

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

Session 5: Amos 5:18-27, Obedience Not Sacrifice, Amos 6:1-7, Party Time is Over, Amos 6:8-14, The Stench of Death Settles Over A People

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm in his teaching on the book of Amos. Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear? This is session number 5, Amos 5:18-27, Obedience Not Sacrifice, Amos 6:1-7, The Party Is Over, and Amos 6:8-14, The Stench of Death Settles Over a People.

Well, in this next session, we're going to pick up where we left off in Amos chapter 5. You'll recall that we covered the first 17 verses of chapter 5 and today we're going to pick it up at verse 18, but we need to circle back and do a little bit of a review of what was in chapter 5. It began, remember, with the sounds of mourning and lamentation, kind of an aura of death, and that's the way the passage ended as well.

And along the way, the Lord exhorts the people to seek Him and live. He doesn't specify what that means, He makes it clear I'm not talking about seek me through cultic ritual by going to Bethel or Gilgal or Beersheba or one of those places, but as the passage unfolds He says seek what is good and live. And so He's talking about their lifestyle, justice.

He wants obedience, not sacrifice. He wants legitimate obedience, not cultic ritual. And so there is this threat of death that is hanging over the covenant community.

The Lord is threatening them with military invasion. They need to repent and turn back to Him, and that's going to involve obedience. And I've actually entitled this next section verses 18 through 27.

It's a distinct literary unit, as we'll see, but it's also closely related to what comes before, and I think that's why they probably put these passages together when they were coming up with their chapter divisions. And so chapter 5 verses 18 through 27 are called obedience, not sacrifice. So, as we did yesterday, we will read the text and then comment on it as we go.

And we're not going to get very far here before I have some things to say. The first word is woe. But I'll read verses 18 through 20.

Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord. Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. We talked about this in an earlier session.

The day of the Lord is when the Lord comes in power as a mighty warrior to judge his enemies and deliver his people. And the Northern Kingdom, the primary addressee in this prophecy, was expecting the day of the Lord. And Amos starts out by describing judgment that's going to come upon all the surrounding nations.

But then he comes directly at them and says You're going to be the main target. You're longing for the day of the Lord because you think it's going to be a day of light and deliverance and salvation that gives you better security and prosperity. But it's actually going to be a day of darkness.

It's going to be a day of judgment from God. It will be as though a man fled from a lion. So, picture this.

You're out in the street. A lion ventures into town, and you want to get away from the lion, so you run only to meet a bear. I don't know.

I got to flip a coin if I wanted to be a lion or a bear. I think they're both pretty ferocious and pretty deadly, as though he entered his house. So he rushes into his house to get away from the lion and the bear, and he's relieved, and he rests his hand on the wall, only to have a snake bite him.

And that's the Hebrew word Nakash. Whenever you can tell, you can't always tell if it's poisonous or not, but it is a poisonous snake. So he thought he was safe, but no.

So you can try to run from the lion, you'll meet a bear. Try to run from the bear and you'll get into a snake. You may be wondering did they have snakes in their houses at that day.

Yes, we know from some Mesopotamian omens that snakes could get into the houses, the roofs, and things like that, and the ceilings. So this is realistic, and the point is that judgment is going to be inescapable. He's going to reiterate that later in chapter 9. Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light?

Pitch dark without a ray of brightness. So he's overturning their expectation. They're expecting the day of the Lord to be a day of light.

No, it's going to be a day of darkness, and you're not going to be able to escape it. But let's go back to that first word, woe. It's the Hebrew word hoy.

And lots of times in the prophets, when they're announcing judgment, they will preface their judgment speeches with this word. And in fact, form critics who study

the different literary forms that we find in the Bible. They will actually call this a woe oracle.

But it's a hoi oracle. That's the Hebrew word. And if you study the word hoi it's actually an interjection like ah, oh, hey.

Those kinds of short words are called interjections. It's actually an interjection. It's used in a positive sense in Isaiah 55 as an intention to get cry, not as an announcement of judgment.

