

Amos

“You Only Have I Known”

Amos 3

Well, if you would turn in your Bibles to Amos chapter three, we're going to read verses one through 15. The whole of chapter three. Amos is continuing on in his Oracles of judgment. Some people have asked me, what is an oracle? Oracle is just a term that we use to say, here's a segment of a speech from a prophet. Okay, sometimes, as I've mentioned before, oracles can be prayers. Remember how Paul is writing in his letter? Sometimes he's praying, sometimes he's preaching. The same is true with Old Testament prophets. Sometimes they're praying, sometimes they're preaching. Okay. And you can discern and hear which one is going on. And what do we call those segments of their sermons? We call them oracles. Okay. What they are doing is they are giving the word of the Lord. Notice we even have some of those, formulas about oracles here today.

Notice in verse chapter three, verse one here, this word that the Lord has spoken against your master, saying, these are not my words, these are the words, the Lord's words. Look at verse 12, thus sayeth right. Thus says the Lord. That's an oracle formula. And he's telling us, these are not my bright ideas, okay? These are all coming from the Lord.

And so we continue. He has been drawing our attention now to the nations and his oracles against the nations. And then he culminates those oracles with the northern Kingdom. The northern Kingdom received its oracle of judgment. And we talked about last week, and now he's going to continue developing it. That's the introduction to the book. The whole rest of the book really is dealing with the problem of the northern kingdom, which will be referred to sometimes as Israel. Okay, almost never the northern Kingdom. That's just how we talk about them. Israel. Okay. Samaria, that's the capital of Israel. It's kind of like you might talk about the United States and say, well, what's Washington doing today? Right? It's talking about the capital. That's the city. It's talking about the whole nation. So Samaria and then sometimes you'll hear them called Ephraim, okay, one of the tribes of the northern Kingdom. And then sometimes you'll hear them called Jacob. Interestingly, you might say, well, isn't Jacob all of Israel? He's the father of all of the tribes. Yes, that's true, but just in prophet language, Jacob will often be used. He can be used to talk about all of the people of God, but oftentimes he'll be used just to talk about the Northern Kingdom. Notice we'll see that in our text this evening.

Israel's Guilt and Punishment

3 ⁱHear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt:

2 ^k“You only have I known
of all the families of the earth;

^ltherefore I will punish you
for all your iniquities.

3 “Do two walk together,
unless they have agreed to meet?

4 Does a lion roar in the forest,
when he has no prey?

Does a young lion cry out from his den,
if he has taken nothing?

5 Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth,
when there is no trap for it?

Does a snare spring up from the ground,
when it has taken nothing?

6 ^mIs a trumpet blown in a city,
and the people are not afraid?

ⁿDoes disaster come to a city,
unless the LORD has done it?

7 “For the Lord GOD does nothing
^owithout revealing his secret
to his servants the prophets.

8 The lion has roared;
who will not fear?

²The Lord God has spoken;

who can but prophesy?"

9 Proclaim to the strongholds in ^aAshdod

and to the strongholds in the land of Egypt,

and say, "Assemble yourselves on ^tthe mountains of Samaria,

and see the great tumults within her,

and ^sthe oppressed in her midst."

10 "They do not know how to do right," declares the LORD,

^t"those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds."

11 Therefore thus says the Lord God:

^u"An adversary shall surround the land

and bring down ¹your defenses from you,

and ^vyour strongholds shall be plundered."

12 Thus says the LORD: ^w"As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, ^xso shall the people of Israel ^ywho dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part ²of a bed.

13 "Hear, ^zand testify against the house of Jacob,"

declares the Lord God, ^athe God of hosts,

14 "that on the day I punish Israel for his transgressions,

^bI will punish the altars of Bethel,

and ^cthe horns of the altar shall be cut off

and fall to the ground.

15 ^dI will strike ^ethe winter house along with ^fthe summer house,

and ^gthe houses of ivory shall perish,

and the great houses ³shall come to an end," declares the LORD.

Amen.

Well, as we delve into the prophets, I want to draw your attention to just a little, little aspects of the prophets as we go. I want to help teach you to read the prophets and understand them in light of, some of the broader redemptive history that we have in the Scripture. So each time we get to one of these lessons, I'd like to kind of draw out maybe just a little sidebar where we can talk a little bit about what's going on with the prophets so that you can better understand what's going on, not just in Amos, but in all of the prophets that we're dealing with.

So what I'd like to talk about this evening, and first of all, is about this the fact that the Bible is really a book about endings. The Bible is really a book about how it's all going to end. As a matter of fact, we don't get past the very first opening verse of Scripture without getting a projection down to how it's all going to end. Notice how the Bible begins in the beginning. Right in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now already, already the introduction is telling us what is God doing? He's about the work of this creation, of bringing about a heavens and an earth. And then we see him. We kind of moves forward and says, now what was the state of this heavens and earth?

