

Mid Week • Amos 1-5

INTRODUCTION

Amos was a farmer from Judah who received a call from God to go to the northern nation of Israel and warn them of judgments to come. The year was 760 BC, and both Israel and Judah were prospering.

The surrounding empires of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and the rest were in decline.

Internal problems and stiff competition for the throne in these nations kept them preoccupied with their own internal issues and stopped their armies from engaging in wars of conquest and expansion.

Assyria was the first nation to break out of this and so became the next major power of the area which fulfilled the dire warnings of judgment Amos foretells in this book.

But at the time Amos prophesied, Israel was prosperous and safe.

But under the surface, the nation was corrupt to the core.

The poor were being ripped off by the rich.

The court system was being used as a tool by the wealthy to steal from the poor.

The kings of Israel were committing acts of indescribable evil.

The people were engaging in all kinds of gross immorality.

And collectively, the nation had turned it's back on God.

The people mouthed the name of Jehovah, but they worshipped Him in the form of a golden bull – and practiced pagan rites of worship that were abominable to God.

AMOS 1

¹The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

²And he said:

“The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers.”

Amos describes himself as a *herdsman* – a shepherd, from Tekoa, which was a small village about 10 miles south of Jerusalem.

In Ch. 7, Amos says that he also harvested figs, so it seems he was a *farmer* as opposed to just a herdsman.

The earthquake mentioned here is also mentioned in Zech. 14.

This time marker, along with the mention of both Uzziah and Jeroboam II mark Amos' prophecy as coming at right about the year 760 BC.

V. 2 may very well be connected to this mention of the earthquake.

Amos prophesied 2 years *before* the quake – and his words were like a spiritual earthquake, seeking to shake the people out of their complacency, and moral corruption.

God is pictured here as roaring from Zion, which is the hill the city of Jerusalem sits on.

Both Zechariah and the Jewish historian Josephus say that the earthquake that occurred during Uzziah's reign was centered on the Mount of Olives and that it actually caused a depression to form to the north of the Mount.

The effects of the quake were felt all over the Middle east and caused sever damage to the pagan altars on the top of Mt. Carmel in Israel – just as is prophesied here.

3 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of
iron.**

**4 But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,
Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.**

**5 I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of aven,
And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden.
The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,”
Says the LORD.**

Beginning with this verse and continuing through 2:16, 8 warnings of judgment are given.

The first 7 are for Israel's neighbors, including her sister nation of Judah to the south.

The final warning is for Israel.
The 8 prophecies all possess the same formula.
Each is introduced with the words, “Thus says the LORD . . .”
Then we read, “For 3 transgressions, and for 4 . . . “ usch and such
a judgment will fall.
The first 3 are symbolic of the cup of God’s wrath being filled to
the full.
The 4th was the proverbial straw that broke the camels back.
As we read these 8 warnings, though 4 sins are mentioned for each
nation, only one is specified – this is that 4th sin, the final evil
that provoked God’s fury.
Before God turns to speak to the sin and rebellion of Israel, from 2:6
to the end of the book, He identifies the sin and judgment of the
surrounding nations.
He does this because it’s a way to stimulate Israel’s sense of what
is just.
By listing the sins of her neighbors and then saying He will judge
them, God hopes Israel will awaken to her own peril.
It is so easy for us to see the sin and short-coming in everyone else
and often so hard to see it in ourselves.
God here shows His perfect justice, and hopefully this will move
the people of Israel to stop and consider their own behavior in
light of it.
In vs. 3-5, we have the judgment on Syria with it’s capital at
Damascus.
They had brutally savaged Israel’s eastern frontier – and for this,
God would rain down judgment on them.
Amos prophesies judgment on the lush and pleasant places of
Syria as well as the royal house in these verses.

6 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they took captive the whole captivity
To deliver *them* up to Edom.**

**7 But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza,
Which shall devour its palaces.**

8 I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,

**And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;
I will turn My hand against Ekron,
And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,”
Says the Lord GOD.**

Gaza was Philistines territory.

Though David and Solomon had pretty much broken the back of Philistine power, they still carried out raids on the borders of Israeli territory.

