

# Hosea 4 Commentary

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Hosea's Unconditional Love for Gomer

[Click chart to enlarge](#)

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission

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## OUTLINE OF HOSEA

### I. The Prodigal Wife, Hosea 1:1-3:5

- A. Her Unfaithfulness, Hosea 1:1-11
- B. Her Punishment, Hosea 2:1-13
- C. Her Restoration and Israel's, Hosea 2:14-23
- D. Her Redemption, Hosea 3:1-5

### II. The Prodigal People, Hosea 4:1-14:9

- A. The Message of Judgment, Hosea 4:1-10:15
  1. The indictment, Hosea 4:1-19
  2. The verdict, Hosea 5:1-15
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- B. The Message of Restoration, Hosea 11:1-14:9
  1. God's love for the prodigal people, Hosea 11:1-11
  2. God's chastisement of the prodigal people, Hosea 11:12-13:16
  3. God's restoration of the prodigal people, Hosea 14:1-9

[Ryrie Study Bible](#)

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## John Hannah's Outline - The prophet's message (Hosea 4:1-14:8)

- A. Jehovah's rejection of Israel (Hosea 4:1-7:16)
  - 1. The faithlessness of Israel (Hosea 4:1-19)
    - a. The fact of apostasy (Hosea 4:1-3)
    - b. The reason for apostasy (Hosea 4:4-10)
    - c. The course of apostasy (Hosea 4:11-19)
      - 1. The idolatry of Israel (Hosea 4:11-13)
      - 2. The instruction of Judah (Hosea 4:14-19) Hannah's Bible Outlines.

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[Pastor David Thompson](#) divides this Hosea 4 into 4 general themes...

- **THEME #1** – God presents His case against His own family . Hosea 4:1-3
- **THEME #2** – God presents His case against religious leadership . Hosea 4:4-10
- **THEME #3** – God presents reasons why His people are ruined . Hosea 4:11-14
- **THEME #4** – God warns to prevent some of His people from falling into the same sin. Hosea 4:15-19

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**Robert Chisholm** points out that there are 5 "Judgment-Salvation" cycles in the book of Hosea:

CYCLES OF JUDGMENT AND SALVATION IN HOSEA	
JUDGMENT	SALVATION
Hosea 1:2-9	Hosea 1:10-2:1
Hosea 2:2-13	Hosea 2:14-3:5
Hosea 4:1-5:14	Hosea 5:15-6:3
Hosea 6:4-11:7	Hosea 11:8-11
Hosea 11:12-13:16	Hosea 14:1-9

**Hosea 4:1 Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land.**

KJV 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

NET Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites! For the LORD has a covenant lawsuit against the people of Israel. For there is neither faithfulness nor loyalty in the land, nor do they acknowledge God.

LXE Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

NLT Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel! The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: "There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land.

ESV Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land;

CSB Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, people of Israel, for the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God in the land!

NIV Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land.

NAB Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel, for the LORD has a grievance against the inhabitants of the land: There is no fidelity, no mercy, no knowledge of God in the land.

NKJ Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the

inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land.

NJB Hosea 4:1 Israelites, hear what Yahweh says, for Yahweh indicts the citizens of the country: there is no loyalty, no faithful love, no knowledge of God in the country,

GWN Hosea 4:1 Listen to the word of the LORD, you Israelites. The LORD has brought these charges against those who live in the land: "There is no faith, no love, and no knowledge of God in the land.

NRS Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land.

YLT Hosea 4:1 'Hear a word of Jehovah, sons of Israel, For a strife is to Jehovah with inhabitants of the land, For there is no truth, nor kindness, Nor knowledge of God, in the land,

- **Listen to the word of the LORD:** 1Ki 22:19 Isa 1:10 28:14 34:1 66:5 Jer 2:4 7:2 9:20 19:3 34:4 Am 7:16 Rev 2:11,29
- **For the LORD has a case:** Ho 12:2 Isa 1:18 3:13,14 5:3 34:8 Jer 25:31 Mic 6:2
- **Because there is no faithfulness:** Isa 59:13-15 Jer 6:13 7:3-6 Mic 7:2-5
- **Or knowledge of God in the land:** Jer 4:22,28 5:4 Joh 8:55 Ro 1:28 1Co 15:34
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### A Simple Outline

- The Moral State of Israel (Hosea 1-3)
- The Sins of God's People (Hosea 4:1-13:13)
- The Conversion and Blessing of Israel (Hosea 13:14-14:9)

## GOD'S LAWSUIT WITH ISRAEL

**Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel** - Given the serious nature of the indictment (see Hos 4:2), it is imperative that the people listen to what God is saying! He is not playing around, but is deadly serious! And so as you might have already surmised "**Listen**" is not a suggestion but a command and in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) it is in the [aorist imperative](#) which is like a military order to "Pay attention, now not later! This is urgent!" Any time the Lord speaks, we should be willing to pay attention, but especially when He gives a strong command to listen!

**THOUGHT** - Does this describe your approach to the Word of God? Do you really listen? Remember that when the Bible speaks, God speaks! There are no exceptions. It follows that we should never come to the Bible with a [lackadaisical](#), [apathetic](#), [ho-hum](#) attitude. Ever! This is the Creator and Sustainer of our souls we are interacting with. I fear that too often I lose that sense of gratitude and wonder that God has provided an awesome entree to His throne through His Word. Forgive me Lord God for my too frequent "ho-hum" approach! Amen.

**Adam Clarke** comments that this is "What we should call a lawsuit, in which God is plaintiff, and the Israelites defendants. It is Jehovah versus Israel and Judah."

**Has a case (rib)** means to "strive (contend typically when outraged enough to initiate a lawsuit – i.e. a legal case with specific charges ("bringing suit" against a defendant)) – properly, strife, dispute. NET Note adds "The noun רִיב (riv, "dispute, lawsuit") is used in two contexts: (1) nonlegal contexts: (a) "dispute" between individuals (e.g., Gen 13:7; Isa 58:1; Jer 15:10) or (b) "brawl; quarrel" between people (e.g., Exod 17:7; Deut 25:1); and (2) legal contexts: (a) "lawsuit; legal process" (e.g., Exod 23:3–6; Deut 19:17; 21:5; Ezek 44:24; Ps 35:23), (b) "lawsuit; legal case" (e.g., Deut 1:12; 17:8; Prov 18:17; 25:9), and (c) God's "lawsuit" on behalf of a person or against his own people (Hos 4:1; 12:3; Mic 6:2; HALOT 1225–26 s.v. רִיב). The term in Hosea refers to a covenant lawsuit in which Yahweh the suzerain lodges a legal case against his disobedient vassal, accusing Israel and Judah of breach of covenant which will elicit the covenant curses."

**Because** - Term of explanation - Gives the "grounds" for God's case with Israel. It is notable that in the Greek text the modifier "no" in all three cases speaks of absolute (not relative) negation. They are in essence completely devoid of these three characteristics (faithfulness, kindness, knowledge).

**Guzik** astutely comments that "Each of these three points is connected. When people forsake the knowledge of God, soon truth and mercy are both gone. Truth must be rooted in something more than personal opinion, and mercy means going beyond self-interest. True wisdom and understanding always begin with the knowledge of God. Proverbs 9:10 says, The fear of the Lord is the

beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Enduring Word Bible Commentary – Hosea)

**Alexander Pope** wrote: "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; the proper study of mankind is man."

**Spurgeon** responded to Pope's statement: "It has been said by someone that 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father." (ED: And this is where Israel was woefully deficient - a true knowledge of God - see [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) use below of [epignosis](#) for **knowledge**).

**Faithfulness** (truth) (0571) ('**emeth** from the verb **aman** = to confirm, support, believe, be faithful) is a feminine noun meaning truth, faithfulness, that which gives complete reliability. Emeth means something confirmed as true ("truth"), the objective reality of truth. The NAS translates it "faithfulness" but it is more properly the idea of truth (in context truth in this relationship) as it is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with **aletheia** (from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed) which has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. Now think of this in terms of relationships, in this case God (the "**Husband**" of Israel - Jer 31:32+, Isa 54:5) and His "**wife**" Israel. In this context the word would speak of authenticity, transparency, integrity. This is the only use of '**emeth** in Hosea.

**Kindness** (02617) (**hesed/chesed/heced**) is most often rendered "lovingkindness" and speaks especially of covenant-*loyalty*, preeminently, God's perfect loyalty to His own covenant. But as a faithful Husband, Jehovah also requires full loyalty from those who would seek to enter covenant with him and experience His covenant blessings. Disloyalty to His covenant brings chastisement and even condemnation if the sinning party refusing to return in repentance! The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) renders hesed with **eleos** which means mercy, compassion, pity, an attitude and emotion roused by the affliction of another, kindness or concern expressed for someone in need.

**Hesed** is used 6x in **Hosea** - Hos. 2:19; Hos. 4:1; Hos. 6:4; Hos. 6:6; Hos. 10:12; Hos. 12:6;

**Knowledge** (01847) (**daat** derived from **yada** = to know, speaking in many contexts of an intimate knowledge) expresses knowledge gained in various ways by the senses (and is the opposite of folly). It describes "experiential active knowing." In other words this **knowledge** is not just a bookish collection of information but is experiential knowledge of the Living God. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates daat here the word [epignosis](#), which speaks of true experiential knowledge. Here's the point -- Israel may have KNOWN ABOUT God (however to some degree that is even questionable), but they did not truly KNOW HIM! Jesus gives a solemn warning to all who are laying claim "I know God!," or "I know Jesus!" but their unchanged sinful lifestyle indicates clearly that they never at any point in time really knew Him, knew Him intimately which is the oneness experienced in the New Covenant. Dear reader, don't pass over this somber truth too quickly! We all do well (yours truly included) to apply what I would call the "Second Corinthians 13" test to our lives - read 2 Cor 13:5+. If we fail the test, we will surely hear these horrible words from the lips of Jesus...

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does (present tense = as one's lifestyle. NOTE: Not perfection, but "direction") the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never (AT ANY TIME) knew (INTIMATELY - LIKE THE KNOWLEDGE HOSEA SAYS ISRAEL LACKS HERE IN Hosea 4:1) you; DEPART (command) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense = as the unbroken pattern of your life) LAWLESSNESS.' (Mt 7:21-23+).

**POSB** - Introduction: being accused or tried for a serious crime is bound to be a terrifying experience. Imagine standing in court with the indictment or charge being read against us. And the more serious the crime, the more frightening the experience would be. The present Scripture is a courtroom scene. God is seen issuing a strong indictment and warning against Israel and Judah. They were guilty of the most serious crimes. This is, The Lord's Indictment and Warnings: A Picture of God's Case Against the Human Race, 4:1-5:15. (The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Daniel, Hosea)

**Criswell** - Hos 4:1-3 These verses could be understood as a summary of Hosea's public preaching. God brings a "charge" (riv, Heb.) against His people. In a sense God is taking His people to court. His charge is threefold and is based upon a broken covenant relationship. "There is no truth [or faithfulness] or mercy [hesed, Heb.] or knowledge [intimate knowing] of God in the land." God displays all three of these covenant, relational virtues toward His people, but His people have ceased to display any of them toward Him. As a result sin permeates the entire land. Gomer is thus a type of Israel, and Hosea is a type of God. The book ends with the promise of God doing to Israel what Hosea did for Gomer. God's love truly is amazing! As the book progresses, knowledge is stressed in 4:1-6:3, mercy in 6:1-11:11, and truth in 11:12ff. (Believer's Study Bible)

**David Thompson** - In this section we seem to leave the specific account of Hosea and his marriage and we begin a new section

that extends to the end of the book and contains oracles of doom and hope. Even though we are not specifically dealing with Hosea's marriage, it is still in the background because there are allusions to the nation as mother and children and there are a number of references to spiritual harlotry and adultery. Chapter four really seems to focus on the sins of the northern kingdom. God presents His case against His own family. Hos 4:1-3 Abraham Herschel, who has written a book called "The Prophets," said that "The Lord is in love with Israel, but He also has a passionate love of right and a burning hatred of wrong" (p. 50). p. 34 God cannot and will not abandon Israel in spite of her unfaithfulness, but He can and He will make things miserable for her. There are chastening judgments that God will send to His own family, in order to get them back to Him. Verse 1 develops the idea that this is the Word of the LORD and it is specifically aimed at Israel, the family of God. God has a judicial case against His own family. Dr. Bruce Waltke said these messages in this chapter actually "form a lawsuit" (Old Testament Theology, p. 836). God has a legal right to judge His own family and we learn reasons why: Reason #1 - Because there is no faithfulness in the land. 4:1c Think about this charge. Israel was in her promised land and no one was faithful or trustworthy in regard to Him and His Word and will. Reason #2 - Because there is no kindness in the land. 4:1d This particular word (hesed) has to do with a kindness and loyalty. Reason #3 - Because there is no knowledge of God. 4:1e There was no evidence that any in this land knew God. The people of God had completely lost their way. They were not faithful to God; not loyal to God and didn't even have true knowledge of God. These were God's own people.

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**Hosea 4:1,3 F B Meyer Our Daily Homily** - Hosea 4:1,3 The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.

Throughout the Old Testament the sin of the people and the prosperity or otherwise of their country are closely conjoined. If the people please God, harvests are plentiful, and the seasons of the year pursue their round in unbroken bounty. If the people backslide, the land is smitten. There is probably a much deeper connection than we suppose between the moral condition of our nation and its prosperity. It is at least remarkable that ever since the Indian Government has legalized impurity in India, and has made money out of the vices of Chinamen, that empire has been smitten with drought and pestilence. So with Africa; the injustice with which the natives have been treated has been terribly avenged in the rinderpest which has swept over the land. And may there not be a close connection between the vice, Sabbath-breaking, and drunkenness of Great Britain, and the agricultural distress which has so long driven our people from the open country to life in the cities? It is an awful thing when God has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. Sin is then terribly avenged.

One noticeable feature with all the prophets is their intense devotion to God on the one hand, and their ardent patriotism on the other. They never scrupled to denounce the sins which were bringing their land to desolation, and to indicate the inevitable result. In the present instance, Hosea turned on the priests and showed how accountable they were for the desolation of the country.

On a wider scale still, we remember that creation groaneth and travaileth in pain because of sin; and its emancipation awaits the advent of the Lord, and the manifestation of his saints (Romans 8:21).

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**Hosea and His Message** Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land." [Hosea 4:1]

The prophets were called by God to bring his covenant lawsuit against the nation of Israel. At the beginning of his series of oracles (Hosea 4-14), Hosea summoned the nation to hear God's charge against them. In Hosea 4:2, God charged them with breaking the Ten Commandments, mentioning cursing, murder, adultery, stealing, and lying. Not only were the people doing these evil deeds, but they were doing them repeatedly, so that "bloodshed followed bloodshed."

God judged the land by letting the people experience the consequences of their behavior. The land did not yield its produce, the people were wasting away, and even the animals were dying off (Hosea 4:3). The people were litigious, constantly bringing lawsuits against one another (4:4).

Why had this come to pass? Israel was not faithful to God, their true Husband. They did not love him, nor acknowledge him as their sovereign (4:1). Thus, God would reject them and bring them under judgment.

Ultimately, judgment came upon them because they had "rejected knowledge" (4:6). It is a serious thing when a nation rejects the knowledge of God. A parallel in Western culture is that, while theology once was regarded as the queen of the sciences and held a position of supremacy in the curricula of schools and universities, now theology is hardly even taught. "Comparative religions," which usurped its place, is regarded as simply a subdivision of anthropology.

But as bad as it is for a nation to reject theology, it is worse when the church does so (4:6-9). How often we hear evangelical Christians say that they don't want to wrestle with doctrinal issues. They only want a "sweeter, closer walk with Jesus." This anti-intellectualism is reflected in some preaching and teaching, and in some songs we sing in worship.

It is a great evil when "head knowledge" is pitted against "heart knowledge." If we don't know what God is like, we cannot have a real relationship with him. If we don't know what he wants, we cannot be faithful to him.

Coram Deo - Are your heart and mind prepared before you hear God's Word? Covenant fidelity is nurtured through a meditative dependence on God's self-disclosure. Christians should grasp onto his truth with a white-knuckled grip. It is of no profit to Christians if they hold a high view of Scripture and fail to do what God has said. (Before the Face of God)

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**Hosea 4:1-3 TODAY IN THE WORD** "Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." (James 4:4) The story of Hosea and Gomer perplexes many readers of Scripture. God instructs the prophet Hosea to marry a woman he knows will be unfaithful—she not only commits adultery, she also becomes a prostitute that Hosea must buy back from those making a profit from her (see Hos. 1–3). God does explain the reason behind His mysterious command to Hosea: "Because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord" (Hos. 1:2). Hosea 4 details the charge of adultery that the Lord brings against His people. Their sin includes unfaithfulness, a lack of love, cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery (Hosea 4:1–2). God's concern for His people on these issues hasn't changed through the centuries; we will see that James rebukes his readers for many of these same sins, and we can be sure God still cares about these issues in our lives today. Throughout his letter James has been drawing on themes that recurred in the Old Testament prophets, specifically justice and care for the poor (typified by the fatherless and the widow). In our passage today, James alludes to another theme frequently found in the Old Testament. The Prophets frequently refer to God's relationship with Israel in terms of marriage, so it's not surprising that Israel's sin is referred to in terms of adultery. When Israel acted in ways that were inconsistent with their relationship with God, they acted adulterously. James is making the same point. Conflict in the church arises from unwise living and following our own desires. This is the same thing as living like the world—which is to say, it's spiritual adultery and cheating on God (v. 4). Now we can understand why James uses such a strong tone here! James highlights another contrast here between pride and humility (v. 6). Pride, pursuing our own way, puts us in opposition to God. Humility, however, positions us to receive blessings of grace from God (cf. 3:13). And this is the relationship God desires to have with us. James says that the Holy Spirit "envies intensely"—God loves His people, and wants us to walk in the path of life (v5). Just as God used Hosea and Gomer to reflect Israel's adultery with God, He uses the marriages of Christians to reflect the relationship between Christ and His people (Moody Bible Institute)

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#### **Hosea 4 TODAY IN THE WORD**

Either a misunderstanding of orders or the personal rivalry of two British officers was responsible for one of the most celebrated, but senseless, moments in military history. During the Battle of Balaklava in the Crimean War, a brigade of British cavalry charged into a heavily fortified Russian position. The attack had no effect whatsoever on the battle's outcome and was very foolish. More than 250 of the 670 men in the brigade were killed or wounded. But British poet Lord Tennyson immortalized the attack in his poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade." It's fair to say that in the spiritual realm, Israel was mimicking that British brigade's foolish charge. Everyone, from the man on the street to the priests, was charging headlong into the judgment of God—with equally disastrous results.

Hosea 4 is a powerful and specific indictment against the sins of God's people. Their guilt was beyond question. In Hosea 4:2 alone, the Lord cited five of the Ten Commandments the people were breaking! Since the Ten Commandments were the heart of Israel's covenant with God, the people's actions were a very serious breach of their promise to obey God's law and serve Him alone. God's love—His loyal, covenant-keeping love—was being repaid with faithlessness on His people's part (Hosea 4:1). Yes, the people were charging into the judgment of God, rather than toward victory. As God specified His charge, it soon became apparent where a great part of the problem lay. The prophets associated with Israel's royal court, and particularly the priests, were wicked, faithless men leading the nation even further into the teeth of God's wrath. God's people were perishing for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). And the priests, who were charged with teaching the people about God, bore much of the blame. They not only rejected the knowledge of God and ignored His law, but they also benefited from the people's sins. This is another sobering passage, partly because we also are capable of the same sins that drove Israel into exile. However, today's verse contains a wonderful reminder of the blessing we can bring by teaching God's way of righteousness. You can do that even today, by following this simple suggestion. Turn to Exodus 20:1-17 and read the Ten Commandments.

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#### **Hosea 4:1-9 Today in the Word**

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. (1 Peter 2:9)

In September 2007, Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers filed a lawsuit—he sued God. In an attempt to demonstrate how people take advantage of the freedom to bring any suit against anyone, the agnostic senator filed a string of ridiculous charges against God Himself. God is without fault, and the countersuit against humanity is overwhelming. Hosea 4 is the beginning of God's case against Israel for violating His laws. The terms of God's complaint are clear: name a commandment, Israel had broken it. God had made Israel aware of the penalties for violating the Ten Commandments, the laws of His covenant with them (cf. Ex. 34:27–28). Israel would suffer plagues, military defeat, agricultural disaster, political upheaval, and a long list of other consequences (Lev. 26:14 ff.). But Israel loved sin more than they loved God (Hosea 4:7, 8). One particularly interesting aspect of this passage is the language concerning priests. Israel's people and priests were equally guilty of apostasy (Hosea 4:4, 9), so who was left to represent the people to God or God's Word to the people? The sins of the priests had multiplied so greatly that no one could hold anyone else

accountable. The spiritual leaders in a nation ordained to be spiritual witnesses to the world had completely given themselves over to sin. The priests and the people were utterly rejected (Hosea 4:6). Verse 6 also contains a dagger of prophetic wisdom: "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge." Ignorance is not bliss—it is destruction. Israel was unraveling because they willfully rejected the knowledge of God in favor of the foolishness of the world. Hosea's point for us is crucial: the way we think is vital to the way we live. Israel's hearts wandered to other gods after their minds ceased to be filled by the wisdom of the Word of God. Likewise, if we fail to center our minds on the Lord, how can we ever hope to love and follow Him as we should? We need to ask ourselves whether we are representing God as a royal priesthood to a society lost in wickedness, or if we are being pulled along by the tides of popular thought. You are currently engaged in one definite positive step: studying the Word of God! As you read, watch, and listen to other media, use God's truth to guard your mind. And in your conversations, don't be afraid to challenge worldly ideas with the Word you know to be true. Encourage others to think biblically!

