




*Welcome
to*
Fai**th**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Tuesdays Together

NOVEMBER 6

THE
PROPHET
AMOS
CHAPTERS 3 - 5



What is a Prophet?

"A Prophet was someone who said NO to his society, condemning its habits and assumptions, its complacency, waywardness and syncretism. He was often compelled to proclaim the very opposite of what his heart expected. His fundamental objective was to reconcile man and God. Why do the two need reconciliation? Perhaps it is due to man's false sense of sovereignty, to his abuse of freedom, to his aggressive, sprawling pride, resenting God's involvement in history."

Abraham J. Heschel



	PROPHET	Object of Indictment	Nature of Indictment
ISRAEL	AMOS	All Israel (particularly upper class)	1. Injustice 2. Pagan religious practice (5:21-23)
	HOSEA	All Israel	1. Pagan religious practice 2. Unfaithfulness
JUDAH	MICAH	Leaders, prophets, and upper class (chs. 2, 3, & 6)	Injustice (secondarily idols 1:7, 5:13 or military strength 1:13; 5:10-11)
	ZEPHANIAH	All Judah	Pagan Worship (1:4-6)

	PROPHET	Pronouncement of Judgment	Action Requested
ISRAEL	AMOS	Overrun by enemy Destruction (3:11; 5:2; 7:9; 9:8)	Justice (5:14-15, 25)
	HOSEA	Covenant blessings and protection retracted	Acknowledge guilt, seek the Lord (5:15) Return (14:1)
JUDAH	MICAH	1. Destruction 2. Exile (1:16)	Justice (6:8)
	ZEPHANIAH	Destruction	Seek the Lord (1:3)

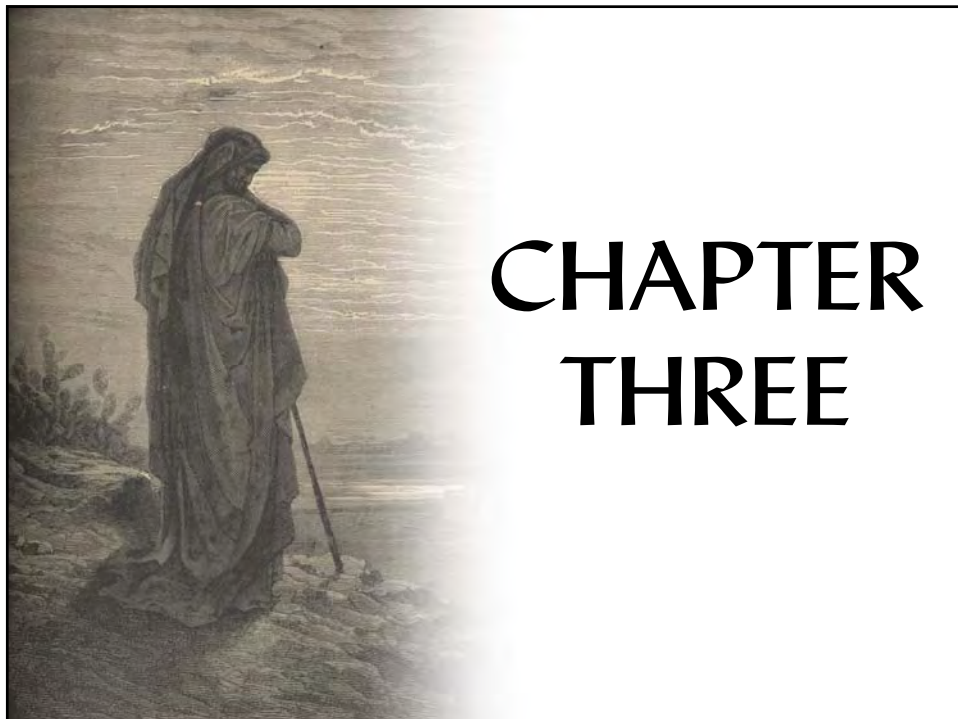
	PROPHET	Nature of Hope	Restoration	Kingship
ISRAEL	AMOS	Restoration (9:11-15)	Rebuilding prosperity (9:11-15)	Messianic (9:11)
	HOSEA	God's faithfulness can be restored (chs. 2, 6, 14)	People will again be faithful (2:14-23)	None
JUDAH	MICAH	Return of remnant (4:6-8; 5:7-8) Restoration	Dominion, peace, prosperity (ch. 4, 7)	Theocratic (4:7) Messianic (5:2)
	ZEPHANIAH	Can avoid judgment (2:1-3) Remnant left (3:12-13)	Gathering of oppressed (3:14-20)	Theocratic (3:15)

REVIEW


Prophet Condemns

1. Absence of loyalty
2. Absence of pity

Because of Israel's wickedness, Israel will be destroyed by Assyria.



CHAPTER THREE



¹Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt: ²You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

God is speaking

“The whole family” – includes Judah (south) and Israel (north) – they have been separated after 100 yrs.

***Paul calls the Church “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6.16), and an heir to the promises of Abraham (Gal 3.9 & 4.7)**

**** therefore – this is also true of the church**




“...I brought up out of the land of Egypt” (v.2)

Israel has been called to be separate – elect – in the world but not of the world – yet Israel (the church) has become like everyone else, and therefore there will be discipline.

“...you only have I known” (v.2)

Word for ‘to know’ used for sexual intimacy.

CALVIN -- chosen not for privilege – but for SERVICE, to be a witness, when you are not a witness (but only exist for yourself) then you are as salt that has lost its saltiness.



"...therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (v.2)

- **What happens when the salt loses its saltiness?**
- **What happens when elite care only about themselves?**
- **What happens to community when self-care rather than community-care is the main concern?**

Israel is like everyone else! They commit atrocities....ethnic cleansing, etc.

