

Hosea 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (מַבְלִי הַדָּעַת)—Not ignorance but rejection: **because thou hast rejected knowledge** (בְּאָסֹת הַדָּעַת). The priests failed to teach Torah, causing national ruin. **Knowledge** (דָעַת, da'at) is covenant relationship, not mere information—the same 'knowing' of marriage intimacy. **Thou hast forgotten the law of thy God** (תָּוָתָת אֶלְקָנִים תַּשְׁכַּח)—deliberate amnesia, not accidental. God's response is measure-for-measure: **I will also forget thy children**. Hosea indicts the religious establishment: priestly corruption produced spiritual famine (Amos 8:11). True knowledge of God yields obedience; Israel had neither.

Historical Context

By the mid-8th century BC, Israel's priesthood had failed its fundamental responsibility to teach Torah, resulting in covenant ignorance that destroyed the nation. Hosea's indictment—'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee'—targeted the priests who had abandoned teaching for profit and political advancement. Archaeological evidence confirms that during this period, high places proliferated throughout Israel with syncretistic worship combining YHWH and Baal elements. The priestly failure created a spiritually illiterate population that could not distinguish true

worship from idolatry, making judgment inevitable as ignorance bred sin and sin bred destruction.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Hosea 4:6 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּה יְהוָה נִצְמָת
are destroyed My people H1097 for lack of knowledge H1847 H3588 H859

אַמְאָסָא בְּעֵת אַמְאָסָא
for lack of knowledge I will also reject I will also reject H1847 H3988 H3988

אֶלְהָ יְהוָה תֹּובֵת אַשְׁכֵחַ לְמִפְּנֵי
thee that thou shalt be no priest H3547 I will also forget H7911 the law H8451 of thy God H430

אֶנְיָה בְּנֵי יִצְחָק אַשְׁכֵחַ
I will also forget thy children H1571 H589

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:13 (Parallel theme): Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

Proverbs 19:2 (Parallel theme): Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

Hosea 6:6 (References God): For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Hosea 4:1 (Word): 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.

Matthew 15:8 (Parallel theme): This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

Isaiah 17:10 (References God): Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:

Hosea 8:14 (Parallel theme): For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

Jeremiah 2:8 (Word): The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

2 Chronicles 15:3 (Word): Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

Hosea 13:6 (Parallel theme): According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.