They would capture Jews and then sell them as slaves in the slave markets of Edom.

Like Syria, the remnant of the Philistines would come under God's judgment.

All her chief cities would be crushed.

9 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,
And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.**

**10 But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre,
Which shall devour its palaces.”**

Tyrus is Tyre, the maritime city of Lebanon which was a major port for the Phoenicians.

For generations, the Lebanese and Jews had been in a friendly alliance.

In fact, the Lebanese king Hiram had supplied Solomon with skilled craftsmen to construct the temple.

But a new royal family had come to the throne that was hostile to Israel and her other neighbors.

Tyre had participated with the Philistines in their slave trade of Jewish captives.

The judgement prophesied here came to pass some years later when Nebuchadnezzar set a 13 year siege on the city and burned the coastal town to the ground.

11 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Edom, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because he pursued his brother with the sword,**

**And cast off all pity;
His anger tore perpetually,
And he kept his wrath forever.**

**12 But I will send a fire upon Teman,
Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.”**

Edom is also judged.

Edom’s sin was their fierce brutality toward the Jews, who were their cousins.

Remember that Edom was populated by the descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother.

13 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they ripped open the women with child in
Gilead,
That they might enlarge their territory.**

**14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
Amid shouting in the day of battle,
And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.**

**15 Their king shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together,”
Says the LORD.**

The Ammonites lived in the region to the east of the tribes living on the east bank of the Jordan.

As the descendants of Lot, they too were relatives of Israel, but they ceaselessly harassed the eastern borders of Israel.

They were utterly cruel and seemed to delight in provoking the Jews by committing barbarous acts against the weak and defenseless.

They carried out a kind of war of terror – much like the Palestinians are trying to do today.

The Ammonites wanted the land Israel occupied on the eastern bank of the Jordan and thought that by terrorizing the eastern tribes they could get them to withdraw.

God said he would judge the Ammonites.

AMOS 2

1 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to
lime.**

**2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting *and* trumpet sound.**

**3 And I will cut off the judge from its midst,
And slay all its princes with him,”
Says the LORD.**

Moab was the nation to the south of the Ammonites and east of Edom - to the SE of the Dead Sea.

They had been constant thorns in the side of Israel and Edom and had practiced a kind of sinister cruelty much like the Ammonites.

So they too would know God’s wrath.

4 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Judah, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they have despised the law of the LORD,
And have not kept His commandments.
Their lies lead them astray,
Lies which their fathers followed.**

**5 But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.”**

Judah’s sins seem less heinous than those of Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, but because Judah had received the Word of God and possessed the temple, along with the priesthood, they were held to a stricter standard.

Now, Amos enters his main prophecy – A warning of judgment on Israel.

The rest of ch. 2 is the same kind of announcement he’s given to

the previous 7 nations.
Then in chs. 3-6, we get 3 sermons
In chs. 7-9, we get 5 visions,
And the book ends with 5 Promises God makes to bring a
Restoration of the nation once she has been purged of her sin.

6 Thus says the LORD:

**“For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they sell the righteous for silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.**

Monetary wealth and gain has become *more important* to the people than justice.

Not that God sets this as a sign of societal corruption!

**7 They pant after the dust of the earth *which is* on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.**

Though a bit awkward in translation, this is a picture of the eagerness with which the wealthy were suing the poor.

They were anxious to set their dusty feet on the head of the poor, and crush them.

A man and his father go in to the *same* girl, To defile My holy name.

Sexual immorality was rampant.

Israel had picked up the practice of some of the pagan nations around them who used temple prostitutes.

Both a father and son would frequent the same girl, and all in the name of worshipping God!

**8 They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their god.**

Idolatry was practiced everywhere – but people were so far gone in their spiritual blindness, though they were committing acts of grave evil, they thought they were being religious!

**9 “Yet *it was* I *who* destroyed the Amorite before them,
Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was as strong as the oaks;
Yet I destroyed his fruit above And his roots beneath.**

**10 Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years through the wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.**

God now tries to reason with the people.

He calls them to remember their past.

It was He who had liberated them from the salve pits of Egypt.

It was God who had led them and provided for them for the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness.