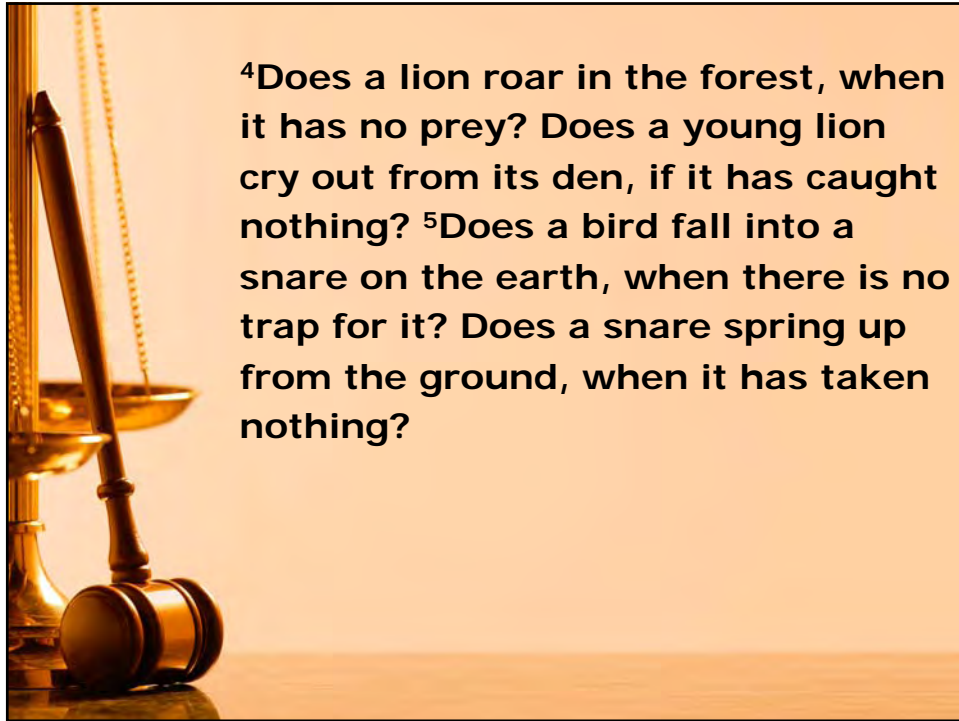
God's judgment is also to God's elect (v.2)



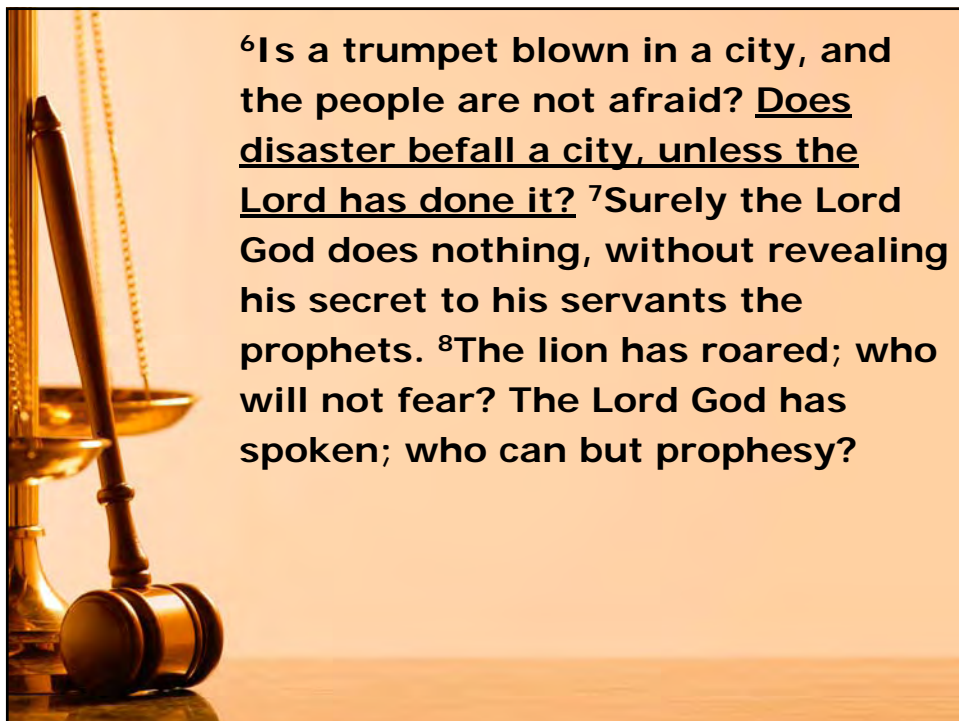
The Prophet's Authority

³Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?

v.3 "make an appointment" – another translation is "unless they know one another" -- know/intimacy – Amos is intimate with God.



⁴Does a lion roar in the forest, when it has no prey? Does a young lion cry out from its den, if it has caught nothing? ⁵Does a bird fall into a snare on the earth, when there is no trap for it? Does a snare spring up from the ground, when it has taken nothing?



⁶Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster befall a city, unless the Lord has done it? ⁷Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. ⁸The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?



