

AMOS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Amos chapter 4 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Now keep in mind that Amos was called into ministry by God to speak to the Northern Kingdom of Israel regarding their coming judgment. His name reflected his mission, “burden” or “burden bearer.” And this shepherd spoke to a nation that was at the height of its glory, living in prosperity. But now that was all going to change as God’s wrath is poured out upon them.

As we concluded last time in Amos chapter 3 we saw that this judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel was deserved as we looked at their present situation. This evening as we look at Amos chapter 4 we will see that God was fair in judging Israel, they deserved it as their past is looked upon. And then in Amos chapter 5 we will see that Israel’s judgment is deserved as we look into the future of the nation and the judgment that is coming in the Last Days.

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Amos chapter 4, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

AMOS 4**VERSE 1**

1. Bashan was located on the east side of the Sea of Galilee and it was well known for its lush pastures. Thus, it was a great place for grazing animals to be raised, like cows.

But understand this, Amos is not speaking of literal cows here. He is speaking of the upper class women of Israel. Their husbands were nothing more than weak, very meek, like servants, who got their wives whatever they wanted, no matter the cost.

And to obtain these luxurious things they had to oppress the poor, squeeze all the money they could from them so they could live the good life. They were self-seeking, and they were heartless!

Hubbard sums it up like this, “The sarcastic epithet [label, nickname] *cows of Bashan* seems to refer both to the luxury that the wealthy women enjoyed and to a certain voluptuousness and sensuality which their extravagant life-style afforded them.”

And their need for greed is seen not only in how they oppressed the poor, crushed the needy, but we are told that these women, “**Who say to your husbands, ‘Bring wine, let us drink!’**”

As one writer put it, “These women may not have been directly involved in mistreating the poor. But their incessant demands for luxuries drove their husbands to greater injustices.”
(McComiskey)

2. We read that and we are amazed at how wicked these people were but be very careful here because America is doing the same thing. The need for greed has caused us to take advantage of others, we try to get our own way. We want to live it up and we do and then we think there are no consequences to our actions, but there are.

Now our society has come up with a name for this, as they do with everything else. Let me share this with you and then I will put my two cents in. We are told,

Individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder grow up feeling superior and needing to be admired. They have a longstanding pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy. The core feature of this disorder is antagonism (grandiosity, attention-seeking, callousness) which repeatedly puts the individual at odds with other people.

This disorder is only diagnosed if: (1) it begins no later than early adulthood, (2) these behaviors occur at home, work, and in the community, and (3) these behaviors lead to clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder should not be diagnosed if its symptoms can be better explained as due to another mental disorder, Substance Use Disorder, or another medical condition.

Interpersonal relations of individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder are typically impaired because of their feelings of entitlement, need for admiration, and callousness. Although these individuals are usually very ambitious and confident; vocational functioning often is impaired because of intolerance of criticism or defeat.

- <http://www.mentalhealth.com/home/dx/narcissisticpersonality.html>

When I first read that I thought it was a joke and then I realized it was the American Psychiatric Association that has put this together and they are just crazy anyway. Here is the problem with what they are saying and please understand that I am not saying we don't see this in people, we do. The problem is that now this is a disorder and thus, it is not your fault, it is not a sin!

As I look at how God judged the Northern Kingdom of Israel for their Narcissistic Personality Disorder, their sin, why would He not hold us accountable for our actions? He will! God saw what the Northern Kingdom of Israel was doing and He promised to hold them accountable and I believe we need to listen and learn, apply these lessons to our lives as individuals and as a nation!

Listen to what the Lord is going to do with Israel because of their sin, not their disorder because they were accountable for their actions, they could not blame anyone else!

VERSES 2-3

1. Remember that at this point in time, during the ministry of Amos, they were living the good life at the cost of those less fortunate. But now that was all going to change. The Assyrians were going to come upon them, breakdown their walls, and lead them into captivity with fishhook's in their lip or noses! These well fed cows were going to be lead away for slaughter!

