look at other nations and saw they had kings. So, Israel said to God in I Samuel 8:6 "*...make us a king to judge us like all the nations..*" "We want to be like other nations. Give us a king." God did that. He gave them Saul who was not the rightful king for Israel. The kingdom suffered under his reign. Yet, they asked for a king out of God's will. Be careful what you ask God for. Is what you ask of Him His will for your life?

It has always been mystifying to me as to why folk who say they are saved resent the concept of *separation*. When Israel was redeemed from the land of the sinful Egyptians, God put separation between Israel and the Egyptians. Yet, on many occasions Israel wanted to go back to Egypt. This is a great mystery. Sinners are redeemed by the saving grace of Jesus Christ. They are bought with a price. They are set forth as a *holy nation* and a *peculiar people* (I Peter 2:9). However, many saved people struggle with the concept of separation and living holy, dedicated lives unto the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The power of the church today is greatly diminished. Why is this? The church no longer believes in separation. If the world is doing it, the church ought to be doing it is the attitude of most. The church participates in the activities of the world under the disguise of "reaching out" unto the world. You cannot win a drunkard to Christ by sitting down on the barstool next to him and drinking what he is drinking. We are a people called out to be separated. We reach sinners by letting our light shine before them, not by drinking booze with them.

Israel is described as a "cake not turned." Sometimes, in Eastern custom bread was baked on the ground. Every few minutes, say 10 minutes or so, the bread was turned. If not turned, one side became

charcoal and the other side dough. Would you eat bread like this? The answer is “no.” This is “half-baked” bread. There are some “half-baked” Christians. They are of little use to God. Are you in a “half-baked” spiritual state? God has a purpose for your life. Are you walking in that purpose? Is God fulfilling the divine purpose for your life? Are you a “half-baked” Christian?

Why was the bread half-baked? Israel was too busy hobnobbing with the world to attend to necessary matters. Do you read your Bible daily? Do you pray daily? Do you attend the house of God each time the doors are open?

(Verse 9-10)

Mixing with the world will sap your strength. Israel had become so weak because they mixed with the world that they don't know they are weak. How many saved folk today have been drained of their strength by the world to the extent they do not know they are weak? This happened to Samson. When his hair was cut while he laid his head in the lap of Delilah, he stood up when he awoke not knowing his strength was gone.

“Gray hairs are here and there upon him” Sin will make your hair gray. Sin is never right for your life. Gray hairs usually indicate the aging process, yet, not always. Perhaps you have seen a young person with gray hair. It can be caused by worry and restlessness. Israel was wearisome and restless. Why? God's people saved by His grace and purchased by His blood *can never be happy and prosper in sin*. Israel tried sin and their hair turned gray.

Verse 10 leads us to believe Israel was stone-hearted. So is America. Eyes are dry. Hearts are hard. Ears are dull. “Pride” remains one of the 7 things God hates, mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-17.