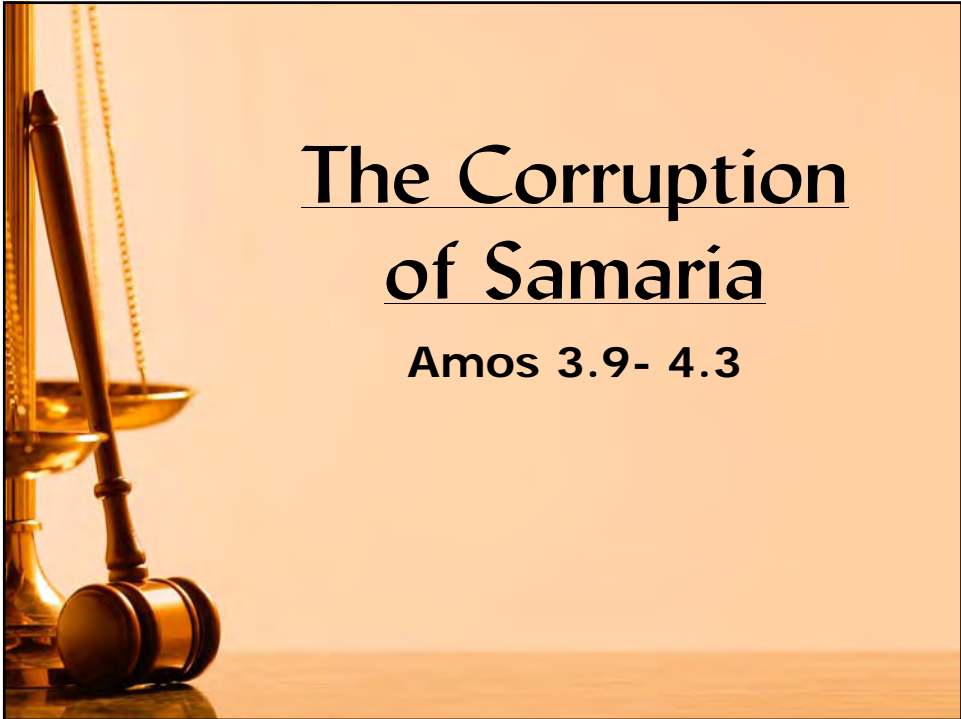
God's Providence

v.6b Nothing happens unless "the Lord has done it."

This is very problematic , i.e. hurricanes, suicide bombers, cancer in children.

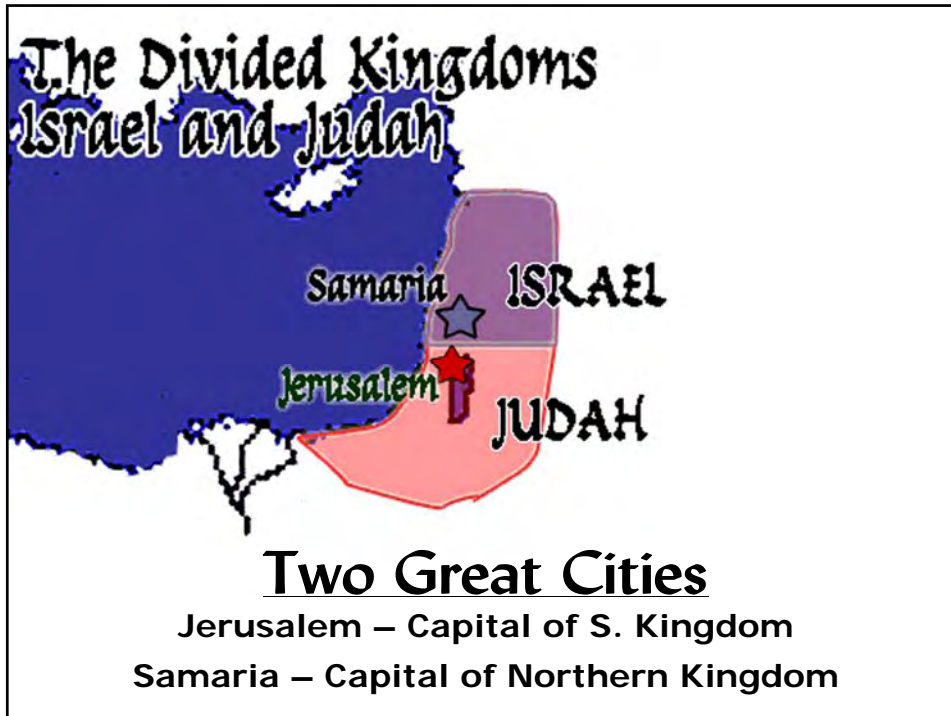
2 Interpretations

1. Literal
2. Must pass the hand of God, all works for; good – not that God causes it, allows it to happen.



The Corruption of Samaria

Amos 3.9- 4.3




⁹Proclaim to the strongholds in Ashdod, and to the strongholds in the land of Egypt, and say, "Assemble yourselves on Mount Samaria, and see what great tumults are within it, and what oppressions are in its midst."
¹⁰They do not know how to do right, says the Lord, those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds.

'Right' means straight forwardness, honesty; despite all their wealth, they do not know anything about real morality.



Total Destruction

¹¹Therefore thus says the Lord God: An adversary shall surround the land, and strip you of your defense; and your strongholds shall be plundered. ¹²Thus says the Lord: As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who live in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed. ¹³Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob, says the Lord God, the God of hosts.



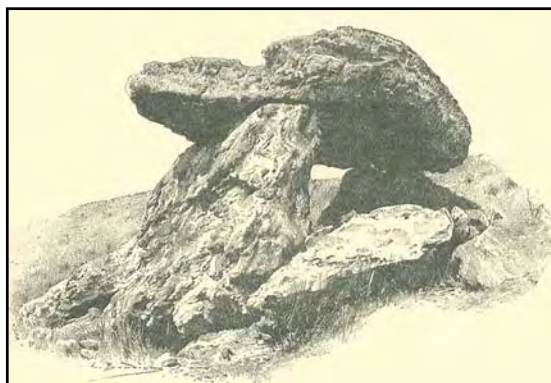
The only part left is just enough to testify to the total destruction; i.e. if an ear is left of the lion, then you will know that the lion was slain.

“Corner of couch” to show contrast between magnificence of life in city vs. poor life of shepherd.