But what the prophets do they take a particular use of this word that was in the culture, and in their judgment speeches, they utilize it. And we know from passages in Kings and elsewhere, Jeremiah, that this was a mourning cry. They use this interjection sometimes at funerals when someone has died.

And so if my father has died I might stand over his corpse and go hoi Avi. Woe, my father. I'm lamenting my father's death.

And so I think the prophets are using it that way. It's a word that people are going to connect with. It's going to resonate with them.

They're going to associate it with death. And so if you hear hoy you might be thinking if it's clear from the context that it's not just being used in a neutral way. You might be thinking oh death.

Who died. And what the prophets describe to you. They're describing the death of the nation, the death of the leadership in advance.

And so it's the prophets are preachers. And so they know how to get people's attention. They know how to drive home the point.

And so woe to you who long for the day of the Lord. When I was translating, doing some NET Bible translation, sometimes I would translate woe in this way, more paraphrastically you who long for the day of the Lord are as good as dead to bring out the force of the interjection. I mean, woe suggests something negative.

But to me, I was trying to bring out the sense of its use in the culture and how it would have resonated with the people. So you who long for the day of the Lord are as good as dead. You see how this death theme is continuing from chapter 5, verses 1 through 17, which began with lamentation and mourning, and ended that way because the Lord is going to pass through as he did in Egypt and bring judgment.

But there is hope. If you repent and seek the Lord by obeying him, you can escape this day of the Lord or at least survive through it. He moves on in verse 21.

I hate. Back in chapter 5, we saw the word hate used. And the Lord said to the people of the northern kingdom and especially their leadership that they hate justice.

They hate justice. And they really should be hating their sin, but they hate justice. And so now, ironically, the Lord is going to tell them what he hates.

And the prophets will often do this. They'll take a key word. We call them key words.

And they'll repeat it, used in different senses and ways, until you kind of string those passages together and you get a theme developed. You hate justice. I'll tell you what I hate.

I hate. I despise your religious festivals. So they were going through the motions.

We've already seen that. They're involved in sacrifices and offerings, and they were celebrating the religious festivals that the Lord had prescribed in the law. Your assemblies are a stench to me.

So you hate justice. I hate your hypocrisy. Your hollow, empty religion.

You are not obeying me. You don't love your neighbor. But you're trying to show your love for me through empty ritual.

And I hate those festivals. That doesn't mean that there's not a place for those festivals. When people are obedient to the Lord, yes, he gave them these festivals to commemorate various things.

But he doesn't want these people coming before him, celebrating festivals in his name. And it's just a sham. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them.

And this is where I'm getting this theme for this section, obedience, not sacrifice. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings. NIV translates, I will have no regard for them.

I kind of like the net translation better. It's more faithful to the Hebrew. And it basically says, I will not look with favor on your peace offerings of fattened calves.

So it's more specific in the Hebrew text. And I think the NIV has just streamlined it a little too much at that point. But we'll go back to the NIV.

So I'm not going to accept your offerings. No way. Fellowship peace offerings.

Away with the noise of your songs. I will not listen to the music of your harps. It's a wonderful thing to praise the Lord in music.

We're told to do this by Paul in the New Testament. It's a wonderful thing. But I think what's scary here is the Lord doesn't really accept that form of worship unless you are obedient and loving your brother and your sister, your neighbor.

So the music is a way of expressing our love for God, but God expects it to be not only vertical, but also horizontal. So there are some interesting principles that come through here in terms of what the Lord expects in worship. He wants religious festivals.

He wants offerings. He wants songs from obedient people. Otherwise, you're just a hypocrite.

And then in verse 24, he kind of returns to a theme that has come up earlier, popped up this whole justice theme. It's a very important theme for Amos. In fact, some people will say the big deal with Amos is justice.

The big deal with Hosea is idolatry. That's an oversimplification. Hosea talks about justice, but he's heavily into condemning idolatry.

Amos is heavily into condemning injustice, but he also talks about idolatry. We've seen that. And those are the two major problems facing the prophets as they confronted the people in this day.

But verse 24 is a famous verse. I think Martin Luther King quoted it. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.