It was He who had given them victory over the giant-like

Amorites when they took possession of the Promised Land.

The prosperity they were enjoying so rich today was the result of His provision and blessing.

They owed Him everything!!!!!!1

11 I raised up some of your sons as prophets, And some of your young men as Nazirites.

Is it not so, O you children of Israel?" Says the LORD.

God had even spoken to them and given them the record of His revelation and Word.

The Law of Moses was a blueprint for national life that if followed would elevate them to the premier nation on earth – for ever!

God had even given them special means for entering in to an even tighter and closer relationship with Him than the average Jews enjoyed – it was called the vow of the Nazarite.

Specified in the law of Moses – if a man wanted to be used of the Lord in a special capacity, he could take a vow and enter into a time of deeper devotion and intimacy with God.

But instead of honoring this special arrangement, it had been neglected and then corrupted, along with everything else . . .

12 "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,

Which was forbidden as part of the Nazarite vow.

Nazarites were not allowed to eat or drink anything of the vine – grapes, raisins or wine.

They were not allowed to cut their hair, and could not touch any dead animal.

Samson was a Nazarite.

And commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not

prophecy!

Though privileged above all other nations to receive the word of God,
the people had forbidden the prophets to speak!

13 “Behold, I am weighed down by you, As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.

God is saying He’s had it!

**14 Therefore flight shall perish from the swift, The strong shall not strengthen his power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;**

**15 He shall not stand who handles the bow, The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.**

16 The most courageous men of might Shall flee naked in that day,” Says the LORD.

Israel thought herself pretty strong militarily at this point.

But only because the surrounding nations were weak.

When the Assyrians overcame their internal problems, they would burst forth from their homes in the north in swift terror that would cause the men of Israel to quail in fear.

Verses 9-11 remind us of the importance of knowing our history.

God tries to awaken them to their current situation by reminding them of His past goodness.

When a people lose contact with their past, their present loses it’s context and can be easily altered.

As the Psalm 11:3 says, “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

We ought to be greatly concerned about the revisionism of history that is taking place in our public schools.

Any reference to the faith of the Founding Fathers is being gutted.

The miracles that attended so much of our history have been left out.

The role of Christianity in the course of Western Civilization is conspicuous by it’s absence.

And yet, no philosophy, no influence, has had a more important role in the development of Western Culture than Christianity and the Bible.

This is like trying to teach auto mechanics about the operation of the

car without every mentioning gasoline or the fuel system.
Christian – read about our nation’s religious heritage.
Parents, teach your children, because they probably are not being taught it in school.

AMOS 3

Now we get 3 sermons.

They each begin with the words, “Hear this word” and end with the word, “Therefore.”

1 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:

2 “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”

God singled Israel out to be the agents of His revelation.

They had a unique opportunity and blessing – but despised it.

3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

In v. 2, God said that Israel ONLY had He known – meaning entered into covenant with.

But a covenant only work when both parties are engaged in it.

A three-legged race only works when the people tied together try to move forward together.

God was willing, but Israel wanted to go her own way.

**4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?
Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?**

**5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it?
Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?**

**6 If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?
If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done *it*?**

God asks 7 questions which all seem rather strange – just what is He getting at here?

These are all cause-and-effect things, but here the order is reversed,

they are effect, and causes.

A lion roars because he or she has caught dinner.

A bird falls because its foot is ensnared – and so on.

Amos' point is that as a prophet, he's speaking because he's been sent by God.

Israel may have rejected their covenant with the Lord.

They may have turned a deaf ear to the Voice of God – but not Amos!

7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Whatever God does that effects the course of history, He first informs His servants so that they can make whatever changes they must in order to fit in to His plan.

8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear?

The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

9 “Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod, And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:

‘Assemble on the mountains of Samaria; See great tumults in her midst, And the oppressed within her.

10 For they do not know to do right,’ Says the LORD, ‘Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.’”

11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “An adversary *shall* be all around the land; He shall sap your strength from you, And your palaces shall be plundered.”

Because Israel has been given ample warning but failed to repent, God will bring sweeping judgment upon them.

12 Thus says the LORD: “As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion Two legs or a piece of an ear, So shall the children of Israel be taken out Who dwell in Samaria —In the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!