And the Assyrians were a brutal people. As they led their captives away they would push them for hundreds of miles and these captives would be naked and they were attached to each other with strings and fishhooks pierced through their lower lip and even their noses!

These "fat cows" would be humbled by God. No more living the good life at the expense of others, they were going into captivity!

2. Now as you read that you may be wondering why was God so harsh on them? I think Peter tells us the reason. He says, **“but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.”** I Peter 1:15-17.

The people of Israel did the exact opposite and God was judging them for it. They had no fear of God or His coming judgment upon them. They partied hearty but that was all going to come to an end!

That again is an important lesson for us to understand. God wants us to be holy, a people that are set apart for Him, to bring glory and honor to Him. That means all that we do! For the most part we can put on a show at church but how are we living at home, at work, when we are at the store or in the car?

As I look at Christianity in America in the 21st Century it seems like many are living like the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It is all about them and thus, we have all kinds of things in the church to feed our flesh and not much to feed our spirit! People come to church to be taken care of but they don’t have any desire to minister to others, they just don’t have the time or whatever!

And as we read on we will see how the Lord feels about this empty spirituality, this superficial spirituality that is only interested in self at the cost of others! Listen to what the Lord is saying.

VERSES 4-5

1. As you can see Amos is being sarcastic here. Bethel was a place where the Ark was kept for a time, Judges 20:18-28. Gilgal was the area where the children of Israel first entered the land, Joshua 4.

One of the problems for the Northern Kingdom of Israel was that the Temple was in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. So to prevent their people going down to Judah they set up their own places of worship in cities like Bethel and Gilgal.

But keep in mind that this was not in obedience to what God had said and thus, all that they did was not accepted by the Lord, it was only a “**transgression.**” And to drive home that point Amos speaks of them bringing an offering to God every three days. I think again Amos is being a little sarcastic here.

You see, there was a tithe that was to be brought to God every three years, (Deuteronomy 14:28) but Amos is saying that even if you brought your offering to God every three days God will not accept it, He does not want it!

And even if they bring sacrifices to God He will not accept them, why? Because they are not done in obedience to God. How do I know that? Because these sacrifices were given with leaven and there was only the wave offering on the Day of Pentecost that had leaven in it. Thus, what Amos is saying here is that your sacrifice to God are polluted by sin or leaven!

And notice what the people thought of their activity, “**For this you love . . .**” Amos 4:5. It is what they loved by not what the Lord loved!

2. Let's make the application in our own lives now. People today go to church today to "feel good" or to "feel happy." If they leave church that way they feel they have had a spiritual experience.

Thus, churches have become social institutions, social gathering places instead of a place to come and worship God. If that is how you judge if a church is good or bad, you are wrong. The bigger picture is and must be, do you leave church knowing God better and in that process are you being conformed into the image of Jesus? For Israel, they failed on both those points and so are many churches today. May we all learn that lesson!

And here is the key folks, whether you agree with it or not. We do not measure worship by how it makes us feel. I know that is shocking to some of you. But the bottom line is this. We measure worship by how it honors God!

Thus, worship many times in churches is all about the congregation, how are we going to make them feel, how are we going to move them and that is totally wrong. If that is the way you feel you are just worshiping yourself and not God! May we learn that lesson!

God is not interested in our sacrifice but He wants a relationship with us and thus, we must worship Him in Spirit and in truth!

3. As you read of God's judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel you may come to the conclusion that God is done with them. He is not!

We are going to see a series of judgments come against Israel with the sole purpose of restoration. Five times God cries out, “**Yet you have not returned to Me**” and because of that we will see the consequences of their failure to repent. And in Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28 God warns His people of the judgments that would come if they rebelled against Him, but they refused to listen.

God is trying to restore them and for those who have walked away from Him, He will do whatever it takes to draw them back, to restore them because He loves them that much!

VERSE 6

1. Please understand that they did not have clean teeth because they went to the dentist or they were brushing their teeth. God brought food shortages upon them to get their attention. That is why their teeth were clean! The problem was that they refused to listen.

