

Hosea 12:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

Analysis

Merchant with false balances: 'He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.' The accusation: קְנָעָן (Kena'an, Canaanite/merchant—pun on 'Canaan'), holding מִרְמָה (mozenei mirmah, balances of deceit). He loves עַשְׁק (ashaq, to oppress/defraud). This demonstrates commercial corruption: dishonest weights, exploitative practices. Deuteronomy forbids false balances (Deuteronomy 25:13-16). Amos similarly condemns (Amos 8:5). Only Christ brings honest dealing and justice (Revelation 19:11).

Historical Context

The wordplay Kena'an (Canaanite/merchant) suggests Israel becoming like pagan traders—adopting corrupt practices rather than maintaining covenant ethics. False balances allowed merchants to cheat: light weights when buying, heavy when selling. Archaeological discoveries include ancient weights showing manipulation attempts. Proverbs repeatedly condemns false balances (Proverbs 11:1, 16:11, 20:10,23). This demonstrates that economic justice is covenant requirement—God cares about marketplace ethics. Prophets consistently link religious apostasy with commercial corruption. Church history shows similar pattern: spiritual decline often accompanies economic exploitation.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does becoming 'a merchant with false balances' demonstrate covenant people adopting pagan values?
2. What does love of oppression reveal about hearts corrupted beyond mere external violations?

Interlinear Text

אָבִי	לְעַשְׁק	מְרַמֵּם	הַמְּזִגְגִּים	בַּידֵי	כִּי עַל
He is a merchant	are in his hand	the balances	of deceit	to oppress	he loveth

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 11:1 (Parallel theme): A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

Isaiah 3:5 (Parallel theme): And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

Proverbs 16:11 (Parallel theme): A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work.

Zechariah 14:21 (Parallel theme): Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

John 2:16 (Parallel theme): And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

James 5:4 (Parallel theme): Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Amos 5:11 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

Amos 3:9 (Parallel theme): Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof.

Amos 4:1 (Parallel theme): Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

Amos 2:7 (Parallel theme): That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: