

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?

Session 3 (A): Salvation History Comes (Amos 3-6)

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm in his teaching on the book of Amos. Amos, the lion has roared, who will not fear? Session 3 (A), Salvation History Comes Unravelling, Amos 3-6.

Well, we looked at chapter 3 verses 1 and 2, where we saw the principle that to whom much is given, much is required.

And the Lord makes the point that he is going to bring judgment upon Israel. Perhaps their sins have not been as bad as what some of the nations were doing, like ripping open pregnant women. But from the Lord's perspective, Israel should have known better.

The Lord had communicated his will, his moral will, through his law, and the people were guilty of sinning against the weak and the poor. They were engaging in syncretism, idolatry. And so that principle is laid down there and explains why Israel is the main target of God's judgment at this point in time.

We're now going to move into verses 3 through 8, which I've entitled, Every Effect Has Its Cause. And it's an interesting section, so let's, I'll read through it. The Lord is asking a bunch of questions, and I think by the time we get through it, you'll see the main point here.

Every effect has a cause, and then he's going to apply that to the current situation in Israel. So, do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? I think maybe another way of looking at that is, do two walk together unless they have at some point come together? And that's obvious. They don't walk together.

They're together. Does a lion roar in the thicket when it has no prey? Does it growl in its den when it has caught nothing? And the answer is no. Does a bird swoop down to a trap on the ground when no bait is there? A bird isn't just going to swoop down into a trap.

There's got to be something there to attract it. Does a trap spring up from the ground if it has not caught anything? So these are just kind of logical questions from experience. There is, I don't think they're random.

He starts in verse 3 with people walking together, which sounds peaceful enough. The Lord walking with his people, for example. But then he moves into things that are a bit more terrifying.

Lions roaring in the thicket, growling in their den, birds swooping down and being trapped. And so it's mirroring what's going to happen in Israel. There has been peace.

There is now going to be violence and judgment. So having kind of laid that foundation, and I guess we could say every effect has its cause. That's what the questions are designed to bring home.

But the answer to the question is going to be a little bit different in the next verse. When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? And the answer to that question is, of course, they do. Because in this case, the ram's horn, the trumpet, the shofar, is a signal.

And they know what the blowing of the shofar means. This is a signal that danger has been spotted. Because there would be watchmen on the walls looking around, making sure that some kind of invading army wasn't coming along.

So when a trumpet sounds in the city, the people get afraid. Because they know that the trumpet signals that there's going to be conflict and maybe a battle. And then, when disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? And the answer is, yes, of course, the Lord has caused it when disaster comes upon a city.

But we're going to talk about that in a little more detail here in a minute. We can't universalize that and apply it across the board. It's a generalization that's true in this context, but more on that in a little bit.

So when a trumpet sounds in a city signaling battle, people get afraid. And when disaster comes to that city, the Lord, as the sovereign God, is the one who brings that disaster. And so Amos is now going to apply this principle of cause and effect to his own ministry.

He says in verse 7, "...surely the sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets." So he tells them anything that the Lord is intending to do, at least in this context of the covenant community and in this nation, Israel, he's going to let people know what his intentions are. He's going to reveal his plan to his servants, the prophets. In other words, me, in this context.

I'm not just throwing words around. I'm not dreaming this up. The Lord has decided to act in judgment, and he is revealing his intentions to me, and I am conveying them to you.

So you need to take seriously what I'm saying. And later, we're going to see that the Lord is giving them an opportunity to repent. It's not set in stone yet.

He's giving them an opportunity to repent, at least some. And then in verse 8, "...the lion has roared, who will not fear?" And that's the statement that I've chosen as the title for the whole series here in Amos. So the lion has roared.

He talked about the Lord roaring back in chapter 1, verse 2, and he uses that same verb here. "...the lion has roared, who will not fear?" In other words, the Lord has announced judgment through me. You need to be afraid.

The proper response is to be afraid. You need to respond the same way you would if you heard the shofar, because you are going to hear the shofar. The enemy army is going to approach, and the shofar will be sounded, and the Lord has already told you this in advance, and the lion has roared, so who will not fear? The proper logical response is to fear.

