

“Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge: A Prophetic Warning for Our Times” **Hosea 4:1-6**

**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.

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

**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.

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

**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.

**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.

1. Hosea whose name means salvation is considered the first of the Twelve Minor Prophets in the Hebrew Bible.
  - He ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel During the long reign of King Jeroboam II, When Israel had successful military campaigns leading the nation into a period of unprecedented prosperity and independence.
    - But the moral fabric of its society collapsed. Corruption and spiritual depravity ran rampant. Israel began to worship pagan gods and attributed the works of God to Baal (**Hosea 4:1–13**).
    - The people broke their covenant with God and no longer obeyed His laws (**Hosea 6:7; 8:1**).
1. In the eyes of the Lord, Israel’s idol worship and unfaithfulness were equivalent to spiritual adultery. The central theme of Hosea’s prophetic messages was Israel’s unfaithfulness to God.
  - a) Following the Lord’s instruction, Hosea married a prostitute to symbolically illustrate how Israel has acted like a prostitute by turning away from the LORD by worshiping other gods”. It was to be a clear picture of Israel’s infidelity to Yahweh.
    - God raised up Moses who worked wonders and miracles in *the* land of Egypt before leading them out of slavery.
    - Then they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground and watched as their persecutors were swallowed up by the sea.
    - In the wilderness they were sustained for forty years, miracle after miracle as God provided for them and protected them supernaturally:
  - b) Despite seeing these undeniable miracles, the nation gradually drifted away from God. Parents not teaching their children about God, compromise, apathy and wanting to fit in with surrounding cultures, they repeatedly turned to false gods and stopped serving the Lord faithfully.
    - Have you ever found yourself wondering how they could start complaining right after a miracle— still not satisfied with God, not trusting that God was caring for them, and not believing God would provide what they needed?
    - And if you’re like me, I’ve realized I’d probably do the same thing.
2. That helps explain what Hosea is addressing: scholars date the Exodus and the Red Sea crossing to around **1446 B.C.** We believe Hosea’s prophetic ministry lasted about 60 years and ended about 722 B.C.

- In other words, it was roughly 700 years—from crossing the Jordan to turning completely away from God—after following the same pattern of unfaithfulness again and again.

**I. 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.

1. The first thing I notice is the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land, or another way this could be stated is found in the book of **Revelation** “But I have this against you,”
  - a) Hosea spells out the reasons why the Lord brings a charge against them: **There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land,**
    - I believe Hosea is showing us this isn’t just ancient history—it’s also an accurate reflection of what’s happening in America today.
2. It doesn’t take much effort to see a disturbing parallel between Israel’s decline and America’s.
  - a) As we look back on our own history, we can clearly see the providential hand of God was at work before this country even existed and this was clearly acknowledged by those whom God was using to bring about our great nation.
    - The compact made by the Pilgrims while still inside the Mayflower in 1620, Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith ... a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia'
    - Drawing nearer to the present time, the Declaration of Independence recognizes the presence of God in human affairs in these words:
      - 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights ...
    - The Chief Justice of the New York Supreme Court in 1804, James Kent said: 'The people of this State, in common with the people of this country, profess the general doctrines of Christianity, as the rule of their faith and practice ...
  - b) There is no doubt when looking through our history, many miracles took place for us to become a country, to survive the first couple of years as a country and for the US to grow into such a great nation was not random or by chance but by the providential hand of God.
    - I think **George Washington** summed it up in his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation on **October 3, 1789**, issued at the request of Congress,

“It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favors.”

- This statement Reflects Washington’s belief that the United States’ survival and prosperity depend on both moral virtue and the guidance of Gods wisdom found in the Christian Bible.
  - The Jews took **684 years** to turn away from God,
    - We are celebrating our 250<sup>th</sup> year as a nation. An accomplishment matched only 9 other times in world history, although most were empires or kingdoms, not modern nation-states.
3. How are we doing as a nation using the same parameters outlined for Israel by Hosea?

