

## Who's Responsible When Things Go Wrong?

[Hosea 4:1-6](#)

Hosea, Day 9

Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel,  
for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.  
There is no faithfulness or steadfast love,  
and no knowledge of God in the land;  
there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery;  
they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.  
Therefore the land mourns,  
and all who dwell in it languish,  
and also the beasts of the field  
and the birds of the heavens,  
and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

Yet let no one contend,  
and let none accuse,  
for with you is my contention, O priest.  
You shall stumble by day;  
the prophet also shall stumble with you by night;  
and I will destroy your mother.  
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;  
because you have rejected knowledge,  
I reject you from being a priest to me.  
And since you have forgotten the law of your God,  
I also will forget your children.

- Hosea 4:1-6, ESV

2018 was the fourth year in a row with over 300 murders in Baltimore City, something which had never happened before in history. With violence spiraling out of control, people want answers and some people are looking for someone to blame: the mayor, the city council, the police, the gangs, anyone.

For generations, life in America has seemingly been spiraling out of control. Most people in America think we're not heading in the right direction, and that's been true for the past 45 years or more. Drugs are killing tens of thousands of people. Divorce is shaking millions. Immorality is rampant on our screens, in our homes, and even in our schools. Mass shootings and suicides are both skyrocketing. Church attendance is slipping lower, and true godliness is getting harder and harder to find.

Who is to blame for this mess?

Hosea lived in troubled times, and people wanted to know who to blame for the mess back then, too. In Hosea 4, Hosea's book transitions from telling the story of his marriage to Gomer to bringing charges even more clearly and directly against the nation of Israel.

The charges are serious and heavy: "*There is no faithfulness or steadfast love,  
and no knowledge of God in the land;  
there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery;  
they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.*"

So, who was to blame for the mess back in Hosea's day? Surprisingly, the indictment for blame is laid at the feet of the priests and the prophets.

God's case through Hosea is as strikingly convicting as it is simple: The people are out of control because they don't know the Lord and His ways. They don't know the Lord and His ways because they've never been taught. They've never been taught because the priests have failed to teach the Law and the prophets have failed to proclaim what God was speaking.

As a pastor, I find these verses very convicting. "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*" How easy it is for a pastor to focus on other things rather than teaching the word of God to the people of God! But that is the calling. We are called to build the people up in their knowledge of God and His word and ways. And I cannot teach others what I do not believe and am not living myself.

Yet this is not just a word for pastors. In the New Testament age we live in today, all of God's people are priests, and the whole church is called to have a prophetic voice to our culture. How are we doing? Not so well, it would seem. God calls us to tell those around us about Him, to teach His character and His will. Yet we don't know ourselves as well as we should because we aren't following Him.

So, the next time we turn on the news and shake our heads at the troubled times we live in, we need to look in the mirror. We need to realize that we are the prophets and priests to our generation. We are the salt and light the world needs. Will we do what we can to make sure people don't perish for lack of knowledge?