The Fate of Bethel

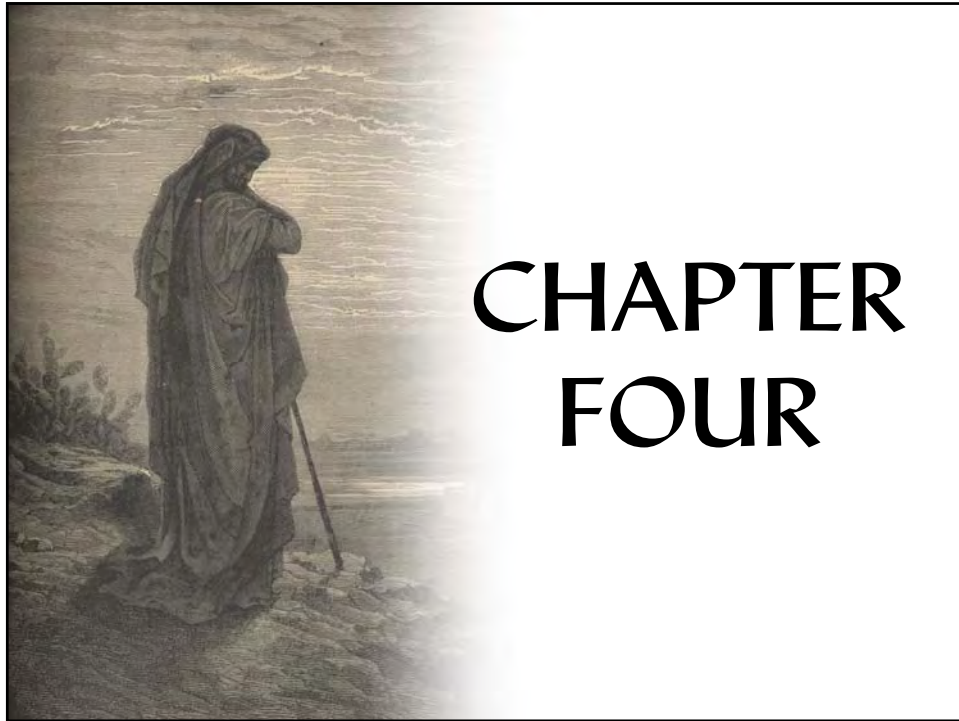
¹³Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob, says the Lord God, the God of hosts: ¹⁴On the day I punish Israel for its transgressions, I will punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground. ¹⁵I will tear down the winter house as well as the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall come to an end, says the Lord.




The Altar at Bethel

v. 14 "I will punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground."

GENESIS 28.10-22 - STORY OF JACOB. When he had to flee he stopped at Bethel and God showed him the promise, so he erected an altar – now that altar is coming down.




CHAPTER FOUR




The Selfish Greed of Women

¹Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, "Bring something to drink!" ²The Lord God has sworn by his holiness: The time is surely coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. ³Through breaches in the wall you shall leave, each one straight ahead; and you shall be flung out into Harmon, says the Lord.



Women liked the good life, came to want more and more and so put more and more pressure upon their husbands to supply them -- OPPRESSED the POOR.

FATE OF THESE WOMEN – they shall be killed; in the streets, scavengers will strip their bodies of all their precious clothes and jewelry.



v. 3 The Mystery of Harmon


HARMON (note that in Moslem Holy Book, the Koran, up to 1/3 of the book no one knows what it means). No one knows what HARMON means – it is a city that does not exist, no record of it ever existing. Some think it is a play on the word naked.

****Picture a city of self-assertion, of dog-eat-dog, of getting ahead at all costs, of greed and pampering, of a system of injustice where only the strong get ahead. They had forgotten that all things come from God, that God is the source of life – so God raises up a prophet to remind them... to tell them that this life will be destroyed by God because it does not please God.**



The Deep Seatedness of
Israel's Guilt 4.4-5.3
The Sin of the Sanctuaries 4.4-5

**⁴Come to Bethel—and transgress;
to Gilgal—and multiply
transgression; bring your sacrifices
every morning, your tithes every
three days; ⁵bring a thank-offering
of leavened bread, and proclaim
freewill offerings, publish them; for
so you love to do, O people of
Israel! says the Lord God.**



**4b "...sacrifices every morning." Tithes
every 3 days - an exaggerated zeal..
confusing the form of religion with
morality/truth. Here is the problem in a
nutshell – they go to Temple, think they
are pleasing God because they are
religious – but they are empty.
People went to the altars to seek
purification (i.e. ok to sin, just go to
confession).**




**Do We Create God in Our Image?
Or, Do we Allow God to Recreate
Us in the Image of The Divine?**

HUMANKIND has always tried to domesticate God, to appease God, give Him sacrifices, etc.

In other cultures – throw a virgin into the volcano.

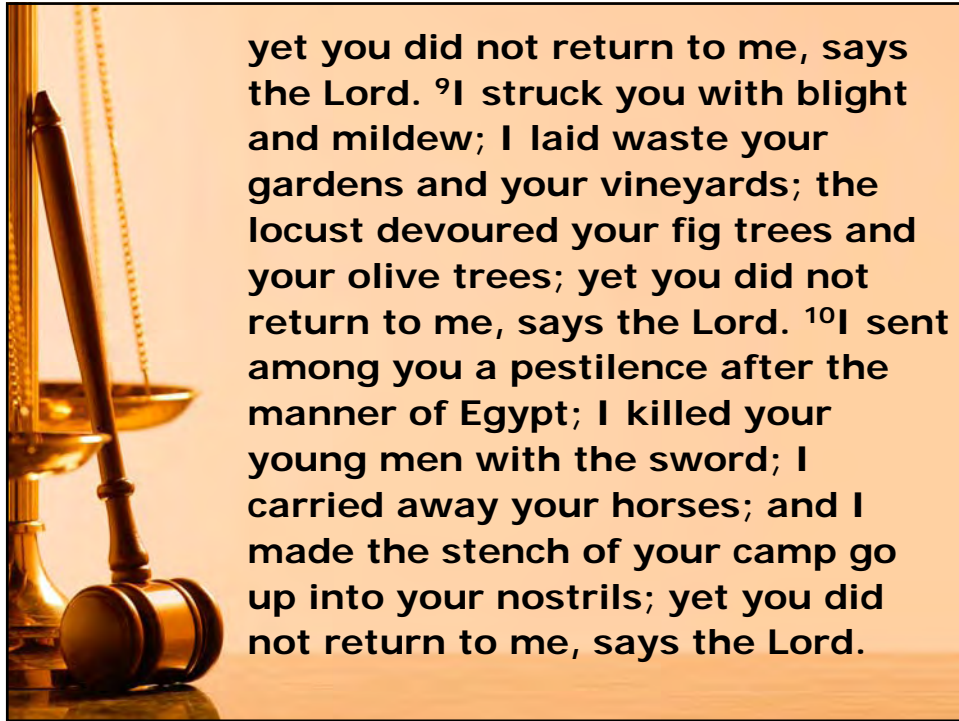
Amos, from shepherding background, understands how some believe the slaughter of an animal would appease God

AMOS – the outsider, warns us that when we become comfortable with our Christianity we are in danger.