The Sovereign Lord has spoken. There's a sense in which the roar, at least initially, is in the form of the prophecy of judgment. Who can but prophesy? In other words, Amos's point is that I have no alternative.

The Lord has picked me out, the shepherd from Tekoa, to be his prophet to you people, and the Lord has spoken to me, and I have no other option than to prophesy and to communicate to you what the Lord has said. So we'll stop right there. So Amos is really validating his ministry in many ways.

He's saying the Lord has chosen me to be his spokesman. The Lord has chosen to bring judgment, so I have got to speak, and you should be afraid, because the trumpet is sounding, and judgment is imminent. But let's go back to this statement, when disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? It's a very interesting statement.

It sounds like a generalization, a general truth in the world, and in fact it's in a context, verses 3 through 5, where he's using examples from nature. Lions roaring, birds sweeping down, it sounds like it's almost proverbial. It's almost proverbial.

It's a general truth that we know to be true just from observation. So why wouldn't chapter 3 verse 6 be universal? In other words, if judgment comes upon a city, a tornado hits a city, a hurricane blows in and does destruction to a city, this verse is our proof text that the Lord is the one who caused this. Well, I don't think that's true.

Jesus talks about judgment and disaster coming, and he says, Was it because these guys, the tower fell on these people, was it because they were special sinners? No, but he does use it as a teaching moment. He says, but worse than that's going to

come upon you if you don't repent. So this kind of thing happens in the fallen world, and judgment is going to bring a culmination to the fallen world.

The whole creation is groaning, as Paul says, waiting for redemption. So I don't think that this is a universal statement. I call it a contextualized generalization.

The way I illustrate this is when I was a child, people would say, if you want to get a good car, you've got to buy American. So they were kind of putting down Japanese cars. You've got to buy American.

That was a generalization that was probably true. You know, if you work for Ford or Chevy, it would be. Yeah, it was a generalization that was true within the parameters of the context, a particular time, a particular place, and a particular set of circumstances about how cars were being built and engineered and all of that.

If you said that today, people would laugh at you. No, it wasn't a universal. It was a contextualized generalization, and these are contextualized generalizations, and they apply to Israel.

Amos is speaking to Israel at a particular point in time, around 760 BC. We're going to discover in chapter 4 that the Lord had already brought forms of judgment upon the people. Some drought.

He was sending signals. The earthquake that comes in 760 or thereabouts would be one of these. He was already sending signals that judgment is on the way, and you need to respond properly to that.

So this passage has a context, and so when a shofar, I'm sure you've heard of it. Do not people tremble? We used to have a chaplain at DTS, Bill Bryan, and he was an excellent trumpet player, and he would always play his trumpet in chapel, and so to illustrate my point here, I would say if Professor Bryan went out onto the yard here at Dallas Seminary and started playing his trumpet and blowing it, would the whole city respond in fear and trembling? No, because that's not what trumpet playing means in our context.

This is specific to this particular context, this point in time, and this specific place, and so when disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? That's a generalization that was true in Amos' time. Given the context and what the Lord had announced he was going to do, Amos is making the point that if disaster comes upon one of your cities, and that's already starting to happen, one city will have drought, another city will have rain. We'll read about that in chapter 4. You can bank on it.

It's the Lord, because the Lord has already communicated to me, and that's another point. See, as he goes in, he says the Lord always reveals when he's going to do

something, such as judgment, through his servant the prophets. So, who said that? Where was the prophet who said Hurricane Katrina was coming from God? I use that as an example.

It had a big impact down here. Where are the prophets today? There are general principles that we can get from the Bible, and I think sometimes we can look at tragedies that God brings, and in that context, we can say, I think that's the judgment of God there. But you don't just assume that every time disaster hits a city, it was from God.

But I heard well-known preachers, when certain disasters hit certain cities, and I'm not going to mention any names, they quoted this verse as their proof text. What they did they universalize it. They made it true in all places at all times.