Now keep in mind that Amos was writing to them during a time of prosperity, they had plenty of food, they had everything they wanted. What Amos is doing here is speaking of what God is going to do and he is speaking in the present tense because it is going to happen, God said it will!

2. We also see here the first of five times God brought judgment upon them to restore them and “**Yet you have not returned to Me**” the Lord said to them! With this judgment of famine, with this judgment of a lack of food they did not repent and return to the Lord and that is a sad place to be! But God has not given up on them. Let’s read on and see what else is going to come upon them for their sin and refusal to return to the Lord!

VERSES 7-8

1. God brought drought conditions, but this drought was not your typical drought. You see, it would rain in one city and not the other. Why? To get their attention. To show them this was from God and not an act of Mother Nature or whatever.

Clarke put it like this, “To prove to them that this rain did not come *fortuitously* or of *necessity*, God was pleased to make these *most evident distinctions*. One city had rain, and could fill all its tanks or cisterns, while a neighbouring city had none . . . in these instances a *particular providence* was most evident.”

God controls the weather and this was obvious to them and **“Yet you have not returned to Me”** the Lord said to them a second time! Even in this drought that was specific to a city, an area, they refused to return to the Lord even though they did see the hand of God in this. Again, very sad.

VERSE 9

1. God is not doing this because He hates them. He is doing this because He loves them and wants what is best for them. He is trying to protect them. And thus, God now brings a judgment of crop failure to get their attention.

He blasts them with the heat and mildew and if that is not enough, the locust come in and eat up what is left of their crops! Hubbard sums it up like this in regards to these judgments, “*Blight* is the work of the east wind that dries and scorches the grain prematurely so that it turns brown. *Mildew* is the product of parasitic worms which turn pale the tips of green grain.” You see, God was trying to warn them and they still did not get it, they did not heed the warnings.

We are told the third time of their response of God's judgment upon them, "**Yet you have not returned to Me**" the Lord said to them!

VERSE 10

1. God brought various plagues upon them. Not only that but their enemies came in and killed many with the sword. And if that is not bad enough they left the dead bodies to decompose around them, which gave off a terrible stench or smell!

So now they are going to cry out to the Lord and repent of their sins, right? Here we are the fourth time and "**Yet you have not returned to Me**" the Lord said to them! It is amazing how hard the heart of man can be as He is living in rebellion against God. And understand that man has not changed, he is still as hard hearted as ever! But God is trying to get their attention so that they will turn to Him but man has a choice, he has a free will and God will never force anyone to come to Him but He will encourage them!

VERSE 11

1. Here we see that God destroyed certain cities of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and still there was no repentance. Now these judgments may seem harsh, but they are designed for one purpose, to awaken the people to their sin so they will return to the Lord. God loves us so much that He will do whatever it takes to get us to return to Him.

But look at what God has done to awaken them and still, even in this fifth time we see **“Yet you have not returned to Me”** the Lord said to them! God blessed them and they did not give thanks. God brought famine and they did not turn back to the Lord. God brought drought and only in certain cities to show that He is in control of the rain, and still they did not turn to Him. God brought judgment upon their crops and still nothing. He sent plagues and their enemies killed many leaving their bodies to rot and smell, and still nothing! And God brought some into captivity and even with this they did not return to Him. What will God do next? We will see in a minute as we read on.

VERSES 12-13

1. Because they rejected God’s love, His warnings, it was time for judgment, it was time for them to meet their God. This is a *warning* that if they don’t turn to Him they will be separated from Him. It is an *invitation* to come to Him, to receive Him.

And this is a *summons* that one day we all will have to stand before God! Now we can stand before God in our own righteousness, which are like filthy rags or we can stand in the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed to us by faith. It is a choice we must make and we will make!

