

AMOS: GOD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENT
VII: God's Judgment For Injustices In Israel's Courts
(Amos 5:1-17)

I. Introduction

- A. When God needed a messenger to the Kingdom of Israel as it was at the height of its rebellion against Him, the Lord sent Amos, a layman from Judah, to go north to Israel to voice severe judgment against that nation.
- B. God seeks justice especially in courts of law, but even there Israel had badly failed, so judgment would come.
- C. Amos 5:1-17 addressed this matter, so we view the passage for our insight, application, and edification:

II. God's Judgment For Injustices In Israel's Courts, Amos 5:1-17.

- A. Amos declared that God's severe judgment would certainly fall on Israel, Amos 5:1-3:
 - 1. He summoned the people to hear his lament for them, what was usually performed at a funeral, Amos 5:1; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1438. Though Israel was "at the height of prosperity under Jeroboam II," Amos presented this lamentation for Israel as if she were dead, what was meant to shock his hearers, *Ibid.*
 - 2. Israel was a "virgin" in the sense that she had never been conquered (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1987, fn. to Amos 5:2), and Amos predicted in his lament that she would be invaded, fall, and not rise, Amos 5:2.
 - 3. Only a tenth of the nation would survive the invasion and be taken into captivity, Amos 5:3.
- B. God did not delight in destroying His people, so He called for them to repent that they might live, Amos 5:4-6:
 - 1. The nation's doom was sure, but individuals could still repent and live, so God's prophet Amos announced the Lord's admonition that the people were to seek the Lord and live, Amos 5:4.
 - 2. They were not to seek Him by going to the golden calf idol at Bethel, to the false fertility goddess at Gilgal or to seek Him at a sanctuary that honored the forefathers in southern Judah at Beersheba, for people at these places would also surely go into captivity and come to nothing, Amos 5:5.
 - 3. Rather, the people of Israel were to seek the Lord and live lest He break out like a fire on them, devouring them with none to quench it in Bethel where they worshiped the golden calf idol of Jeroboam I, Amos 5:6.
- C. Amos 5:7 introduces God's critique of the abuses in Israel's law courts, and it is connected to Amos 5:10-13 by way of grammar and content while verses 8-9 parenthetically describe God's sovereign power to punish these great wrongs [by a series of dependent clauses, cf. Amos 5:8-9 NIV, ESV] (*Ibid.*, B. K. C., O. T., p. 1439).
- D. Accordingly, Amos 5:8-9 describes the sovereign omnipotence of God over the physical universe, that He would thus surely use that sovereign power to punish the injustices in Israel's courts of law, *Ibid.*:
 - 1. God made the constellations of Pleiades and Orion (Amos 5:8a), and "the rising of Pleiades before daybreak signaled the return of spring while the rising of Orion after sunset heralded the onset of winter" (*Ibid.*), so God is presented as Sovereignly controlling the seasons and the stellar universe.
 - 2. God also controls the cycle of day and night, the "elements of nature, gathering by evaporation the waters of the sea and draining them out over . . . the land . . . Israel's covenant God," *Ibid.*' (Amos 5:8b, c)
 - 3. God "Whose dominion was unchallenged in heaven was also irresistible on earth. Nothing could withstand His destruction – not the mightiest stronghold or the most fortified city," Amos 5:9; *Ibid.*
- E. As for the injustices in Israel's courts of law, God described them and denounced them in Amos 5:10-13:
 - 1. Those who tried to use the courts to profit illegally hated judges who reprov'd their wrongs and they also despised witnesses who told the truth and so blocked their evil efforts, Amos 5:10a, b; *Ibid.*, p. 1439-1440.
 - 2. Thus, such evil men went to judges who would take bribes and deprive the poor of justice, Amos 5:11a.
 - 3. Accordingly, the Lord would cause those who took their unjust profits from such distorted injustices to build stone mansions like royal palaces and to plant vineyards would neither live in those mansion nor drink the wine of their vineyards, for God would punish them by the Gentile invasion, Amos 5:11b-12.
 - 4. So much dangerous evil was practiced in the trials that the prudent kept silent to protect themselves, v. 13.
- F. Nevertheless, God still offered deliverance from judgment for those who repented, Amos 5:14-15.
- G. In the end, God's judgment would fall on an unrepentant nation, so there would be wailing and mourning. This section that began with a lament ends with the prediction of lamentations at Israel's fall, Amos 5:16-17.

Lesson: *God's severe judgment would fall on Israel for gross injustices that abused the vulnerable even in courts of law. Nevertheless, individual repentance would lead to individual deliverance even in the nation's fall.*

Application: (1) *May we do what is just and equitable toward others, especially the vulnerable, for God's blessing.*
(2) *May we rest in God's coming sovereign judgment of all the injustices that have occurred in courts of law.*