Sometimes a shepherd would come upon a lion that had taken one of his sheep from the fold.

The lion has eaten her fill and when the shepherd comes along, she gets up and ambles off, leaving nothing left of the sheep but a couple of hooves and a piece of ear.

In the same way, judgment will come on Israel and be so far reaching there will be only a tiny remnant of the people left alive.

And these shall go away in to captivity with only the meagerest of possessions.

13 Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,” Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,

14 “That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions, I will also visit *destruction* on the altars of Bethel; And the horns of the altar shall be cut off And fall to the ground.

15 I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; The houses of ivory shall perish, And the great houses shall have an end,” Says the LORD.

Israel’s centers of idolatry, like Bethel and Samaria, will be utterly destroyed.

The mention of ivory here is interesting.

King Ahab, the wicked king of Israel who had married Jezebel had paneled his throne room with ivory and had an ivory throne made for himself.

This ivory palace was known across the world – but would not survive the judgment of God.

AMOS 4

The second sermon begins . . .

1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who *are* on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, “Bring *wine*, let us drink!”

Amos is now speaking out against the *women* of Israel, whom he refers to as the cows of Bashan.

Bashan was rich pasture land and grew a kind of cow that especially big!

Amos casts the women of Israel as the instigators of the sins of the nation.

They’ve grown fat with the prosperity of the nation and instead of playing their usual role of resisting the decadence of the men, they had led the way in promoting it.

Instead of encouraging the men to not drink so much, they were calling for more wine.

And instead of keeping an eye out for the weak and underprivileged, they were the chief instigators of oppression.

2 The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: “Behold, the days shall come upon you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with fishhooks.

3 You will go out *through broken walls*, Each one straight ahead of her, And you will be cast into Harmon,” Says the LORD.

The Assyrians discovered a really effective way to make sure their captives stayed in line and didn't try to escape.

They put a ring through their nose, then ran a rope through it. Several captives would be strung up this way and could be led easily.

Harmon was more than likely the central market the Assyrians gathered at to divide up the captives they would sell as slaves.

The point is this is quite a come down for the women of Israel who have all tried to live like queens – here they are as slaves.

4 “Come to Bethel and transgress, At Gilgal multiply transgression; Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days.

5 Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, Proclaim *and* announce the freewill offerings; For this you love, *You* children of Israel!” Says the Lord GOD.

This is a picture of utter hypocrisy.

The whole time the people were engaging in the most abominable evils, they were going to Bethel and Gilgal, two main religious centers, and offering sacrifices to God!

But God sees every sacrifice and every offering as just another sin.

There are many people today who go to church infrequently – but when they do, they think they are doing God a big favor.

They even drop a 5 spot in the plate as it passes by and think that this has somehow endeared them to the big Grandfather in the sky.

No – it's an abomination!

- 6 “Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.**
- 7 “I also withheld rain from you, When *there were* still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered.**
- 8 So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.**
- 9 “I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured *them*; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.**
- 10 “I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, Along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.**
- 11 “I overthrew *some* of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.**

5 times in vs. 6-11 God reminds them of the way He had tried to shake them out of their complacency through natural disaster. But with each event, they refused to return to Him.

God does use natural disasters to wake people up to their moral plight.

Drought, famine, storms, disease, plagues – all these are wake up calls that there is a need to repent and get right with God.

But Israel had not learned.

As you read the history of the Pilgrims and the *Plymouth Plantation*, one of the things you are struck with is how these men and women, as devoted to God as they were, whenever there was some adversity, the immediately turned to repentance and prayer. Sickness, drought, Indian attacks, whatever – they dropped to their

knees and plead with God for cleansing and forgiveness.
And interestingly – God delivered them from their trouble and prospered them greatly!

12 “Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”

In other words – judgment is coming and now you will stand before the Judge of All the Earth.

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.

This is a striking statement!

God is issuing a profound statement of personal revelation:

I – the One who created the mountains you worship your idols on.

I – the One who creates the air your breath.

I – the One who knows the thoughts of your heart before your mouth opens to utter them.

I – the One who controls the course of the planets and can block out the light of the Sun with an eclipse.