Spurgeon summed it up like this, “Think awhile upon who it is that you have to meet! You must meet, your God - your God! That is, offended justice you must meet whose laws you have broken, whose penalties you have ridiculed; justice righteously indignant with its sword drawn you must confront. You must meet your God; that is, you must be examined, by unblinded omniscience. He who has seen your heart, and read your thoughts, and jotted down your affections, and remembered your idle words, you must meet him; and infinite discernment you must meet; those eyes that never yet were duped; the God who will see through the veils of hypocrisy and all the concealments of formality. There will be no making yourself out to be better than you are before him.” Not much more I can add to that!

2. Listen again to Amos 4:13, **“For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth - The Lord God of hosts is His name.”**

The all-knowing, all-powerful, omnipresent God, just in case you don’t know who He is, **“The Lord God of hosts is His name.”** or ***“Yahweh Elohiym tsaba shem.”*** God has been trying to get their attention and they just refused to see so now He tells them who He is and that they need to prepare their lives because they are going to stand before Him!

Make no mistake about it, people today who have rejected His love, who have rejected Him, will see His wrath. They will not be able to stand before a holy and righteous God in their own righteousness, which are like filthy rags as I have said. We stand in the righteousness of God that has been imputed to us through Jesus Christ. Thus, we are prepared to meet our God! But if you are not, beware, He is a consuming fire!

3. Now, in Amos chapter 5 we will look at Israel's judgment is deserved as we look at the future of the nation.

AMOS 5

VERSES 1-3

1. Keep in mind that Amos is bringing forth this lamentation, this funeral dirge during a time of prosperity in which the nation was enjoying. His words are speaking of the sorrow that is coming and the reality is, that is the heart of God towards His people. He laments over the judgment that must come. He desires us to return to Him, but if we refuse, like Israel, judgment will come. In fact, Amos is so certain that this judgment will come that he speaks as if it already happened!

2. This nation that was full of life will be cut down and become lifeless because of her sin! The Assyrians will come in and take the nation captive! And as you look at this invasion by the Assyrians, I guess it really is by God, His judgment will be so severe that there will be a 90% casualty rate in these battles! You can't win with those kinds of casualties and they won't because they are fighting against God and you can never win when you do that!

VERSES 4-9

1. Judgment is coming, what can they do about it? "**Seek Me and live.**" Do you see how simple that is and yet they did not do that. And it is God who is crying out for them to come to Him and live. Now, on the other end of the spectrum is to reject God and die!

Amos speaks of the fire of God's judgment. Fire is an interesting property. It can destroy or harden, make firm. The point being is you can't escape the fire of God. If you reject God your life you will be like wood or paper and it will be consumed by the fire of God.

If you accept the Lord in your life your life will be like steel and as the fire of God comes upon it you will be hardened or made into permanence. Thus, it all depends on what you are in regards to what the fire of God is doing in your life!

2. In verse 7 we see how unrighteous the society was, even the court system. Make no mistake about it, justice and righteousness are the pillars of any society. And yet, here we see the corruption that is poisoning the nation. You see, the judicial system is to be like a medicine to heal the wrongs of society and restore those who are oppressed. But, what we see here is the judicial system has become a fatal poison, destroying the nation. A sign that a nation is dying is seen in the corruption of its judicial system! That is a sad commentary on our nation where we have corrupt judges making laws to support wickedness, to free the guilty and to get away with murder!

3. Now as we see that don't lose heart. Why not? Because, **“He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning And makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth; The Lord is His name. He rains ruin upon the strong, So that fury comes upon the fortress.”** Amos 5:8-9.

In other words, God is in control. He places the constellations in the sky. He brings about whatever He desires. He is sovereign! Thus, God is not only strong enough to save but He is strong enough to bring His judgment upon the wicked and no one can stand before Him or stop Him! I will rest in the fact that I can only stand before God because of what Jesus has done for me! Thus, the judgment that was due me was endured by my Lord!

VERSES 10-15

1. Here is the reason for the coming judgment. They don't like those who are speaking forth the truth, they like to live in darkness! And think about it, when people are living in the darkness of sin, when anyone turns on the light of righteousness or righteous living, exposing their sin, look out.