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.

a) **How is our country doing with the TRUTH?**

- When you need to know something do you believe or trust the news?
- Do you trust our elected officials are being completely honest with us about the issues that matter?
- Realistically we don't punish lying from our politicians we dismiss them as campaign promises?
- Do you look forward to the next infomercial because that gizmo will be as good they say?

b) **What about mercy? Do you believe our courts have MERCY?** (covenant love, *hesed*)

- For the victims, or their families?
- Do you feel an individual's wealth can affect a verdict or trial outcome
- Have you seen the fear of retribution change a verdict to appease the angry mob waiting to destroy a city,

c) **How is our country doing on the knowledge of God in the land?** (intimate, relational knowledge that shapes our lives)

- In terms of net growth and percentage increase, mosques have been opening faster than Christian churches in the US.
  - Data primarily from the US Mosque Survey 2020 (ISPU/Hartford Institute)
    - **since 2010 Roughly 60–80+ new mosques per year open in the US.**
  - **Lifeway Research** data on Protestant churches
    - **2024: ~3,800 new Protestant churches started, ~4,000 closed → net loss of ~200.**

II. **Hosea 4:2** tells us the symptoms caused by our actions:

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

➤ Swearing (false oaths), lying, murder, stealing, adultery—breaking all restraint, with “blood touching blood” (violence escalating/ murder after murder).

- Breaking all restraint has much bigger impact when we understand what it means: breaking God's laws.

a) **Our broken court system is a symptom**

- It seems like our courts can't figure out right and wrong perverting justice so right is wrong and wrong is right.

**Micah 6:8** gives the standard God is looking for

He has shown you, O man, what <i>is</i> good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God
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b) **Another symptom is ADULTERY?**

- Due to a lack of commitment adultery is now leading financial problems as the top cause of divorce.

c) **The symptom of Murders?**

- Here is a pleasant surprise! The murder rate for our country is falling, according to the Council on Criminal Justice's 2026 report. An analysis of 35 major U.S. cities, homicides fell **21% from 2024 to 2025**, the largest single-year decline ever recorded. If this trend holds nationwide, the U.S. homicide rate could reach about **4.0 per 100,000 residents down from 4.4 per 100,000**.
- Unfortunately, that's until you factor in abortion for anything outside of saving a life. Last year America recorded over 1 million abortions, a stat that is never factored into our murder rate...

<b>Malachi 2:17</b> “You have wearied the Lord with your words by saying ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them,’ or ‘Where is the God of justice?’”
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- Hosea continues to give a warnings of how the consequences will affect a country.

III. **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.

a) Verse 3 says the land will mourn and everyone who dwells there will waste away”

1. The question is are we wasting away as a country?

- **According to the total fertility rate** — the average number of children per woman in the US— is at a historic low of about **1.6 children**, well below the **2.1 replacement level** needed to maintain a nations population. (govfacts.org)

2. How God sees wealth,

Psalms 127:3-5 Behold, children *are* a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb *is* a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So *are* the children of one’s youth. 5 Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

- To speak with their enemies in the gate means you have power in numbers you don’t have to fight.

IV. Looking at **Hosea 4:4**: “Now let no man contend, or rebuke another; For your people *are* like those who contend with the priest.

a) We see the diagnosis of spiritual sickness in society, the consequences of a smaller role of the church in society, and a lack of leadership coming from the church (**priests/prophets back in the day**),

- When **Hosea 4:4** says For your people *are* like those who contend with the priest. He means this is a culture of blame-shifting and defensiveness. We call evil good and demand God prove Himself on our terms.
- No one wants to hear that they are wrong or receive rebuke. They no longer have a standard to measure their beliefs against.
- Those who aimlessly argue with God’s appointed leaders governing officials, judges the police are the people who usually resist the correction needed to keep a country healthy.
- What I am seeing more and more often is truth is subjective, mercy is selective, and “knowledge of God” is shallow or absent even in many churches. A lot of people only utter the name of God when swearing.

**Judges 21:25**: “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

- Where there is no knowledge of God, society naturally descends into moral anarchy. Everyone doing what they think is right.
- Without direction from the pulpit you end up with a bunch a weird beliefs morphed together and it becomes hard to tell what is right and what just sounds good.

a) Think about if this is right, God blesses a nation when it honors Him. Humility, prayer, and faithful citizenship will bring blessings rather than pride or self-righteousness.