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**Chuck Smith -**

## **I. WHO WAS THE CONTROVERSY WITH? THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.**

A. It was with His own people.

1. Being the people of God has great advantages. You have special privileges.

a. No weapon formed against you shall prosper, this is the heritage of the people of God.

b. Rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees their fruit.

c. Peace in the land, you will lie down, and none will make you afraid.

d. You can leave your doors unlocked.

e. God said that He would chase their enemies.

f. God said that He would walk among them.

b. There are also special responsibilities.

2. You are held accountable to a higher standard.

a. What the world might do and get by with, the Lord will not let you get by with.

b. If you are driving by a bunch of boys throwing rocks through the windows of a vacant building you might think naughty boys. But if you notice that your boy is among the boys throwing the rocks that is a different story.

## **II. THE COMPLAINT OF GOD.**

A. There is no truth in the land.

1. The people were defrauding and deceiving one another.

2. The newscasters were distorting the news.

3. The politicians were lying to the people.

4. Even the prophets and priests were giving false comfort to the people by lying to them concerning the nature of God.

B. There was no mercy.

1. They had received great mercy from God, but they were not willing to show mercy.

a. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

b. Ps.18:25 With the merciful you will show yourself merciful.

c. The standard of measurement that you use to dish things out to others is the standard that God will use as He dishes out to you.

2. Hosea had named his second child Loruhamah, (No mercy) as a warning to the people. God was going to show no more mercy to them.

C. No knowledge of God in the land.

1. Here was a people, a nation that owed its existence to God.

2. In the beginning they framed their laws by God's decrees.
  3. They sought the Lord.
  4. God made them strong, prosperous, and mighty among the nations.
  5. Now there was no knowledge of God in the land.
  6. The children were growing up in a pagan environment.
- D. Could not God make the same case against our land today?
1. The parallels between Israel and America are so great.
  2. Started out honoring and trusting in God.
  3. Became strong and great among the nations of the world.
  4. In their prosperity turned from God, the one who had made them strong and prosperous.
  5. The next step is given over to their enemies, because there was no truth, mercy or knowledge of God in the land.
- E. These are the foundations upon which a strong and moral nation are built.

### III. THE RESULT OF REMOVING THESE FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS.

- A. There was a moral breakdown.
1. The people were swearing, lying and killing.
  2. People would swear to a lie.
    - a. Their word meant nothing.
    - b. They would make contracts that they had no intention of keeping.
    - c. They thought nothing of breaking their contracts.
  3. Killings became very common.
    - a. You would not dare to go out on the streets after dark.
    - b. They had a very low value on life.
      1. They thought little of taking another mans life.
      2. They thought nothing of throwing their babies into the bonfires to sacrifice them to the god of pleasure.
      3. One thing that the Christian faith teaches us is the great value of life.
      4. Only a pagan nation could advocate and support abortions.
      5. What does that tell you about our nation?
  4. They were stealing from each other.
    - a. Nothing was safe, and nothing was sacred.
    - b. They had no restraints of conscience.
    - c. No remorse for their evil, the only remorse was that they were caught.
    - d. They had become an amoral society.
  5. Adultery had become a common practice.
    - a. A man was ruled by his passions.
    - b. They had become like animals in their selection of their sexual partners.
    - c. The home is broken down, family values are trashed, children had become an inconvenience, and roamed the streets in gangs.
  6. They break out, that is they burst through every restraint.
    - a. The laws had become so permissive, and lenient, that there were no restraints.



b. Nothing holding them back from giving themselves over completely to their lusts.

#### IV. THE ULTIMATE, INESCAPABLE RESULT, THE LAND WILL MOURN, AND THE PEOPLE SHALL LANGUISH.

A. There will be a total breakdown of law and order.

1. The police forces will be unable to protect the citizens from assault.

2. A society out of control, entering into a deadly tailspin without ability to pull out of it.

B. **Is it too late for America?**

1. Only God knows.

2. There is a refuge for the people of God.

a. The name of Jehovah is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe.

b. Surround your family, home, church with prayer.

C. Isaiah 55:6,7 "Seek the Lord while He is near, call upon Him while He may be found. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return unto our Lord for He will have mercy upon Him and unto our God for He will abundantly pardon."

**Hosea 4:2 There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.**

KJV Hosea 4:2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

bloodshed.

LXE Hosea 4:2 Cursing, and lying, and murder, and theft, and adultery abound in the land, and they mingle blood with blood.

NLT Hosea 4:2 You make vows and break them; you kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere-- one murder after another.

ESV Hosea 4:2 there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

CSB Hosea 4:2 Cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another.

NIV Hosea 4:2 There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

NAB Hosea 4:2 False swearing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery! in their lawlessness, bloodshed follows bloodshed.

NKJ Hosea 4:2 By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed.

NJB Hosea 4:2 only perjury and lying, murder, theft, adultery and violence, bloodshed after bloodshed.

GWN Hosea 4:2 There is cursing, lying, murdering, stealing, and adultery. People break my laws, and there is one murder after another.

NRS Hosea 4:2 Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed.

YLT Hosea 4:2 Swearing, and lying, and murdering, And stealing, and committing adultery -- have increased, And blood against blood hath touched.

- **There is swearing, deception, murder:** Isa 24:5 48:1 59:2-8,12-15 Jer 5:1,2,7-9,26,27 6:7 7:6-10 Jer 9:2-8 23:10-14 Eze 22:2-13,25-30 Mic 2:1-3 3:2,9 6:10 7:2 Zep 3:1 Zec 5:3 7:9
- **bloodshed follows bloodshed:** Ho 5:2 6:9 La 4:13 Mt 23:35 Ac 7:52 1Th 2:15 Rev 17:6

- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL'S "DIRTY LAUNDRY LIST"

The Lord makes a strong case against Israel. In His indictment God presents 9 charges against His people and all of the charges are serious!

**There is swearing** - This probably has reference to the fact that God's own people were swearing oaths to other things other than God. Thus the NLT paraphrases it "You make vows and break them."

**They employ violence** - "they break all bounds" (ESV, NIV)

**So that bloodshed follows bloodshed** - "one act of bloodshed follows another." (CSB) **Constable** comments that "'violent crimes were so common that they seemed to follow one another without interruption."

**Employ** (break out)(06555)(parats) means to break through; burst out (qal); to spread abroad (niphil); to be broken down (pual); break loose (hitpaal). It is also used in Hos 4:10 ("but not **increase**"). The idea of **parats** is break down the hedge, break down the wall, break through a barrier or retainer, break into the house of God, tear down the wall of Jerusalem. **Parats** described the breaking open of a barrel of water, the breaching of a wall during a siege or the bursting of a dam. In a military context parats referred to a sudden, violent, devastating attack.

The **NKJV** has "**They break all restraint**," about which **Guzik** comments "When man will not or can not restrain himself, bloodshed and destruction follow. Our modern age is completely set against the idea of restraint. You see it in modern advertising slogans: "To know no boundaries" "No rules, just right" "Just do it" "Break all the rules" "Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road" "Living without boundaries" The message is the same: You make your own rules. You answer to no one. You are the one that matters. Your universe revolves around you. You should only restrain yourself if you want to. The ultimate result is bloodshed after bloodshed. In the ancient Hebrew, this is literally "bloody deed touches bloody deed." "Apparently violent crimes had become so common that one seemed immediately to follow another, as if touching it." (Wood) (Enduring Word Bible Commentary – Hosea)

**NET Note on they employ (parats)** - "they break out and bloodshed touches bloodshed." The Hebrew term פָּרַץ (parats, "to break out") refers to violent and wicked actions (BDB 829 s.v. 7 פָּרַץ; HALOT 972 s.v. 6 פָּרַץ.צ). It is used elsewhere in a concrete sense to describe breaking through physical barriers. Here it is used figuratively to describe breaking moral barriers and restraints (cf. TEV "Crimes increase, and there is one murder after another").

**Life Application Study Bible** - This verse may allude to the assassinations of kings during Hosea's lifetime. Shallum killed Zechariah (the king, not the prophet) and took the throne. Then Menahem killed Shallum and destroyed an entire city because it refused to accept him as king (2 Kings 15:8-16). God pointed out that even murder was being taken casually in Israel.

**Hosea 4:3 Therefore the land mourns, And everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, And also the fish of the sea disappear.**

KJV Hosea 4:3 Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

NET Hosea 4:3 Therefore the land will mourn, and all its inhabitants will perish. The wild animals, the birds of the sky, and even the fish in the sea will perish.

LXE Hosea 4:3 Therefore shall the land mourn, and shall be diminished with all that dwell in it, with the wild beasts of the field, and the reptiles of the earth, and with the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea shall fail:

NLT Hosea 4:3 That is why your land is in mourning, and everyone is wasting away. Even the wild animals, the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea are disappearing.

ESV Hosea 4:3 Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

CSB Hosea 4:3 For this reason the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes, along with the wild animals and the birds of the sky; even the fish of the sea disappear.

NIV Hosea 4:3 Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and

the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.

NAB Hosea 4:3 Therefore the land mourns, and everything that dwells in it languishes: The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and even the fish of the sea perish.

NKJ Hosea 4:3 Therefore the land will mourn; And everyone who dwells there will waste away With the beasts of the field And the birds of the air; Even the fish of the sea will be taken away.

NJB Hosea 4:3 This is why the country is in mourning and all its citizens pining away, the wild animals also and birds of the sky, even the fish in the sea will disappear.

GWN Hosea 4:3 That is why the land is drying up, and everyone who lives in it is passing away. Wild animals, birds, and fish are dying.

NRS Hosea 4:3 Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.

YLT Hosea 4:3 Therefore mourn doth the land, And weak is every dweller in it, With the beast of the field, And with the fowl of the heavens, And the fishes of the sea -- they are removed.

- **the land mourns:** Isa 24:4-12 Jer 4:27 Joe 1:10-13 Am 1:2 5:16 8:8 Na 1:4
- **Along with the beasts of the field** Jer 4:25 12:4 Eze 38:20 Zep 1:3
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE LAND

Jehovah denies fertility to the earth either through natural causes or by bringing military ruin (Assyria would take the Northern 10 tribes into exile in 722 BC) to an area as a result of improper relationship of an area with Him. Israel is judged for breaking the ("marriage") covenant, while surrounding nations are found wanting for their disregard for Jehovah and mistreatment of His people (cf Jer 25:9 with Jer 25:12).

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. God says in view of the preceding sins, this the reason I am not blessing you in your land.

**David Thompson** - In verse 3 God says this is the reason I am not blessing you in your land. This is the reason why your life and land is not flourishing. This is why your existence is one big drought. No one in My family is interested in God and His Word. No one was interested in doing God's will. This was God's own family and they were pathetic. Now carefully observe the chronology of these verses. **No knowledge of God** (Hos 4:1 "**no...knowledge of God in the land**") leads people to do horrible things. The cause is "**no knowledge of God**" and the effects are the things in the list. We live in a country where politicians are groping for answers as to how to lower crime and promote decency. **The answer is simple—give people the true knowledge of God and it will have a tremendous effect on the nation.** ([Sermon](#))

**The land mourns** - This is the rotten fruit that a nation reaps when they reject the knowledge of the living God (America, listen up!)

**And everyone who lives in it languishes** - The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates languishes ('amal) with [pentheo](#) which is used in the NT to denote loud mourning such as the lament for the dead or for a severe, painful loss. It is grief and sorrow caused by profound loss, especially death. **Mourning** can reflect an outward expression of sorrow. It is to experience sadness or grief as the result of depressing circumstances or the condition of persons and so to be sad, to grieve, to bewail or to lament. **Pentheō** refers to "*manifested grief*" *severe enough to take possession* of a person and hence cannot be hid. This is the same meaning of *pentheō* throughout *antiquity* and gives a horrible picture of the state of the people of the Northern Kingdom. To reiterate, this is the picture of the dead, rotten fruit that is reaped by a nation that rejects the living God.

**Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, And also the fish of the sea disappear**- It is sad when sins of man affect the state of the animals!

**Mourns** (verb) ([056](#))([abal](#)) primarily means "to mourn" or "to lament." It employs this sense in 39 passages in the OT, the vast majority of which are of the prophetic-poetic genre. **Mourns** ('abal) can describe mourning rites for the dead, but is used figuratively here of **the land** as in Isa 24:4 "The earth **mourns** ('abal) and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away."

**Languishes** ([0535](#))('amal) describes a state of exhaustion or extremity. It means properly to grow feeble, worn down; to succumb, languishing from weariness; overcome with something burdensome; feeble, withering.

'**Amal** is used to express the state into which the objects of God's punishment and discipline come: the proud mother who boasts over her barren rival (1 Sa 2:5); Moab (Isa 16:8); Egypt (Isa 19:8); the whole world (Isa 24:4). Words associated with it are "wither," "mourn," and "lament" (Isa 24:4; Isa 33:9; Jer 14:2). Most particularly, '**amal** describes the state of Israel and its people after the punishment of God has fallen (Isa 33:9; Jer 14:2), so also, Jerusalem after the fall (Lam 2:8). Clearly, God's objective in such discipline was to bring his people to their knees as a warning and to humble them (Hos 4:3; Joel 1:10, 12). 'Amal is also used in Hosea 10:5 ("its people will **mourn** for it").

**Gilbrant** on '**amal** - It is usually translated "to languish." The state of languishing is the result of Yahweh's activity. In most cases this activity is direct. The unrighteous bearers of many children will themselves languish as the barren they snub (Song of Hannah--1 Sam. 2:5; Jer. 15:9). Other fertile sources will be denied productivity by Yahweh's hand in righteous indignation, as the vines of Heshbon (Isa. 16:8), the fish of the Nile (Isa. 19:8), the oil of Israel (Joel 1:10), the agricultural produce of Bashan, Carmel and Lebanon (Nah. 1:4), the fig trees of Israel (Joel 1:12) and the vines of Israel (Isa. 24:7) all will languish. Yahweh will deny fertility to the earth either through natural causes or by bringing military ruin to an area as a result of improper relationship of an area with him. Israel is judged for breaking the covenant, while surrounding nations are found wanting for their disregard for Yahweh and his people. Metaphorically, the walls and ramparts of the city of Jerusalem likewise languish, or be made unproductive in Lam. 2:8. The people of the land languish from this judgment (Isa. 33:9; Jer. 14:2; Hos. 4:3). Indeed, the entire earth feels the force of Yahweh's wrath (Isa. 24:4). Yahweh's punishment to peoples is mediated by other agents on occasion. The Assyrians are used to devastate the land in some cases (Joel 1:10, 12; Lam 2:8). The injustices flowing from disregard for the covenant causes distress as well (Isa. 24:4, 7; Hos. 4:3). This state provides the basis for Yahweh to directly intervene in Isa. 33:9ff. In essence, the verb conveys the concept of infertility upon the population as the result of God's judgment. BDB 51, KB 1:63, Strong <H535>, TWOT 1:50. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates '**amal** here with the verb *smikruno* (no NT uses) which means to reduce, to diminish in number, to lessen, to be treated as insignificant.

'**Amal** - 14v - decays(1), fade away(1), fades(1), fails(2), languish(1), languished(1), languishes(2), languishing(1), pine away(1), pines away(2), wither(2), withered(1).

1 Sam. 2:5; Isa. 16:8; Isa. 19:8; Isa. 24:4; Isa. 24:7; Isa. 33:9; Jer. 14:2; Jer. 15:9; Lam. 2:8; Ezek. 16:30; Hos. 4:3; Joel 1:10; Joel 1:12; Nah. 1:4

**Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, And also the fish of the sea disappear-** God's punishment would not just impact Israel but all the natural surroundings in Israel! Sin is a destructive "beast!" Are you making provision for some sin? Stop! Do not do it! Walk by the Spirit Who Alone can enable you to jettison the lusts of the flesh (Gal 5:16<sub>+</sub>).

**Hosea 4:4 Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof; For your people are like those who contend with the priest.**

KJV Hosea 4:4 Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

NET Hosea 4:4 Do not let anyone accuse or contend against anyone else: for my case is against you priests!

LXE Hosea 4:4 that neither any one may plead, nor any one reprove another; but my people are as a priest spoken against.

NLT Hosea 4:4 "Don't point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame! My complaint, you priests, is with you.

ESV Hosea 4:4 Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.

CSB Hosea 4:4 But let no one dispute; let no one argue, for My case is against you priests.

NIV Hosea 4:4 "But let no man bring a charge, let no man accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.

NAB Hosea 4:4 But let no one protest, let no one complain; with you is my grievance, O priests!

NKJ Hosea 4:4 "Now let no man contend, or rebuke another; For your people are like those who contend with the priest.

NJB Hosea 4:4 But let no one denounce, no one rebuke; it is you, priest, that I denounce.

GWN Hosea 4:4 "No one should accuse other people or bring charges against them. My case is against you

priests.

NRS Hosea 4:4 Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O priest.

YLT Hosea 4:4 Only, let no one strive, nor reprove a man, And thy people are as those striving with a priest.

- **let no one find fault:** Ho 4:17 Am 5:13 6:10 Mt 7:3-6
- **your people are like those who contend with the priest:** De 17:12 Jer 18:18
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD'S CASE AGAINST THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

**Yet let no one find fault** - "Let no one contend or accuse."

I agree with Thompson's comment that "verse 4 is tricky, but it seems to me the primary point of it is in view of how corrupt and sinful things are, don't blame the people because the people aren't the real problem; the real problem is the leadership. In other words, even though this nation is filled with all of these evil sins, don't spend your life finding fault with the people, because the real problem lies with the religious leaders. Your real point of contention lies with the priests and prophets who are not doing their job." ([Sermon](#))

**NET Note** - The MT reads וְעַמְּךָ כְּרִיבֵי כֹהֵן (vé'ammékha kimrive khohen): "And your people [are] like those who contend against the priest." This is reflected in the LXX and the versions; however, it is syntactically awkward and makes little sense in context. Several textual critics suggest emending the text to read וְעַמְּךָ רִיבֵי כֹהֵן (vé'immékha rivi khohen): "My contention is with/against you, O priest!" This involves (1) the revocalization of עַמְּךָ ("your people") to עַמְּךָ ("with/against you") and (2) positing dittography (a letter written twice instead of once) of ה (kaf) between original וְעַמְּךָ רִיבֵי כֹהֵן to create וְעַמְּךָ כְּרִיבֵי כֹהֵן (MT). The BHS editors suggest that the MT is corrupt and should be emended. However, the editors of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project retain the MT reading with a "B" rating. Likewise, the English translations are split: (1) **KJV** "for thy people are as they that strive with the priest"; **NASB** "for your people are like those who contend with the priest"; **NIV** "for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest"; (2) **RSV** "for with you is my contention, O priest"; **NJPS** "for this your people has a grievance against [you], O priest!"; **TEV** "my complaint is against you priests"; **CEV** "My case is against you, the priests!"

**And let none offer reproof** - **NLT** says "Don't point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame! My complaint, you priests, is with you."

**Life Application Study Bible** - We often blame others if we fear punishment for wrongdoing. Hosea warned the priests not to blame anyone else; the nation's sins were largely their fault. Israel's priests pointed out the people's sins, but God would not allow them to overlook their own irresponsible actions. Instead of instructing the nation in religion (ED: I WOULD SUGGEST THEY TAUGHT THEM "RELIGION" BUT NOT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIVING GOD - THUS THEY RAN TO DEAD IDOLS) and morality, they had led the way toward idolatry and immorality. Their failure to lead the people in God's ways placed most of the blame for Israel's destruction on them. Knowing that God will not allow us to blame others for our sinfulness should cause us to admit our own sins. We are responsible for our own sinful actions. Beware of the tendency to blame others because it can keep you from feeling the need to repent.

**For your people are like those who contend with the priest** - "for My case is against you priests!"

The role of the priests had been clearly stipulated...

So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, **you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.** 12 "Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, **so that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law.** 13 "Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Deut. 31:9-13).

"**They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, And Your law to Israel.** They shall put incense before You, And whole burnt offerings on Your altar. (Deut. 33:10).

