

Hosea 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Judgment on religious leaders: 'Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.' Priests and prophets—twin pillars of spiritual leadership—both face judgment. The temporal contrast ('day'/'night') may indicate constant judgment or distinguish their fates. 'Thy mother' likely refers to the nation (mother of the people) or possibly the priest's literal family line. The verse demonstrates that spiritual leaders bear greater responsibility and face severer judgment when they fail (James 3:1). False prophets who should speak God's word instead mislead (Jeremiah 23:13-14, Ezekiel 13:1-16). This necessitates Christ who perfectly fulfills both offices—our true Prophet speaking God's word (Deuteronomy 18:15-18, Acts 3:22-23) and eternal Priest mediating God's grace (Hebrews 7:23-28).

Historical Context

Northern kingdom's religious establishment, illegitimate from its Jeroboam I origins, had thoroughly corrupted worship. Prophets who should confront sin instead legitimized it, prophesying prosperity while ignoring injustice (cf. Amos's critiques). Archaeological findings show Israelite worship sites mixing YHWH worship with Asherah poles and Baal imagery. The priests facilitated this syncretism rather than resisting it. Their judgment came through Assyrian conquest (722 BC), which destroyed both religious and political infrastructure. This historical pattern warns that religious office doesn't guarantee divine favor—

God judges unfaithful shepherds who scatter the flock (Jeremiah 23:1-4, Ezekiel 34:1-10).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the judgment on failed spiritual leaders challenge those in Christian leadership to faithful stewardship of God's truth?
2. What characteristics distinguish true prophetic ministry from false teachers who tell people what they want to hear?

Interlinear Text

יִכָּשׁ לְ	הַיּוֹם	יִכָּשׁ לְ	גַּם	נָבִיא
Therefore shalt thou fall	in the day	Therefore shalt thou fall	H1571	and the prophet
H3782	H3117	H3782		H5030
עִמָּךְ	לַיְלָה	וְיָדָמָּה יִתִּי	אִמְךָ:	
H5973	with thee in the night	and I will destroy	thy mother	
	H3915	H1820	H517	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 15:8 (Parallel theme): Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

Hosea 2:2 (Parallel theme): Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;

Galatians 4:26 (Parallel theme): But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

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