- The term faithful citizenship is defined in Philippians **3:20**; For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we are looking for the Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ,

b) Many Christians point to America’s wealth, freedom, religious liberty, global influence, and prosperity as signs of God’s blessing,

- Then are quick to say God is judging us when a 911 happens, when Mt. St. Hellen blew up, or insert any disaster of your choosing here.
  - These POV’s stress God’s blessings are not guaranteed and depend on our nation’s relationship with God.
- The problem is God didn’t choose us as His people or make us a nation based on a covenant that He made with us. God only chose 1 nation to bless as His people, that’s Israel:

**Deu 7:6** “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

- God has chosen to bless America in many spectacular ways, not for what we have done or who we are but for who God is.
- He has a plan for us, as a country we don't know what that is.
- I do know my job is to figure out how I can make myself available for God's purposes and to make God known to others, to fulfill the great commission.

The book of Hosea compares Israel's actions as a nation turning from marriage to a life of prostitution, harlotry. Worshiping false gods forsaking Jehovah.

- When looking at our text we can see Hosea is warning Israel of impending punishment for sinning. But it's much deeper than that.
    - **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.
    - **Hosea 4:3** Therefore the land will mourn; And **everyone who dwells there** will waste away
- 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**. This is all encompassing, it includes the children of Israel, the inhabitants of the land everyone who dwells there, even the land itself.
2. Everything mentioned by Hosea has been laid out in both Exodus and Deuteronomy, Hosea is just reminding them of the curses as they turned from Jehovah to worship false gods. Looking at the OT covenants sheds light on why these curses **will** take place.
    - a) In the OT there are 2 kinds of covenants that God made with His people.
      - An unconditional covenant where God will keep His promises regardless of the people's response like the **Abrahamic Covenant**.
      - **Genesis 12:1–3**, where God calls Abram (later Abraham) to leave his homeland.
      - The covenant is confirmed in **Genesis 13:14–15** with the promise of land, the land of Canaan.
      - The **land of Canaan** was promised to Abrahams descendants **Genesis 10** and **Numbers 34**, today it roughly corresponds to present-day **Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, western Jordan, and parts of Syria**.
    - b) The covenant also came with the promise of descendants even in Abrahams old age. **Genesis 15**
      - It is here in **Genesis 15:12** that we see the covenant taking place. As the sun was setting, and a deep sleep fell upon Abram behold, a horror of great darkness fell upon him!
        - i. Darkness explained like being in a plastic bag and dropped into water, in the dark.
      - **Genesis 15:17**, the sun went down, it was dark and, **a smoking furnace**, and **a burning lamp** passed between pieces of animals cut in half, a blood covenant.
      - The covenant is sealed in **Genesis 17** with the sign of circumcision for all males in Abraham's lineage.
        - i. It is an unconditional covenant because Abraham slept and God alone moved as a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch between the halves of the animals.
        - ii. Indicating that the covenant promise is legally binding God to uphold all the requirements to fulfill the covenant.
  3. The other type of covenant in the OT is the 1 Conditional covenant, The Mosaic Covenant:
    - a) A Conditional covenant lays out the obligations that each party must uphold and will be held accountable for.

- Both parties met at Mount Sinai (**Exodus Chapters 19–24**) and agreed to the terms.
- **Exodus 24:7** Moses took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.”
- The blessings are tied directly to Israel’s obedience, and the curses are directly tied to Israel’s disobedience: This also is a blood covenant.

**Deuteronomy 29:10** “You are standing today, all of you, before the LORD your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, 11 your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp ... This was so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God is making with you today,

Notice everyone is included the heads of the tribes, elders, officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, wives, even the sojourner who is in your camp. There is a caveat that came with this covenant each and every individual had to obey the covenant, or everyone suffers together.

**Deuteronomy 29:18** Beware lest there be among you a **man** or **woman** or **clan** (family) or **tribe** whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

**Deuteronomy 29:29** “The secret *things belong* to the Lord our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law

**Psalms 78:5–7** Israel knew they needed to pass this on from generation to generation:

Psalms 78:5–7 For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; 6 That the generation to come might know *them*, The children *who* would be born, *That* they may arise and declare *them* to their children, 7 That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments

They were instructed to teach and uphold the covenant.

- This may seem harsh but think of boot camp, 1 person messes up everyone suffers.
- Or sports, like football, if 1 person commits a foul the whole team is penalized.
- And here see examples of this type of accountability in scripture:

**Example: Numbers 13:23-24** When Caleb and Joshua and the other 10 (1 from each tribe) spied out the promised land. Upon returning, they reported that the land indeed flowed with milk and honey and they showed its fruit as proof.