They will fight and mock those who stand up for the truth. Again, we see the same today! People don't want their sin exposed but accepted as normal, as right. Thus, in America we have people who call evil good and good evil because they have no King ruling in their lives. The Lord is not ruling in their heart! Thus, they do as they please no matter how evil it is. And as you depart from the Lord He will give you over to these debased things.

It is amazing that you can't go against any kind of sin or it is a hate crime. But you can slam Christians, make fun of them, call them intolerant, and get away with it. The darkness is trying to put out the light!

Let me show you what I mean with this article from July 11, 2015 and you will see how right is wrong and wrong is right. We are told,

The Honorable Myron Danus, seen here, handing down a one-year prison sentence to Pastor Horner for refusing to marry gay couples at his church in Proctor, Vermont.

Proctor, VT - A pastor at the Christian Proctor Church in Vermont, has been sentenced to one year in federal prison after refusing to marry gay couples. This comes shortly after the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision ruling that states must allow gay-marriage.

The Christian Pastor, 56-year-old Paul Horner, had his lawyer speak to reporters on his behalf.

"We are currently disputing the guilty verdict and I am confident my client will be a free man here shortly," said attorney Tom Downey. "Horner was just using his best judgement according to his rights and religious freedom in this country."

The Honorable Myron Danus handed down the harsh sentence.

"Religious freedom goes both ways, Mr. Horner," Danus told a packed courtroom. "It is not your place to deny individuals the same rights that everyone else has, rights that were passed down and agreed upon in a court of law, the ultimate court, the Supreme Court. It is not your decision whether or not you agree with the law but more importantly that you follow it and enforce it." . . .

Steve Shand president of the Vermont Family Research Committee, said it is "open season on Americans who refuse to bow to the government's redefinition of marriage."

"Homosexuals are gay," Shand told reporters. "Why should Christian ministers be forced to perform and celebrate any marriage that conflicts with their beliefs? It's a slippery slope my friend. Pretty soon these same pastors will be forced to wed animals or kitchen appliances. This is not my America!"

- <http://nbc.com.co/christian-pastor-in-vermont-sentenced-to-one-year-in-prison-after-refusing-to-marry-gay-couple/>

They don't want the truth, they can't handle the truth so they try to silence those who are speaking forth the truth. But here's the thing. God's Word will never be silenced no matter what man may try to do! Never forget that.

2. Now look at what they were involved in. They gained their wealth by oppressing the poor and God is saying that they will not enjoy the fruit of their wickedness. All the injustices that were going on will be stopped as they go into captivity!

And how sad this is that with all the evil, all the injustice that was taking place that there was no one would take a stand against it. And at this point you would think that God has had enough of their sin, their rebellion, their wickedness and He should just wipe them out.

But listen to the heart of God again in verses 14 and 15 of Amos chapter 5, **“Seek good and not evil, That you may live; So the Lord God of hosts will be with you, As you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the Lord God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”**

God is calling for them to repent, which means to turn around, to go in the opposite direction. Look at all the evil that they were doing and God still wants to forgive them. You see, it is their choice. They could seek God and live or reject God and die. If they seek God they will manifest in their lives the things of God, the nature of God. But if they reject Him then they will continue doing these evil things and judgment will come upon them!

3. Now if they don't repent, if they don't return to the Lord then the judgment of God ***WILL*** come upon them, not ***MIGHT!*** That is what we will see as we read on.

VERSES 16-20

1. As the judgment of God comes upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel we see that there is a shortage of mourners and thus, they call the farmer to come and mourn as well as some professional mourners. Why do they need so many? Because the judgment is so severe!

2. What is interesting here is that in verse 18 of Amos chapter 5 we see that they were looking for the Day of the Lord, they were wanting it to come, but why? Because they saw it as a time of victory over their enemies as God steps in and defeats them.

The only problem here, and it is big one, is they had become God's enemies and thus, this day would be one of judgment for them. They couldn't escape it no matter how hard they tried.