**Robert Chisholm** - These **priests** and **prophets** (in Hos 4:5) were attached to the official sanctuaries and royal court. Their

allegiance was to their human king, not God (cf. 1 Kings 22:6-8; Amos 7:10-17), and they were characterized by self-gratification (cf. Isa. 28:7; Jer. 23:11) and greed (Jer. 6:13; Micah 3:11). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**NET Note on the priest** - The singular noun כֹּהֵן (cohen, "priest") may be understood as a singular of number (so KJV, NASB, NRSV), referring to a singular individual (perhaps the high priest); however, it is more likely that it functions as a collective singular, referring to the priesthood as a whole (e.g., 4:7–10, so NAB, NCV, TEV, NLT, CEV). Collective singular forms alternate with plural forms throughout the oracle against the priests in 4:4–10.

**Hosea 4:5 So you will stumble by day, And the prophet also will stumble with you by night; And I will destroy your mother.**

KJV Hosea 4:5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

NET Hosea 4:5 You stumble day and night, and the false prophets stumble with you; You have destroyed your own people!

LXE Hosea 4:5 Therefore they shall fall by day, and the prophet with thee shall fall: I have compared thy mother unto night.

NLT Hosea 4:5 So you will stumble in broad daylight, and your false prophets will fall with you in the night. And I will destroy Israel, your mother.

ESV Hosea 4:5 You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother.

CSB Hosea 4:5 You will stumble by day; the prophet will also stumble with you by night. And I will destroy your mother.

NIV Hosea 4:5 You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother--

NAB Hosea 4:5 You shall stumble in the day, and the prophets shall stumble with you at night; I will destroy your mother.

NKJ Hosea 4:5 Therefore you shall stumble in the day; The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; And I will destroy your mother.

NJB Hosea 4:5 Priest, you will stumble in broad daylight, and the prophet will stumble with you in the dark, and I will make your mother perish.

GWN Hosea 4:5 During the day you stumble, and during the night the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother, the nation of Israel.

NRS Hosea 4:5 You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother.

YLT Hosea 4:5 And thou hast stumbled in the day, And stumbled hath also a prophet with thee in the night, And I have cut off thy mother.

- **And the prophet also will stumble with you by night** Ho 9:7,8 Isa 9:13-17 Jer 6:4,5,12-15 8:10-12 14:15,16 Jer 15:8 23:9 Eze 13:9-16 14:8-10 Mic 3:5-7 Zec 11:8 13:2
- **I will destroy:** Heb. cut off
- **your mother:** Ho 2:2 Isa 50:1 Jer 15:8 50:12 Eze 16:44,45 Ga 4:26
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## STUMBLING IN THE LIGHT BECAUSE OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

**So you will stumble by day** - This speaks of their moral "stumbling" as in the use of the same verb (kashal) in Hos 14:1 "Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have **stumbled** because of your iniquity." As **Thompson** says "When leaders are not interested in the Word and will of God, the people stumble. They stumble during the day. They don't even walk through a day right with God, because they don't know the Word of God." (Ibid)

**Stumble** (03782)([kashal](#)) means to stagger, totter. The verb may imply not only the action of falling but also the action leading up to

the fall, i.e., "stumbling" or "staggering." Kāshal in the present use is figurative, as it is in Jeremiah prophecy that Israel would stumble over stumbling blocks as punishment for their oppressing of the economically weak (Jer. 6:21; cf. Isa. 8:15). In Isaiah 3:8 we read "For Jerusalem has **stumbled (kashal)** and Judah has fallen, (WHY HAVE THEY STUMBLED?) Because their speech and their actions are against the LORD, To rebel against His glorious presence." (Woe!) Jeremiah quoted God lamenting that "My people have forgotten Me, They burn incense to worthless gods And they **have stumbled (kashal)** from their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in bypaths, Not on a highway." (Jer 18:15). (Woe!) And even in the last OT book the Lord says to the **priests** "But as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to **stumble (kashal)** by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of hosts."

Hosea uses **kashal** in the next chapter - "Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him, And Israel and Ephraim **stumble (kashal)** in their iniquity; Judah also has stumbled with them." (Hos 5:5)

**Kashal** is used 4x in Hosea - Hos. 4:5; Hos. 5:5; Hos. 14:1; Hos. 14:9; Nah. 2:5; Nah. 3:3; Zech. 12:8; Mal. 2:8

**And the prophet also will stumble with you by night** - Those who should have had the "antidote" for stumbling will also stumble. Clearly he is using the term **prophet** to describe those who prophesied falsehood and denied the possibility that God would ever judge them! Hosea is a true prophet and he did not stumble by night but in fact sought to bring spiritual light to the Northern Kingdom, but it would be to no avail!

**And I will destroy your mother** - Where **mother** stand for the nation Israel (See Hos 2:2+).

**Chisholm** has a different interpretation of **mother** - Because of their part in the people's moral ruin mothers would be destroyed. This judgment, though unusual, appears elsewhere (cf. Jer. 22:26). In this way the source of the priestly line would be eliminated. As punishment for their rejection of knowledge, the priests themselves would be removed from their office by the Lord. (Ibid)

**Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children**

KJV Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

NET Hosea 4:6 You have destroyed my people by failing to acknowledge me! Because you refuse to acknowledge me, I will reject you as my priests. Because you reject the law of your God, I will reject your descendants.

LXE Hosea 4:6 My people are like as if they had no knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt not minister as priest to me: and as thou has forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children.

NLT Hosea 4:6 My people are being destroyed because they don't know me. Since you priests refuse to know me, I refuse to recognize you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children.

ESV Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

CSB Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you from serving as My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your sons.

NIV Hosea 4:6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

NAB Hosea 4:6 My people perish for want of knowledge! Since you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you from my priesthood; Since you have ignored the law of your God, I will also ignore your sons.

NKJ Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

NJB Hosea 4:6 My people perish for want of knowledge. Since you yourself have rejected knowledge, so I

shall reject you from my priesthood; since you have forgotten the teaching of your God, I in my turn shall forget your children.

GWN Hosea 4:6 I will destroy my people because they are ignorant. You have refused to learn, so I will refuse to let you be my priests. You have forgotten the teachings of your God, so I will forget your children.

NRS Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

YLT Hosea 4:6 Cut off have been My people for lack of knowledge, Because thou knowledge hast rejected, I reject thee from being priest to Me, And thou forgettest the law of thy God, I forget thy sons, I also!

- **My people:** Ho 4:12 Isa 1:3 3:12 5:13 Jer 4:22 8:7
- **destroyed:** Heb. cut off
- **for:** Ho 4:1 6:6 2Ch 15:3 Job 36:12 Pr 19:2 Isa 27:11 45:20 Jer 5:3,4,21 Mt 15:14 2Co 4:3-6
- **because:** 1Sa 2:12 Pr 1:30-32 Isa 28:7 56:10-12 Jer 2:8 8:8,9 Mal 2:7,8 Mt 23:16-26
- **I will also reject:** Zec 11:8,9,15-17 Mal 2:1-3,9 Mt 21:41-45 Mk 12:8,9 Lu 20:16-18
- **Since you have forgotten:** Ho 8:14 13:6 2Ki 17:16-20 Ps 119:61,139 Isa 17:10 Mt 15:3-6
- **I will also forget:** Ho 1:6 1Sa 2:28-36 3:12-15
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NOT IGNORANCE BUT WILLFUL REJECTION

The NET translation has "You (**PRIEST**) have destroyed my people by failing to acknowledge me! Because you refuse to acknowledge me, I will reject you as my priests. Because you reject the law of your God, I will reject your descendants."

**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge - Lack of knowledge** implies they did have some knowledge. But who should have given them full knowledge of God (cf Hos 4:1 where Hosea says "there is **no** faithfulness or kindness or **knowledge** of God in the land.") Their leaders, especially the religious leaders. Can you see how this applies to America where expositional preaching is on the decline and is being replaced by sermonettes for Christianettes and things like "social justice?" God's people need God's Word to enable them to be godly! America is in trouble because the pulpits are in trouble! You may have heard this quote before, but it bears repeating...

"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers – and it was not there . . . in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there . . . in her rich mines and her vast world commerce – and it was not there . . . in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution – and it was not there. **Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness** (READ THAT STATEMENT AGAIN!) did I understand the secret of her genius and power. **America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.**" -- Alexis de Tocqueville

**Today in the Word - Ignorance is not bliss**—it is destruction. Israel was unraveling because they willfully rejected the knowledge of God in favor of the foolishness of the world. Hosea's point for us is crucial: the way we think is vital to the way we live. Israel's hearts wandered to other gods after their minds ceased to be filled by the wisdom of the Word of God. Likewise, if we fail to center our minds on the Lord, how can we ever hope to love and follow Him as we should? We need to ask ourselves whether we are representing God as a royal priesthood to a society lost in wickedness, or if we are being pulled along by the tides of popular thought. You are currently engaged in one definite positive step: studying the Word of God! As you read, watch, and listen to other media, use God's truth to guard your mind. And in your conversations, don't be afraid to challenge worldly ideas with the Word you know to be true. Encourage others to think biblically!

**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge** (Isa 5:13): The Lxx adds an interesting nuance here by using the verb [homoioo](#). It is interesting that this is one of the best known and most frequently quoted passages in Hosea and yet it seems the church in America has forgotten that this same Word is to be not just to make us smarter sinners but is to be used as a "mirror" to allow self-examination (Jas 1:24, 25) so that we become more like the Savior.

**Lack of knowledge:** "Knowledge" is not just information but is experiential knowledge of the living God. Knowledge of His written Word cannot be separated from personal knowledge of God. To know God is to live in harmony with His will (OBEDIENCE), and to live in harmony with His will we must know His will. Loss of the knowledge of God leaves a destructive vacuum in personal and national life.



Jesus warned

**"Take care** ([blepo](#) in [present imperative](#)) what you listen to. By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and more shall be given you besides." (Mk 4:24)

**Comment** - The people were listening to the priests who were not listening to God and so because of their godless standard, God would measure out to them destruction. We are on "thin ice" when we refuse to listen to the clear words and warnings of the loving but holy God Who does have a righteous anger against sin! Dear reader, if you are reading but not heeding the Word, beware lest you incur the chastising hand of the Almighty! Confess. Repent. Turn around. Call out. Return. Be revived! Now! Not later! **"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You."** (Ps 86:5)

**Henry Morris** - When people lack the knowledge of God, it is because they have rejected the knowledge already received, which could have led them to God. "Unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark 4:24).

**Sir Isaac Newton** - Certainly no one could say that he was not an intellectual or that he was not a man of remarkable ability. One day someone said this to him: "Sir Isaac, I do not understand. You seem to be able to believe the Bible like a little child. I have tried but I cannot. So many of its statements mean nothing to me. I cannot believe; I cannot understand." This was the reply of Sir Isaac Newton: "Sometimes I come into my study and in my absentmindedness I attempt to light my candle when the extinguisher is over it, and I fumble about trying to light it and cannot; but when I remove the extinguisher then I am able to light the candle. I am afraid the extinguisher in your case is the love of your sins; it is deliberate unbelief that is in you. Turn to God in repentance; be prepared to let the Spirit of God reveal His truth to you, and it will be His joy to show the glory of the grace of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ." Sir Isaac Newton was not only a great scientist but also a great preacher. Why don't people believe? Because Satan has blinded their eyes "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." It is a glorious gospel, but it is glorious because it reveals the glory of Christ. Apparently that is what men do not want to see.

**Guzik** - It should not surprise us that there is a connection between knowing God and knowing His Word. Some people think that Bible knowledge is boring and brainy and not necessary for a real walk with God. But God and His Word are vitally connected. Psalm 138:2 says, You have magnified Your word above all Your name. When God sought for a term to express His nature, He calls Himself "The Word" (John 1:1). When we know God for who He really is, it affects our conduct. "Where there is no knowledge of God, no conviction of his omnipresence and omniscience, private offences, such as stealing, adulteries, and so forth, will prevail." (Clarke) (Ibid)

**Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest** - Note once again the spiritual axiom of sowing and reaping. They rejected knowing God through His Word and so they will reap His rejection of them! Note the possessive pronoun "My" in "My priest," the point being that the priests were not only to serve the people but were to serve the Lord as His representative to the people. And by his preaching of the Word to the people he presented God to the people. These priest were "zero" on both accounts! They were in it for themselves as the following verses illustrate.

**I also will reject you** - The nation will be rejected from her priestly position before God (Ex. 19:6). Why? Because they rejected knowledge of God.

**Guzik** adds "Teaching was an important duty of the priests (Deuteronomy 33:10, Ezekiel 44:23, Malachi 2:7). Their neglect of this demonstrates what an important place the minister, the pastor, the preacher has in presenting God and His Word to the people. If he neglects his duty to preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2), then he can't lead the people into the true knowledge of God, and will lead them into destruction. (**ED**: A FRIGHTENING THOUGHT GIVEN THE DECLINE IN VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN AMERICAN PULPITS!) (Ibid)

**Guzik's** comments remind me of the warning in Proverb 29:18 which says

**Where there is no vision** (NO WORD OF GOD), **the people are unrestrained** (RUN WILD), But happy (BLESSED) is he who keeps the law (BUT HE HAS TO HAVE THE WORD PREACHED AND NEEDS TO READ IT TO KEEP IT). (Pr 29:18+)

**Reject**, (cast off, despise) ([03988](#))([ma'as](#)) means to reject, to despise, to abhor, to refuse. The primary idea is to treat as loathsome (that which is repulsive, detestable, causing disgust). Think of what Israel was doing - despising, refusing the Word of God, treating it as loathsome! This is what Israel sowed, but she reaped the same from God! (Gal 6:7-8+ "the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption") This same word is used by Jeremiah - They call them **rejected** silver, Because the LORD has **rejected** them. (Jer 6:30).

**Ma'as** is used again in Hosea 9:17 in an almost identical scenario as here in Hos 4:6

"My God **will cast** them **away** (ma'as) (WHY?) Because **they have not listened to Him**; And they will be wanderers among the nations.

**Comment:** The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **cast away** with [apotheo/apotheomai](#) the same verb Stephen used in his sermon in Acts 7 when he declared "'Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to Him, but **repudiated** (literally "pushed him aside," "thrust Him off from themselves," "drove Him away," by refusing to listen to) Him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, (Acts 7:39+)

The first use of **ma'as** in Lev 26:15+ (cf similar use in Lev 26:43) (**reject** in the Lxx = [prosochthizo](#) = to be offended, very upset over something someone has done, used in Heb 3:10, 17+) is of Israel who is warned not to **'reject My statutes**" which is what Hosea 4:6 describes. And yet later because of His unbreakable covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God says "when (not "if" but "when" - God foretold they would be defeated and exiled) they are in the land of their enemies, I will not **reject** them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God." (Lev 26:44+)

**Since you have forgotten the law of your God** - Aka the Word of God. Now Hosea says they had **forgotten the Law**, implying at one time they had known it at some time in the past and to some degree.

**I also will forget your children** - The sins of parents would impact their offspring. This is a good reminder to all us fathers of children - they are watching us; they are learning from us; they will imitate us. Be careful to give them a good example to follow, for if they see you forget God in your everyday life, don't be surprised if they follow suit in their life!

**You have forgotten...I will forget** (07911)([shakach/shakah](#)) means to **forget**, ignore, to cease to care, (*Niphal*) to be forgotten, (*Piel*) to cause to forget, (*Hiphil*) to make or cause to forget, (*Hithpael*) to be forgotten. Those who forget God wither away (Job 8:13), as well as all the nations who forget Him. [Shakach/shakah](#) "indicates that something has been lost to memory, or a period of time has softened the memory of it.

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**John Phillips** - Ignorance is never accepted as an excuse in a court of law. We are expected to acquaint ourselves with the law by which we will be judged. But Israel was not merely guilty of simple ignorance; she was guilty of studied ignorance-that is, she chose to be ignorant of God. She did not want to know God, so He said, "Thou hast rejected knowledge." As we say today, there are none so blind as those who will not see. God's verdict is in Hos 4:9: "I will punish them."

The people saw corruption, covetousness, and carnality in their priests, modeled themselves after the priests' example, and used it as an excuse. If such a lifestyle is good for the priests, they rationalized, it is good for us. When a nation's priests and preachers are evil and her teachers, leaders, opinion-makers, and pace-setters are unprincipled, what hope is there for her?

The Russian people followed the lead of their secular "priests," Marx and Lenin, and became a nation of atheists and materialists. The Germans followed their militaristic, anti-semitic "priests," Hitler and Goebbels, into persecution, war, and destruction. The Iranians followed their narrow-minded and ruthless "priest," Khomeini, into an Islamic revolution that clamped a rigid, intolerant, militant fanaticism on their nation. A nation's behavior, no less than an individual's behavior, is governed by its beliefs, and a nation rises no higher than its priests, be they secular or spiritual.

Israel's priests were evil. Jeroboam I chose them in the beginning from the lowest of the people. Only completely unprincipled people would have consented to be consecrated to his false religion. It did not take them long to establish calf worship in the northern kingdom. Then Ahab and Jezebel imported into Israel an even fouler foreign religion, complete with a licentious, pagan priesthood. Soon the people were bowing at the feet of the cruel gods of Phoenicia and reveling in every form of sexual sin as part of their worship. Jehu attempted reform, but it suited his purpose to leave the old priesthood of Jeroboam in power.

Gomer had probably been one of the victims of those priests, and Hosea was indignant. With his heart broken by what the priests had done to his wife, he cried out, "Like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9). Then he summed up Israel's religious life in three words: "Whoredom and wine" (Hosea 4:11). In a system where fornication, adultery, and sodomy were not only tolerated but also encouraged and where male and female prostitutes were available to help consummate worship at every shrine, to go "a whoring" (Hosea 4:12) after strange gods was much more than a mere figure of speech. Yet God still called the Israelites "My people."

In Hosea 4:6, when God used the expression **'My people**," His emphasis was on their **immorality**. When He used the expression in Hosea 4:12, His emphasis was on their **idolatry**. "My people ask counsel at their stocks," He said. There is no greater folly than to pray to an idol made by man. Imagine taking a piece of wood or a slab of stone, carving it into the likeness of a man or a monster, painting it, putting it on a pedestal, and then praying to it! One might as well pray to the kitchen sink. Yet even today millions of people-Hindus, Buddhists, Shintoists, Roman Catholics-pray to graven images of one sort or another. **Idolatry** is always demoralizing. Evil spirits that lurk behind the idols blind people's minds and lure them into sin. Hindu idolatry is often accompanied by the same kinds of moral decadence that characterized Israel's idolatry. Gomer, ruined by the priests, had been unable to settle down

to a regulated home life. As brokenhearted Hosea wrote his prophecy, he had visions of his wife plying her infamous trade under the direction and control of some filthy-minded priest. (Exploring the Minor Prophets)

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**David Jeremiah** - It is not the hearers and “knowers” of God’s Word who will be blessed, but the doers. The knowledge of God’s Word is important—without it, God’s people have been known to suffer (Hosea 4:6). But great knowledge can also water the root of pride in the sinful human heart (1 Corinthians 8:1). One man said that to consume the Bible without putting it into practice is the equivalent of going into a fine restaurant and eating the menu while ignoring the meal. Which are you more focused on in your Christian life: knowing the Word for the sake of knowing it, or knowing it in order to put it into practice? Knowing the Bible should lead to living the Bible, which leads to honoring the Author of the Bible.

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### [Hosea 4:6 Devotional](#)

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**ILLUSTRATION OF IGNORANCE IN THE CHURCH** - I recently received an amazing letter from a dear woman who was attending a Bible study in another state. At the Bible study the people were kicking around the idea of the boy who died and went to heaven and came back and told everyone about his experience. The basic idea that was being presented at this study was this experience and book and movie really proved there was a heaven. Well, the woman who wrote me the letter had just got done listening to our web site and specifically our exposition of II Corinthians 12:1-6. She said she could not believe the timing of this. She waited until all of the pooled ignorance was done and then she said—do you really believe that God would allow some kid to go to heaven and come back and tell everyone about it when He would not permit Paul to even speak what he saw and heard? She said she was totally dumbfounded that no one at this study knew sound doctrine. That is a major problem in most churches today. Many people today want to live their lives by feelings and experiences and not sound doctrine. But the truth is unless God’s people are serious about understanding the books of the Bible and the Doctrines of the faith, they will end up as pathetic as Israel. They will end up ashamed and God will hold leadership accountable. ([David Thompson](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - Related to leaders misleading the people of Israel - Hurrying my 11-year-old daughter to school, I turned right on red where it was prohibited. "Uh, oh," I said, realizing my mistake. "I just made an illegal turn." "It's all right," my daughter said. "The police car behind us did the same thing."

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### [Question: "How are people destroyed from a lack of knowledge \(Hosea 4:6\)?"](#)

**Answer:** Hosea 4:6 says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” What was it that Israel did not know, and why was that lack of knowledge so dangerous?

The rest of verse 6 helps explain: “Because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (KJV). It’s important to note the structure of the verse: “rejected knowledge” is parallel to “forgotten the law.” This fits the context of the opening verse of the chapter, which states that Israel failed to acknowledge the LORD as their God (Hosea 4:1). The people did not simply lack knowledge; they actively rejected it.