- However, ten of the spies gave a discouraging report, emphasizing the strength and size of the inhabitants, the descendants of Anak, the fortified cities, claiming the Israelites could not conquer them (**Numbers 13:28-31**)
- The lack of belief in God and His promises by the 10, spread throughout the camp and brought the wrath of God on everyone. He cursed them as a nation (a team) with forty years of wilderness wandering until the unbelieving generation died off, never stepping foot in the Promised Land. Save for Caleb/Joshua.

**Numbers 32:13** And the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone.

**Example:** Once in the promised land they conquered **Jericho** with trumpets and shouting to bring the walls down.

**Joshua 7:1** But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.

Then they see Ai, a simple task to conquer this small insignificant town after Jericho. But they had a problem and were defeated, the Lord talked to Joshua after the defeat saying:

**Joshua 7:11** Israel has sinned; they have transgressed **my covenant** that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings.

- If you know the historical account it was only 1 person Achan, who had broken God's commandments but the verbiage is very clear all of Israel has sinned, and was being held accountable!
- Going back to the Mosaic Covenant the Israelites were told repeatedly:

**Deuteronomy 4:23** Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you,

**Deuteronomy 4:24** For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

They are also told they would fail,

**Deuteronomy 4:26** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it but will be utterly destroyed.

**Deuteronomy 4:27** And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you.

- In the end, the curses culminate in national destruction and dispersion among the nations under Nebuchadnezzar II the Jews went into exile the Babylonian captivity marked the beginning of the "Times of the Gentiles".
  - A period described in the Bible as a time when the nations (the "Gentiles") would dominate the world, fulfilling God's prophetic plans for Israel's history.
- This time began in 605 BC and will end at the second coming of Christ according to **Daniel 2:31-45** statue of gold, Chapter 7 and 8 visions give more detail on the timing and nature of Gentile rulers.
- If we were to jump ahead to Chapter 19 of Revelation, we find a description of Jesus' physical return to Earth which gives us the end point of the Age of the Gentiles, a point when the gentiles are no longer trampling the city of Jerusalem under foot, but it is completely in God's control, and the Jews will be restored to their right position with God.

➤ In the meantime, God in His infinite wisdom and mercy gave the Jews an escape clause that can terminate the Mosaic Covenant before it comes to full term, only 1 thing can break God's conditional covenant, until then they are bound to the old covenant until the second coming of Christ.

- What is the 1 thing that can break the Mosaic Covenant, the New Covenant.
- The New Covenant is accepted on an individual basis, it's personal, meaning as each Jew turns to Jesus as their Lord and savior it doesn't nullify the Mosaic Covenant for other Jews or the nation it is only for those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and savior. The same way it applies to you and me, individually.

V. **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.

1. I will destroy you mother, a direct reference to destroying Israel as a nation. To removing them from the promised land and scattering them amongst the nations.

a) Hosea outlined the failures for us. Then he described the symptoms now Hosea will start to explain the consequences of the failures.

- **The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night:** God paints a picture so bleak that even the prophet is dragged down to the level of the people and stumbles.

**Micah 3:5** Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry "Peace" when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.

**Micah 3:6** Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without divination. The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be black over them;

- The prophets went silent for 400 years, until John the Baptist.

- America must reckon with the same truth Scripture shows Israel: God has reasons, God gives warnings, and God will not tarry forever—our disobedience will bring consequences.
  - Pretty soon in the grand scheme of things, this will all end.
- a) As a nation we cannot hide behind the sins of our leaders, God has blessed us with the gift of voting for our elected officials, if you wave that right your responsibilities are not waved. In this aspect, America is just like Israel, we are all in this together for good or bad.
  - b) The difference we can make is for everyone. Each person has been given the unique responsibility to make changes in our schools, city, state and country by voting your conscience, based on your moral values. Because of the wisdom of God imparted on our founding fathers each person, that is able to make a difference, is without excuse.
  - c) We are under the New Covenant, an age of grace, don't trample on God's great blessings.
  - d) The only hope for America, like Israel, is repentance toward the One who fulfills the New Covenant—Jesus Christ.

**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.