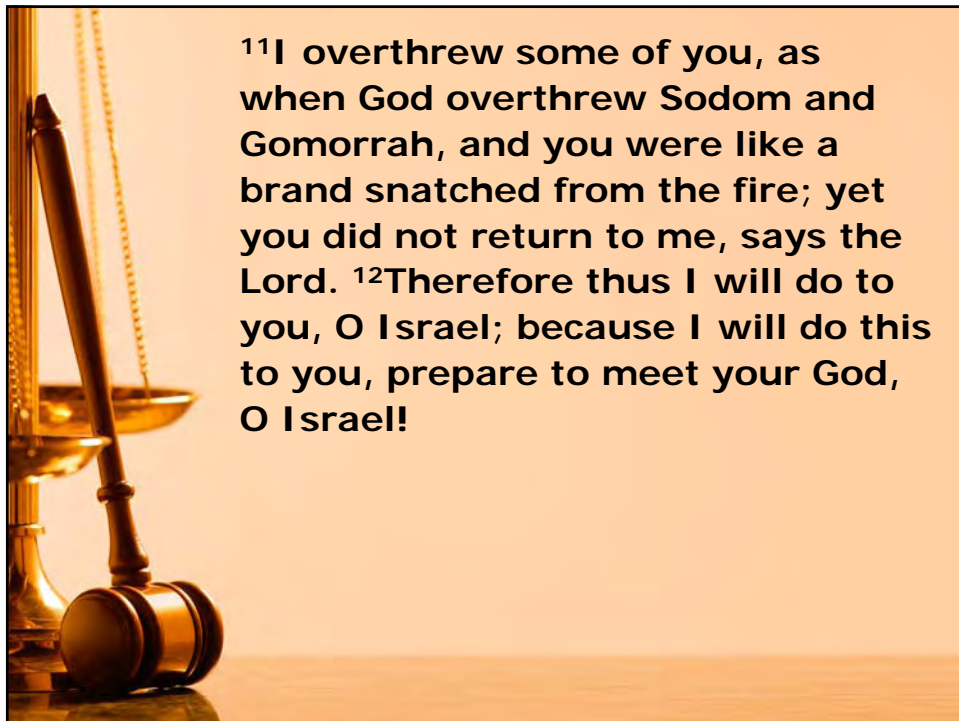


Indifference to Chastisement


⁶I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. ⁷And I also withheld the rain from you when there were still three months to the harvest; I would send rain on one city, and send no rain on another city; one field would be rained upon, and the field on which it did not rain withered; ⁸so two or three towns wandered to one town to drink water, and were not satisfied;



yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. ⁹I struck you with blight and mildew; I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards; the locust devoured your fig trees and your olive trees; yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. ¹⁰I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I killed your young men with the sword; I carried away your horses; and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me, says the Lord.



¹¹I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a brand snatched from the fire; yet you did not return to me, says the Lord. ¹²Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!



What is Required – Repentance: Turn Around

v. 6 “.... Yet you did not return to me”

v. 8 “.... Yet you did not return to me”

v. 9 “.... Yet you did not return to me”

v. 10 “.... Yet you did not return to me”

v. 11 “.... Yet you did not return to me”

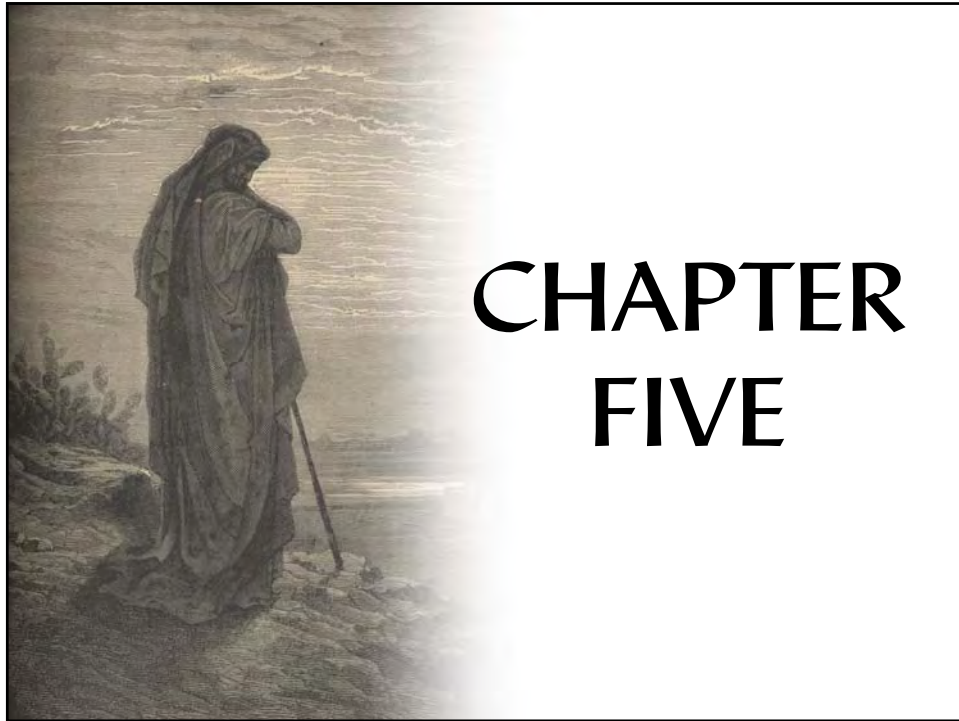


Doxology


¹³For lo, the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind, reveals his thoughts to mortals, makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth— the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name!