And so what he's talking about here is a perennial river, a river that does not dry up. And he said that's what God wants. He wants justice all the time, rolling on like a never-failing stream because they had wadis.

They have wadis in the land, and these are seasonal streams that can flash flood. There can be a lot of water in them during the rainy season, but they'll dry up. And that's what the Lord does not want.

He wants a perennial, never-failing stream, and he wants justice to be like that. The next three verses are a big problem. And all you have to do is compare the translations.

And it's apparent that they're not sure what's going on here. We know what the words are saying, but at the same time, we're not sure how this all fits together. Verse 25 is translated by the NIV, and it is a question.

It's a question in Hebrew. It's marked as such. Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings 40 years in the wilderness, people of Israel? Well, it sounds like in the context where he's rejecting their offerings that he's expecting an answer no to that question.

But we know that the Lord did give the people sacrifices and offerings, and expected them to offer. They couldn't do it ideally until they get into the land, but I would be inclined to say yes to that question, but then it doesn't really fit the context. So some people will interpret it as, well, it's kind of a no, but it wasn't the primary thing I wanted.

You have the same problem with Jeremiah 7:21 through 24, where Jeremiah seems to say that the Lord did not accept offerings and sacrifices early on. He was concerned about obedience. Well, he's always concerned about obedience more than sacrifice, and so that may be the point here.

But I kind of like the view that you take 25 and 26 together as all part of that rhetorical question. So in 25, did you bring me sacrifices and offerings 40 years in the wilderness, people of Israel? And also lift up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols, the star of your God, which you made for yourselves. Okay, sacrifice was there from the very beginning, offerings.

I wanted them from the very beginning, and when you offered them to me at the beginning in the wilderness, now I know there was the golden calf incident, but that happened early on at Sinai, and I think what the Lord is saying, in the wilderness, I wanted offerings and sacrifices. You gave them, but did you combine it with idolatry at that point in time? And so that would make sense. No, but that's what you're doing now.

You're making offerings to me, and you're not concerned about justice, and furthermore, you're also mixing your offerings with offerings to other gods. You're polytheistic. I can't accept this from disobedient people who are also worshiping other gods along with me.

I can't accept that. And so, yeah, offerings and sacrifices came in very early, and I wanted them, but not this way, and that's not the way it was done in the wilderness. Therefore, you see verse 27 as talking about the consequences.

Therefore, I will send you into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is God Almighty, and once again, that's God of hosts, God of armies. The Lord, who is the God of armies, is his name. So it's a condemnation in this chapter of injustice as well as idolatry, and notice at the end, I'm going to send you into exile, and that is in part why I understand this particular section as salvation history comes unraveled.

That's my overall title for chapters 3 through 6, and think about exile. That's the undoing of their salvation history, and as we said in an earlier lecture, salvation history begins really with the promise to the patriarchs that the Lord is going to give them a land and multiply and make them into a great nation, but then it really gets implemented when they're in Egypt and Moses goes, and through Moses' leadership, the Lord delivers his people from Egypt. They go through the Red Sea.

It's kind of the ultimate salvific event. They freed them from slavery. They go to Sinai.

They receive the law. They disobey. They question whether God can really give them the land, and so the Lord makes them wander in the wilderness.

The new generation comes in, and through the leadership of Joshua and Caleb and others who had believed the Lord, they conquer the Canaanite people, and so that's salvation history. It sort of gets extended through David. David expands the empire and is kind of carrying out what the Lord started through Joshua, and so we refer to that as salvation history, but what we see in the prophets, the Old Testament prophets, is you're disobeying the covenant, and so the covenant contains these curses, these threatened judgments, Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, and those covenant curses are going to be implemented against you.

God is going to judge you, and the judgment can come in different forms, such as famine, drought, or invasion that decimates the population. Your children can be killed. Your cities can be besieged to the point where you get so desperate you'll actually resort to cannibalism, but ultimately, exile.

That's the ultimate punishment. If you don't change, then the Lord will be forced to send you into exile, and if you think about it, you've lost your independence. You're not in the land anymore, and salvation history has come unraveled, and it's reversed.

