

## Amos and the Prophets

### Week Three: Prophets and the Future

#### What is the Future?

- The Bible does not set forth a singular, clear relationship between the prophet's words and the future of kingdoms: on one hand, what Amos says comes to pass without much remainder. On the other, Jonah's words to Nineveh clearly do not. Human response to the oracle might be a variable, but then that varies in degrees of influence.
- Think of a Biblical prophecy not as someone reading a script and saying what happens but as a message from God to people: if God wills that it should come to pass, nobody can stop God, but God (or Moses or Hezekiah, as the case may be) might change God's mind.
- Prophecies are more demonstrations of God's authority than of God's prognostication (cf. Amos 3).

#### Amos 5:1-7: Justice over Ritual

- What is the "House of Israel" in verse one? Is it the same as "maiden Israel" in verse two?
- What warning does the prophet bring to the people in verses 4-6?
- What is wormwood (v. 7)?

#### Amos 5:8-9: The One who Speaks

- Why the shift into astronomy in verse 8?
- Do verses eight and nine mark any sort of parallel?

#### Amos 5:10-13: Warning to the Righteous

- Who are "they" in verse 10? Are "they" the same as "you" in verse 11?
- Why does God start talking about knowledge in verse 12?
- What do you make of the warning in verse 13?

#### Amos 5:14-17: Exhortation and Declaration

- Verses fourteen and fifteen are calls to do what the people already know is right. Why does the prophet bring this word at this point?
- Verses sixteen and seventeen point to a destruction that seems inevitable. Why put this right after the moral reminders in 14-15?
- Does the word "remnant" in verse 15 have anything to do with this?

#### Amos 5:18-24: The Day of the Lord

- What is Amos talking about when he talks of "the day of the LORD"? What do the people of Israel seem to be thinking when they say that phrase? How nasty is this day going to be according to verse 19?
- Why is the LORD so down on rituals in this passage? What does He call for instead?
- The day of God's judgment is always a two-edged sword: because God has made the world to be sufficient for all, while those who cannot get enough will find the news good, those who have grabbed in excess will find it quite bad news.

#### Amos 5:25-27: Final Judgment

- Note in this final passage the inevitable connection between idolatry and injustice.

#### Implications

- When God speaks of coming judgment, the word is both warning and comfort.
- When God warns the people, He could be warning the nation as a whole or simply a remnant.
- Or both.
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