

Hosea 7:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

Analysis

Unrecognized decline: 'Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.' Israel's strength consumed by foreigners (זרים, zarim)—tribute payments, territorial losses, cultural influence—yet אַיִן־יְדֹעַ (einennu yodea, he knows not). Similarly, premature aging (gray hairs, שִׁבְעָה, seivah) signals decline, yet awareness lacking. This describes spiritual delusion: obvious deterioration invisible to those experiencing it. Pride blinds to reality (Revelation 3:17: 'knowest not that thou art wretched'). Only divine revelation exposes true condition. Christ as Great Physician diagnoses accurately, offering healing to those who acknowledge sickness (Matthew 9:12).

Historical Context

Israel's final decades saw progressive weakening they refused to acknowledge. Tribute to Assyria drained resources (2 Kings 15:19-20, 17:3-4). Territory lost to Assyrian campaigns (2 Kings 15:29). Political autonomy diminished. Yet rather than recognizing decline and repenting, they maintained delusions of strength and security. Amos condemned those 'at ease in Zion' (Amos 6:1). The 'gray hairs' imagery suggests age without wisdom—elderly physically but immature spiritually. Archaeological evidence shows declining economic conditions they apparently ignored. This demonstrates that spiritual blindness prevents recognizing even obvious decline. Church history shows denominations similarly declining while denying reality.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can spiritual blindness prevent recognizing obvious moral and spiritual decline in ourselves or our communities?
2. What indicators reveal spiritual 'gray hairs'—aging/declining faith masked by outward religious activity?

Interlinear Text

אָכַל	וְ	זְרִים	כִּי	וְאֵה	לֹא	וְהִזְעֵל	גַם
have devoured		Strangers	his strength		H1931	H3808	and he knoweth
H398		H2114	H3581			H3045	H1571

שִׁבְתָּה	וְאֵה	בְּזִקְנָה	לֹא	וְהִזְעֵל	וְזַעַם
it not yea gray hairs	are here and there		H0	H1931	H3808
H7872	H2236				and he knoweth
					H3045

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 8:7 (Parallel theme): For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.