Of course, the good news, as we'll see at the end of Amos, is that the Lord is going to redo salvation history. He's going to do it again. There's going to be a second exodus.

Isaiah talks about that in chapters 40-55, other passages as well, so the Lord is going to bring his people out of bondage again and lead them back into the land, and the Valley of Achor, the Valley of Trouble, because that's when Achan stole the stuff from Jericho and jeopardized the whole conquest. That's going to become a doorway of hope, so salvation history is going to be renewed and brought to completion, but in the meantime, you don't want to be part of the generation that sees it all come unraveled and reversed. So, it's once again ending on a kind of a sour note here in chapter 5. Before we make the transition to chapter 6, I've been coming up with principles for each major section of Amos, and I have combined the two main speeches in chapter 5 into one. So, here is my summary, my principle for chapter 5.

It's a little longer because chapter 5 is a little longer, 27 verses, and in putting these principles together, I try to incorporate all of the major themes of any given unit.

So, God places a higher priority on relationships than ritual, and by relationships, I'm talking about the relationship with him and with one's neighbor. He is not pleased by those who engage in religious activity while at the same time violating his ethical standards. If we could make it a little broader and really repeat a theme that was in chapter 4, we could also, because of the seek me and live, say that God gives those who violate his standards an opportunity to repent and escape judgment.

That could be an additional statement that we put in there in the summary, because there is a positive side to this. The Lord is appealing to them. It's not just straight judgment speech.

There are these exhortations, as the forum critics call them, seek me and live, where you give a command and then a positive consequence, in this case. So, now we're ready to move to chapter 6, which is the last section of this middle unit of the book, and I've divided chapter 6 up into two parts. It's got 14 verses, and so the first seven verses, I call party time, are over.

And then the second half of the chapter, verses 8 through 14, the stench of death settles over a perverse people. So, once again, the main thrust is judgment in these verses, a shorter chapter. So, let's begin with verse 1, and notice the first word, the word that we talked about, woe, hoy, once again.

So, we had hoi at the beginning of chapter 5 in verse 18, and then once again here. So, right after this threat of death in the first part of chapter 5, but given the opportunity to have life through obedience, we get two of these woe oracles, funeral cries in advance, as it were. So, once again, woe to you who are complacent in Zion.

So, we could say, you who are complacent in Zion are as good as dead, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation to whom the people of Israel come. Seems like he's talking, targeting here the leadership that is in these capital cities, but you might be pausing to ask at this point, Zion? That's Jerusalem. That's Jerusalem.

I thought that Amos' primary message was to the northern kingdom. Well, it was. That's obvious.

He travels up north. He gets in trouble with the priest at Bethel, as we'll see in chapter 7, and so, yes, his primary message was to the tribes of Joseph, the northern kingdom Israel, but that doesn't mean that he can't include Jerusalem or Judah in the message, because remember, in the oracles, Judah was number seven right before Israel, and so Judah is not going to escape the coming judgment, and so it may well

be that Amos is including them because they need to hear what he's saying to the leadership in Samaria because the leadership in Judah is starting to look a lot like that, and the leadership in Jerusalem, and so he wants this message to apply to them as well. Another option is that once he finished ministering in the northern kingdom, he came back home to Tekoa and continued to function as a prophet to some degree, and he wanted to; maybe the Lord led him to add this later.

It doesn't have to be a redaction from 150 years later or something like that. It doesn't have to be that. It could be Amos tailoring his message to the people of Judah as well.

So, either way, it makes sense here, but it's a little surprising to see initially. So, even Zion is beginning to look like Samaria, and so he includes them in this as well. So, you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, remember this had been a time period, even though the Lord was beginning to judge them and get their attention, apparently they were overlooking this, and they were prospering under Jeroboam II.

They had actually won some military victories, as we'll see later in this chapter, and so they're feeling pretty good. They're feeling secure and prosperous. They're hoping for even greater security when the Lord destroys all their enemies, but they're feeling pretty good at this point, and Amos is coming and saying, No, this is false security.