Some scholars believe that v. 13b is by a later editor. This editor concerned about the God of nature (note also 5.8-9 & 9.5-6). Amos is concerned about the God of history.

Editor also uses “The Lord, God of Hosts” – a name not used at time of Amos, but used in later period.



CHAPTER FIVE

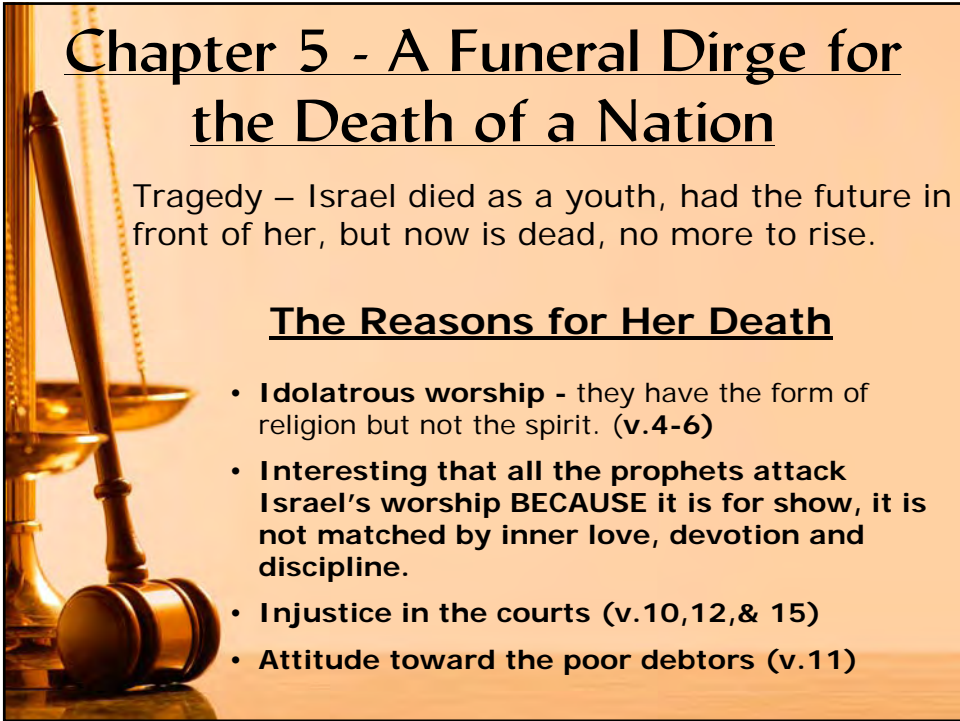


PARADOX

A paradox is when you hold two things, each of which is true, yet taken together they are diametrically opposed.

God as Father in prodigal Son (loving, tender, merciful) and God as judge – anger.

Tension -- while Amos does not question God's justice, he appeals to God's mercy (**Amos 5.15 "It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph"**)




Chapter 5 - A Funeral Dirge for the Death of a Nation

Tragedy – Israel died as a youth, had the future in front of her, but now is dead, no more to rise.

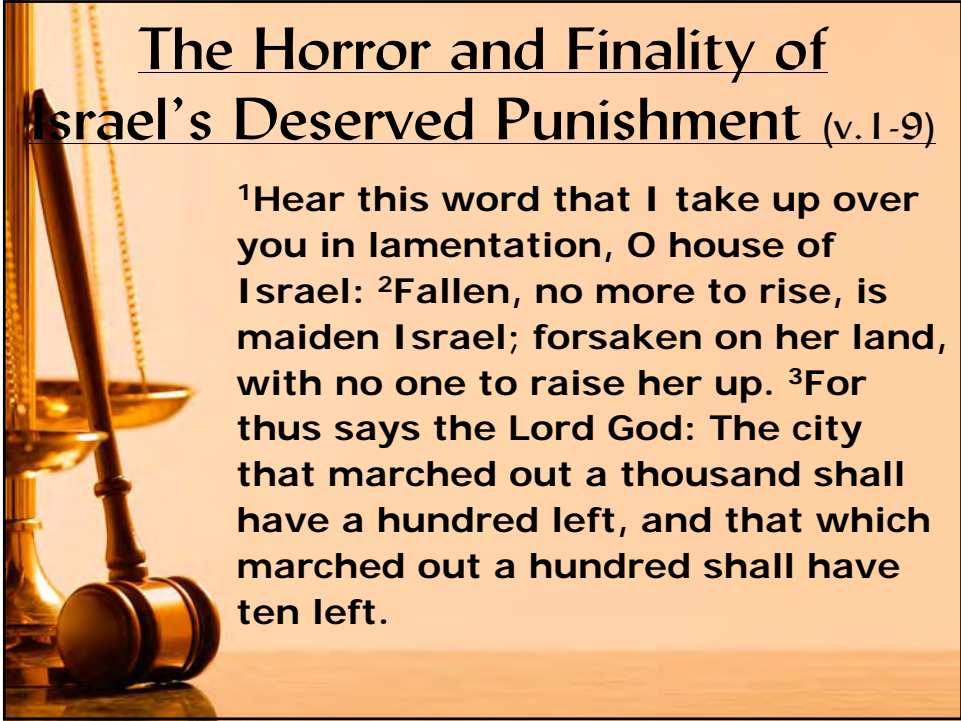
The Reasons for Her Death

- **Idolatrous worship** - they have the form of religion but not the spirit. (v.4-6)
- **Interesting that all the prophets attack Israel's worship BECAUSE it is for show, it is not matched by inner love, devotion and discipline.**
- **Injustice in the courts (v.10,12,& 15)**
- **Attitude toward the poor debtors (v.11)**



