

Hosea 5:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

Analysis

The summons 'Hear this, O priests; listen, O house of Israel; give ear, O house of the king' calls all leadership to account: religious (priests), tribal (Israel collectively), and political (royal house). 'For the judgment is toward you' (ki lakem ha-mishpat) announces God's legal proceeding against them. The specific charge: 'you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread on Tabor'—geographic locations where leaders should have guided people to God but instead trapped them in sin. Mizpah was Saul's coronation site and Tabor a Levitical city; both became centers of false worship. Leaders entrusted with spiritual guidance perverted their office into instruments of destruction. This principle applies universally: greater privilege brings greater accountability (Luke 12:48), and unfaithful shepherds face severe judgment (Ezekiel 34, John 10:12-13).

Historical Context

Mizpah (in Gilead) and Tabor (in Zebulun/Issachar) were strategic locations that became idolatrous shrines. Hosea's indictment spans both religious and civil leadership during Israel's final chaotic decades: political instability, assassination of kings, desperate alliances with Assyria and Egypt, and pervasive idolatry. The priests failed to teach God's law (4:6), kings pursued power politics ignoring divine will, and elders led people astray. This leadership vacuum contributed to Israel's

collapse. Hosea's contemporary Micah pronounced similar judgment on Judah's leaders (Micah 3:1-12). Jesus later condemned Pharisees and teachers of the law for blocking others from God's kingdom (Matthew 23:13).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What accountability do I bear for my influence on others, especially if I hold leadership positions?
2. How do I evaluate spiritual leaders—by worldly success or by faithfulness to God's Word?

Interlinear Text

וְיִתְּ	יִשְׂרָאֵל	ל	וְיִתְּ	וְהִקְשִׁיבוּ	הַכֹּהֲנִים	זֶאת	שְׁמְעוּ
O house	of Israel		O house	and hearken	ye this O priests	Hear	
H1004	H3478		H1004	H7181	H3548	H8085	H2063
כִּי	הַמִּשְׁפָּט	ט	לְךָ	מִ	כִּי	הָאֵזְנוֹ	יְנוּ
for judgment						and give ye ear	of the king
H3588	H4941		H0		H3588	H238	H4428
וְנֶשֶׁת	לְמִצַּפָּה	הַ	הֵייתָ	מִ	כִּי	פָנָה	
and a net	on Mizpah					is toward you because ye have been a snare	
H7568	H4709		H1961			H6341	
עַל	פְּרוּשָׁה	הַ	תָּבוֹר:				
spread			upon Tabor				
H6566			H8396				H5921

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 9:8 (Parallel theme): The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.

Hosea 6:9 (Parallel theme): And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness.

Judges 4:6 (References Israel): And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

Micah 3:9 (Judgment): Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

Micah 7:2 (Parallel theme): The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.

Amos 7:9 (References Israel): And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

Malachi 2:1 (Parallel theme): And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

Hosea 10:15 (Kingdom): So shall Beth-el do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

Hosea 4:1 (References Israel): 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.