

AMOS: GOD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENT
VI: God's Judgment For Relentless Spiritual Hardness
(Amos 4:6-13)

I. Introduction

- A. When God needed a messenger to the wicked Northern Kingdom of Israel as it was at the height of its spiritual rebellion against Him, the Lord sent Amos, a layman from Judah, to travel north into Israel to pronounce sharp judgment as a great warning to that nation.
- B. Israel had already been the recipient of several punishments from the Lord, but due to her relentless spiritual hardness, the nation had failed to repent each time, so only an extreme, final punishment was due from God.
- C. Amos 4:6-13 addresses this issue, so we view the passage for our insight, application, and edification:

II. God's Judgment For Relentless Spiritual Hardness, Amos 4:6-13.

- A. Israel was in a typical Ancient Near Eastern suzerain treaty covenant relationship with God where the covenant described various "curses or punishments" that God as the Suzerain "would bring against his vassals" in Israel "for disloyalty or disobedience," *Bible Know. Com., O. T.*, p. 1436. In Israel's case, the covenant was the Mosaic Covenant, so God had brought several punishments upon Israel for her disobedience, but the nation had still refused to repent, *Ibid.*
- B. Those punishments and Israel's relentless spiritual hardness are described in Amos 4:6-11; *Ibid.*, p. 1436-1437:
 - 1. First, God had caused the nation to experience hunger and famine with low food production in fulfillment of Leviticus 26:26, 29 and Deuteronomy 28:17, 48 as described in Amos 4:6. All the cities of Israel had experienced hunger with the lack of food, yet the nation had not repented of her sins.
 - 2. Second, God had caused the nation to experience drought in fulfillment of Leviticus 26:19 and Deuteronomy 28:22-24, 48 as described in Amos 4:7-8. God had withheld the spring rain that was so important for a productive harvest, selectively letting it rain on one city and not on another, on one field but not on another to where the dry field's harvest had withered. This had led people from two or three cities to wander to another city that had received rain only to obtain a limited water supply, and yet the people had still not learned from this hardship that they needed to repent in accord with the Word of God.
 - 3. Third, God had afflicted Israel with blight and mildew in fulfillment of Leviticus 26:20 and Deuteronomy 28:18, 22, 30, 39-40 as described in Amos 4:9a. When their vegetable and fruit tree gardens and their vineyards had yielded produce, blight and mildew destroyed them, but Israel had still not repented.
 - 4. Fourth, God had caused Israel to face locust plagues in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:38, 42 as described in Amos 4:9b. The locusts had devoured the leaves of their fig and olive trees, but Israel had not repented.
 - 5. Fifth, God had caused Israel to experience plagues of illness in fulfillment of Leviticus 26:16, 25 and Deuteronomy 28:21-22, 27, 35, 59-61 as described in Amos 4:10a. Israel had still not repented.
 - 6. Sixth, God had caused Israel to experience military defeat in fulfillment of Leviticus 26:17, 25, 33, 36-39 and Deuteronomy 28:25-26, 49-52 as described in Amos 4:10b. Israel's young men had been slain with the sword, her horses had been confiscated and the stench of dead bodies slain by the invaders had hung over their camps, but the people of Israel had still not repented.
 - 7. Seventh, God had caused Israel to face devastation in fulfillment of Leviticus 26:31-35 and Deuteronomy 29:23-28 as described in Amos 4:11. God had overthrown some of the nation's cities like He had overthrown Sodom and Gomorrah with such great devastation by invaders that some of Israel's cities had ceased to exist, and the "whole nation had come perilously close to obliteration, barely escaping like a burning stick snatched from the fire," *Ibid.*, p. 1437. Nevertheless, Israel had still not repented.
- C. Accordingly, due to Israel's continual failure to repent in her relentless spiritual hardness, God was about to punish her with the "devastating sweep through the land as predicted in [Amos] 3:11-15," *Ibid.*; Amos 4:12a. The call, "prepare to meet your God" is most likely a military summons to an awful confrontation. Israel was to face God's final judgment," *Ibid.*; Amos 4:12b.
- D. The description in Amos 4:13 likens "God's terrifying approach in judgment to the darkening of a storm." God as Commander of all forces in heaven and earth was about to advance against Israel, *Ibid.*, p. 1437-1438.

Lesson: For repeat failures in relentless spiritual hardness to repent under God's initial punishments that were in clear fulfillment of the Mosaic Covenant, Israel, without excuse, was about to face God's severe punishment.

Application: If God has clearly and often warned us of His punishment for sin, may we repent as soon as possible!