Any successes you've had are fool's gold. I'm paraphrasing now, and death is right around the corner. Death is imminent.

Verse 2 is another verse that is problematic among the interpreters. It says, Go to Kalneh and look at it. Go from there to Great Hammat.

These are Aramean towns, and then go to Gath in Philistia. There's that fifth Philistine city that wasn't mentioned in the earlier oracle, but Amos is aware of it, and it has come under judgment. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours? It's difficult to understand the force of this question, which seems to be rhetorical.

Some would argue that this is what the leaders are telling their own people. They're bragging about their significance and their strength, because the northern kingdom was a large land area in comparison to some of these others that are mentioned, and so, like the Net Bible, I believe, I'm going to check that real quick. The Net Bible puts in, they say to the people.

Well, that's not in the Hebrew text, and the Net Bible's not trying to trick anyone. They say that the people are interpretive and added, and then they explain why they

feel that the people are talking. I mean, the leaders are talking to the people here, bragging about their land.

So, in this case, they're saying, hey, go look at these other places. We're greater than them. We're not going to experience any of the negative judgments that they experienced.

The other option is that the Lord is speaking to the leadership, and that seems like the most natural way of taking this. He's just denounced the leaders. Woe to you, and he is going to talk to them directly in verse 3, so why not in verse 2? And I think the point is, go to Kalneh, go to Great Hammat, go to Gath.

Are they better off than, or are they better than, your two kingdoms? I think the point he's trying to make is, even though you're my covenant people, and only you have I known out of all the nations of the earth back in chapter 3, there's another sense in which you're no different than the other nations. The only reason that you're unique and blessed is because I have protected you and blessed you. But as far as, on the other hand, you're just one of the nations, and I'm sovereign over the nations, and you don't get a pass.

You're not insulated by the covenant. So, just as I have brought judgment upon these places, and that happened much earlier, actually back in the 9th century, it's going to happen again when Tiglath-Pileser III comes through from Assyria, but that hasn't happened at this point yet. And he's saying, you may think that you've got more territory than they have.

I can change that. I can reduce your territory, which is exactly what he did when the Assyrians came in a little bit after this. They just reduced all of the area of the northern kingdom to provincial status, and they left this small state right in the middle.

And so, I think that's what the Lord is saying. Don't think that your special status insulates you from my judgment. Don't think that the successes that you've experienced, the prosperity you think you have, and the military victories you've won set you apart from these other nations.

No, I'm demanding obedience. So, that's my preference on verse 2, is to just see it as a continuation of what the Lord is saying to the leaders. You put off the day of disaster, verse 3, and bring near a reign of terror.

So, he's, and actually terror is a word that we're familiar with, Hamas, Hamas, violence. So, he's accusing them of putting off the day of judgment, failing to recognize that it is on the way, and not wanting to consider that. And instead, they are responsible for violence within their own nation, because from the Lord's

perspective, what they're doing to people, taking their land away from them, making them very vulnerable.

And I'm sure in many cases, people died from starvation, and children died because of these oppressive measures. The Lord views that as violence. And so, he's calling them out for this.

And then, he's kind of describing the way they live. We've already seen allusions to this with the summer house, the winter house, and all of that, and the ivory. And he's going to talk about that a little bit more here.

You lie on beds adorned with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. So, you're pretty well off.

Yeah, you're pretty prosperous, wealthy. You've got nice beds and couches to lounge around on. You eat the best food.

You strum away on your harps like David. This is, I think this is kind of sarcastic. You think you're like David, and improvise on musical instruments.

So, you've got time to play around with musical instruments, and strum away, and try to, you know, compose songs. You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions. So, they consider themselves the head of the nation, the heads of the nation.

They're the first and foremost notable. They demand the best lotions, the first and foremost of lotions. Only the best for the best is kind of the philosophy here.

You use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. You don't grieve over the ruin of Joseph, and therefore, you will be among the first to go into exile. Your feasting and lounging will end.

The ruin of Joseph, it's debated as to what that means. You don't want to always do this, but sometimes you have something called a double entendre. You have a dual meaning that's operative at the same time.