Another parallel offers a deeper understanding of the passage. Because Israel had “rejected” knowledge (God’s Law), God would “reject” them. Because Israel had “forgotten” God’s Law, He would “forget” their children (He would remove His future blessing from the nation). As a result of God “rejecting” and “forgetting” Israel, they would be destroyed. Hosea’s message is in line with Moses’ warning to the nation that God would remove His blessing from a disobedient people (Deuteronomy 28).

Hosea 4:1-2 emphasize that Israel’s lack of knowledge was not mere ignorance, but active sin against God: “There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.” The people were only ignorant of the Law because they actively ignored it.

Hosea’s warnings went unheeded, and Israel was conquered by Assyria during his ministry. Yet, even in judgment, God spares a remnant and restores His relationship with them. The prophecies of Hosea reflect this pattern. Israel was judged, yet the Lord would later restore His people whom He loved.

The coming of Jesus Christ illustrates God’s love to the fullest degree. Jesus died for the sins of all people, offering every person the opportunity to come to faith in Him (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). To those who do believe, Jesus is “wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Because of Christ, there is no need for anyone ever again to be “destroyed from a lack of knowledge.”

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**John MacArthur** - Hosea was facing the reality in Israel that God’s people had abandoned God. Consequently, they fell into all kinds of sin. They became a harlot-wife, an adulterous nation, violating their vow to God. But what was their basic problem? How did it happen? and why did it happen? Well, listen to what he writes beginning in verse 1: “Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel.” Stop right there. Hosea puts his finger on the problem. When a nation ceases to hear the Word of the Lord, confusion and chaos take place. He continues, “For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.” They had removed the foundation, and when the foundation was gone, what was left? Verse 2 gives us the answer, “By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery they break out, and blood

toucheth blood." In other words, you get national chaos when you give up the foundation of the Word of God.

In America today people are concerned about the condition of our country; they're concerned about a rising crime problem; they're concerned about the disintegration of the family; they're concerned about chaos in government; they're concerned about economic stress and the chaos that results—the people have all of these concerns in their hearts. But I'll tell you the truth: there is no resolution to any of these problems unless there is a reaffirmation of the absolute qualification of the Word of God as the standard to set the pace for this country.

Israel had failed. When you destroy a biblical base, all you're going to get is chaos. Everything bad had begun to happen because they wouldn't hear the Word of the Lord. Verse 3 says, "Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth in it shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heavens; yea, the fish of the sea also shall be taken away." Everything went wrong. Verse 6 sums it up for us: "My people are destroyed." But why? "For lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge." Now when a people rejects the law of God and the knowledge of God, they open the floodgates to chaos.

As it is true in a nation, as in the case of Israel, it is also true in the life of an individual. (How to Study the Bible)

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**Bob Gass**- Danger of Not Knowing - My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6)

I used to think that blessings were all spiritual. I resented folks who were well off and told myself they were probably miserable. I knew it would take money to reach the world with the Gospel, but I had no idea, and even less concern, where it would come from.

Then one day I read, "They ... searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). I knew God used the word "prosperity" many times, but I'd seen it abused and couldn't get comfortable with it until I heard it defined as having enough to do the will of God. Surely if God has a will for me, then He intends me to have enough to carry it out! Your purpose determines your prosperity.

So here's what I can tell you for certain: The whole world will hear the Gospel (see Revelation 14:6); God will use His people to do it (see Matthew 28:19); they can't do it if they're broke. It's time to claim God's provision so that we can carry out God's purposes (see Deuteronomy 8:18). God says clearly, "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9, NIV).

NOW ASK GOD TO MAKE THAT REAL IN YOUR LIFE.

#### **Hosea 4:7 The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.**

KJV Hosea 4:7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

NET Hosea 4:7 The more the priests increased in numbers, the more they rebelled against me. They have turned their glorious calling into a shameful disgrace!

LXE Hosea 4:7 According to their multitude, so they sinned against me: I will turn their glory into shame.

NLT Hosea 4:7 The more priests there are, the more they sin against me. They have exchanged the glory of God for the shame of idols.

ESV Hosea 4:7 The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame.

CSB Hosea 4:7 The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me. I will change their honor into disgrace.

NIV Hosea 4:7 The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful.

NAB Hosea 4:7 One and all they sin against me, exchanging their glory for shame.

NKJ Hosea 4:7 "The more they increased, The more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.

NJB Hosea 4:7 The more of them there have been, the more they have sinned against me; they have

bartered their Glory for Shame.

GWN Hosea 4:7 The more priests there are, the more they sin against me. So I will turn their glory into shame.

NRS Hosea 4:7 The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; they changed their glory into shame.

YLT Hosea 4:7 According to their abundance so they sinned against Me, Their honour into shame I change.

- **The more they multiplied:** Ho 4:10 5:1 6:9 13:6,14 Ezr 9:7
- **I will change their glory into shame:** 1Sa 2:30 Jer 2:26,27 Mal 2:9 Php 3:19
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BAD MATHEMATICS!

It would have been better had they just been "added" because "multiplied" implies a plethora of pseudo-priests!

**The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me** - They is still referring to the priests of Israel. Ideally the increase of those set apart to God (or holy as the priests were to be), should have resulted in a commensurate increase in holy living. Sadly, the converse took place, so that an increase of religious men brought an increase of wrong perpetrated against God. Beloved, all they needed was one good, godly, Word centered, Spirit empowered priest and yet not one could be found in all the land. So God was forced to send them one Word inspired, Spirit empowered holy prophet named Hosea! In God's mercy, he is giving the Northern Kingdom the final verdict. The jury is "in" and the verdict is guilty of sin against the Holy One of Israel.

And note that phrase **sinned against Me**.

**THOUGHT** - All sin is first and foremost against the Holy God, because ultimately though we might break men's laws, we primarily break God's righteous standard. Oh, how this principle needs to drop from our head (you are reading it right now and intellectually comprehending it) to our heart, our control center, so that His Words direct our steps. As Solomon wrote "Do not let them (My Words) depart from your sight; **Keep** (command not a suggestion; Lxx = [phulasso](#) in [present imperative](#) - only [possible by depending on the Holy Spirit](#)) them **in the midst of your heart**(Lxx = [kardia](#))." (Pr 4:21) Joseph understood this principle when tempted by Potiphar's wife to whom he declared "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. **How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?**" (Ge 39:9) Sadly, God's priests did not follow Joseph's lead. But then neither do we when we willfully sin against God, knowing that the evil we do in thought, word or deed will not please Him! Thank God for the Cross and forgiveness! But thank God for the gift of the indwelling Spirit [Who enables us to obey the command](#) **"put to death** ([aorist imperative](#)) whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry. (Col 3:5NET±)" So one more question - Is sin increasing or decreasing in your life? Or to ask another way are you "multiplying" righteousness or unrighteousness?

**I will change their glory into shame**- Or "they exchanged their glory for shame." Either way it is a "bad exchange," and recalls the exchange Paul describes in Romans 1:23 where men **"exchanged** the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures." ([commentary](#))

**NET Note on I will change** - The MT reads אָמִיר ('amir, "I will change, exchange"; Hiphil imperfect 1st person common singular from מוֹר, mur, "to change, exchange"). However, an alternate scribal tradition (*tiqquneh sopherim*, that is, an intentional scribal change when the Masoretes believed that the received consonantal reading was corrupt) preserves the reading הִמִּירוּ (*hemiru*, "they have exchanged"; Hiphil perfect 3rd person common plural from מוֹר). This alternate scribal tradition is also found in the Targum and reflected in the Syriac Peshitta. Several translations follow the MT: KJV, RSV, NASB **"I will change their glory into shame"** and TEV "I will turn your honor into disgrace"; however, others adopt the alternate tradition: NRSV "they changed their glory into shame" and NIV "they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful." For discussion in favor of the MT reading, see D. Barthélemy, e.d., Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, 5:232. (**ED COMMENT:** The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) has "I will turn their glory into shame" which would reflect divine retribution.)

**Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin of My people And direct their desire toward their iniquity**

KJV Hosea 4:8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.

NET Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin offerings of my people; their appetites long for their iniquity!

LXE Hosea 4:8 They will devour the sins of my people, and will set their hearts on their iniquities.

NLT Hosea 4:8 "When the people bring their sin offerings, the priests get fed. So the priests are glad when the people sin!

ESV Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity.

CSB Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin of My people; they have an appetite for their transgressions.

NIV Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness.

NAB Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin of my people, and are greedy for their guilt.

NKJ Hosea 4:8 They eat up the sin of My people; They set their heart on their iniquity.

NJB Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin of my people, they are greedy for their iniquity.

GWN Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sins of my people, and they want them to do wicked things.

NRS Hosea 4:8 They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity.

YLT Hosea 4:8 The sin of My people they do eat, And unto their iniquity lift up their soul.

- **They feed on the sin** : Lev 6:26 Lev 7:6,7
- **set their heart on their iniquity**: Heb. 1Sa 2:29 Ps 24:4 25:1 Isa 56:11 Eze 14:3,7 Mic 3:11 Mal 1:10 Ro 16:18 Titus 1:11 2Pe 2:3
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PRIESTS FLEECING THE SHEEP!

Instead of **feeding** the sheep (cf Jesus triplicate command in Jn 21:15-17<sub>±</sub> = "Tend...shepherd...tend"), the priests were in essence **fleeing** the sheep! To [fleece](#) means to rip off! Does this sound like some modern television personalities? I know one with initials "J.O." whose net worth is reported as in the range of \$40 million. That's more than the gross national product of some small third world countries!

**They feed on the sin of My people** - The priests eat the sin offering. Most commentators think this is a reference to the sin offering indicating that the priests grew wealthy by taking the offerings the people brought. And don't miss the fact that the people are still "practicing religion," but it is futile and worthless for they have no personal relationship with God Himself in their "religion." One has to wonder how many of those who are calling themselves "*Christian*" on surveys or when asked about their religious preference on a government form, are actually like these Israelites who practiced religion without relationship! Religion saves NO ONE! Only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by grace through faith saves one from the eternal fire of Hell!

**Wood on feed on the sin of My people** - "They did this by enjoying the benefits of the people's sins, such as taking bribes and eating the sin offerings. So the priests actually relished Israel's wickedness."

**And direct their desire toward their iniquity** - This could be subtitled "Priest pursuing pagan pleasures." Instead of More literally "lift up their soul to their iniquity." The word **desire** is [nephesh](#) which can also mean passion, appetite, emotion. And so the **NET** version renders it "their appetites long for their iniquity!" The **NIV** paraphrases it as they "relish their wickedness." The **ESV** says "they are greedy for their iniquity."

**Direct** is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with [lambano](#) which figuratively can mean to take advantage of or exploit. The idea of lambano gives us a vivid picture of these pseudo-priests because it means to get hold of something by laying one's hands on it or by grasping it. And so this pictures these greedy priests grasping for unrighteousness ([Lxx](#) for **iniquity** = [adikia](#)) or wickedness!

**Iniquity** ([05771](#)) ('**avon** from verb '**avah** = to bend, twist, distort) describes the iniquity, evil, punishment or guilt which is associated with a twisting of the righteous standard or deviation from that standard. Since this word implies a deliberate twisting or perverting, '**avon** describes sin that is particularly evil.

**Hosea 4:9 And it will be, like people, like priest; So I will punish them for their ways And repay them for their deeds**

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NET Hosea 4:9 I will deal with the people and priests together: I will punish them both for their ways, and I will repay them for their deeds.

LXE Hosea 4:9 And the priest shall be as the people: and I will avenge on them their ways, and I will recompense to them their counsels.

NLT Hosea 4:9 'And what the priests do, the people also do.' So now I will punish both priests and people for their wicked deeds.

ESV Hosea 4:9 And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds.

CSB Hosea 4:9 The same judgment will happen to both people and priests. I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their deeds.

NIV Hosea 4:9 And it will be: Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds.

NAB Hosea 4:9 The priests shall fare no better than the people: I will punish them for their ways, and repay them for their deeds.

NKJ Hosea 4:9 And it shall be: like people, like priest. So I will punish them for their ways, And reward them for their deeds.

NJB Hosea 4:9 But as with the people, so with the priest, I shall punish them for their conduct, I shall pay them back for their deeds.

GWN Hosea 4:9 So the priests will be punished like the people. I will punish them for their wicked ways and pay them back for what they have done.

NRS Hosea 4:9 And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways, and repay them for their deeds.

YLT Hosea 4:9 And it hath been, like people, like priest, And I have charged on it its ways, And its habitual doings I return to it.

- **like people:** Isa 9:14-16 24:2 Jer 5:31 8:10-12 23:11,12 Eze 22:26-31 Mt 15:14
- **punish:** Heb. visit upon, Ho 1:4
- **repay:** Ps 109:17,18 Pr 5:22 Isa 3:10 Zec 1:6
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE PEOPLE FARE NO BETTER THAN PRIESTS

**And it will be, like people, like priest** - The point is that even though the lay people of Israel were not taught the Law and in actuality were led into sin does not free them of their personal responsibility for acquiescing to the sin. There is no "free pass." To be sure the priests will have a greater degree of punishment in the future Lake of fire for Jesus clearly taught this principle of greater knowledge yielding greater guilt and more severe punishment (read Mt 10:14,15, Mt 11:22-24).

**So I will punish them for their ways** - **Punish** is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with [ekdiikeo](#) which means to bring to judgment so as to punish (2 Cor 10:6) or to take revenge (Rev 6:10<sup>±</sup>, Rev 19:2<sup>±</sup>)

**And repay them for their deeds** - The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **repay** with the verb [antapodidomi](#) which means to give back in return for something received. The idea is to practice reciprocity with respect to an obligation. In this case God will pay them their just rewards of His divine judgment for their evil deeds. In a negative sense it means to requite or exact retribution. Requite implies a paying back according to one's preference and often not equivalently.

God's repayment of the priests (and the people) reminds me of the old classic sermon by **Robert G Lee** entitled **Payday Someday!** ([Text](#), [youtube](#)) The priests' payday has come and sadly they are now experiencing **eternal punishment** for their evil deeds.

**Henry Morris** - One of the great tragedies in the long war against God has been the defection of so many religious leaders from the true Word of God, leading their people into compromise and apostasy. This, sadly, is as true in modern Christendom as in ancient Israel. (Defender's Study Bible)

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**Punish** (06485)(pequddah/pāqadh/paqad) conveys the root idea of something that is attended to or set in order -- fighting men under an officer (2 Chr. 17:14), priests in an order (1 Chr. 23:11; 24:19); arrangement of Tabernacle (Nu 4:16[2x]). Office of one in charge of something (Ps 109:8) or officers (2 Ki. 11:18; Isa. 60:17). Usually pequddah means accounting when God attended to people's actions, usually to call them to account for their sins (Nu 16:29; Jer. 48:44). In Job 10:12 God's attention was for Job's good.

**Gilbrant** - The verb pāqadh possesses the basic meaning or "to intervene" or "to muster," "to inspect." In the Qal, it can mean "to attend to," "to pay attention to," "to care for," "to punish," "to muster," "to assemble," "to record," "to enroll," "to commit," "to appoint," "to call to account" or "to avenge." In the Niphal stem, the word can be defined as "to be missed," "to be lacking," "to be appointed" or "to be called to account." The Piel and Pual define pāqadh as "to muster" and "to be mustered," respectively. The Hiphil translates the verb as "to appoint," "to entrust" or "to commit." Essentially meaning "intervention," "division," or "duty," pequddāh occurs thirty-two times in the OT. The noun is derived from pāqadh. In Middle Hebrew, the word means "custody." A cognate in Akkadian means "handing over" or "examination." Frequently, pequddāh refers to various positions of authority (Num. 3:32, 36; 2 Ki. 11:18; Isa. 60:17; Ezek. 44:11). For example, Eleazar was appointed as the chief leader over the Levites (Nu 3:32) and was to be in charge of the Tabernacle and everything in it (4:16). Elsewhere, the idea of punishment is indicated by pequddāh (Isa. 10:3; Jer. 8:12; 10:15; Hos. 9:7). On one occasion, God's kindness and providence in the life of Job is cited (Job 10:12). BDB 824, KB 3:958, NIDOTTE 3:657-63, Strong <H6486>, TWOT 2:731-32. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

### Pequddah in NAS -

am indeed concerned(1), any reason(1), any reason he is missing(1), appoint(12), appointed(19), appoints(1), assign(3), assigned(1), attend(1), attended(1), bring punishment(1), brought(1), call their to account(1), calls me to account(1), care(3), charge(1), commit(1), committed(3), concerned(1), counted(1), damage(1), deposited(3), deprived(1), empty(3), entrusted(1), examine(1), foremen(1), gave(1), had the oversight(1), lack(1), longed(1), look(1), made him overseer(2), made them overseers(1), miss(2), missed(3), misses me at all(1), missing(5), mustered(6), mustering(1), number(13), numbered(99), officers(2), oversight(3), punish(46), punished(6), put him in charge(1), put in charge(1), put under(1), put under the charge(1), register(2), see(1), sought(1), suffer(1), summoned(1), supervisors(1), surely take care(3), take care(1), take notice(1), took a census(1), took note(1), untouched\*(1), visit(7), visited(6), visiting(4).

Gen. 21:1; 39:4-5; 40:4; 41:34; 50:24-25; Exod. 3:16; 4:31; 13:19; 20:5; 30:12-14; 32:34; 34:7; 38:21,25-26; Lev. 6:4; 18:25; 26:16; Num. 1:3,19,21-23,25,27,29,31,33,35,37,39,41,43ff,49-50; 2:4,6,8-9,11,13,15-16,19,21,23-24,26,28,30-33; 3:10,15-16,22,34,39-40,42-43; 4:23,27,29-30,32,34,36-38,40-42,44-46,48-49; 7:2; 14:18,29; 16:29; 26:7,18,22,25,27,34,37,41,43,47,50-51,54,57,62-64; 27:16; 31:14,48-49; Deut. 5:9; 20:9; Jos. 8:10; 10:18; Jdg. 15:1; 20:15,17; 21:9; Ruth 1:6; 1 Sam. 2:21; 11:8; 13:15; 14:17; 15:2,4; 17:18; 20:6,18,25,27; 25:7,15,21; 29:4; 2 Sam. 2:30; 3:8; 18:1; 24:2,4; 1 Ki. 11:28; 14:27; 20:15,26-27,39; 2 Ki. 3:6; 5:24; 7:17; 9:34; 10:19; 11:15; 12:11; 22:5,9; 25:22-23; 1 Chr. 21:6; 23:24; 26:32; 2 Chr. 12:10; 23:14; 25:5; 34:10,12,17; 36:23; Ezr. 1:2; Neh. 7:1; 12:44; Est. 2:3; Job 5:24; 7:18; 31:14; 34:13; 35:15; 36:23; Ps. 8:4; 17:3; 31:5; 59:5; 65:9; 80:14; 89:32; 106:4; 109:6; Prov. 19:23; Isa. 10:12,28; 13:4,11; 23:17; 24:21-22; 26:14,16,21; 27:1,3; 29:6; 34:16; 38:10; 62:6; Jer. 1:10; 3:16; 5:9,29; 6:6,15; 9:9,25; 11:22; 13:21; 14:10; 15:3,15; 21:14; 23:2,4,34; 25:12; 27:8,22; 29:10,32; 30:20; 32:5; 36:20,31; 37:21; 40:5,7,11; 41:2,10,18; 44:13,29; 46:25; 49:8,19; 50:18,31,44; 51:27,44,47,52; Lam. 4:22; Ezek. 23:21; 38:8; Hos. 1:4; 2:13; 4:9,14; 8:13; 9:9; 12:2; Amos 3:2,14; Zeph. 1:8-9,12; 2:7; 3:7; Zech. 10:3; 11:16

### Allen Ross on - Paqad "Visit, Appoint, Oversee"

The verb paqad, usually translated "visit" in older translations, has a wide range of meanings that call for special attention. The older translation of "visit" is somewhat misleading if that is understood in the contemporary sense of a social visit; and so a contextual study of the passages where this word occurs is in order.

### Etymology

#### Hebrew Words

The dictionaries list the basic meaning of the verb as "attend to, visit, muster, entrust." In addition to the verb there are several derived forms to consider. One noun, pequddah, means "visitation," but more specifically the kind of visitation intended, such as "punishment" in Hosea 9:7 and "prison" in Jeremiah 52:11. It also has the meaning of "store" or "storage" in Isaiah 15:7, "overseeing" in 1 Chronicles 26:30, and "mustering" fighters in 2 Chronicles 17:14. This range of meanings for the noun parallels the verb.

There is also a word paqid which means "overseer" (Gen. 41:34; Jdg. 9:29).



The idea of "appointing" is also attested with related words. Piqqud is a "precept," that is, something appointed to be obeyed (Ps. 19:8). The noun mipqad is "appointment" in 2 Chronicles 31:13, and an "appointed place" in Ezekiel 43:21. It is also translated "muster" in 2 Samuel 24:9. Piqqadon is a "deposit" or "store" in Genesis 41:36.