Now for the child of God we rejoice in this day for it is a day of hope as God intervenes and puts down the evil and will set up His Kingdom here on this earth.

It is as Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:9-11, "**For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.**" But the wrath of God will come upon the wicked, those who have rejected Jesus.

For the Jews, this will be a time of refining as they go through this Day of the Lord and they do turn back to the Lord. They receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior as their sins are forgiven in Him! They will see that, "**The LORD God of hosts is His name.**" Amos 4:13.

VERSES 21-27

1. God wants nothing to do with their hypocrisy! They went through all the religious motions but there was no emotion for the Lord, no relationship. And thus, God was not going to honor their activities, not their burnt offerings or even their worship music.

Then what does the Lord want? Listen Again to what verse 24 of Amos chapter 5 says, **“But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.”** The Lord wants justice to flow from their lives and righteousness to pour out of them like a mighty stream.

No, this is not a works salvation but it is the fruit that is born in the lives of those who love the Lord. You see, God was interested in their heart, not their empty rituals. If God gets a person’s heart then justice and righteousness will flow from their lives!

Now in verses 25 and 26 Amos takes them back to the Exodus out of Egypt and even when God brought them out of Egypt and they traveled through the wilderness for those 40 years because of unbelief, they were also worshiping pagan deities, the gods they brought up out of Egypt with them.

And the consequences of their actions is given to us in verse 27, **“Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus,” Says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.”** Judgment is coming by the hands of the Assyrians who will take them into captivity!

I don’t know where you are at this evening put I think James Montgomery Boice gives us a correct perspective on this judgment of God. He wrote,

If judgment is inevitable, as Amos (and the entire Bible) says it is, then the only logical thing is to flee to the place where it has already been poured out, that is, to the cross of Calvary. Only there may a guilty sinner find shelter. Augustus Toplady knew this secret and expressed it in one of the best-loved hymns in the English language, “Rock of Ages.”

Toplady lived in England in the 1700s and wrote this hymn in the first year of the American Revolution, 1776. He was in a field in England when suddenly a storm swept down out of the sky. He was far from a village and had no shelter, but he saw a large rock ahead of him and thought that, if he leaned against it, he might escape some of the storm's violence. When he got to the rock, he saw that it had been split open. There was a crack into which he could fit. He went in and was sheltered from the storm.

While waiting there, he thought of God's coming judgment and of the fact that Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was broken by God so that sinners like ourselves, who hide in him, might be safe. Struck by this thought, he found a playing card that had been lying at his feet and wrote, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee."

Are you hiding in that Rock? There is no other shelter. It is only there where you can safely meet God.

- James Montgomery Boice, *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 163-164

AMOS 6

VERSES 1-2

1. They were living the good life, trusting in themselves, in their location, in the wealthy people that surrounded them. They had become comfortable when they should have been fearful seeing the judgments of God that had come upon them and the ones that were still to come because of their disobedience, but they were not.

As I look at this nation I see a scary comparison to Israel. We boast about all that we have. We flaunt our sin. We are very religious but we do not worship the God of the Bible. It is all about self and if the God of the Bible does not make me feel good then I will make a god out of the imagination of my own heart and just say it is the God of the Bible! It is not!

Spurgeon put it like this. “Self-indulgence! Oh, this is the God of many! They live not for Christ - What do they for him? They live not for his Church - What care they for that? They live for self, and for self only. And mark there are such among the poor as well as among the rich, for all classes have this evil leaven.”

2. Since God is out of the picture God is asking the children of Israel if they are better than these pagan nations who were judged for their sin. You see, if God held them accountable for their actions how much more He is going to hold accountable His people who should have known better!

It is as Jesus said in Luke 12:47-48, “**And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**”

VERSES 3-7

1. They had it all at the cost of oppressing others but that did not seem to bother them. They had possessions, fine food, good music, great wine, the best ointments and in the end all these things will be worthless because they are going into captivity. And the picture that is being painted for us is they were more interested in the pursuit of pleasure than what was happening with the nation as it was going down the tubes!