One view is that the ruin of Joseph is the moral ruin of Joseph, and Joseph stands for the northern kingdom. So, you don't grieve over the moral ruin of the nation where people are lying, cheating, and abusing others. That could be.

Or you do not grieve over the coming ruin of Joseph in judgment. And I guess on this one, usually I like to choose one or the other, but the prophets are poets, and they're very rhetorical. And so, I think that in this particular case, you can take it both ways at the same time because they're interrelated.

The moral ruin of Joseph is going to bring about the national disaster and ruin of Joseph. And so, I think both are there, and I think as the audience hears it and starts to think about, well, what does that mean? They might come to the, oh, I see what he's saying. Oh, very, very slick there, Amos.

And then he says, therefore, you will be among the first to go into exile. Your feasting and lounging will end. And this is another thing that the prophets do.

They will engage in wordplay. And so, he used, there's a root in Hebrew, or, you know, reish al-ashin, a rosh, head. And from the head, you can talk about the first of something, the most notable.

And there's also a word that comes from that same root, reishit. It's right there in Genesis 1.1, bereshit -- in the beginning. So, reishit comes from this idea of beginning.

It can be temporal, beginning. It can be quality, the best. And so, he's playing on that root here.

He's saying, you are the reishit of the nation. You are the first and foremost, the notable men of the elite. You are the best.

And you even demand the reishit of lotions, the best of lotions, the best quality of lotions to put on your body as you drink your wine by the bowlful. Well, I'll tell you what. The Lord's going to honor you.

He's going to honor you. This sarcasm drips from verse 7. Guess who gets to be first in line when they go into exile? You're going to be right up front at the rosh of the line. You're going to be right up front at the rosh of the line.

You're going to be right up front at the rosh of the line. You're going to be right up front at the rosh of the line. You're going to be because the target language, English, has its limitations and can't bring out what the Hebrew is saying.

But it's, maybe if we use first in all three of those texts, the first of lotions, but first of lotions sounds a little weird, first of people. It works in verse 7. But the irony of it, all right, only the best for the best.

Well, everyone's going into exile, but you get to be the first in line. You can lead off. You can be right up there, up front, first in exile.

And so there's also a punishment fits the crime dimension, what we call God's talionic justice. Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. And that is present in the prophets, but it's not always as obvious.

Because of their greed and the excessive wealth that they had acquired as a result of exploiting people, their punishment is going to match their crime. And so often through wordplay like this, a scholar by the name of Patrick Miller wrote a really good volume way back. It's a small volume, more of a monograph, sin and judgment in the prophets.

And he was trying to show that judgment corresponds to the sin. And so you see that here. This is an appropriate punishment for them.

They want to be first. They want to be set apart from the rest of the people and enjoy the very best. And so ironically, that's the position they're going to have in the line of exiles.

I'm going to take a little drink of water here. And we'll move on to verse 8, 8 through 14. Which, again, I'm going to call this the stench of death settles over a perverse people.

So let's begin with 8. We'll read through 14. I'm going to be reading from a translation that has the NIV where I disagree at a couple of points. And so I will read it as NIV has it.

And then as we work through verse by verse, I'll tell you what I think verse 10 is saying precisely. The sovereign Lord has sworn by himself. Remember, you swear by something that's certain.

And so when the Lord swears by himself, it actually, in Hebrew, it's his life, his soul, maybe even his nephesh. And so the Lord is swearing by himself, his own life. Hey, the Lord is eternal.

He's always alive. That's steady, lasting. And so this is an oath being sworn by himself.

The Lord God Almighty declares, I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses. I will deliver up the city and everything in it. So what does the Lord hate? He hates their hypocritical worship.

He also hates their pride, which I think is more fundamental. It underlies everything that they do. And this is a theme that we see in the wisdom literature in the Old Testament.

In Proverbs, the Lord hates pride. He hates it, the proud look. And so that's what's motivating these people, that they want to have all this wealth, however they gain it,

because they want to feel better and superior to others and even surrounding nations.