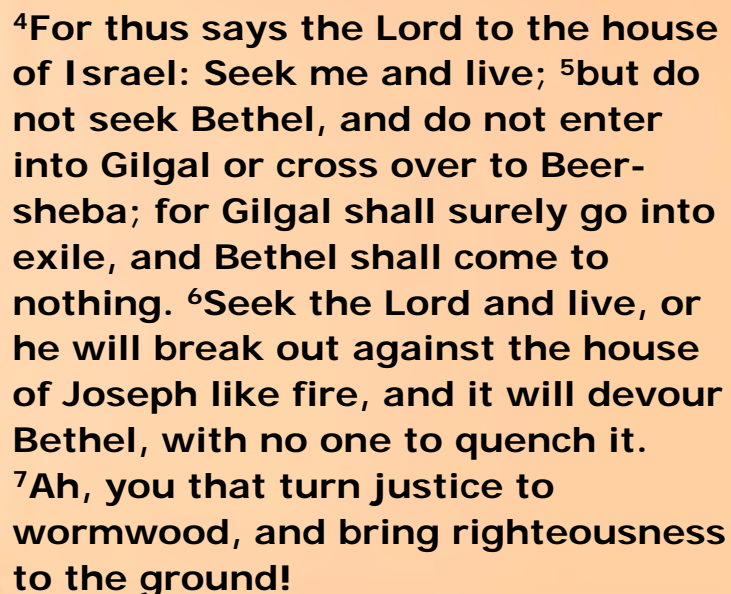
**Seek good and hate evil
defined by context.**

- **Seek good = Seek the Lord**
- **Hate evil = Hate idolatry and injustice**

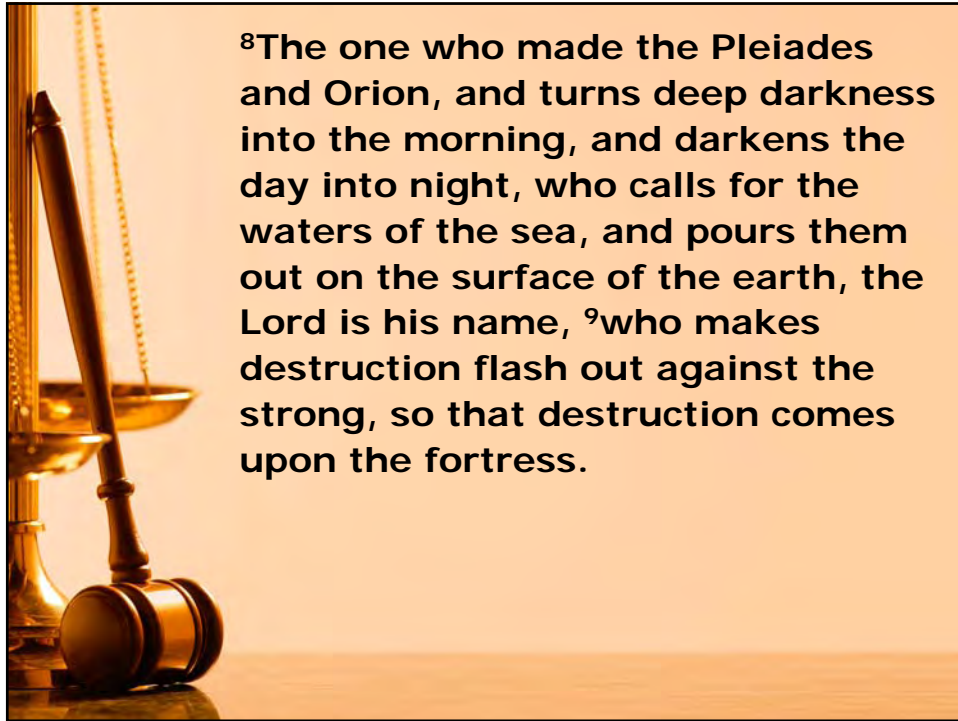


The Horror and Finality of Israel's Deserved Punishment (v. 1-9)

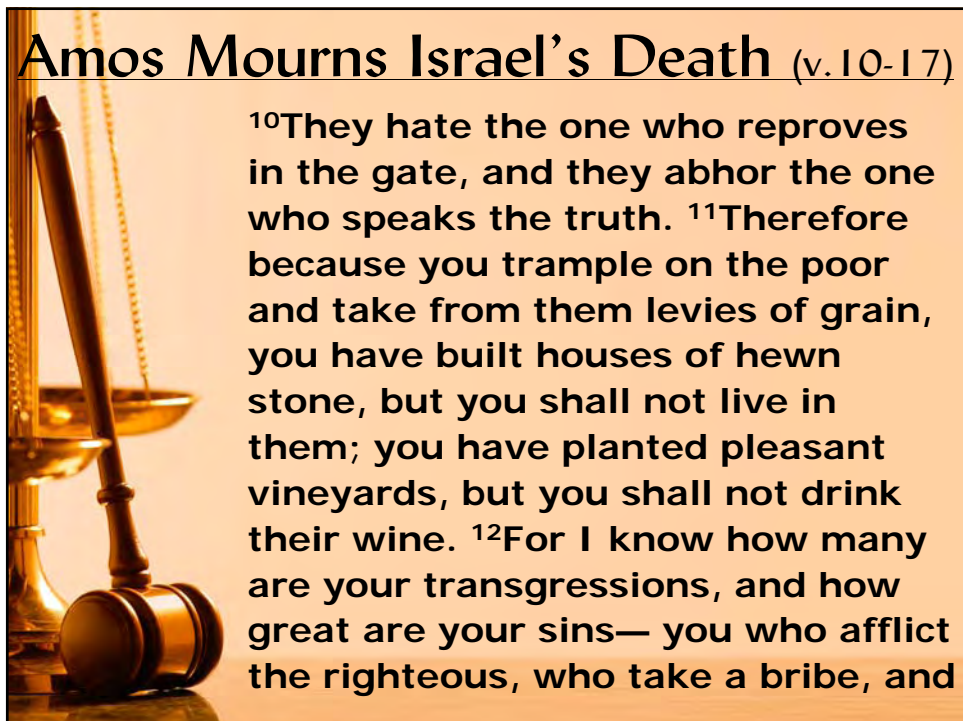
¹Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel: ²Fallen, no more to rise, is maiden Israel; forsaken on her land, with no one to raise her up. ³For thus says the Lord God: The city that marched out a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which marched out a hundred shall have ten left.