VERSE 8

1. God has made many precious promises in His Word and He will bring them to pass. He has also spoken of some difficult things, some difficult promises like this coming judgment upon Israel. But make no mistake about it, what He has spoken He will bring to pass whether we like it or not.

2. Let me share a few verses with you and then I will expound on them. First of all in I Peter 5:5-7 we are told, **“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”**

In James 4:6 we are told, **“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”**

And in Proverbs 3:34 we are told, **“Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.”**

What was bringing them down? It was their pride! It is what we have read in these verses and it brought Lucifer down, it is bringing the Northern Kingdom of Israel down and it will bring us down! What can we do about it? Humble ourselves before the Lord. Don't think of yourself more than you should. But pride will keep you from repenting and getting right with God. We see it here with Israel and we can easily see it in our own lives if we are looking!

VERSES 9-10

1. I like the way that Page H. Kelly sums these verses up. He says,

“In the pestilence that will sweep across the land there will be so many victims that normal burial practices will have to be set aside and the survivors will resort to the unusual procedure of burning the corpses. When the relative of a deceased man enters his house to take out his body to be burned, he discovers that there is a lone survivor, hidden in some far corner of the house. When the relative calls out to him, he responds with a Hebrew interjection translated ‘hush!’ and then adds, ‘We must not mention the name of the Lord.’ These men have profaned the name of God in the past but now they dare not pronounce it, lest it loosen some fresh avalanche of His wrath. It is significant that even to this day an orthodox Jew will not pronounce the covenant name of Israel’s God.”

McComiskey also picks up on this and writes, “When a relative of one of the dead comes to burn the corpses, should he find one person still alive, that person will not permit his mentioning the name of the Lord for fear that the Lord will turn his wrath on him.”

Interestingly enough they will fear the Lord but they will not turn to Him, at least not yet!

VERSES 11-14

1. The point here is this. You don't run on rocks with horses nor do you plow on rocks. That is foolish and really impossible. And thus, Israel has taken an impossible position with God leaving God no choice but to pour out His judgment upon them.

Spurgeon put it like this, Here, Amos "puts together two proverbs which were commonly used to signify that men do not, as a rule, continue to labor in vain, and spend their strength for nought. Wise men do not send their horses to run upon the rocks; and they do not send their oxen to plough where all their toil would be wasted: 'Shall horses run upon the rock?' 'Will one plough rocks with oxen?' The answer implied is, 'Certainly not,' and it meant that, if a thing cannot be done, it is not worth doing if it can, it will be well for us not to attempt to do it."

2. And yes they were rejoicing in all they had and God said that they were rejoicing over nothing - Lo Debar. They were masters of their own destiny and they were resisting all that was coming against them by their own strength - Karnaim.

But God says that He is going to bring the Assyrians down upon them. The Assyrians are the nation that will bring forth the judgment of God upon them. And this judgment will affect all of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, from the north to the south, they will be wiped out and they were!

Spurgeon put it like this, “The Lord points to other cities which had been destroyed, - to Calneh, and Hamath, and Gath, which he had smitten because of the sin of the people who had lived there; and he says, ‘Ye that dwell at Jerusalem, and ye that live at Samaria, do not imagine that ye will escape the consequences of your sin. I was able to reach the inhabitants of these proud cities, despite their strong fortifications and their powerful armies; and I can reach you also.’ So, when we look back upon the judgments of God upon guilty men, we may conclude that no sinner has any right to think that he shall escape. The proudest and mightiest have been brought down by God and so will men, will dare to resist the Most High, continue to be humble, even to the world’s end.”

3. Let me close with this because we need to understand what God desires for us. We also need to understand that God will bring to pass that which He has promised, even judgment, but that is not His desire for us. He wants to restore, He wants restoration to occur and He will do all that He can to see that take place in our lives because He loves us that much. What a great God we serve!