They theologized it in an improper way, and I would argue that it's a contextualized generalization, and it was true in Israel at that point in time. But still, some theologians will promote this, what we call pan-causality, where God is all, causes everything. And it's interesting that theologians who believe in this pan-causality will sometimes argue that God has a demonic dark side.

Pan-causality, if you really push that, hard determinism, pan-causality, God is causing everything directly. Now, the Westminster Confession says he works through secondary causes many, many times. But if you push that, you can say, well, God has kind of got a dark side.

There's no good, there's no evil. He's just responding. You've got a sovereign God who isn't necessarily good.

I don't think we want to go that direction. There was a scholar in the 80s, Frederick Lindstrom, Scandinavian scholar, and he wanted to write a book on promoting the pan-causality, what they call the demonic in Yahweh view, and as he started to look at all the passages carefully in their context, he flipped, and he wrote a book, God and the Origin of Evil, and he goes through the verses that are used by the pan-causality, divine pan-causality position, and shows that they're not teaching what is being said. Isaiah 45, you know, is another example where the Lord creates good, He creates evil.

I don't think evil is the best way to translate Ra'ah there. It's a disaster, and it's simply making the point that when the Lord decides to intervene in the world, He is responsible for both salvation and judgment. But even that passage is a contextualized generalization.

But here's what Lindstrom said: the intention of the passage in Amos 3:6b is to force its audience to recognize the connection between Yahweh's actions and the

catastrophes which affected northern Israel. There is nothing in the text to suggest that the prophet attempts to assign all disasters in general to the agency of Yahweh. So I think the lesson here is we have to be very, very careful that we don't pull passages out of their context and apply them in a broad general way that really violates the context of the passage, and also just our experience.

I think God is working in the world, He's sovereign, He can intervene any time He wants to, but I'm not ready to say that every time calamity or disaster comes upon a city, or it's direct judgment from Him. I just don't think the Bible teaches that. It's a fallen world, and as Romans 8 says, the creation is groaning, waiting for the redemption of the sons of God, and so in the fallen world, things just happen.

And the fallen world, if anything, is unfair. And so the flood we just had in Texas here, I don't think that was a direct judgment of God upon anyone. It just, it happened, and things like this happen in the fallen world.

It's one of the things that makes it fall. So that's my take on what that verse means. So what Amos is saying is true.

Any city that experiences judgment in this context, they will know that it is judgment from the Lord Himself. Okay. So that's my, that's my take on that one, and think about it.

There's a principle here, and it's a positive one that comes through. Even when God is displeased with His people and ready to discipline them, He offers an opportunity to repent. He's announcing what He's going to do ahead of time through the prophet.

Now, sometimes when prophets proclaim their message, it's over. It's a decree. It's going to happen.

It's unconditional. But more often than not, the prophet will proclaim his message with the hope that the people will take it seriously and repent, and that's when you read in the Old Testament, and the Lord relented. Classic example, Jonah.

Jonah goes to Nineveh, and he says, "In 40 more days, Nineveh will be destroyed. Doesn't sound like any condition. It makes you wonder why he says 40 more days.

Is there a window of opportunity? But he doesn't make it clear. And the king of Nineveh hears this, and he, he says, we need, who knows, in Hebrew, who knows, maybe this God will relent. Maybe he'll turn from his sins, his sins, his warning of our sins, if we turn from our sins, and his judgment can be averted.

And so he gets everybody involved. Everybody repents. He even gets the animals involved.

They don't feed the animals, so the animals are mooing and doing what animals do, braying, and it's like they're crying out to God. And the Lord, the text tells us, relents, and he decides not to bring judgment upon the city of Nineveh. He does, by the way, later.

Nahum, the prophet Nahum, talks about that in the 7th century, a hundred years or so after Jonah. The Lord does, eventually, 150 years later, he brings judgment upon Nineveh. But they repented, and the Lord relented from sending that judgment.

And Jonah is ticked off about it, and people will ask questions, why did Jonah not want to go to Nineveh? And they'll suggest he was afraid or something. No, he does, he hates the Ninevites. You probably would, too, if you reflected on what they had done to Israel in the prior century.