## Cognate Languages

The root paqad is well attested in the cognate languages. The dictionaries record that it occurs in Akkadian with essentially the same meanings as Hebrew. In the Ugaritic texts pqd has the meaning "to give orders." In Phoenician it means "to attend to, to provide." The Syriac cognate means "to visit." Arabic has the meanings "to lose, miss, give attention to." And Ethiopic has the word with the meanings "to muster, to visit, to desire, to need." All these meanings in the cognate languages parallel the Hebrew meanings, with a few of them developing the meanings further in later times.

## Usage

It is necessary, given the wide range of definitions, to survey the uses and then try to explain the connections between the meanings. The following are the main categories of meaning.

### 1. To Attend To

The word occurs in passages where the expected meaning has something to do with "attending to" something or someone. Translations may vary a bit here to suit the immediate contexts.

For example, it may have the meaning "to pay attention to, to observe." In a few passages the idea is that of a close examination or observation, with the intent to do something to benefit or punish. The psalmist says, "What is man that you are mindful ('zakar) of him, or the son of man that you visit ('paqad) him?" (Ps. 8:4).

Or, "I remember (paqadti) that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait" (1 Sam. 15:2). In spite of the various ways that the English versions have rendered the verb in these passages, the idea is clearly that of observing or paying attention to something with the intent to act.

Some passages take the meaning a little further, having the sense of the intended action and not just the examination; here we would have the idea of "to see to something." An example is found in Zechariah 11:16, which says, "I will raise up a shepherd in the land who shall not attend to (yipqod) those who are cut off."

Also connected to the idea of looking for or taking note of something is the meaning "to seek." Here the word may be used to convey the idea of looking for a remedy or for something missing. For example, Isaiah says, "Yahweh, in trouble have they sought you (peqaduka); they poured out a prayer when your chastening hand was upon them" (Isa. 26:16). Similarly we read, "If your father at all miss me (paqod yipqedeni) . . ." (1 Sam. 20:6). The first sample uses the verb for seeking that finds expression in prayer; the second sample uses it for seeking something in vain.

All the samples in this first category of meaning, then, have the idea of paying attention to, looking after, looking for, or remembering with the intent of doing something.

### 2. To Visit

The second category of meaning includes uses that describe some kind of intervention (usually by God) for blessing or for punishment. The translation "visit" may be somewhat archaic in view of modern English usage, but it still is retained in several of the English translations. Moreover, Webster's Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary, The Oxford English Dictionary, and The American College Dictionary all include as part of the usage of "visit" the concepts found in these passages, that is, to come to comfort or aid, to assail, to plague, or to afflict with suffering. The use of "visit" for this category is therefore acceptable, although each passage may be given a more precise meaning and translation.

In many passages the word describes "intervention for good" or for blessing. One type of blessing is childbirth--the speaker attributes the birth of a long-awaited child as the work of God. Genesis 21:1 reports that Yahweh "visited" Sarah so that she gave birth to Isaac. And 1 Samuel 2:21 reports the same with regard to Hannah.

Another blessing that comes through a divine intervention is growth in the fields. Ruth 1:6 says, "She had heard that Yahweh had visited (paqad) his people by giving them bread." It had rained, the crops had grown and been harvested, and bread was abundant--Yahweh visited them. Likewise the psalmist says, "You visit (paqadta) the earth and water it" (Ps. 65:9).

A third blessing that this word introduces is deliverance from oppression. Two passages clearly show it to be the means of escaping from bondage. Joseph said, "God will surely visit (paqod yipqod) you and will bring you out of this place" (Gen. 50:24-25). And, "after seventy years have been accomplished in Babylon, I will visit ('epqod) you and perform my good word to you in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10).

The idea of deliverance can also be personal when God "visits" his servant. The psalmist says, "O visit me (poqdeni) with your salvation" (Ps. 106:4); and Jeremiah says, "O Yahweh, you knew; remember me and visit me (u-poqdeni) and revenge me of my persecutors" (Jer. 15:15).

When paqad is used to describe Yahweh's intervention for good, some deliverance or benefit will be granted. It is interesting to note that the concept of "remembering" appears in some of these passages, as it did in those under the first category; "to remember" means to act upon what is remembered.

A second group of passages uses the word to describe "intervention for punishment." Punishment for sin is clearly expressed in the first example from Exodus: "I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting (poqed) the iniquity of the fathers on the children" (Exod. 20:5). The verse is saying that the children often pay for the sins of the fathers if they do not turn to the Lord. Another passage that expresses punishment concerns the sin of the golden calf: "when I visit (poqdi) . . . I will visit (u-paqadti) their sin on them" (Exod. 32:34). The verb seems to have two slightly different senses here: when the Lord intervenes in their life (a neutral connotation), it will be for punishment for sin (a negative connotation).

In some contexts the emphasis is more on the judgment that is the punishment. For example, Hosea says, "Now will he remember their iniquities and visit (weyipqod) their sins, and they shall return to Egypt" (Hos. 8:13). Amos says, "When I visit the transgression of Israel upon him, I will visit (u-paqadti) the altars of Bethel as well"--and the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground (Amos 3:14). Isaiah says, "In that day Yahweh with his awesome and great strong sword will punish (yipqod 'al) Leviathan" (Isa. 27:1). The verse declares that God will destroy Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, by destroying these "gods" that empowered them. And again Isaiah says that the Lord will water and keep a vineyard "lest any harm (pen yipqod) it" (Isa. 27:3). In all these samples the verb depicts punishment inflicted in some way by intervention.

A third sub-group here has the idea of "intervention for testing." The word describes suffering at the hand of God as a form of testing, not punishment. Job asks, "What is man that you should visit him (wattipqedennu) every morning and test him (tibkhanennu) every moment?" (Job 7:17-18).

### **3. To Number**

A third main category may have developed out of the first category of observing or examining with preparation in mind--usually for war. Numbers records, "You shall number (tipqedu) them [males, twenty years old and able to fight] by their armies" (Num. 1:3). And later David said to Joab, "Go through all the tribes . . . And number (u-piqdu) the people . . . that I may know the number of them" (2 Sam. 24:2).

### **4. To Appoint**

The fourth category of meaning is close to that of "seeing to" something; but these passages emphasize the appointing of someone. For example, Genesis says, "And the captain of the guard charged (wayyipqod) Joseph with them, and he served them" (Gen. 40:4). The Law prescribed, "They shall make (u-paqedu) captains of the armies to lead the people" (Deut. 20:9). And finally, Cyrus says of Yahweh, "And he has charged me (paqad 'alay) to build a house in Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 36:23).

Summarizing the usage of the verb in the qal and niphil verbal systems, we may say that the basic ideas are "to attend to" something, examine or observe it, see to it, look for it; "to intervene," used of God's visiting with benefits or punishments or sufferings; "to number" by examining or observing for the purpose of warfare; or "to appoint" or entrust with the responsibility of overseeing or attending to someone.

### **5. To Entrust**

This category is very close to the last one, except that the emphasis in these passages is more of entrusting than appointing; besides these passages use the verb in the hiphil and hophal verbal systems. The basic idea seems to be that of entrusting something or someone into another's care. The following uses show the range of this category of meaning. Genesis records that Potiphar made Joseph overseer (wayyapqidehu) over his house (Gen. 39:4). Or, the Law instructed: "You shall appoint (hapqed) the Levites over the Tabernacle of the Testimony" (Num. 1:50). Or, the prophet-historian reported that Rehoboam made shields "and committed them" (wehipqid) to the chief of the guard (1 Kings 14:27). And finally, Isaiah says, "At Michmash he will store up (yapqid) his implements" (Isa. 10:28).

### **6. To Muster**

A couple of passages use the verb in the piel-hithpael verbal systems with the idea of mustering armies. This sense is clearly related to the qal system's idea of numbering the armies for the purpose of fighting, but appears to be more intensive, more immediate, that is, rousing the troops to fight. Isaiah, for example, says, "Yahweh of armies musters (mepaqqed) the army for the battle" (Isa. 13:4).

## **The Old Greek Translations**

The categories of meaning are too diverse for any one word to be used throughout an ancient version. In the Greek Old Testament, however, one of the basic terms used is episkeptomai, episkopeo, "to look at, take care of, oversee," and the noun episkope, "a visitation" (see Gen. 50:24, which in the Greek reads "In the visitation with which God shall visit . . ."). This verb is even used in passages like Numbers 1:3 for "taking account" or "numbering" the tribes). There is also the noun episkopos, "an overseer" (from which we get "bishop, overseer" in the New Testament, and then the derived "Episcopal" for the Church). But in some of the more developed meanings other Greek words were used as would be expected.

## Conclusion

It should be clear from this brief survey of the usage of paqad that there are common motifs than run through the uses--ideas of attending to something or seeing to something--which lead to the ideas of intervening for blessing or punishing, the enlisting of people for military intervention, or the appointing or entrusting of such responsibilities to individuals. It should be clear that no one English word can be used to translate all the uses of this verb.

Gunnel Andre, in his book [Determining the Destiny](#): PQD in the Old Testament, proposes that the basic idea behind the word is

**"to determine the destiny."**

This understanding fits very well many of the passages, especially where the Lord is said to visit people for one reason or another.

## Hosea 4:10 They will eat, but not have enough; They will play the harlot, but not increase, Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD

KJV Hosea 4:10 For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

NET Hosea 4:10 They will eat, but not be satisfied; they will engage in prostitution, but not increase in numbers; because they have abandoned the LORD by pursuing other gods.

LXE Hosea 4:10 And they shall eat, and shall not be satisfied: they have gone a-whoring, and shall by no means prosper: because they have left off to take heed to the Lord.

NLT Hosea 4:10 They will eat and still be hungry. They will play the prostitute and gain nothing from it, for they have deserted the LORD

ESV Hosea 4:10 They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply, because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish

CSB Hosea 4:10 They will eat but not be satisfied; they will be promiscuous but not multiply. For they have abandoned their devotion to the LORD.

NIV Hosea 4:10 "They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves

NAB Hosea 4:10 They shall eat but not be satisfied, they shall play the harlot but not increase, Because they have abandoned the LORD

NKJ Hosea 4:10 For they shall eat, but not have enough; They shall commit harlotry, but not increase; Because they have ceased obeying the LORD.

NJB Hosea 4:10 They will eat but never be satisfied, they will play the whore but not grow more prolific, since they have deserted Yahweh to give themselves up

GWN Hosea 4:10 "They will eat, but they'll never be full. They will have sex with prostitutes, but they'll never have children. They have abandoned the LORD.

NRS Hosea 4:10 They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply; because they have forsaken the LORD to devote themselves to

YLT Hosea 4:10 And they have eaten, and are not satisfied, They have gone a-whoring, and increase not, For they have left off taking heed to Jehovah.

- **they shall eat:** Lev 26:26 Pr 13:25 Isa 65:13-16 Mic 6:14 Hag 1:6 Mal 2:1-3
- **They will play the harlot:** Ho 4:14 9:11-17
- **Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD:** 2Ch 24:17 Ps 36:3 125:5 Jer 34:15 Eze 18:24 Zep 1:6 2Pe 2:20-22

- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**They will eat, but not have enough** - This speaks of God's judgment of [famine on the land](#). God was very clear about this in Leviticus "When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied." (Lev 26:26+)

**Have enough** (satisfied) (07646)([saba](#)) means to be sated (implying sufficiency, though generally not speaking of excess), to be filled or be full and so to be satisfied or have enough (or too much of something, as when Israel had too many quail in Ex 16:8, 12). Yahweh is the ultimate Source of physical satiety (Ps. 104:28; satisfaction with His lovingkindness - Ps 90:14). [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates with [empilemi](#) meaning to be satisfied or have enough (Jn 6:12).

**They will play the harlot, but not increase** - The NET is a bit more blunt rendering it "they will engage in prostitution, but not increase in numbers." The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates play the harlot with the verb **porneuo** (from **pornos** = literally the purchasable one, the one you buy, the harlot, the prostitute) which means to prostitute one's body to the lust of another, to give oneself to unlawful sexual intercourse. Here is used in the Hebraic sense as a figure of speech to describe one who worships idols rather than the living God. Israel was pictured as a woman (God's wife - Jer 31:32, Isa 54:5) who was unfaithful and like a wife who became a prostitute, figuratively committing acts of immorality against God. However as worship of idols is often associated with literal immorality in Scripture, the OT uses of porneuo also to picture both literal and figurative fornication.

All the uses of **porneuo** in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) (note concentration in Hosea)

Dt. 23:17; Jdg. 2:15; 1 Chr. 5:25; Ps. 73:27; Ps. 106:39; Jer. 3:6; Jer. 3:7; Jer. 3:8; Ezek. 6:9; Ezek. 16:15; Ezek. 16:34; Ezek. 23:19; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 9:1; Amos 7:17

**Play the harlot** (02181)([zanah](#)) is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7, Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of zannah are figurative describing Israel's (Jehovah's "wife") commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1, 2, 3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1, 2, 3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4-note; Rev 2:4-note). In addition zannah describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied." (TWOT) "A third figurative meaning is found in Isa 1:21, where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." (TWOT)

Uses of **zanah** in Hosea - Hos. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1;

**Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD** - This is always the explanation for apostasy and its rotten fruit of immorality. It was true with Israel, but it is a principle that applies to our lives. God is impartial, so if we cease giving heed to Jehovah ([How's your quiet time?](#) Is it "too quiet!"), rest assured we will reap the disastrous "desserts" of our sowing (and they won't be "sweet!").

**Stopped** (forsaken, left off) (05800)(['azab](#)) basically means to depart from something -- to leave, to forsake (48x), to leave (26x; "left" 22x), to loose, to depart, to abandon. Things that can left behind or forsaken include persons (Ge 44:22; Nu 10:30; Ru 1:16; 2Ki4:30), people who should left behind (Ge 2:24); places (2Ki 8:6; Jer 18:14; 25:38) and objects (Ge 39:12,13; 50:8; Ex 9:21). Men can forsake God (apostatize) (Dt 28:20, 31:16, Jer 1:16), can abandon qualities of virtue (1Ki 12:8, 2Chr 10:8, 13), the way (of righteousness) (Pr 15:10).

'**Azab** is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with [egkatalaipo](#) which means literally to leave down in and conveys the sense of deserting someone (in this case God) and so to desert or abandon. When one abandons God the tragedy is that one abandons all hope in this life and will be abandoned by God in the life to come!

**Giving heed** (guarding, observing) (08104)([shamar](#)) means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard.

**Shamar** is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with [phulasso](#) meaning to keep watch, to guard, to protect, to observe or follow (God's law).

**David Thompson** rightly says "When God's people stop listening to the Word and will of God, it is the beginning of the end for them. Nothing they do will make them happy. Nothing they do will be blessed by God. Even though they go to their worship services, all it means is judgment." ([Sermon](#))

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## Hosea 4:11 Harlotry, wine and new wine take away the understanding

KJV Hosea 4:11 Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

NET Hosea 4:11 Old and new wine take away the understanding of my people.

LXE Hosea 4:11 The heart of my people has gladly engaged in fornication and wine and strong drink.

NLT Hosea 4:11 to worship other gods. "Wine has robbed my people of their understanding.

ESV Hosea 4:11 whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding.

CSB Hosea 4:11 Promiscuity, wine, and new wine take away one's understanding.

NIV Hosea 4:11 to prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away the understanding

NAB Hosea 4:11 to practice harlotry. Old wine and new deprive my people of understanding.

NKJ Hosea 4:11 "Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart.

NJB Hosea 4:11 to whoring. Old wine and new wine addle my people's wits,

GWN Hosea 4:11 Prostitutes, old wine, and new wine have robbed them of their senses.

NRS Hosea 4:11 whoredom. Wine and new wine take away the understanding.

YLT Hosea 4:11 Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take the heart,

- **take:** Ho 4:12 Pr 6:32 20:1 23:27-35 Ec 7:7 Isa 5:12 28:7 Lu 21:34 Ro 13:11-14

### WINE, WOMEN AND SONG ARE A BAD COMBINATION

I say "song" because wine is often associated with joy and singing.

**Wikipedia** - "**Wine, women, and song**" is a [hendiatris](#) that endorses [hedonistic](#) lifestyles or behaviors. A more modern form of the idea is often expressed as "[sex](#) and [drugs](#) and [rock 'n' roll](#)", a phrase popularized by British singer [Ian Dury](#) in [his song of the same title](#).

**Harlotry, wine and new wine take away the understanding** - So now we see an allusion to intake of alcohol in excess as when one is drunk his/her understanding is blurred and blunted. Hosea 4:12-13 illustrate the lack of **understanding**.

The Hebrew word for **understanding** is [leb](#) (03820) which is usually translated **heart**. The "heart" is man's "control center" so to speak. And so the "**heart**" commonly refers to the mind as the **center of thinking and reason** (Pr 3:3; 6:21; 7:3), but also includes the **emotions** (Pr 15:15, 30), the **will** (Pr 11:20; 14:14), and thus, the **whole inner being** (Pr 3:5). The **heart** is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech (Pr 4:24), sight (Pr 4:25), and conduct (Pr 4:26, 27).

I like the **NKJV** rendering though not literal does give an excellent picture of the power of sin over the human heart - "Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart."

**David Thompson** adds - Sexual immorality will ruin you. It will take away your understanding and cause you to act like you are out of your mind. Drunkenness will ruin you. It will take away your ability to think right. ([Sermon](#))

## Hosea 4:12 My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them; For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, And they have played the harlot, departing from their God

KJV Hosea 4:12 My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.

LXE Hosea 4:12 They asked counsel by means of signs, and they reported answer to them by their staves: they have gone astray in a spirit of whoredom, and gone grievously a-whoring from their God.

NLT Hosea 4:12 They ask a piece of wood for advice! They think a stick can tell them the future! Longing after idols has made them foolish. They have played the prostitute, serving other gods and deserting their God.

ESV Hosea 4:12 My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore.

CSB Hosea 4:12 My people consult their wooden idols, and their divining rods inform them. For a spirit of promiscuity leads them astray; they act promiscuously in disobedience to their God.

NIV Hosea 4:12 of my people. They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God.

NAB Hosea 4:12 They consult their piece of wood, and their wand makes pronouncements for them, For the spirit of harlotry has led them astray; they commit harlotry, forsaking their God.

NKJ Hosea 4:12 My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, And their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, And they have played the harlot against their God.

NJB Hosea 4:12 they consult their block of wood, and their stick explains what they should do. For an urge to go whoring has led them astray and whoring they go and desert their God;

GWN Hosea 4:12 My people ask their wooden idols for help. A piece of wood tells them what to do. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray. They commit adultery by giving themselves to other gods.

NRS Hosea 4:12 My people consult a piece of wood, and their divining rod gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have played the whore, forsaking their God.

YLT Hosea 4:12 My people at its staff asketh and its rod declareth to it, For a spirit of whoredoms hath caused to err, And they go a-whoring from under their God.

- **My people consult** : Jer 2:27 10:8 Eze 21:21 Hab 2:19
- **For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray**: Ho 5:4 Isa 44:18-20 Mic 2:11 2Th 2:9-11
- **departing from their God**: Ho 9:1 Lev 17:7 20:5 Nu 15:39 De 31:16 2Ch 21:13 Ps 73:27 Jer 3:1-3 Eze 16:1-63 23:1-49
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **WOODEN IMAGES AND WICKET WANDS MAKE BAD COUNSELORS!**

**David Thompson** - Don't miss the context of all of this—when you are involved in religious things that are not true to the Word of God, you are actually straying from God and His Word and it will leave you without understanding. You will not know what truth is anymore. You will not even know where to turn to find truth. ([Sermon](#))

**My people consult their wooden idol** - KJV = "My people ask counsel at their stocks" The stocks were idols made of wood (compare Jeremiah 2:27). The "staff" may be a divining rod, such as many have used since ancient times to "witch" for water or metals in the earth. Perhaps more likely, it is synonymous with "stock."

Jeremiah 2:27 Who say to a tree, 'You are my father,' And to a stone, 'You gave me birth.' For they have turned their back to Me, And not their face; But in the time of their trouble they will say, 'Arise and save us.'

**And their diviner's wand informs them** - Once a person jettison's the true and living God from their mind and heart, they are wide open to all manner of supernatural sensationalistic phenomena! In this case they are now practicing sorcery for which an Israelite would have been stoned to death under the Mosaic Covenant, which they have forsaken. They are falling into the pagan practices of the occult.

**Unger's Dictionary** - [Rhabdomancy](#) (Gk. **hrabdos**, a "staff," and **manteia**, "divination"). Divination by rods. Cyril of Alexandria calls this an invention of the Chaldeans and describes it as consisting in this, that two rods were held upright and then allowed to fall while forms of incantation were being uttered. The oracle was inferred by the way in which the rods fell, whether forward or backward, to the right or to the left. This custom is referred to in Hos. 4:12: "And their diviner's wand informs them," and is evidence of the tendency of Israel to idolatry.