⁴For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek me and live; ⁵but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beer-sheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing. ⁶Seek the Lord and live, or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire, and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it. ⁷Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground!

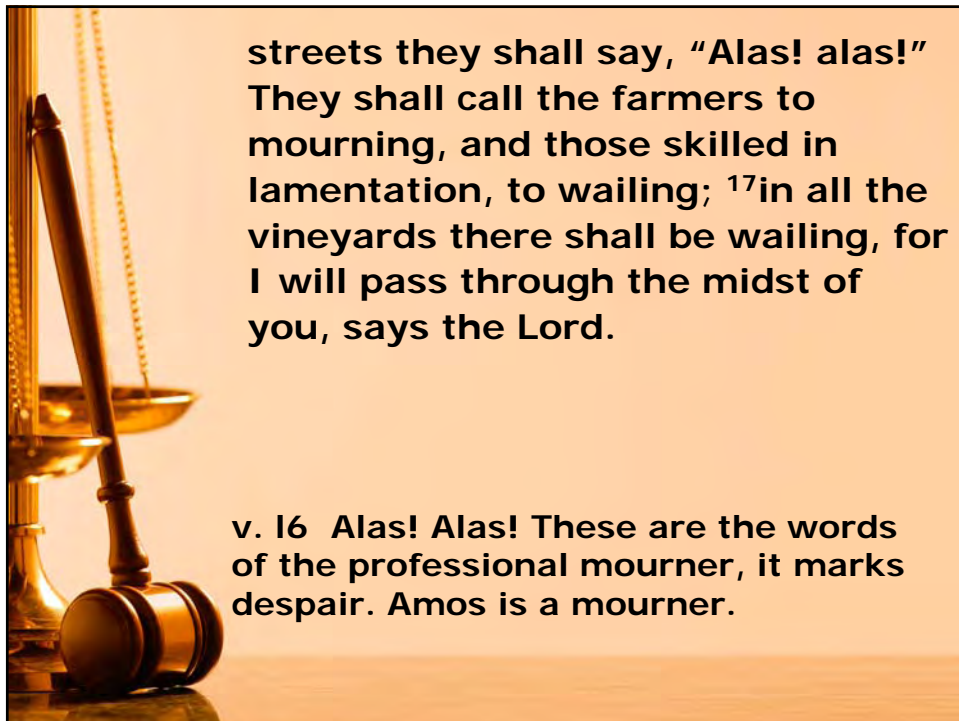
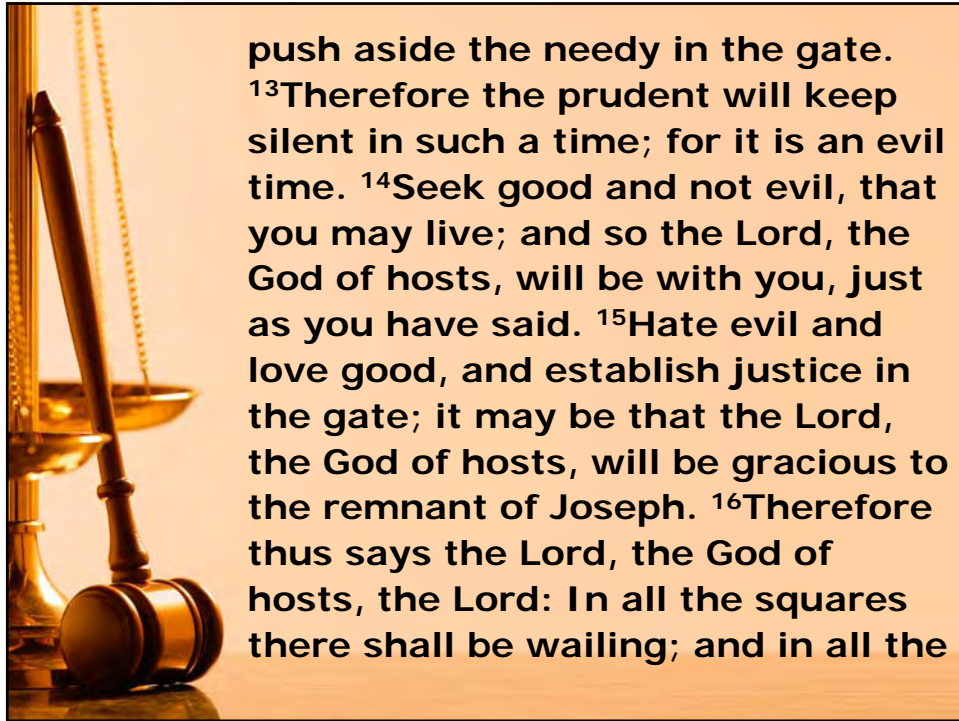


⁸The one who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning, and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the Lord is his name, ⁹who makes destruction flash out against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress.



Amos Mourns Israel's Death (v.10-17)

¹⁰They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth. ¹¹Therefore because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. ¹²For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins— you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and





Verses 10-17 further explained

v.10 GATE - This is the place for discussion, where people came to talk - yet here the causes for the poor meet only with hatred and abhorrence.

v.11 Exactions of wheat - rather than doing crops on the 'half' - the rich took so much from the poor that there was nothing left for the poor to live on (migrant workers).

v.13 **Such a time - not the time now, but time will come when to speak up will do no good.**

v.17 **"Pass through the midst of you" – this is what God did to Egypt, the Passover, death.**

****v.15** **It may be that God saves you, but you cannot force this, not dependent on human action, only by God's grace.**



WHAT IS GOOD?

Subjective - In our society, good is what each individual decides it is. Each has a different good – define it the way we want to.

Biblically - Good is to seek God – to seek God is to seek the good

Israel apart from God cannot be good, neither can we.

FALSE CONFIDENCE

5.18-6.14 is about Israel's deluded confidence that no harm will come upon her from God.