And so he doesn't like Ninevites, and he doesn't think they should be given any kind of a second chance by God. And so he tells God in chapter 4, I didn't want to come here, this is why I ran away, because I know the kind of God you are. You're long-suffering, you're patient, and you relent from sending calamity.

That's the kind of God you are. I don't want to be in, you know, take any part in that. I don't want to be involved in your reclamation of the Nineveh plan.

And he's very upset by this, and he's, even after it's happened, he's still hoping that the Lord will send fire down upon Nineveh. But Jonah knows, and he generalizes there, he generalizes that God is the kind of God who does relent from sending judgment. Sometimes he says, That's it, I am NOT a man that I should relent, and sometimes he follows through on the judgment, you cross the line.

But often he will relent, and it sounds as if he is giving them an opportunity here. And so I think that's an important principle that we see. And in ancient Israel, the prophets were God's vehicles of communication.

We don't have prophets today who give us special revelation from God, but we do have his written word, and we can derive principles from that. But we can never tell exactly if this is a judgment from God or not. But I think it's comforting here to see that the prophets say, before the Lord acts, he's going to communicate through his prophets.

That was very encouraging, I think, for the people of Israel, and should have motivated them, like the king of Nineveh, to do something positive to avert the coming judgment. Well, that brings us to verses, I put verses 9 through 15 together,

and in the outline I call it, Who Invited These Guys? So what's going on here? Well, you'll see here in a second. So, judgment is coming.

Proclaim to the fortresses of Ashdod, that's Philistine territory, and to the fortresses of Egypt, assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria. So it's very metaphorical, I don't think the prophet actually went to those places and said, Hey, round people up and let's go up to Samaria. Now this is very poetic and very metaphorical.

And see the great unrest within her, and the oppression among her people. They do not know how to do right, declares the Lord, who store up in their fortresses what they have plundered and looted. He's referring to their injustice, and how they have stolen property and other things from the people, alluded to back in chapter 2. Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: an enemy will overrun your land.

Pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses. So let's just stop there for a minute. He's clearly talking about the injustice that's in Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom.

I mean, this is where Naboth's vineyard, you know, took place and was stolen. And so he's basically saying to these foreigners, Come and look at the oppression that's going on in here. Here's what they're doing, and the Lord is going to judge them for that.

But why would he invite Philistines and Egyptians to come and take a look? Why would he do that? Well, think about it. In Egypt, they were oppressors of God's people. Good grief, the Israelites were slaves for hundreds of years in Egypt.

Pharaoh oppressed God's people, and when Moses came and said, Let them go, God said, Let them go. Pharaoh says, I don't know, I don't recognize his authority, I don't know him, and I'm not going to let them go. And he just made it worse for them.

And so, yes, the Egyptians and the Philistines, if you read through the history, the Philistines often had the upper hand over the Israelites and oppressed the Israelites. So he's bringing the primary oppressors in Israel's history, and he's inviting them to come and look at what's going on in Samaria. Very, very fascinating.

Very sarcastic, it seems to me. And I think what he's suggesting is Philistines and Egyptians, they're experts in oppression. They really know it when they see it.

And so I'm going to invite them to come and be witnesses. They'll be expert witnesses. They'll be able to say, yes, that's oppression, that's the kind of stuff we do.

And so he's very sarcastic, and he's inviting them to come and observe and be God's witnesses against the Israelites. So what is this suggesting? Maybe the Israelites are even worse than the Egyptians and Philistines, but they're at least comparable in some way. And so I have written in the past, it would be like an opponent of abortion, inviting Hitler and his Nazi cohorts to come and view the butchery taking place in America's abortion clinics, quote-unquote.

Such a rhetorical technique would strongly imply that the clinics are similar in some ways to the ovens of Auschwitz. That's kind of what he's doing here. It's very insulting.

We're not as bad as those people. Well, the Lord thinks you are, and they're experts. They're going to be his expert witnesses in the lawsuit that the Lord has against you.

