

Hosea 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

God's shocking statement 'I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery' isn't approval but devastating irony: judgment on the men makes their women's punishment irrelevant. The indictment continues: 'for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots' (ki-hem im-ha-zonot yepharedu we-im-ha-qedeshov yezabbehu). The religious leaders engage in ritual prostitution with qedeshov (cult prostitutes, literally 'holy ones'—perverse sanctification of sexual sin in worship). When spiritual leaders model immorality, societal moral collapse follows. 'Therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall' (we-am lo-yavin yilabbet): without discernment grounded in God's Word, people stumble into destruction. This underscores leaders' accountability—their sin corrupts the entire community (James 3:1).

Historical Context

Canaanite Baal worship incorporated sacred prostitution, believing sexual activity with cult prostitutes (male and female) magically stimulated Baal's fertility blessings on crops and livestock. Israel's syncretism integrated these practices into YHWH worship, grossly violating the first and seventh commandments

simultaneously. Deuteronomy 23:17-18 explicitly forbade cult prostitution. That priests and leaders led in this abomination (v. 9) magnified the sin. Archaeological evidence from Canaanite sites confirms these practices. Hosea's contemporary ministry showed God's patience ending: the moral corruption was too deep, judgment inevitable. Paul later warned that sexual immorality is uniquely destructive (1 Corinthians 6:18).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do I respond when religious leaders embrace or tolerate blatant sin, even in 'worship'?
2. What responsibility do I bear for discernment and holiness when surrounded by moral confusion?

Interlinear Text

לֹא תִּعְנַּק אֶפְקָן וְעַל בָּנֹתֶיךָ מִן כִּי בָנֹתֶיךָ מִן כִּי
H3808 I will not punish H5921 H1323 H3588 when they commit whoredom H2181
H6485 H1992 H5973

וְעַל כָּל-וֹתִיכֶם כִּי תָּנַא פְּנָה כִּי עַמְּם כִּי
H5921 nor your spouses H3588 H5003 H3588 H1992 H5973
H3618

בָּזָן וְתִּפְרַח דָּתְךָ כִּי בָּזָן וְתִּפְרַח דָּתְךָ כִּי
when they commit whoredom for themselves are separated H5973 with harlots H6948
H2181 H6504 H5973

וְיִבְרַע חֹזֶק וְיִבְרַע חֹזֶק כִּי לֹא יִבְרַע חֹזֶק כִּי
and they sacrifice therefore the people H3808 H995 H3832 shall fall H3832
H2076 H5971 H3808

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 4:1 (Parallel theme): 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.

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