

Hosea 7:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

Analysis

God's metaphor for Israel's foolish foreign policy: 'Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.' The Hebrew 'ke-yonah potah en-leb' (like a simple/foolish dove without heart/sense) depicts a bird easily trapped, flitting between predators. Israel vacillated between appealing to Egypt and Assyria for protection (2 Kings 17:4), playing great powers against each other—geopolitical foolishness that hastened their destruction. 'Without heart' means lacking understanding/wisdom. Rather than trusting YHWH (who delivered them from Egypt originally), they sought security in political alliances with pagan empires. This epitomizes unbelief: trusting human solutions over divine provision. The principle applies broadly: believers who seek worldly security over God's promises act as 'silly doves,' vulnerable to the very powers they court.

Historical Context

Israel's final decades (740s-720s BC) featured frantic diplomacy as Assyrian power grew. King Hoshea (last king of Israel) conspired with Egypt against Assyria (2 Kings 17:4), provoking Assyrian invasion. This 'dove' strategy backfired catastrophically: neither Egypt nor Assyria saved them; Assyria conquered Samaria (722 BC), deported the population, and ended the northern kingdom. God had warned against Egyptian alliances (Deuteronomy 17:16) and promised protection if they trusted Him. Their refusal demonstrated functional atheism—covenant breaking manifested in pragmatic reliance on pagans. Judah later

repeated this mistake, trusting Egypt against Babylon (Jeremiah 37:7), with similar results. Human schemes cannot substitute for divine providence.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'Egypt's' or 'Assyrias' do I turn to for security instead of trusting God's provision and protection?
2. How does my foolish pursuit of worldly solutions make me vulnerable to the very threats I fear?

Interlinear Text

יְהוֹנָדָב	אֶפְרַיִם	דּוֹב	כִּי־זֶה	פֹּתֵה	אֵין	לֵב	מִצְרַיִם
H1961	Ephraim	dove	also is like a silly	H369	without heart	to Egypt	
	H669	H3123	H6601		H3820	H4714	
וְהָיוּ	אֲשֶׁר	קָרָא	לְאֲשֶׁר	לְאֲשֶׁר	לְאֲשֶׁר	לְאֲשֶׁר	לְאֲשֶׁר
they call	to Assyria	they go					
H7121	H804	H1980					

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 12:1 (References Egypt): Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

Hosea 5:13 (Parallel theme): When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

Hosea 11:11 (References Egypt): They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.

Hosea 4:11 (Parallel theme): Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

Hosea 9:3 (References Egypt): They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

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