And so the Lord is suggesting something about the nature of their actions when he says this, and he denounces their greed and their oppression, and they're really a lot like the Egyptians and the Philistines. So judgment is coming, and this is what the Lord says, as a shepherd rescues from the lion's mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites living in Samaria be rescued with only the head of a bed and a piece of fabric from a couch. Not going to be a whole lot left when the Assyrians come through, when judgment comes.

And you know in the Old Testament law, there was a provision for shepherds. It's difficult for a shepherd to stop a lion or a bear or a predator. And so sometimes, probably especially at night, the shepherds are out there, and they just can't guarantee that a predator won't get the sheep.

And I think the legal system in the ancient Near East understands that, and we see evidence of this in the shepherd contracts, and it's also something the Lord recognizes. And so shepherds, if that happened, the shepherd to prove that he wasn't, you know, funneling off sheep and stealing them on the side, if he can bring some evidence that the predator killed the sheep, such as a bone, a couple of leg bones, or a piece of an ear, he's got to bring some evidence, and then he won't be charged for that sheep. Now, you know, this puts me always thinking of David.

David said, I stopped the lion, I rescued the sheep from the lion and the bear. Impressive. Impressive that David could do that.

He was a top-notch shepherd. And so, the same thing's going to be true. After I've come through Samaria, there's just going to be part of a bed, there's going to be part of a couch.

It's going to be devastating judgment, just like when a predator gets hold of a sheep and tears it to bits. Not pretty stuff. So, hear this and testify, in verse 13.

That's plural, and I think he's referring to the Philistines and the Egyptians that he called to be assembled earlier in the passage. So, hear this and testify against the descendants of Jacob, declares the Lord, the Lord God Almighty. Literally, traditionally, it's been understood as the Lord God of hosts, but hosts is a little archaic.

You know, what is a host? It's the Lord Almighty is the NIV way of translating, and some translations say it this way, the Lord of armies. Because Hebrew, Tzivaot, host, can refer to armies. So, it's the Lord who commands armies.

So, he's definitely picturing himself as the warrior king here, and he says, On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel. The horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground. I will tear down the winter house along with the summer house.

The houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed, and the mansions will be demolished, declares the Lord. So, you kind of get a feel for why this judgment is coming. The Lord is going to punish Israel for her sins, and he's going to destroy the altars of Bethel.

Now, we just hear Bethel, and we think, oh, it's a place name. It's located there in the land. No, Bethel would be a very significant place for these people.

Think about it. I just finished a rather lengthy series on the life of Jacob in my Sunday school class at my church, and Jacob met God at Bethel twice. Bethel Beth-el means house of God.

So, remember when Jacob was running away, and because Esau had threatened to kill him, and so both his father and mother told him he needed to get out of town, and as he was on his way to Laban's house, way, way, way far away in Paddan Aram, the Lord meets him there at Bethel. In a vision, he sees a stepped ramp going up into heaven, and the Lord is at the top, and the Lord speaks to Jacob and offers him the Abrahamic promise. By the way, he didn't gain the Abrahamic promise through his deceptive actions.

The, you know, the paternal blessing and the birthright, that didn't give him the Abrahamic promise. If it did, why would his father say to him as he left, May the Lord extend his promise to you? That's not so. That's up to the Lord.

And then the Lord comes, and he extends it to him. He says, This is what I want to do. I want to give you the Abrahamic promise.

Jacob doesn't care about that. He says, all, I'm paraphrasing now, all I care about is that you, somebody takes care of me on this trip I'm taking, and I'll tell you what, if you take care of me on this trip, and you bring me back safely, I'll give you 10% of everything that I gain on the way, and you will become my God. You will be my God.

You will become my God. That implies to me he has not, you know, pledged allegiance to the Lord yet. And he also sets up a pillar and says, And by the way, you can live in the pillar.

I think he's got a little bit of paganism in him. Well, you know the story. Long story.

Twenty years or so, and he, the Lord, takes care of him, and brings him back, and the Lord tells him to return to Bethel. And this time, his attitude has changed. They get rid of all their idols that are in the family before they go, and when he arrives there, the place, which he had earlier named Bethel, he formally names it Bethel, as he embraces the promise.