And so they're motivated by pride, and the Lord hates their pride. And he detests their fortresses because it's a product of their pride and their attempt to elevate themselves and protect themselves. And so I will deliver up the city and everything in it.

That sounds pretty all-encompassing and complete. If 10 people are left in one house, they too will die. And if the relative who comes, now we're in the aftermath of the death, it makes it sound as if they're all going to die, but the prophets will often do this, but the few who do survive, here's the way it's going to be.

And if the relative who comes to carry the bodies out of the house to burn them, I want to revisit that. Ask anyone who might be hiding there, is anyone else with you? And he says, no. Then he will go on to say, Hush, we must not mention the name of the Lord. We don't want to even take any chance on him bringing further judgment on us.

For the Lord has given the command. He has issued the decree. He's given the command, and he will smash the great house into pieces.

The typical great house is there, and the small house is in bits. So this is one of the sad things about judgment. You get the impression that the Lord is targeting the leadership, but the reality is that what the leaders do will filter down and corrupt the attitude of everyone, and sometimes, when judgment comes, there's collateral damage.

Even people who are innocent are impacted negatively by the judgment. Think of the book of Habakkuk. Habakkuk's problem is, Lord, you're going to bring the Babylonians through? How is that a solution to the problem of injustice in Judah? How is that a solution? I don't get it.

They're worse than we are, and what about your people? What about me? And the Lord says the just, the innocent, will live by their faithfulness, or as Paul understands it, faith. Faith and faithfulness go together. The righteous remnant will be preserved, and at the end of the book, remember Habakkuk says, Okay, I know trouble's coming, and we're probably going to be close to starvation.

It's not going to be good, and everyone's going to be impacted, including the righteous, but I'm confident that the Lord will sustain his loyal followers, and we'll be like those mountain goats that can navigate that rocky terrain, and you watch them, and you think, how can they do that without plummeting to their death? But Habakkuk says, I know the Lord is going to enable us to get through this, so even the

poorer people are going to be impacted because God's judgment is corporate, and it impacts, and has collateral damage, and the small house into bits, and then he asks a question, and most translations are going with an alternative reading here, which I think is correct, and it's reflected here. Do horses run on rocky crags? Do you ever see somebody trying to run horses, ride a horse, or ride a chariot on a rocky crag, on a cliff? No, that's crazy. It's bizarre.

You would never see that, and then does, actually, the traditional text says, does one plow with oxen? Well, yeah, you do, but it's tricky. You can divide that Hebrew word with oxen into two words, and then you get this. Does one plow the sea with oxen? No.

Nobody takes a plow out into the water, hitched up to some oxen, and tries to plow the sea. It's bizarre. It's crazy.

It makes no sense whatsoever, and now the Lord is going to give us some insight into how he views injustice, but you have turned justice into poison, and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness, and we talked about justice in one of our prior lectures. When you see justice implemented, you remember I used the illustration of the classic Western, where the theme is usually justice prevails in the end, and the bad guys get it, so don't be a bad guy, because the law will come after you, and you will get it, and so yeah, justice is supposed to be something that we feel good about. It gives us joy, but what they're doing, they've turned justice and the fruit of righteousness into something poisonous and bitter, and that's a perversion.

Justice should never be overturned and perverted, so it becomes something poisonous and bitter. What you're doing is comparable to trying to run a horse on a cliff, or trying to plow the sea with oxen. It's crazy, and in this case, it's moral insanity.

You know, those other things mentioned would be insane actions, which would be self-destructive, but in this case, there's such a thing as moral insanity. You know, when people decide, we're going to kill babies, we're going to kill babies, because it's not convenient for you to have one at this point. When they do that kind of thing, it's in God's sight, you're turning justice, what is right, into something poison and bitter, and the irony of it is they'll defend that action, you know, through some kind of crazy logic and false premises about the baby not being a baby.

Well, why are you killing it then? If it's growing, it's alive. If it's not growing, you've got nothing to worry about, so it makes no sense, and so the Lord is calling them on this, and he says, You who rejoice in the conquest of Lo-Dabar. We don't pick up on that because we're not native Hebrew speakers.