And he goes, well, it was to move about who? Right? It was formless and void again, that projects something out. Okay, so he's creating the heavens and earth. It's formless and void that implicitly tells us what he's going to do. What is he going to do? He's going to bring form to the formlessness. He's going to bring substance to the void.

And then what happens? He does exactly that over the six days of creation, culminating with the creation of man and woman who he makes in his image. And then what does he tell them to do now? Go out and keep doing the work that I've been doing. Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Fill it, form it.

So by the end of even the chapter one of Genesis, we already have an end projected down the road. God has built his palace. It has a roof which is the stars of the sky, the firmament, and down in his palace, just like every good temple, it has two image bearers right there, and they've been told to do the thing that the image should do fill the whole temple, fill the palace with reflective worship of the living God.

It's already been projected out for us. Really, the very end of revelation. All right, look at that. Already there in chapter one. We already know where the story is going. One day God will fill the earth and subdue it. He will one day fill the earth with his image bearers who will reflect, reflect back to him his glory.

And that's exactly what we find at the end of revelation. As the heavenly Jerusalem descends down, what do we hear then? There's no temple anymore, because the whole earth is filled with his presence. There's no sun. Why? Because the whole earth is filled with his glory. And what is it now? The whole earth has been filled now with redeemed images of God reflecting back to him His worship.

Here's the point is that the Bible really is just about constantly projecting forward what God's plans are and how we can live in accordance with those plans. It's a matter of fact. I sometimes think about the Bible or the prophets, the authors of Scripture. It's kind of like imagine yourself kind of standing like this, and you're directed down towards a long expanse.

At the end of that expanse is a screen like a, like a projection screen like we have up here and strapped to your chest is a camera that is or rather a projector that is projecting onto that screen the end, how it's all going to end, what's going to take place, what will the end times be?

All right. This is in theology. We call this eschatology. And imagine that it's projected down there. And as you walk towards the screen, imagine that the picture on the screen kind of swirls around and gets more and more precise and more and more in focus. And as we go through redemptive history, this projection that starts off with, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

That means he formed it and he filled it. That means he's going to do it through man and woman. That means, okay, you just kind of projection out into the future. As we move through redemptive history, we get clearer and clearer and clearer picture of how exactly God is going to accomplish these ends. And you can stop at any point.

You can stop with Abraham and he'll say, yes, God is going to fill the earth and subdue it. How? Through my family, through my seed, he will conquer that because of course sin has happened. He'll conquer the seed of the serpent and he will establish my family. And my family will be a blessing to all the families on the earth, because that's what he promised in Genesis 12.

And you could go to Joseph and he'd say, let me tell you how I'm going to play a role in this. And you could go to Moses and you could go to Isaiah and Amos, and then you can go after the exile in each point, if you take a slice and you kind of just stop them and you pull them out and you say, okay, you tell me, what are you expecting?

Okay? They will explain to you an increasing detail, the plans that God has for the end of his creation. And he will sometimes call that end that day. Sometimes he'll call it the last day, sometimes he'll call it the latter day. Sometimes he'll call it the latter days day singular. And then many times he will call it the day of the Lord, the Yom Adonai, the day of the Lord.

And when that day comes, God is going to bring his judgment, and he's going to bring his mercy, and he's going to fill the earth. He's going to set all wrongs to right, and he will establish his earth as his temple, now formed and filled with the image. They're worshiping him in perfect communion. That's the culmination of the day of the Lord.

And yet we can stop at any point in Scripture and say, okay, what are they expecting now? Then? What are they expecting? Now we could even look back on Abraham and say, all Abraham knew was that he was going to one day have a family that would fill the earth and would be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

How little he knew compared to what we know today. Abraham didn't know anything about Roman crosses. He didn't know anything about a man named Jesus of Nazareth. He just knew. One day my seed will bless all of the families of the earth. One day God will provide a ram. But he didn't know what that looked like, what that meant.

And we can look back and see how little he knew. But here's what we have to remember as believers. There will come a time in the new heavens and new earth when we will look back to where we are today and we will say, it's so sweet. It's so quaint. Look how little they knew. They thought they knew what it meant to be a new creation, but they had no idea what it meant to be a new creation.

They thought they knew what it meant to be united in Christ. But they had a oh, they had no idea. It was such a simplistic view. They had. Because we will now see how God has completed his grand plan of redemption. And, you know, we're going to want to do when we see it, when we see God do it exactly the way he said he was going to do it.

I think we'll look back and say, we were so concerned and anxious and we were so filled with uncertainty. And yet he told us exactly how he was going to do it, and he did it just like he said he was going to do it. And what we will want to do when we reflect on that is just rejoice and worship and praise.

Even so, as the hymn says, when 10,000 years have passed, we'll have no less days to sing his praises as we reflect on how he brought it all to completion. Now, if we come back and we stop that projection, that that man walking with the projector, that the archetypal prophet that we're talking about, he's walking towards the projection.