And he has been doing that. In chapter 32, when he wrestles with God, he is embracing the promise at that point. He realizes, yes, the promise is bigger than it was all about family power politics to him.

He wanted to leapfrog Esau and be number one in the family. That's what the birthright and the paternal blessing were all about. And remember, when he faces off Esau, you're getting a little mini-lesson on Jacob here, in the midst of our study of Amos.

The reference to Bethel ignited this. He actually gives the paternal blessing back to Esau. If you read the statement carefully, he basically says, You're number one, you're number one.

Everything that the blessing gave him, he kind of gives back. It's reversed. So he goes to Bethel, and this time, the Lord finalizes the covenant, and what happens at Bethel the second time is what should have happened the first time.

So Bethel is a very important place. It's the house of God. It is a major sanctuary.

It's where Jacob, their father, met the Lord and solidified the covenant relationship that the Lord extended to him. And so it's a special place, and you would think that the judgment would bypass Bethel. Why would the Lord destroy his house? But no, I'm going to destroy the altars of Bethel, because their worship at Bethel has been polluted and contaminated and corrupted by their idolatry and their syncretism and all of that.

And so the Lord's going to destroy the altars of Bethel, and I think implied in that, not only the worship system there, but also those who live there. It would be shocking. It would be like if the Lord announced judgment on the United States and then described how he was going to destroy all the buildings in Washington, D.C. No, not that far.

That's like reversing our status as a people. But that's what's going to happen, and the horns of the altar are going to be cut off. Sometimes you'll see this in archaeological pictures.

They find an altar, and the altar has these horns on each corner called the horns of the altar, and you could go and grab hold of the horns of the altar to seek asylum. If someone is trying to kill you, you can grab hold of the horns of the altar, and it guarantees that you'll at least have a hearing before the judicial authorities. But what if the horns aren't there? The horns aren't going to be there.

The Lord's going to cut them off. There's going to be no place where you can go for asylum when I come through. It's going to be too late.

I'm going to destroy your worship system at Bethel, and the horns of the altar are going to be cut off, and you're not going to have any recourse before me. I'm going to tear down the winter house and the summer house. What's this all about? You know, there are people in our culture who have homes, and winter homes in Florida, and southern homes up north, and you know, we think nothing of this.

You have to have some money to be able to do that, but I'm not going to try to universalize this and condemn people who have two houses. I'm not going to do that with this passage. We're talking about ancient Israel at this point in time, and apparently, a lot of people had exploited others and grown wealthy at the expense of other people by acquiring their land or whatever, and they were able to have a winter and a summer house, and the houses are adorned with ivory.

You would expect to see this maybe in a king's palace, but it sounds like a lot of the people in the northern kingdom were living like kings, and the Lord's going to destroy all that. It's a testimony to their greed and their exploitation. It's how they got their wealth, and in this particular setting, they had gotten their wealth in dishonest and oppressive ways.

We actually have a text from the ancient Near East that talks about a king. He's bragging that he, he says, my predecessors just had one palace, but I have two palaces, one for winter and one for summer, and he's bragging. So from that, I take it that not every king was able to have them, but apparently in the northern kingdom, people had a winter and a summer house.

I'm sure that was true for the king, and there was a lot of ivory in these houses, and so this just shouts out wealth, excessive wealth in this culture, obtained in a sinful way, and the Lord is going to destroy all that. And this is what is called a futility judgment. They've worked so hard to get all this wealth, and sometimes the prophets say, The Lord's going to take it away, The Lord's going to take it away.

So severe judgment is coming, so severe that the Philistines and Egyptians can be invited in to watch what is going to happen. And so we'll move on to chapter 4, verses 1 through 3. Hear this word, kind of a new speech, but it's related to what has just been stated. Hear this word, because it fills in some of the gaps regarding the greed, and what these people are doing, and what is motivating them.

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria. So Bashan is over east, but these are the cows of Bashan who are living in Samaria. We're not talking about literal cows here.

