

Hosea 7:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

Analysis

Entertaining wickedness: 'They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.' Political leaders delight in evil—the king rejoices (שמח, simach) in subjects' רָעָה (ra'ah, wickedness/evil), princes in כְּזָבִים (kezavim, lies/deceptions). This inverted moral order—rulers rewarding evil rather than punishing it—guarantees societal collapse. When leaders love lies, truth becomes dangerous; when wickedness pleases authority, righteousness suffers persecution. Isaiah similarly condemns those who 'call evil good, and good evil' (Isaiah 5:20). Only Christ establishes righteous rule, the King who loves righteousness and hates wickedness (Psalm 45:7, Hebrews 1:8-9).

Historical Context

The chaotic final decades of northern Israel saw leaders maintaining power through deception, flattery, and conspiracy rather than justice. The political instability (six kings in 30 years, four assassinated) created environment rewarding treachery. Leaders who validated false worship and moral corruption remained popular; prophets speaking truth faced opposition (Amos 7:10-13, 1 Kings 22:8). This pattern recurs throughout history: corrupt leaders surrounding themselves with yes-men who tell them what they want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3-4). When leaders delight in wickedness, entire societies corrupt. Reformation addressed this: leaders accountable to God's Word rather than personal preference.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does leadership that delights in wickedness rather than righteousness corrupt entire communities?
2. What responsibility do Christians have to speak truth even when leaders prefer lies and flattery?

Interlinear Text

בְּרָעָתָם	יִשְׂמְחוּ	מֶלֶךְ	וּבְכַתְּשֵׁיהֶם	שָׂרִים:
with their wickedness	glad	They make the king	with their lies	and the princes
H7451	H8055	H4428	H3585	H8269

Additional Cross-References

Romans 1:32 (Parallel theme): 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.

Micah 7:3 (Evil): That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up.