**Wikipedia on Rhabdomancy** - One method of rhabdomancy was setting a number of staffs on end and observing where they fall, to divine the direction one should travel, or to find answers to certain questions.<sup>[1][2]</sup> It has also been used for divination by arrows (which have wooden shafts) - otherwise known as [belomancy](#).<sup>[3]</sup> Less commonly it has been assigned to the [I Ching](#), which traditionally uses a bundle of yarrow shoots.<sup>[4]</sup> Another type of rhabdomancy is [dowsing](#) in its traditional form of using a wooden stick,

usually forked.<sup>[5][6]</sup> Rhabdomancy has been used in reference to a number of Biblical verses. [St Jerome](#) connected Hosea 4:12, which reads "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them" (KJV), to Ancient Greek rhabdomantic practices.<sup>[7][8][9]</sup> Thomas Browne, in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, notes that Ezekiel 21:21 describes the divination by arrows of [Nebuchadnezzar II](#) as rhabdomancy, though this can also be termed belomancy.<sup>[10][11]</sup> Numbers 17 has also been attributed to rhabdomancy.<sup>[12]</sup>

**For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray** - This is not some demonic "spirit" but is a reflection of their unfaithfulness to God in their hearts. The heart is desperately sick and continually seeks to lead men and women astray. We don't need demonic spirits to lead us astray. We have the "enemy within" called the flesh who is powerful and seductive and fully able to lead us astray from God and His Word of Truth.

**David Thompson** - Again we come to the theme of sexual immorality. It can lead people away from God faster than almost any other sin. There is no question that the Apostle Paul said that sexual immorality is a different kind of sin that will actually cause one to lose not only mental reason, but eternal rewards. This is exactly why Paul said to "flee immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:9, 16-18<sup>+</sup>). ([Sermon](#))

**And they have played the harlot** - In this context [zanah](#) refers to spiritual harlotry or spiritual adultery (in contrast to use in Hos 4:13), but of course does not exclude physical harlotry. God is their husband and by worshipping other so-called gods they have gone a-whoring (so to speak) spiritually. They have been unfaithful spiritually. See preceding discussion of [zanah](#) (Hos. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1)

**Departing from their God** - This is not just "backsliding" like a believer who has a bad day, week or "season" of sinful rebellion. This is out and out apostasy or turning away from the God Israel had been set apart to worship.

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**[What was the "spirit of prostitution" in Hosea 4:12?](#)** - Answer: Hosea 4:12 makes a strong and graphic accusation against Israel: "My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore." Why would God say Israel had a spirit of whoredom ("spirit of prostitution," NIV)? This provocative label is given to idolaters. We read that the Israelites "inquire of a piece of wood." In other words, Israelites were consulting wooden idols. They had invested financially in making these idols or in asking others to give advice from idols. These idolaters were "unfaithful" to the Lord as they paid to have a relationship with other gods. God's people are to be faithful to Him; to chase after other gods is to commit "spiritual adultery." The "spirit of whoredom" could be a poetic reference to Israel's desire to practice idolatry. However, there is a real connection between idolatry and the spirit world: "They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known" (Deuteronomy 32:17). There are spirits, demonic in nature, which set themselves up as "gods" in this world and demand worship. The "spirit of whoredom" could be a literal entity that led Israel astray. Hosea 4:13 continues to delineate the problem: "They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery." Israel's spiritual prostitution included offering sacrifices to false gods. This was in violation of God's Law that commanded sacrifice only to the Lord in the temple in Jerusalem. The worship of other gods often included actual prostitution, a sexual sin that the Israelites had been commanded to avoid. Such strong words from God through the prophet Hosea were intended to condemn idolatry and call Israel to repentance. God offered forgiveness and restoration even to those who had been so wicked. Hosea himself served as an example of God's grace: his wife Gomer was unfaithful to him, yet he restored his relationship with her (Hosea 1:2; 3:1-5). In the same way, God was willing to restore His relationship with His people who had strayed into idolatry. Hosea 14, the final chapter of the book, reveals the Lord's desire for His people: "Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity" (Hosea 14:1). Verse 4 likewise encourages, "I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them." Verse 7 poetically describes a restored Israel in the future: "They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine." Despite wayward Israel's following a "spirit of prostitution," it is clear the Lord's desire was to restore His people, calling them to repentance and a renewed relationship. This gracious offer to sinners is still extended to individuals today through Jesus Christ. He has offered forgiveness of sin and the opportunity for a relationship with God for everyone who trusts in Him (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** - The towering monument to George Washington dominates the skyline in our nation's capital, and intentionally so. Buildings in Washington, D.C. are restricted to a height of nine stories so that they will not overshadow the Washington Monument. This is symbolic of a truth that has existed since the day God called Abraham to leave his homeland and go to Canaan: a nation seldom rises above the character of its leaders. Not only that, but it also seems that after awhile a country's national ""persona"" begins to reflect the character, or lack thereof, of its leaders. We are seeing another illustration of this principle in the nation of Israel in the eighth century B.C. The nation had gone bad, but the problem was not just that everybody was sinning against the Lord. Unfortunately, the Israelites had help--the terrible example of their priests and kings. Chapter 4 of Hosea's

prophecy seems to contain just about any sin that could be named. The mention of seeking answers by means of "a stick of wood" (Hos 4:12) refers to one ancient form of divination, a pagan practice strictly forbidden to God's people. The priests, who had already come under God's indictment, were guilty because they offered sacrifices to idols in numerous locations, accompanied by immoral practices. It's little wonder that the young women of Israel turned to immorality and prostitution as a way of life (Hos 4:13). Things were so bad that the prophet warned the southern kingdom of Judah to stay away from Israel so as not to duplicate Israel's sins. Specifically, Judah was warned to avoid the formerly holy sites of Gilgal and Bethel, the "house of God," which had become Beth Aven, the "house of wickedness." All of this starkly contrasts the way God wanted to tend, feed, and lead His people. He wanted to be their Shepherd, gently leading His lambs to safety and abundant provision. Today's lesson is one that should cause us to pause and reflect, since the principle of "like people, like priests" (Hos 4:9) is still in effect--except today we might reword it to say, "as a country's leaders are, so will its people be." We could argue about individual leaders, or champion our particular cause or party. But our first duty as Christians and citizens is to offer up prayer for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Regardless of denominational or political identity, this is a command that all of God's people can obey.

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**Hosea 4:10-19 Today in the Word** Woe to him who says to wood, "Come to life!" Or to lifeless stone, "Wake up!" Can it give guidance? Habakkuk 2:19 - Opponents of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) object to its prevalent use as a sugar substitute because of possible negative health effects. Although research so far has been inconclusive, some nutritional experts believe fructose inhibits the release of leptin, a hormone that causes a feeling of satisfaction and controls the appetite. They argue that foods high in HFCS cause consumers to eat without feeling full. Sin has a similar, more powerful effect. Israel is the case study, and the evidence is clear: their appetite for sin never waned. Their problem wasn't a lack of spiritual hunger; they were just always eating at the wrong table. Today's passage catalogs Israel's steady diet of misguided worship. It included adultery and prostitution, both figuratively and literally. Prostitution was a metaphor for Israel's pattern of adding to their worship whatever false god most tantalized their desires, but it was also a literal part of pagan worship practices (v. 14). Israel's mixed worship included inanimate objects believed to possess divine powers (v. 12). Israel burned their sacrifices in places they found appealing instead of holy places set apart for God (v. 13). They turned sacred sites into degraded centers of idolatry (v. 15). Gilgal was the site of Israel's miraculous crossing of the Jordan River, commemorated by Joshua as a reminder to future generations of God's power (Josh. 4:19-24). Beth Aven was an alteration of Bethel, changing the meaning of the city's name from House of God to House of Wickedness. It was the place named by Jacob and where he was given the name Israel and told to cleanse his house of all foreign idols (Gen. 35:1-9). Now, both places had become havens of foreign worship. Prophets had delivered the Word of God to the people, but they continued to stray further from the will of God, like a stubborn cow instead of an obedient lamb (v. 16). Israel refused what was good for them, and they were about to be carried away by forces beyond their control (v. 19). The worship described by Hosea was focused more on the desires of the participants than the glory of any god. That can be a dangerous trap even for believers in the one true God. In your corporate worship, be careful to make honoring God a higher priority than personal entertainment. This is not a call to criticize your worship leader's choice of songs or styles, rather, it is a reminder to always approach worship with an attitude of contrition and a humble heart. That is one sacrifice God will never reject (Ps. 51:17).

**Hosea 4:13 They offer sacrifices on the tops of the mountains And burn incense on the hills, Under oak, poplar and terebinth, Because their shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters play the harlot And your brides commit adultery.**

KJV Hosea 4:13 They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

NET Hosea 4:13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops, and burn offerings on the hills; they sacrifice under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is so pleasant. As a result, your daughters have become cult prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery!

LXE Hosea 4:13 They have sacrificed on the tops of the mountains, and on the hills they have sacrificed under the oak and poplar, and under the shady tree, because the shade was good: therefore your daughters shall go a-whoring, and your daughters-in-law shall commit adultery.

NLT Hosea 4:13 They offer sacrifices to idols on the mountaintops. They go up into the hills to burn incense in the pleasant shade of oaks, poplars, and terebinth trees. "That is why your daughters turn to prostitution, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

ESV Hosea 4:13 They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery.



CSB Hosea 4:13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops, and they burn offerings on the hills, and under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, because their shade is pleasant. And so your daughters act promiscuously and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

NIV Hosea 4:13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar and terebinth, where the shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution and your daughters-in-law to adultery.

NAB Hosea 4:13 On the mountaintops they offer sacrifice and on the hills they burn incense, Beneath oak and poplar and terebinth, because of their pleasant shade. That is why your daughters play the harlot, and your daughters-in-law are adulteresses.

NKJ Hosea 4:13 They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops, And burn incense on the hills, Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, Because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters commit harlotry, And your brides commit adultery.

NJB Hosea 4:13 they offer sacrifice on the mountain tops, they burn incense on the hills, under oak and poplar and terebinth, for pleasant is their shade. So, although your daughters play the whore and your daughters-in-law commit adultery,

GWN Hosea 4:13 They offer sacrifices on mountaintops, and they burn incense on the hills under oaks, poplars, and other trees. They think that these trees provide good shade. "That is why your daughters become prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

NRS Hosea 4:13 They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains, and make offerings upon the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

YLT Hosea 4:13 On tops of the mountains they do sacrifice, And on the hills they make perfume, Under oak, and poplar, and terebinth, For good is its shade.

- **sacrifices:** Isa 1:29 57:5,7 Jer 3:6,13 Eze 6:13 16:16,25 20:28,29
- **therefore:** 2Sa 12:10-12 Job 31:9,10 Am 7:17 Ro 1:23-28
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FALSE WORSHIP: SACRIFICES AND SEX**

This passage once again shows the strong link between **idolatry** and **immorality**.

**THOUGHT** - The preceding principle begs the question - Do you have any "idolatry" in your life? If so are you wrestling with immorality? For example, are you having "trouble" with the internet? If so, ask God to show you any idols you might have in your life and cast them out by the power of the Holy Spirit. (cf Ps 139:23-24) As long as you have "idols" you are vulnerable!

**They offer sacrifices on the tops of the mountains And burn incense on the hills** - Their "high places" were really low places spiritually for faithless Israel sacrificed to the pagan gods were on the tops of the mountains and these "worship services" were replete with indescribably abominable immoral ceremonies.

**Under oak, poplar and terebinth, Because their shade is pleasant** - Chisholm summarizes Hos 4:11-14 - They engaged in pagan worship practices, including divination (seeking answers by a stick of wood), sacrificed to false gods, and engaged in cult prostitution (cf. Hos 5:4). The Canaanite shrines, which Moses had commanded Israel to destroy (cf. Deut. 12:2-3), were located on hills and/or under shady trees (oak, poplar, and terebinth) throughout the Northern Kingdom (cf. 2 Kings 17:10-11). Here many young women (daughters) of Israel took part in sexual rites with male cult prostitutes (cf. Deut. 23:17-18; 1 Kings 14:24). The intent of such acts was to ensure human and agricultural fecundity by making the fertility deities Baal and Asherah favorably inclined to their offerings and prayers. However, these women would not be singled out for divine punishment because the men frequented the shrines as well (Hosea 4:14). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Therefore your daughters play the harlot** - This context speaks of literal prostitution, not just spiritual prostitution. The NET renders it "your daughters have become cult prostitutes." See preceding discussion of [zanah](#) (Hos. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1)

According to this statement the reason why the **daughters** were involved in prostitution and the reason why brides commit adultery

is because all of this was promoted by the men.

**And your brides commit adultery** - **ESV** also has "**brides**." Some versions like **NET** (NIV, CSB) say "your daughters-in-law commit adultery"

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the definition of idolatry?](#)
- [Is religious iconography considered idolatry? What is an icon?](#)
- [What are some modern forms of idolatry?](#)
- [Do Catholics worship idols / practice idolatry?](#)

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**What is the significance of high places in the Bible?** Answer: High places, very simply, were places of worship on elevated pieces of ground. High places were originally dedicated to idol worship (Numbers 33:52; Leviticus 26:30), especially among the Moabites (Isaiah 16:12). These shrines often included an altar and a sacred object such as a stone pillar or wooden pole in various shapes identified with the object of worship (animals, constellations, goddesses, and fertility deities). It seems that, at times, high places were set up in a spot that had been artificially elevated; 2 Kings 16:4 seems to differentiate the "high places" from the "hills." The Israelites, forever turning away from God, practiced Molech worship and built high places for Baal (Jeremiah 32:35). Although Solomon built the temple of God in Jerusalem, he later established idolatrous high places for his foreign wives outside of Jerusalem and worshiped with them, causing him the loss of the kingdom (1 Kings 11:11). The people were still sacrificing at the pagan high places before the temple was built, and Solomon joined them. After the Lord appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon, the king returned to Jerusalem and sacrificed offerings; however, he continued to waver between the two places of worship. Not all high places were dedicated to idol worship. They played a major role in Israelite worship, and the earliest biblical mention of a site of worship, later called a "high place," is found in Genesis 12:6–8 where Abram built altars to the Lord at Shechem and Hebron. Abraham built an altar in the region of Moriah and was willing to sacrifice his son there (Genesis 22:1–2). This site is traditionally believed to be the same high place where the temple of Jerusalem was built. Jacob set up a stone pillar to the Lord at Bethel (Genesis 28:18–19), and Moses met God on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1–3). Joshua set up stone pillars after crossing the Jordan (Joshua 4:20) and considered this a high place of worship because the Israelites "came up from" the Jordan onto higher ground. The high places were visited regularly by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 7:16). High places as sites of Canaanite idol worship (Judges 3:19) extended into the period of Elijah (1 Kings 18:16–40). God would name only one high place where sacrifice was authorized, and that was the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). God commanded that all other high places be destroyed. King Josiah destroyed them in 2 Kings 22–23. ([Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org))

**Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot Or your brides when they commit adultery, For the men themselves go apart with harlots And offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes; So the people without understanding are ruined.**

KJV Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

NET Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery. For the men consort with harlots, they sacrifice with temple prostitutes. It is true: "A people that lacks understanding will come to ruin!"

LXE Hosea 4:14 And I will not visit upon your daughters when they shall commit fornication, nor your daughters-in-law when they shall commit adultery: for they themselves mingled themselves with harlots, and sacrificed with polluted ones, and the people that understood not entangled itself with a harlot.

NLT Hosea 4:14 But why should I punish them for their prostitution and adultery? For your men are doing the same thing, sinning with whores and shrine prostitutes. O foolish people! You refuse to understand, so you will be destroyed.

ESV Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

CSB Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they act promiscuously or your daughters-in-law when

they commit adultery, for the men themselves go off with prostitutes and make sacrifices with cult prostitutes. People without discernment are doomed.

NIV Hosea 4:14 "I will not punish your daughters when they turn to prostitution, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery, because the men themselves consort with harlots and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes-- a people without understanding will come to ruin!

NAB Hosea 4:14 Am I then to punish your daughters for their harlotry, your daughters-in-law for their adultery? You yourselves consort with harlots, and with prostitutes you offer sacrifice! So must a people without understanding come to ruin.

NKJ Hosea 4:14 "I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry, Nor your brides when they commit adultery; For the men themselves go apart with harlots, And offer sacrifices with a ritual harlot. Therefore people who do not understand will be trampled.

NJB Hosea 4:14 I shall not punish your daughters for playing the whore nor your daughters-in-law for committing adultery, when the men themselves are wandering off with whores and offering sacrifice with sacred prostitutes, for a people with no understanding is doomed.

GWN Hosea 4:14 Yet, I will not punish your daughters when they become prostitutes or your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery. The men go to prostitutes and offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes. These foolish people will be trampled.

NRS Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with whores, and sacrifice with temple prostitutes; thus a people without understanding comes to ruin.

YLT Hosea 4:14 Therefore commit whoredom do your daughters, And your spouses commit adultery, I do not see after your daughters when they commit whoredom, And after your spouses when they commit adultery, For they with the harlots are separated, And with the whores they do sacrifice, A people that doth not understand kicketh.

- **punish:** Ho 4:17 Isa 1:5 Heb 12:8
- **For the men themselves go apart with harlots:** 1Co 6:16
- **And offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes:** 1Ki 14:23,24 15:12 2Ki 23:7
- **So the people without understanding are ruined:** Ho 4:1,5,6 14:9 Pr 28:5 Isa 44:18-20 56:11 Da 12:10 Joh 8:43 Ro 3:11 Eph 4:18
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LENIENCY FOR THE LADIES

**I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot Or your brides when they commit adultery-** They would not be singled out

See preceding discussion of [zanah](#) (Hos. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1)

**For the men themselves go apart with harlots and offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes** - This speaks of the lewd sexual practices which were even practiced under the guise of "religion" or "worship." Talk about being deceived! When you are deceived you don't even know it and you begin to think like they did in the book of Judges which is summarized "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Jdg 21:25+). Do you see what that is saying? What they did (even overt, abominable sins) they thought was "right in their own eyes." That's deception. And the pathogenesis of the problem in Judges was similar to the situation in the Northern Kingdom -- there was no spiritual leader, no godly leadership.

**So the people without understanding are ruined-** This is basically a repetition of the prediction in Hos 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

**David Thompson** - God says I won't even punish the daughters or the brides because it is the men and the false leaders who are promoting all of this. God's people were being ruined because the male leadership refused to lead the people into the pure, true, right ways of God. This is interesting to me because in our social world, generally speaking, men's sins are treated more leniently than a woman's sin. But it doesn't work that way in God's world. God will hold the men accountable and specifically He will hold the

**Hosea 4:15 Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Do not let Judah become guilty; Also do not go to Gilgal, Or go up to Beth-aven And take the oath: "As the LORD lives!"**

KJV Hosea 4:15 Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth.

NET Hosea 4:15 Although you, O Israel, commit adultery, do not let Judah become guilty! Do not journey to Gilgal! Do not go up to Beth Aven! Do not swear, "As surely as the LORD lives!"

LXE Hosea 4:15 But thou, O Israel, be not ignorant, and go ye not, men of Juda, to Galgala; and go not up to the house of On, and swear not by the living Lord.

NLT Hosea 4:15 "Though you, Israel, are a prostitute, may Judah avoid such guilt. Do not join the false worship at Gilgal or Beth-aven, even though they take oaths there in the LORD's name.

ESV Hosea 4:15 Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven, and swear not, "As the LORD lives."

CSB Hosea 4:15 Israel, if you act promiscuously, don't let Judah become guilty! Do not go to Gilgal or make a pilgrimage to Beth-aven, and do not swear an oath: As the LORD lives!

NIV Hosea 4:15 "Though you commit adultery, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. "Do not go to Gilgal; do not go up to Beth Aven. And do not swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives!'

NAB Hosea 4:15 Though you play the harlot, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty! Come not to Gilgal, nor up to Beth-aven, to swear, "As the Lord lives!"

NKJ Hosea 4:15 "Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Let not Judah offend. Do not come up to Gilgal, Nor go up to Beth Aven, Nor swear an oath, saying, 'As the LORD lives'--

NJB Hosea 4:15 Though you, Israel, play the whore, there is no need for Judah to sin too. Do not go to Gilgal, do not go up to Beth-Aven, do not swear oaths 'by Yahweh's life',

GWN Hosea 4:15 "Israel, you act like a prostitute. Don't let Judah become guilty too. Don't go to Gilgal. Don't go to Beth Aven. Don't take the oath, 'As the LORD lives....'

NRS Hosea 4:15 Though you play the whore, O Israel, do not let Judah become guilty. Do not enter into Gilgal, or go up to Beth-aven, and do not swear, "As the LORD lives."

YLT Hosea 4:15 Though a harlot thou art, O Israel, Let not Judah become guilty, And come not ye in to Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-Aven, Nor swear ye, Jehovah liveth.