Those of us who've studied Hebrew pick up on it. You know what Lo-Dabar means? Nothing. It was the name of the place, apparently.

I don't know why you would name a place that, but nothing, and so you're rejoicing in the con... You conquered a place called Lo-Dabar. You really conquered nothing. Your successes are meaningless.

It's fool's gold. It's not going to ins... your military strength that you think you have is not going to insulate you from what is coming, and you say, did we not take Karnayim by our own strength, and we look at Karnayim, well, it must be a place. Yeah, it's a place, and it's actually a dual form.

Hebrew has a dual form when they want to indicate two of something, and they're taking the word keren, horn, like the horn of an animal, and they're saying two horns, so apparently there was a place called Karnayim. They named it two horns because they thought of it as a place of great strength, and so you conquered Larnayim. You conquered two horns, and we're talking about, again, the horn of a wild ox that the ox would use to defend itself and to defeat another ox in some kind of combat, and so the horn is often a symbol of strength in the Old Testament.

The psalmist says the Lord is my horn of salvation. He's the one who is my strength and my power that defeats my enemies, just like the ox can gore to death its enemies, and you think you're so strong because you took Lo-Dabar and Karnayim. Well, you really did nothing, and yeah, you took two horns, but that's not going to amount to anything because you're not going to be able to withstand the Lord when he brings judgment your way.

Four, the Lord God Almighty declares, and once again, it's the Lord God of armies. When NIV translates Lord God Almighty, it's Lord God of armies. Almighty is okay.

It's the Lord God of armies is mighty, and they're trying to bring that out, but I kind of like the some of the more recent translations that will say Lord God of armies, so who leads armies in a militaristic context, and he declares, here's the one who's the real warrior who can defeat all enemies. I will stir up a nation against you, so the Lord is going to raise up a nation. That nation, by the way, is going to be Assyria.

In a few short years, the Assyrians are going to decide we need to expand our empire all the way to the Mediterranean again into the west, just like Shalmaneser did in the prior century, and we're going to do that now, and the Lord is the one who's moving them to do that because he's going to use them as his instrument of judgment against Israel and Judah. Now, Judah is spared in the 8th century, in 701, the Lord spares Jerusalem, but eventually, Jerusalem is going to be destroyed, so the Lord is, I will stir up a nation against you, Israel, that will oppress you all the way, so this nation is going to oppress them all the way from Level Hamat, the entrance to

Hamat, way up in the north near Aram to the valley of the Aravah, way down in the south, so it's going to be a judgment that goes through the whole nation, and that's what happened, not only Israel, but also Judah, and that may be why Zion got addressed at the beginning, because the judgment that's coming, Judah is included in that judgment, and as God judges the northern kingdom, Judah is going to be impacted negatively by that, and the Assyrians aren't going to stop with the northern kingdom, they're going to also move into Judah, which they eventually do. So that brings us to the end of chapter 6, and as we've been going along, I try to draw out some principles, and for this particular passage, it's pretty short and sweet.

God hates arrogance and actively opposes the proud. That's the principle, and it's a principle that goes all the way through Scripture. The Lord hates arrogance, and he actively opposes the proud.

Often when God hates, it's not just an emotional thing, it's by metonymy, he opposes. He hates, and then he acts on that. Just like love, in God's way of thinking, is not just an emotion.

The Lord expects us to love him. Well, that doesn't mean just feel good about our relationship. No, we're to act on that and obey him.

If we really love him, we'll obey him. And he loves us, and it's not just an emotion that he feels. No, he demonstrates that love in tangible, positive ways.

So God hates arrogance. The chapter details how that arrogance was evidenced in their context, and he's going to actively oppose them and reverse salvation history. If they don't seek him and turn to him, and really revolutionize their whole way of doing things by making sure that justice is present.

We'll stop here and pick it up with chapter 7 in our next lecture.

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm in his teaching on the book of Amos. Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear? This is session number 5, Amos 5:18-27, Obedience Not Sacrifice, Amos 6:1-7, The Party Is Over, and Amos 6:8-14, The Stench of Death Settles Over a People.