Obviously, you can't take the Bible that literally at all times. People who say, I always read the Bible literally. Oh really? Well, you've got cows of Bashan then who are oppressing the poor, and begging their husbands to get us some drinks.

I don't think these are cows. But he's comparing the women of Samaria, the wives of the rich in Samaria. He's comparing them to the cows of Bashan.

Well, the cows of Bashan, the livestock of Bashan, were well known for their strength, their health. It was a cattle breeding area, a livestock breeding area, and so these cows would be healthy, perhaps even fat. They're being fattened up for the slaughter, for sacrifice.

This is dripping with irony. When he says cows of Bashan, he's talking about their wealth as it were, but he's also hinting that you've been fattened up for the slaughter. Prophets can be very sarcastic sometimes.

You women who oppress the poor and crush the needy. Well, how do they do that? And say to your husbands, bring us some drinks. You know, bring us something so that we can drink it.

In other words, these women are benefiting from their husbands' oppressive, unjust lifestyles, and they are encouraging their husbands to bring them more and more wealth. Isaiah does the same thing in chapter 3, when he talks about the judgment that's going to come upon Jerusalem, and he describes the wives of the leaders who are responsible for the just, and he lists, it's like one of those old pennies catalogs or something, he lists all the stuff that they wear, including their jewelry, and it just goes on and on and on, and this is part of their beauty. In this culture, they're not just looking at your facial features; it's how you adorn yourselves.

You can become beautiful if you've got a lot of jewelry, and you're, you know, you got a bling, and you're flashing, you know, that makes you beautiful, and one time I just decided to look at that list a little more carefully, and guess how many items are mentioned in that list, after beauty of 21, multiple of seven, multiple of seven. They do this kind of thing, trust me, they do this kind of thing in the Bible, and in the culture. It's like they got three complete wardrobes.

This is totally excessive. Seven would have done it, but 21 items. Amos is not quite as descriptive here, but it's the same scenario that's going on in Samaria that later is going to take place in Judah, and so they are encouraging their husbands to gain more and more wealth so they can really live it up and enjoy this lifestyle of the rich and famous.

The sovereign Lord has sworn by His holiness. The time when he swears by His holiness, you swear by something that's certain, and the Lord is swearing by His holiness. You can bank on the fact that God's holiness is a truth, and it's very relevant that he's swearing by it here because it's His holiness that's going to demand that justice be brought against these people.

The time will surely come when you'll be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fish hooks. One scholar has looked at this language and decided it's talking more about, like, fish being carted away in a basket. Either way, it's a negative.

The Lord's going to fish, and he's going to hook you, or you're going to be hooked, and he's going to cart you away in fish baskets. Rich, beautiful women would not appreciate this metaphor. You will each go straight out through breaches in the wall.

The wall is going to be breached, and you will be cast out toward Harmon. We're not sure what that is. Some want to read Herman here declares the Lord, but you're going to be going into exile.

So, what we see in this passage is why these cows are so fat. Who invited these guys? This is all designed to bring out just how unjust their society was, and how greedy they were, and how they had perverted God's standards, and they were surely not loving their neighbor as they should have. I'm just more concerned with what they could get for themselves. So my principle, I'll state it this way, when God's covenant community fails to live out his principles regarding justice, grows complacent in its religious traditions, yeah, we still worship at Bethel, that's not going to insulate them, and greedily pursues the toys of this world, it invites divine discipline.

And so that's the major argument that the Lord is developing here, and we're going to continue in the verses to follow in chapter 4. In the last part of chapter 4, verses 4

through 13, we will be talking about Prepare to Meet Your God. Famous verse, Prepare to meet your God. It's in this context that it occurs, and so we'll see the Lord confronting his people more directly, and then we'll be moving into chapter 5, where we see the 10th plague revisited.

The Lord is going to bring an Egypt-like judgment upon his people. So that's kind of where we're going in the next session.

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm in his teaching on the book of Amos. Amos, the Lion has roared, who will not fear? Session 2A, Salvation History, Comes Unravelling. Amos 3-6.