

## Amos 5:1-17

(Resources:

- Word Biblical Commentary Hosea-Jonah by Stuart
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary Daniel, Minor Prophets by Gaebelein
- Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible – Amos by Shalom M. Paul
- Bible Text English Standard Version)

Two major sins of northern Israel:

1. False worship in illegal sanctuaries
2. Exploitation of those who had been made poor in the corrupt legal system

**Amos 5:1** – “Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:

1. “lament (qinah) is a mourning song or poem for a relative, friend or hero.
2. The verbs in this lamentation are in the perfect tense which expresses completed action. Israel's doom is certain.
3. s

**Amos 5:2** – “Fallen, no more to rise,  
is the virgin Israel;  
forsaken on her land,  
with none to raise her up.”

1. “virgin” can mean “maiden” or “young woman” which indicates the lamentation is for a young woman who was still in her youth with much potential.
2. “no more to rise” means these people were cut off and hopeless of ever recovering. (There will be a remnant that will be restored after a period of discipline, but this generation is gone.)

**Amos 5:3** – “For thus says the Lord God:

“The city that went out a thousand  
shall have a hundred left,  
and that which went out a hundred  
shall have ten left  
to the house of Israel.”

**Amos 5:4** – “For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: “Seek me and live;

1. “seek” and “live” are connected imperatives which means fulfilling the command to “seek” will result in the other, “live”.
2. “live” seems to be referring to physical life as a nation. In this case not specifically spiritual life.
  - a. “live” is *hayah*. Amos seems to use this to refer to national welfare.
  - b. “live” (*hayah*) is used again in 5:14: “Seek good, and not evil, that you may live.”

3. Amos is announcing certain national doom, but is also offering an invitation that will be the foundation for the repentance and restoration of the remnant that hears and obeys.

**Amos 5:5** – “but do not seek Bethel,  
and do not enter into Gilgal  
or cross over to Beersheba;  
for Gilgal shall surely go into exile,  
and Bethel shall come to nothing.”

1. Three major worship centers (cultic sites, high places, false Yahweh worship with heavy pagan influence) had all become places of unfaithfulness to the Lord who had manifested himself to Israel at these places:
  - a. Bethel – (mentioned 3x since it was most significant)
    - i. the center of Northern Israel worship in Amos time.
    - ii. Jacob met the Lord there (Gen. 28:10-15)
    - iii. These all were external religious centers with external rituals that did not require a heart or lifestyle of obedience to the Truth or the Covenant.
    - iv. Worship at these sites led the people further from God.
  - b. Gilgal – (mentioned 2x)
    - i. First location Joshua set up camp when they entered the Promised Land.
    - ii. This had become a cultic center
  - c. Beersheba – (mentioned 1x)
    - i. located in Judah
    - ii. a religious pilgrimage destination for northern Israel since this site was associated with Abraham.
    - iii. Likely visited to seek blessing



**Four-horned altar in Beersheba from this the time of Amos.**

**Amos 5:6** – “Seek the Lord and live,  
lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,  
and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,

1. “house of Joseph” is a name for northern Israel. The largest tribe in Israel was Ephraim who were descendants from Joseph’s youngest son Ephraim.
2. Seek and live; or, continue and burn
3. “fire” has been a theme since 1:3 through 2:11:
  - a. The fire is the Lord himself
  - b. 5:17 – Yahweh says, “in all vineyards there shall be wailing, **for I will pass through** your midst.”

**Amos 5:7** – “O you who turn justice to wormwood  
and cast down righteousness to the earth!

1. The reason for the Lord’s judgment is Israel’s lack of morals and ethics that are now identified.
2. “justice” is *mispāt* and means fair, impartial enforcement of law.

- a. Includes defending the rights of the poor according to Jeremiah 5:28:  
“Their evil deeds have no limit; do not seek justice.  
They do not promote the case of the fatherless; they do not defend the just cause of the poor.”
- 3. “wormwood” was a bitter plant that was also poisonous.
- 4. “righteousness” is cast down

**Amos 5:8** – “He 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;

**Amos 5:9** – “who makes destruction flash forth against the strong,  
so that destruction comes upon the fortress.

- 1. 5:8-9 may be an ancient hymn
- 2. Amos again uses this to identify the True God, his character and his capabilities
- 3. Israel does not want to violate this God, yet they have.
- 4. Yahweh’s deeds:
  - a. Made Pleiades and Orion
  - b. Turns deep darkness into morning
  - c. Darkens the day into night
  - d. Calls water from the Sea
  - e. Pours Sea water on the surface of the earth
- 5. Yahweh can also:
  - a. Flash destruction against the strong
  - b. Bring destruction upon the fortress
- 6. The true God, Yahweh, Israel’s true national God is powerful and willing to use that power to bring destruction as well as blessing.

**Amos 5:10** – “They hate him who  
reproves in the gate,  
and they abhor him who speaks the truth.

- 1. Elder - “him who reproves in the gate”  
is one of the city elders sitting in the  
jury speaking truth
- 2. Witness - “him who speaks the truth”  
is a truthful witness
- 3. The gate were the location of the city  
courts. The gates were large with  
multiple chambers with benches and  
places to sit for daily legal and  
business dealings



Galyn sits on one side of the Gezer gate.  
The city water drain is in the middle of the  
gate.

**Amos 5:11** – “Therefore because you trample on the poor  
and you exact taxes of grain from him,  
you have built houses of hewn stone,  
but you shall not dwell in them;  
you have planted pleasant vineyards,  
but you shall not drink their wine.

**Amos 5:12** – “For I know how many are your transgressions  
and how great are your sins—  
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,  
and turn aside the needy in the gate.

**Amos 5:13** – “Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time,  
for it is an evil time.

**Amos 5:14** – “Seek good, and not evil,  
that you may live;  
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,  
as you have said.

**Amos 5:15** – “Hate evil, and love good,  
and establish justice in the gate;  
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,  
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

**Amos 5:16** – “Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:

“In all the squares there shall be wailing,  
and in all the streets they shall say, ‘Alas! Alas!’  
They shall call the farmers to mourning  
and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation,

**Amos 5:17** – “and in all vineyards there shall be wailing,  
for I will pass through your midst,”  
says the Lord.