- **play:** Ho 4:12 Jer 3:6-10 Eze 23:4-8
- **yet:** Ho 11:12 2Ki 17:18,19 Jer 3:10,11 Lu 12:47,48 Eph 5:11
- **Also do not go to Gilgal:** Ho 9:15 12:11 Am 4:4 5:5
- **Or go up to Beth-aven :** Ho 5:8 10:5,8 1Ki 12:28,29
- **And take the oath: "As the LORD lives!":** Isa 48:1 Jer 5:2 Eze 20:39 Am 6:10 8:14 Zep 1:5,6
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**WARNING TO  
JUDAH**

**David Thompson** sees Hosea 4:15-19 as divine "preventive maintenance" for the Southern Kingdom

THEME #4 – God warns to prevent some of His people from falling into the same sin. 4:15-19

Preventative #1 - God warns Judah not to become guilty like Israel. Hos 4:15a

Preventative #2 - God warns Judah not to go to Gilgal . Hos 4:15b

Preventative #3 - God warns Judah not to go to Beth-aven . Hos 4:15c Gilgal and Beth-aven were two pagan cult sites. In fact, the name "Bethel" means "House of God" and the name "Beth-aven" means

"House of Wickedness." God did not want them going to these false places of evil worship and taking oaths like Israel.

Preventative #4 - God warns He does not shepherd and care for a rebellious people. Hos 4:16 When God's people pursue sin, it takes them out from the shepherding protection and provisions of God. God can shepherd and bless His people and He delights in doing this. However, God may also take away His blessings.

Preventative #5 - God warns His people that they would end up ashamed . Hos 4:17-19 Because of their drunken, idolatrous immorality, God would see to it that His people would be blown away and blown into shame. ([Sermon](#))

**Though you, Israel, play the harlot - Israel** stands for the 10 Northern Tribes (referred to above as Ephraim). The context here refers to Israel's spiritual adultery. See preceding discussion of [zanah](#) (Hos. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1)

**Do not let Judah become guilty** - The sense is that Judah would avoid such guilt as the Northern Kingdom had incurred. Did they? No for Jeremiah says...

Then the LORD said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there. 7 "I thought, 'After she has done all these things she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 "And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also. 9 "Because of the lightness of her harlotry, she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 "Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception," declares the LORD. (Jer 3:6-10)

**Also do not go to Gilgal - Gilgal** was an important religious center in the north, known in Hosea's time for its hypocritical religious practices (Amos 4:4).

Hosea 9:15 All their evil is at **Gilgal**; Indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will love them no more; All their princes are rebels.

Hosea 12:11 Is there iniquity in Gilead? Surely they are worthless. In **Gilgal** they sacrifice bulls, Yes, their altars are like the stone heaps Beside the furrows of the field.

Amos 4:4 (Amos began prophesying to Northern Kingdom about 755 BC, two years before Hosea in 753 BC - according to Ryrie) - "Enter Bethel (chief idolatrous worship center of north) and transgress; In **Gilgal** multiply transgression! (= "Go to Gilgal to sin!" = bitter sarcastic call to "worship") Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days.

**Or go up to Beth-aven** - They are not to go to the "House of Wickedness" the place of "pseudo-worship" of the Northern Kingdom! Woe! Judah was to stay away from Israel's two major centers of false worship and not to worship at what were formerly holy cities, **Gilgal** and **Beth-aven** (House of Wickedness = Hosea's name for **Bethel** = which meant House of God). **Beth-haven** was a deliberate substitution for the name **Bethel** once sacred to God (Ge 28:10-19 = site of Jacob's dream), but initiated by Jeroboam as a place to worship calves (1 Ki 12:28-33; 13:1; Jer 48:13; Am 3:14; 7:13). Geographically Beth-aven (aka "Bethel") was in the southern part of the Northern Kingdom and just inside the border from the Southern Kingdom. It would have been easy to make a trip from Judah just across the border to Beth-aven (mentioned 3x in Hosea - Hos 4:15, Hos 5:8, Hos 10:5).

**Holman Bible Dictionary on Beth-aven** - Hosea used the term as a description of Beth-el. Instead of a house of God, Beth-el had become a house of deception and idolatry. Thus he commanded worshipers to refuse to go there (Hosea 4:15 ), to prepare for battle against an army marching from the south against Benjamin (Hosea 5:8), and to be afraid of the golden calves in the worship place of Beth-el, not because they represented the fearful presence of God but because they brought disaster on the nation (Hosea 10:5). All the worship places were Aven, deception and idolatry (Hosea 10:8 = "Also the high places of **Aven**, [means nothingness, trouble, evil, emptiness, vanity] the sin of Israel, will be destroyed; Thorn and thistle will grow on their altars; Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!").

**And take the oath "As the LORD lives!"** - " do not swear oaths 'by Yahweh's life'," (NJB) Those from Judah were not to take false oaths under the guise of worship like those in the Northern Kingdom were doing. **Chisholm** explains "In the midst of this idolatrous, immoral worship the Israelites even had the audacity to employ the Lord's name in oaths. The Law commanded Israel to swear by the Lord's name (Deut. 6:13; 10:20). However, to make a semblance of devotion to the Lord while serving other gods was the

grossest hypocrisy. "(Ibid)

**Morris** - The town of Beth-aven (meaning "house of vanities") had long been a center of idol worship and immorality. The northern kingdom had become enamored of it, and Hosea was warning Judah not to do the same. The same had become true of Gilgal.

#### **Hosea 4:16 Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer, Can the LORD now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field?**

KJV Hosea 4:16 For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

a lamb in a broad field!

LXE Hosea 4:16 For Israel was maddened like a mad heifer: now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a wide place.

NLT Hosea 4:16 Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. So should the LORD feed her like a lamb in a lush pasture?

ESV Hosea 4:16 Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?

CSB Hosea 4:16 For Israel is as obstinate as a stubborn cow. Can the LORD now shepherd them like a lamb in an open meadow?

NIV Hosea 4:16 The Israelites are stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. How then can the LORD pasture them like lambs in a meadow?

NAB Hosea 4:16 For Israel is as stubborn as a heifer; will the LORD now give them broad pastures as though they were lambs?

NKJ Hosea 4:16 "For Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn calf; Now the LORD will let them forage Like a lamb in open country.

NJB Hosea 4:16 for Israel is as stubborn as a stubborn heifer; so is Yahweh likely to pasture him like a lamb in a broad meadow?

GWN Hosea 4:16 "The people of Israel are as stubborn as a bull. How can the LORD feed them like lambs in an open pasture?

NRS Hosea 4:16 Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?

YLT Hosea 4:16 For as a refractory heifer hath Israel turned aside, Now doth Jehovah feed them as a lamb in a large place.

- **Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer**: Ho 11:7 1Sa 15:11 Jer 3:6,8,11 5:6 7:24 8:5 14:7 Zec 7:11 \*marg:
- **Can the LORD now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field** Lev 26:33 Isa 7:21-25 22:18
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **A BACKSLIDING HEIFER**

**Since Israel is stubborn Like a stubborn heifer, Can the LORD now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field?**- This is a rhetorical question. I was raised on a farm and stubborn heifer could not be treated like a gentle lamb! The answer to the question is of course is "No!" Now the Lord could do anything, but in the context of Israel's unwavering stubbornness and unfaithfulness, God would treat her accordingly. (cf. Jer. 31:18, and regarding stubbornness see Dt 21:18-21)

**Guzik** - Cattle can safely feed out on the open range, because they are not easy prey for predators. But a lamb in open country has strayed from the shepherd and is vulnerable. Hosea's point is plain: if you act like a stubborn cow, don't expect to be protected like an obedient sheep. (Ibid)

**John Phillips** - He then likened his own nation to a "backsliding heifer" (4:16), a significant description since Israel's chief idol was a golden calf. Hosea, a country man, had seen many intractable, untamed animals pull back from the yoke when they could. If they

could not avoid the yoke, they would pull sideways or backward. Israel was just like them. Judah had, in the mercy of God, been pulled back from the abyss, but let her beware of backsliding again!

[Hosea 4:16KJV - Backsliding](#) - In Depth Analysis with numerous references - The peril of the **drifting life**...

For most of us the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin. There are few people who deliberately and in a moment turn their backs on God; there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from him. There are not many who in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin; there are many who almost imperceptibly involve themselves in some situation and suddenly awake to find that they have ruined life for themselves and broken someone else's heart. We must continually be on the alert against the peril of the drifting life (cf 1Pe 1:13, Heb 2:1, Mt 26:41, etc). The Word will never drift from us. The danger is our drifting from the anchor provided by the Truth of God's Word. The harbor of salvation is absolutely secure. It is Jesus Christ, Who never moves, never changes, and is always available to anyone who wants the protection and security of His righteousness. (From [William Barclay's commentary on Hebrews](#) - however see [critique of Barclay](#) or [here for some of his beliefs](#))

**Charles Naylor** (1941) speaks about those saints who are **drifting** - "They have become used to being unspiritual. They are not just altogether satisfied with it, but they would rather be as they are, than to make an effort to be more spiritual. So they drift along. Oh, of course, they would like to be more spiritual like their brethren, but they have become used to being as they now are, and as they are doing pretty well, why bother about things? To be sure, they have lost their former zeal, but they have got used to being without it. They used to feel very keenly when they omitted spiritual duties, but now they have become used to omitting them and it does not bother them so much. We can get into a place where it is just natural for us to love righteousness and to hate iniquity, to desire to do all we can for God and not hold back from effort. We can get used to service and sacrifice, and this we must do if we are to prosper in our souls as God designs that we should prosper. But woe unto us, if we sacrifice those qualities of righteousness in the soul, and get used to sin." ([Read the entire article if you are drifting or beginning to drift - They Got Used to It!](#))

**Stubborn** (05637)(**sarar**) means to be stubborn or to be obstinate, 16/17x as Qal participle and 4x in parallel with **mārāh** which means rebellious. A similar verb in Arabic means "to be angry" and in Akkadian "to be deceitful."

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **sarar** in Hos 4:16 with the rare verb (only found in Septuagint, here and Ezra 2:6) **paroistrao** which means to rage madly, to be provoked, to be incited (of animals, e.g. a young cow).

**Gilbrant** - **Sārār** refers to a stubborn, rebellious people in general (Ps 66:7; 68:6, 18; Jer. 6:28); more specifically, it refers to a stubborn generation of Israel's forefathers (Ps. 78:8), to a stubborn son who was incorrigible and whose parents had to take him before the tribal elders for execution (Deut. 21:18, 20), to the stubborn princes of Israel who led their people into sin (Isa. 1:23; Hos. 9:15), to the stubborn people of Israel who sought counsel, but not from the Lord (Isa. 30:1), and walked in their own ways (Isa. 65:2) and to a stubborn harlot pictured figuratively as personified folly lurking in public places to ensnare the simple (Prov. 7:11). **Sārār** is also used figuratively of Israel's rebellion to describe the heart of the people of Israel (Jer. 5:23). Israel was stubborn like a stubborn calf (Hos. 4:16). **Sārār** is used as an adjective to modify **kāthfiph**, "shoulder," in an idiom meaning "to shrug the shoulder"—literally "to give a stubborn shoulder" (Neh. 9:29; Zech. 7:11). (BDB 710, KB 2:770, NIDOTTE 3:298-300, Strong 5637, TWOT 2:635) ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Patterson** - The root is clearly displayed in the case of the wayward and rebellious son who is publicly denounced and executed (Deut. 21:18ff., see under **sābā'**). Most often it portrays Israel's total rebellion against God (Isaiah 1:23; Jeremiah 6:28). Indeed, the "stubborn and rebellious son" may be one who is not merely disobedient to parents, but who has rebelled likewise against their God. In that case, the verses teach that even the parent should condemn the apostate son. Cf. for a similar thought Deut. 13:6-11. It is a rebellious generation (Psalm 78:8) or heifer (Hosea 4:16) which walks in its own way (Isaiah 65:2). It has a stubborn shoulder (Neh. 9:29), a deaf ear (Zech. 7:11), and a stubborn and rebellious heart (Jeremiah 5:23). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Sarar** - 16x - rebellious(6), rebels(2), stubborn(8), stubbornly rebellious(1).

Deut. 21:18; Deut. 21:20; Neh. 9:29; Ps. 66:7; Ps. 68:6; Ps. 68:18; Ps. 78:8; Prov. 7:11; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 30:1; Isa. 65:2; Jer. 5:23; Jer. 6:28; Hos. 4:16; Hos. 9:15; Zech. 7:11

**Screwtape** advises **Wormwood** on how to attack

All the healthy and out-going activities which we want him to avoid can be inhibited and nothing given in return, so that at least he may say, as one of my own patients said on his arrival down here, 'I now see that I spent most of my life in doing neither what I ought nor what I liked.'

The Christians describe the Enemy as one 'without whom Nothing is strong'. And Nothing is very strong: strong enough to steal away a man's best years not in sweet sins but in a dreary flickering of the mind over it

knows not what and knows not why, in the gratification of curiosities so feeble that the man is only half aware of them, in drumming of fingers and kicking of heels, in whistling tunes that he does not like, or in the long, dim labyrinth of reveries that have not even lust or ambition to give them a relish, but which, once chance association has started them, the creature is too weak and fuddled to shake off.

You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy.

It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts (The Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis)

**Joel Beeke** asks "**What is backsliding?** Backsliding is a season in the life of a professing Christian when his sin grows stronger and his obedience declines. Not all sin is backsliding. The Christian life is a constant cycle of sin and repentance, all under the atoning blood of Jesus. But at times the cycle of repentance is broken for a while. This is backsliding. It could lead to outright apostasy or falling away from Christ, thus showing that the person is not saved. But by God's grace not all backsliding is deadly to the soul. Our Physician can heal fallen runners. Healing begins with diagnosis. The most dangerous injury is one where you do not recognize how serious it is. Many Christians are like people who know something is wrong with their bodies but refuse to go to the doctor until a friend forces them to—or until it gets so bad they have no other choice. Sadly, avoiding diagnosis can be deadly. The infection turns into gangrene. The cancer metastasizes and spreads. Early diagnosis can save your life." (Read the full article [Getting Back into the Race](#))

#### **Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols; Let him alone.**

**KJV** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

**Greek of Septuagint (Lxx)** - [metochos](#) (companion of, partaking in [the cult of idols]) eidolon Ephraim etheken (histemi: 3SAAL: has set) heauto skandala (plural = stumbling blocks or snares Rev2:14)

**English of Septuagint** - Ephraim partaking with idols has set stumblingblocks ([skandalon](#) - not singular but plural) in his own path. (Who's fault then is the subsequent destruction?)

**NET** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim has attached himself to idols; Do not go near him!

**NLT** Hosea 4:17 Leave Israel alone, because she is married to idolatry.

**ESV** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone.

**CSB** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is attached to idols; leave him alone!

**NIV** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

**NAB** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is an associate of idols, let him alone!

**NKJ** Hosea 4:17 "Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.

**NJB** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim has made a pact with idols- let him alone!

**GWN** Hosea 4:17 The people of Ephraim have chosen to worship idols. Leave them alone!

**NRS** Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols-- let him alone.

**YLT** Hosea 4:17 Joined to idols is Ephraim, let him alone.

- **Ephraim:** Ho 11:2 12:1 13:2
- **let:** Ho 4:4 Ps 81:12 Mt 15:14 Rev 22:11
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **THE HORROR OF DIVINE ABANDONMENT!**

**Ephraim is joined to idols** - In the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translation of this verse the Greek word [metochos](#) which describes one who



shares with someone else as an associate in an enterprise or undertaking. In the present context it speaks of Ephraim participating in, partnering, in sharing in idolatry. Metochos is first word in the Greek translation for emphasis of this horrid sin that speaks of unfaithfulness to God, her "Husband." (cf Jer 31:32, Isa 54:5). The language of marriage was used in Hoses 2 where we read "I will **betroth** you to Me forever; Yes, I will **betroth** you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion." (Hos 2:19)

**THOUGHT** - Notice the repetition of the verb **betroth** - The selection of the bride was followed by the **BETROTHAL**, which was similar to modern "engagement" but was far more binding (modern engagements being virtually meaningless) and involved a formal proceeding, undertaken by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom and by the parents on the part of the bride. From the time of betrothal the woman was regarded as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed (Dt 28:30; Jdg 14:2, 8; Mt1:18-21). It was confirmed by oaths and accompanied with presents to the bride. The act of betrothal was celebrated by a feast, and among the more modern Jews it is the custom in some parts for the bridegroom to place a ring on the bride's finger. The ring was regarded among the Hebrews as a token of fidelity (Ge 41:42) and of adoption into a family (Lu 15:22). **Betrothal** could be dissolved only by a legal divorce. Infidelity during that period on the part of the bride might even be punishable by death (Dt 22:23,24). Joseph, however, was a "righteous man" (Mt1:19), who loved Mary who was pregnant with Jesus and was unwilling to divorce her for supposed "infidelity". Dear reader, if you belong to Jesus, do you realize you are inseparably bound to Him as your Bridegroom? It behooves us to learn from the unfaithfulness of Ephraim (and what it cost them) and seek by the power of the Spirit to walk in purity and holiness to the Lord.

**Morris - Ephraim**, as the largest and strongest of the ten tribes in the northern kingdom of Israel, is referred to as synonymous with all Israel. By this time, all ten of these tribes were so consumed by idolatry that they were beyond hope of revival. As a result, God instructed Hosea and other prophets to quit trying (compare Genesis 6:3). Their remaining burden was to call Judah to retain her faith in the true God (Hosea 4:15) rather than following Israel.

**Chisholm - Ephraim**, a prominent tribe in the Northern Kingdom, mentioned 36 times in the Book of Hosea, stands for Israel as a whole (cf. the parallelism in Hos 5:3, 5; also cf. Isa. 7:2, 5, 8-9, 17). (Ibid)

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Ephraim in the Bible?](#)
- [What should we learn from the tribe of Ephraim?](#)

**John Phillips** - Holding Israel up as an example to Judah of the end result of sin, Hosea made one of the most terrible statements in the Bible: "**Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone**" The nation was so besotted by its idolatry that no Holy-Ghost-inspired, God-breathed word, voiced either in tones of yearning love or in terms of boiling wrath, would make any difference. So God said, "**Let him alone.**" **When God gives up on an individual or a nation, all that remains is judgment.** How like Hosea's day is our day! How like Hosea's homeland is our homeland. He would probably describe our country the way he described his country: "Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love [or, do love shame]" (Hos 4:18). Like us, Hosea lived in a **pornographic society** in which those who should have been on the side of Biblical morality and simple decency supported permissiveness and upheld every form of moral and religious decadence. What hope was there? None! Israel had long since sown the wind and she was about to reap the whirlwind (see Hos 8:7 and Hos 4:19). All Hosea could see ahead was doom. (Exploring the Minor Prophets)

**THOUGHT** - This begs the question - **is there yet hope for America?** We have rejected God and His Word (outlawing public [prayer in schools](#) and [reading the Bible in schools](#)). How long will God be longsuffering with America? Only God knows, but revival is always a viable option. If you are reading this, let me encourage you to begin to intercede fervently and frequently that God would send the winds of revival to our land, once a God respecting nation, even if not all genuinely believed. Ro 3:18 has become the **byword** describing the post-Christian (becoming even anti-Christian) American culture "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." (Penned in June, 2019).

**Let him alone:** Ephraim was the largest and strongest of the ten tribes in the northern kingdom of Israel and is often used as synonymous with the entire nation of Israel. By this time, all ten of the Northern Tribes were so consumed by idolatry that they were beyond hope of revival. As a result, God instructed Hosea and other prophets to quit trying to revive them (compare Ge 6:3). Their remaining burden was to call the Southern Kingdom of Judah (and Benjamin) to retain her faith in the true God (Hos 4:15) rather than following after the whoring of the 10 Northern Tribes. In short Judah was warned to stay away from the Northern Kingdom (Mt 15:14).

**Guzik** writes "We don't want God to leave us alone because we need Him to protect us against ourselves. Left to ourselves, with our own sinful hearts, we will surely drift away from the Lord. All God must do to make certain a man goes to hell is simply let him alone. Our prayer should always be, "Lord, don't leave me alone. Keep working on me." (AMEN AND AMEN!) (Ibid)

**John MacArthur** calls **let him alone** "an expression of God's wrath of abandonment. When sinners reject Him and are bent on fulfilling their wicked purposes, God removes restraining grace and turns them over to the results of their own perverse choices. This kind of wrath is that in Ro 1:18–32 (cf. Jdg 10:13; 2Ch 15:2; 24:20; Ps 81:11, 12)." (MacArthur Study Bible)

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, beware! If you want idols, God may just give you over to those idols which is exactly what He did in Romans 1 where three times Paul uses the verb [paradidomi](#) meaning to give one over to the power of another! Notice how idolatry is closely linked with immorality. Beloved "**Idolatry is always demoralizing.**" (Phillips) We see America rejecting God and what is the rotten fruit - sexual immorality and perversion out in the open to a degree we would have never dreamed possible! (2019) And as they say unless America experiences true revival "You ain't see nothing yet!"