I AM THE ONE YOU CALL JEHOVAH – but you have turned from My revelation of Myself to your own made up fantasies.

I Am God – you are not – and Me you do not know at all!

AMOS 5

The 3rd sermon begins . . .

1Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:

2 The virgin of Israel has fallen; She will rise no more. She lies forsaken on her land; *There is* no one to raise her up.

3For thus says the Lord GOD: “The city that goes out by a thousand Shall have a hundred left, And that which goes out by a hundred Shall have ten left to the house of Israel.”

The might and glory of Israel will be destroyed.

Even what is virtuous will be crushed.

4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: “Seek Me and live;

Though it sounds like the judgment of the nation is certain – God now reveals that there is still time to repent.

5 But do not seek Bethel, Nor enter Gilgal, Nor pass over to Beersheba; For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, And Bethel shall come to nothing.

Again – these were the centers of idolatry and false worship of God.

6 Seek the LORD and live, Lest He break out like fire *in* the house of Joseph, And devour *it*, With no one to quench *it* in Bethel—

7 You who turn justice to wormwood [bitterness], And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!”

8 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.

God is not like the pagan deities of the nations – He is the Creator and Sustainer of all creation and holds the very fabric of the universe in His hand.

9 He rains ruin upon the strong, So that fury comes upon the fortress.

10 They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, And they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.

This was Amos.

He was unpopular because he dared to speak the truth and identify what the people were doing as sin and worthy of judgment.

Friend, if you are true to God and do not compromise with sin, be prepared to face the hostility of the world.

A holy lifestyle makes the unholy very uncomfortable, and usually, instead of thanking you for helping them see their sin, more often than not, they will simply try to hurt you, as they perceive you are hurting them.

11 Therefore, because you tread down the poor And take

grain taxes from him, Though you have built houses of hewn stone, Yet you shall not dwell in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, But you shall not drink wine from them.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just *and* taking bribes; Diverting the poor *from justice* at the gate.

13 Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, For it *is* an evil time.

Once again, notice how God takes the corruption of justice for the poor as one of the main causes for national judgment.

This ought to be a cause for all of us to do some serious mediation as we consider our own nation and times.

14 Seek good and not evil, That you may live; So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, As you have spoken.

15 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.

It's not too late to repent and avoid the coming judgment.

16 Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this: "*There shall be wailing in all streets, And they shall say in all the highways, 'Alas! Alas!' They shall call the farmer to mourning, And skillful lamenters to wailing.*

17 In all vineyards *there shall be wailing*, For I will pass through you," Says the LORD.

God know they won't repent – so judgment will come.

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good *is* the day of the LORD to you? It *will be* darkness, and not light.

19 It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him! Or *as though* he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him!

20 *Is not* the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? *Is it not* very dark, with no brightness in it?

There were many in Israel who saw the corruption of their times and thought, “Yeah, Lord, judge those wretched sinners.”

They longed for the Day of the Lord to come when He would bring judgment on earth.

What they didn't realize was that the judgment God would bring was national judgment – and it would be indiscriminant in it's scope.

There would be no where to flee.

21 “I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.

23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

24 But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.

Religion, devoid of justice, is a sham!

Genuine religion, being right with God, will result in being right with your fellow man.

If you call yourself a Christian, yet you cheat on your husband or wife – you hain't got a clue!

If you call yourself a Christian, and chat your business partners or customers – you hain't got a clue.

If you call yourself a Christian, and got to court, lie under oath, and seek to get an advantage over someone else whose innocent of the things you accuse them of, you hain't got a clue about what it means to be a Christian.

That's what these verses are saying – though to a different age.

25 “Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

26 You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves.

27 Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus,” Says the LORD, whose name *is* the God of

hosts.

God is pointing out something here that is shocking.

As far back as the Exodus, the people are hiding little idols and pagan deities!

Can you imagine the nation at the foot of Mt. Sinai for an entire year!

They saw the lightening and thick cloud.

They heard the very voice of God as He gave the 10 Commandments!

Yet they would retreat to their tents, pull out their little idols, set them up and do obeisance before them!

Does that make any sense whatsoever?