Therefore God **gave them over** ([paradidomi](#)) in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them... 26 For this reason God **gave them over** ([paradidomi](#)) to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural... 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God **gave them over** ([paradidomi](#)) to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, (Ro 1:24,26,28+)

**John Butler** writes "That which will destroy a land and a people is ignorance of Jesus Christ. This ignorance is intentional, it is not accidental. Most people do not want to know anything about Christ. But their willful ignorance will curse them eternally.

**Stubbornness** "She is so determined to get her own way, she writes her diary in advance."

"The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't." (Henry Ward Beecher)

"God's will is hard only when it comes up against our stubbornness, then it is as cruel as a ploughshare and as devastating as an earthquake." [Oswald Chambers]

None so deaf as those who will not hear. [Matthew Henry]

**G Campbell Morgan - Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone** Hosea 4.17

In the last eleven chapters of this book we have carefully edited notes, rather than verbatim reports of the prophetic utterances. These may be divided into three sections. The first (Hos 4.3) describes the pollution of the nation of Israel, and dealt with its cause. The cause was that of the pollution of the priests; which issued in the pollution of the whole nation. In the course of his prophesying to Israel, Hosea's mind turned to 'Judah, and he interpolated a message to the southern nation to beware of any complicity with Israel. This is the meaning of the words we have stressed. Ephraim was at the time the dominant tribe in Israel, and that accounts for the prophet's constant references to it (thirty-seven times the name occurs). This word has often been interpreted as constituting a sentence on Ephraim, as though Jehovah declared that He abandoned the nation altogether. But that were to contradict all the teaching of the prophet. It was rather a solemn word to Judah, warning her against any political alliance with Israel. The distinction is revealing. God does not abandon His people wholly, even when they are unfaithful to Him, but through discipline and troubling brings them back to Him-self. Nevertheless, those who are loyal to Him, must stand aloof from the disloyal; they cannot have fellowship with those who are joined to idols. To the Christian Church the word of the apostle of love involves this, as indeed all his letter shows. We are thinking of that final injunction of this first epistle, "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." - G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications

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### **John MacArthur - The Simple Profound Secret**

ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC scenes in the Bible and yet one of the most familiar to us is the scene of the strongest man who ever lived, a man by the name of Samson, finding out he had no strength. Judges chapter 16:18ff+ this. When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines saying, Come up once more, for he's told me all that is in his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands and she made him sleep on her knees, called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him and his strength left him. And she said, The Philistines are upon you, Samson, and he woke from his sleep and said, I will go out as at other times and shake

myself free. (Jdg 16:20+) And heres the telling line written by God the Holy Spirit. But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. So the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, brought him down to Gaza, bound him with bronze chains and he became a grinder in the prison. Sad. He didnt know that the Lord had departed from him. I cant imagine anything worse than being abandoned by God. To the sons of Israel earlier in the book of Judges 10:13+, God said this, You have forsaken me, you have served other gods, therefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your distress. This was God saying to Israel, Im done with you, abandoned by God. Proverbs 1:24-31+ records a similar sentiment.

**Because I called and you refused, I stretched out My hands and no one paid attention. You neglected all my counsel, you did not want my reproof, I will even laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your dread comes, when your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind. When distress and anguish come on you, then they will call on Me but I will not answer. They will seek Me diligently, they will not find Me because they hated knowledge, did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would not accept My counsel, they spurned all My reproof, so they will eat of the fruit of their own way and be satisfied with their own devices.**

Again being abandoned by God, turned over to the inevitable consequences of sinful choices.

**Prophecy Of Hosea - A haunting line is found tucked away in the little prophecy of Hosea 4:17**, and it refers to Israel by the name Ephraim and it says this, Ephraim is joined to idols, so says God. The next line, Leave him alone. Sounds out of character for God, doesnt it? Ephraim is joined to idols, bring him back, might sound a little more like God. Let him alone?

People and nations, even the covenant nation Israel can come to a point where they are abandoned by God. Jesus reiterated this in Matthew 15 when He confronted the Pharisees and then described them to the disciples. He said this, Theyre blind leaders of the blind. Let them alone. When God lets you go, its serious. When Jesus pronounces over you abandonment, its serious.

Now Im going to say something, youre going to have to hold on to your seat a little bit. Im convinced beyond doubt that in this same sense, **God has abandoned America**. I know thats a strong thing to say and Im going to show you why I believe you can see that clearly in Scripture.

**The Cycle Of History** - Open your Bibles to Romans 1...Romans 1. Dont be surprised, by the way, by that statement because while youre turning there, Acts 14:16 says this, this is from the Apostle Paul, In the generations gone by, thats past history, God permitted all the nations to go their own way. This is not the first nation God has abandoned, nor if Jesus tarries is it the last, or is it now the only. This is the cycle of history and it is this very cycle of history that Paul describes in Romans chapter 1. Here in Romans chapter 1, beginning in chapter 18 running to the end of the chapter, you have the most clear presentation of God abandoning a nation, what that looks like, what happens and why He does it. This is the most graphic and the most detailed and the most comprehensive discussion of what it means for a people, a society to be abandoned by God. And it perfectly describes the moral chaos in our own nation today.

It starts with very familiar words. Ro 1:18+, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. Now let me stop you there for just a moment. Were talking about the wrath of God and I need to just let you know that in the Scripture and in reality there are five different manifestations of Gods wrath. Okay? And you will recognize them. There is eternal wrath. That is that wrath which God unleashes on the unbelieving dead in hell...eternal wrath, suffering forever eternal punishment. Thats eternal wrath. There is also in the Bible eschatological wrath, that is the unfolding of divine wrath at the end of the age described in detail, for example, in Revelation 6 through 19, the pouring out of Gods wrath in the breaking of seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, and the dumping of seven bowls of wrath...eschatological wrath, that wrath is yet to come as is eternal wrath for all society, yet right now there are many experiencing eternal wrath, all the unbelieving who have left this world are experiencing. The third kind of wrath is what I guess you could call calamitous wrath. That is that wrath of God which produces calamity in the world and the most notable illustration of that is the Flood which drowned the entire world, only eight people were saved. Massive wrath on the part of God against sinful man.

Fourthly, there is consequential wrath, thats sowing and reaping wrath. Thats the natural end of patterns and choices of sin. Whatever a man sows, he...what?...he reaps...thats consequential wrath.

**The first thing you look for in a society youre trying to discern whether God has abandoned that society is whether or not that society has gone through a sexual revolution so that illicit sex, adultery, every form of immorality is accepted as normal in that society.** And were there. The second step in the progression, verse 26, God gave them over, not just to passions that are explicable because theyre men and women, but to inexplicable degrading passions for their women exchanged the natural

function for that which is unnatural. You know a society has been abandoned by God when it celebrates lesbian sex. God has given them over...gross affections, unnatural, unthinkable. So you follow a sexual revolution with a homosexual revolution, and homosexuality becomes normalized. Verse 27 adds the male part, In the same way the men abandon the natural function of the women burned in their desire toward one another.. And by the way, it is a burning that is just hard to comprehend. There was a man named Halpern(?) who was the coroner for the city of New York and he did, I think, 26 or 28 thousand autopsies in his day. He said we can look at a corpse that had been murdered and tell you whether a homosexual killed that person by the multiple wounds. Hes not a Christian, hes a Jewish guy and he just said, Theres something about the passions of that kind of involvement that are not explicable.

But interestingly enough, the Holy Spirit puts the women first here and the men after. Why? The Holy Spirit refers first to the degradation of women because theyre usually the last to be affected in the decay of morals because their hearts are so naturally inclined toward a husband and toward the responsibility of nurturing children. But when they lead the parade, God has removed His restraint. And the amazing thing of it is this, verse 27, The man abandoning the natural function of the women, burning in their desire toward one another, men with men, committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. Right into this wrath of abandonment comes the wrath, the consequential wrath and even though it generates venereal disease and AIDS, they keep doing it. This is what step two looks like and we know this has come like a flood. But its not the final step. The final step comes in verse 28, the middle of verse 28, God gave them over to a depraved mind.

And so we see what happens in a society when God turns them over and we see why He turns them over. And that was just a quick overview. So we look at our nation, our hearts are broken, the mind is depraved, they think theyre smart, theyre morons. They cant get to the truth, the mind is completely gone. They invent bizarre religions. They become religious. And today they like to talk about being spiritual, right? Im very religious, Im very spiritual. What in the world does that mean? What does that mean? As if you can invent your own worship and your own religion. Thats man at his lowest. Thats all the way at the bottom, total complete rejection of the true God and the true faith. Thats where we are. Now the question is...how do we pray?

God Only Wants One Thing - God only wants one thing out of a nation. Listen and believe this book. I really get grieved even when I hear evangelical people in the media and the public eye kind of equivocating about the clarity of the gospel. Its all weve got. Or about the clarity of what Scripture says. Your prayer and mine has to be that God would raise up faithful preachers and people who would proclaim His Word across this land. Pray for this generation of young men that God will call and shape and send, pray for pastors everywhere. Pray for lay people, for Christians to be bold. Theres only one solution and thats the truth...the truth by which God saves, by which God sanctifies, and if this nation will respond and listen to His truth, God will open the flood gates. We might be the greatest recovery story in history. But theres no other way than that people listen to Me and walk in My ways. Its not going to happen if theres a famine of the hearing of the Word of God. Pray that the Word, as Paul said, would have free course and that it would run with all its power across this land. ([Sermonindex.net](http://Sermonindex.net))

#### **Hosea 4:18 Their liquor gone, They play the harlot continually; Their rulers dearly love shame.**

KJV Hosea 4:18 Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye.

NET Hosea 4:18 They consume their alcohol, then engage in cult prostitution; they dearly love their shameful behavior.

LXE Hosea 4:18 He has chosen the Chananites: they have grievously gone a-whoring: they have loved dishonour through her insolence.

NLT Hosea 4:18 When the rulers of Israel finish their drinking, off they go to find some prostitutes. They love shame more than honor.

ESV Hosea 4:18 When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring; their rulers dearly love shame.

CSB Hosea 4:18 When their drinking is over, they turn to promiscuity. Israel's leaders fervently love disgrace.

NIV Hosea 4:18 Even when their drinks are gone, they continue their prostitution; their rulers dearly love shameful ways.

NAB Hosea 4:18 When their carousing is over, they give themselves to harlotry; in their arrogance they love shame.

NKJ Hosea 4:18 Their drink is rebellion, They commit harlotry continually. Her rulers dearly love dishonor 1>.

NJB Hosea 4:18 Their drunken orgy over, they do nothing but play the whore, preferring Shame to their Pride;

GWN Hosea 4:18 When they're done drinking their wine, they continue to have sex with the prostitutes. Their rulers dearly love to act shamefully.

NRS Hosea 4:18 When their drinking is ended, they indulge in sexual orgies; they love lewdness more than their glory.

YLT Hosea 4:18 Sour is their drink, They have gone diligently a-whoring, Her protectors have loved shame thoroughly.

- **Their liquor gone:** De 32:32,33 Isa 1:21,22 Jer 2:21
- **They play the harlot continually :** Ho 4:2,10 2Ki 17:7-17
- **Their rulers:** Ex 23:8 De 16:19 1Sa 8:3 12:3,4 Pr 30:15,16 Am 5:12 Mic 3:11 Mic 7:3
- **rulers:** Ps 47:9
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CAROUSING LEADERS LEAD LAITY INTO LICENTIOUSNESS

[Licentiousness](#) means sexually unrestrained or promiscuous, unprincipled in sexual matters.

**Their liquor gone** - It's gone because they have drunk in excess. Their inhibitions now fully numbed (even their consciences had not even already been seared), they go off to commit sexual sins in abundance and without any sense of shame (see **aselgeia** below)

**ASELGEIA** - In Galatians 5:19 in Paul's "dirty laundry list" (vice list) of sins there is a sin referred to as **sensuality** which is the Greek word [aselgeia](#) originally referred to any excess or lack of restraint but came to convey the idea of shameless excess and the absence of restraint, especially with sexual excess. Thus like [koite](#), **aselgeia** was used almost exclusively of especially lewd sexual immorality, of uninhibited and unabashed lasciviousness. It refers to the kind of sexual debauchery and abandonment that characterizes much of modern society and that is often flaunted almost as a badge of distinction! **Aselgeia** refers to uninhibited sexual indulgence without shame and without concern for what others think or how they may be affected (or infected). The Greeks defined **aselgeia** as "a disposition of soul that resents all discipline," as "a spirit that acknowledges no restraints, dares whatsoever its caprice and wanton insolence may suggest."

**They play the harlot continually** - "When the rulers of Israel finish their drinking, off they go to find some prostitutes" (NLT) "When their drinking is over, they turn to promiscuity" (CSB). The rulers were leading the people into these things.

**Play the harlot** - In context this refers to literal immorality. See preceding discussion of [zanah](#) (Hos. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1)

**Their rulers dearly love shame** - "They love shame more than honor." (NLT) (See discussion of [aselgeia](#) above). This is a [sarcastic](#) statement, for no one really loves shame. But so horrible is their leadership in their evil ways, they are essentially acting like they greatly desire the fruit of those ways, which is shame, disgrace and dishonor. **Shame** comes to the person who isn't willing to learn from instruction as taught in the proverbs (Pr 13:18).

**Chisholm on rulers - Rulers** is literally "shields," a term which suggests the positive, protective role which a nation's leaders should play (cf. Ps. 84:9, 11; Ps 89:18). Israel's rulers failed miserably in this regard, loving only shameful deeds.

**Shame** ([07036](#))(qalon) means dishonor, [ignominy](#), and the root signifies the lowering of another's social position. It is the opposite of glory and honor as in Proverbs 3:35 "The wise will inherit honor, But fools display **dishonor** (qalon)."

**Gilbrant on qālôn** - It is probably derived from qālāh (HED #7319), "to be despised," a by-form of qālal, "to be small," "to be light." The root indicates the lowering of a person's social status. Dishonor exists on both the national and individual levels in the OT. Qālôn is used seven times in the first instance (Ps. 83:16; Jer. 13:26; 46:12; Hos. 4:7, 18; Nah. 3:5; Hab. 2:16) and ten in the second (Job 10:15; Prov. 3:35; 6:33; 9:7; 11:2; 12:16; 13:18; 18:3; 22:10; Isa. 22:18). Israel, to its shame continued its spiritual prostitution, not even stopping when the party had ended (cf. Hos. 4:7). Since the people were filled with shame, a cup was being offered from God's right hand, the symbol of impending divine judgment (Hab. 2:16). Psalm 83 is an imprecatory prayer against those nations which have determined to destroy Israel. The supplicant prays to "fill their faces with shame" (v. 16). Figuratively, the national dishonor would indeed be exposed by Yahweh, even as when a woman's skirts are lifted (Jer. 13:26; Nah. 3:5). On the personal level, Shebna, who had desired for himself a tomb worthy of royalty (Isa. 22:16), would die in disgrace as a consequence of his sin (Isa

22:18). Eight references in Proverbs (Pr 3:35; 6:33; 9:7; 11:2; 12:16; 13:18; 18:3; 22:10) address human experience and, either by implication or direct contrast, promote the value of wisdom: "The wise will inherit glory, but shame will be the promotion of fools" (Pr 3:35); "But whoso commits adultery... dishonor shall he get" (Pr 6:32f). When a person corrects a scoffer, he "invites insult" (Pr 9:7NIV; the RSV here reads, "abuse"). A wise man conducts himself circumspectly, avoiding careless pride which leads to disgrace (Pr 11:2). An insult is ignored by the wise (Pr 12:16). "Shame" comes to the person who isn't willing to learn from instruction (Pr 13:18). Since he perceived that God had treated him unjustly, Job was left feeling full of shame (Job 10:15). BDB 885-86, KB 3:1101-2, NIDOTTE 3:924-25, Strong <H7036>, TWOT 2:799. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Qalon** - disgrace(4), dishonor(7), shame(6).

Job 10:15; Ps. 83:16; Prov. 3:35; Prov. 6:33; Prov. 9:7; Prov. 11:2; Prov. 12:16; Prov. 13:18; Prov. 18:3; Prov. 22:10; Isa. 22:18; Jer. 13:26; Jer. 46:12; Hos. 4:7; Hos. 4:18; Nah. 3:5; Hab. 2:16

**Rulers** (shield)(04043)(**magen** from ganan = to cover, surround, defend) is a masculine noun which most often refers to **ashield**, indicating some kind of protection, literal or figurative. A shield is described as a weapon (Jdg. 5:8; 2 Sa 1:21; 1 Ki 14:27; Job 15:26), as an ornament (1 Ki. 10:17; 14:26), as the protective scales of a crocodile (Job 41:15). This use in Hosea 4:18 is the only instance in which magen is translated **rulers**. who should have functioned like a shield to protect the people under them from harm. Instead the rulers were more like a sieve, allowing evil to pervade the people!

#### Hosea 4:19 The wind wraps them in its wings, And they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

KJV Hosea 4:19 The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

NET Hosea 4:19 A whirlwind has wrapped them in its wings; they will be brought to shame because of their idolatrous worship.

LXE Hosea 4:19 Thou art a blast of wind in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their altars.

NLT Hosea 4:19 So a mighty wind will sweep them away. Their sacrifices to idols will bring them shame.

ESV Hosea 4:19 A wind has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

CSB Hosea 4:19 A wind with its wings will carry them off, and they will be ashamed of their sacrifices.

NIV Hosea 4:19 A whirlwind will sweep them away, and their sacrifices will bring them shame.

NAB Hosea 4:19 The wind has bound them up in its pinions; they shall have only shame from their altars.

NKJ Hosea 4:19 The wind has wrapped her up in its wings, And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

NJB Hosea 4:19 the wind with its wings will carry them off and their sacrifices will bring them nothing but disgrace.

GWN Hosea 4:19 The wind will carry them away in its wings, and their sacrifices will bring them shame.

NRS Hosea 4:19 A wind has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their altars.

YLT Hosea 4:19 Distressed her hath wind with its wings, And they are ashamed of their sacrifices!

- **wind**: Jer 4:11,12 51:1 Zec 5:9-11
- **and**: Ho 10:6 Isa 1:29 42:17 Jer 2:26,27,36,37 3:24,25 17:13
- [Hosea 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DIVINE JUDGMENT PICTURED AS WIND

**The wind wraps them in its wings** - This is a figurative description of their fate when God sweeps them away. From other passages and from history, we know that the "wind" God sent to take them away into exile was the horrible Assyrian army.

Hosea's figurative description of their fate reminds me of a parallel picture in Psalm 1:4-6, where God sees sinners as like

worthless "chaff" which the wind blows away. The psalmist explains this blowing away by stating that "the way of the wicked will perish." The wicked won't be annihilated but they will eternally lose all purpose and value they could have had if they had worshiped Jesus (Lxx of **will perish** = [apollumi](#)). Notice the **two ways** in Psalm one, a theme Jesus emphasizes in His Sermon on the Mount calling for everyone to enter by the narrow gate, the narrow way (read Matthew 7:13-14+)...

The wicked are not so,  
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.  
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.  
For the LORD knows **the way** of the righteous,  
But **the way** of the wicked will perish.

**And they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices**- Well, at least they have some sense of shame left, but now it is "too little, too late" as they say! Judah did not heed Hosea's warning to avoid the sins of the Northern Kingdom and Jehovah even asks and answers a question concerning Judah "**Were they ashamed (bosh)** because of the abomination they have done? **They were not even ashamed (bosh)** at all; They did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down," says the LORD." (Jer 6:15). Now that's a conscience that is bordering on or is overtly seared! (cf 1 Ti 4:2).

Later in the book. Hosea alludes to the places where they sacrificed to idols and their shame...

The inhabitants of Samaria will fear For the (golden, idolatrous) calf of Beth-aven. Indeed, its people will mourn for it, And its idolatrous priests will cry out over it, Over its glory, since it has departed from it. The thing itself will be carried to Assyria As tribute to King Jareb; **Ephraim will be seized with shame And Israel will be ashamed of its own counsel.** (Hos 10:5-6)

**Ashamed** (put to shame) ([0954](#))(**bosh** from root = "to become pale" or "to blush") Always take a moment to ponder what is being explained. When failure or sin occurs, there is a disconcerting feeling, a flushing of the face. Always take a moment to ponder what is being explained. Bosh often occurs in contexts of humiliation and shattered human emotions. It is the feeling of public disgrace. The confusion, embarrassment, or dismay when things do not turn out as expected (Micah 7:16+ describes the arrogant anti-Semitic Gentile world powers who will definitely be surprised when things do not turn out as they had expected!). **Bosh** not only conveys the idea of shame, but of a type of shame in which utter defeat pervades the mood. Disillusionment and a broken spirit follow (Ezra 9:6; Isa 1:29; 30:5; Jer 2:36; 9:19).

**David Thompson** concludes his message on Hosea 4 - God's people need to realize that they will have a day in court. There will be a day of accountability. God's people have a choice. They can pursue that which is fleshly or that which is spiritual. They can dabble in immorality or drunkenness or all kinds of religion, but in the end they will end up ashamed. Wise are the people who spend their time carefully studying God's Word and applying it to life. Those people will discover God will shepherd them, prosper them and bless them. ([Sermon](#))