If we stop him at Moses, do you know what he would tell Israel? He'd say, yes, the Lord is still going to fill the earth with your with your image, the Lord of the image of God. He's going to do it through Israel, the seed of Abraham. The promise to Abraham is that there will be a people and a nation that will fill the earth and be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

However, that is going to involve Israel going in to the Promised Land, and they will sin and be disciplined, and they will be righteous at times and be blessed. But there will come a time where there will be a precipitous sin. There's going to be a thing that so great that the Lord will scatter Israel out to the nations.

But when he does that, when he scatters them out of the nations, he will remember them, and they will remember him, and they will repent, and they will seek the Lord, and the Lord will restore them to Israel, to a better place than they had before. It'll be better than it was in the days of Joshua. In the days of Caleb.

It will be better than it was back in those days of the judges. There will be more prosperous, more blessed. The Lord will not be outside of their hearts. It will be inside their hearts. Circumcision won't be a thing of the flesh will be of the heart, and it will be a better thing. But they have to pass through that veil of fire.

That is the scattering or what elsewhere is called the diaspora, or as elsewhere is called the exile. Look at Moses in Deuteronomy 30. He says this when these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among the nations, where the Lord your God has driven you, so you call them to mind all these blessings and curses.

This is Deuteronomy 30, verse one. Now on to verse two. And you return to the Lord your God. You and your children obey his voice and all that I command you today with all of your heart and with all of your soul. Yes, that is a quote of Deuteronomy six is going back to the sermon, citing it. Then the Lord will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you.

And he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. If you're Alcester in the uttermost parts of heaven, there, from there the Lord will. Your God will gather you. From there he will take you, and the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed. So this is a post exile restoration to the land.

They will be brought into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it, and he will make you what even more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart. This is what Moses tells them to do. But now the Lord God is going to do it for them. You will circumcise your heart in the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul. Again. Deuteronomy 6. Why so that you may live. Why are we talking about Moses? Is a series on Amos? Because when Amos goes to the northern Kingdom and he says the Lord is raising up an army to drive you out of the nation, to take from you your inheritance, they already know about this. This isn't brand new to them.

If they had just been reading the book of the covenant, they would know that the Lord always holds out that it's possible that I will if your sin is great enough. If you ignore the teachings of my law, I will discipline you so greatly I will actually drive you back out of the land as if you were a Canaanite or a Philistine.

I will drive you back out of the land, lay claim to it again myself.

You see what Amos is telling them tonight is? It's coming. You remember what Moses told you about? It's coming. You can repent. We can make this. This can be a spiritual exile and not a physical exile. The Lord loves to show mercy. This is the kind of thing he likes to do. He would love to cleanse you by faith and not by experience.

He would love to cleanse you because you hear His Word, you repent, and you believe. And maybe there's going to be some skirmishes on the outer borders of the Northern Kingdom, but the Lord will have used it to quicken you, to draw him back to you, and then he will restore you to this land. We have to accept that.

That's a possibility. Why? Because that's what happens with Jonah. That's what Jeremiah tells us. He says, listen, the Lord lays out those curses, those judgments, and when he does that, it's always to invite you to repent. God loves to show mercy. He loves to annul or to mollify or to postpone or even to reverse his judgments against his people.

So as we look at this passage this evening, notice what Amos is telling us here. Notice what Amos is saying. He starts off with the Lord is saying through Amos by pointing out to Israel again, I know I just listed you amongst all the nations that are going to be judged in the oracles against the nations, but I want to remind you, this one specifically hurts.

We have a special relationship. Israel, he says, I have known only you amongst all the families of the earth. You'll hear me say this over and over again. I don't think I've said it in this setting, but I've said in a couple of other settings here, a brier with all where he. Okay, you'll hear this from me whenever you see that word to know in the Bible.

Okay, I'm gonna say this is a blanket statement. I almost never say just totally blanket statements, but this this is this is more than a rule of thumb. If you see someone say something like. And then you will know that I am the Lord, or the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Or Adam knew his wife. Okay, if you see passages like that, I just want you to note this. Knowing almost always means something like acknowledging the relationship.

This is not just in the Old Testament, it's in the new as well. For those he foreknew, he also predestined this is not God kind of knowing about us being saved. And in choosing to predestined us as a result, he is for acknowledging us. He is acknowledging the special covenant

relationship that he has with you. R.C. Spruill goes so far to say, knowing really means something more like loving.

That's true though that may be unpacking the word a little too much. But generally speaking, what does it mean? It means to acknowledge their relationship. The Lord says you alone have. I acknowledged you alone? Have. I said, your mind, your mind, your mind, your mind. Over the course in the face of the earth, of all the families of the earth, Israel, you alone are the ones I have acknowledged.

Therefore I have to, because you are my faithful wife. You are my. You are my. I'm. This is me, my unfaithful wife. You are my unfaithful son. Because of our special relationship. Because I love you. You must be disciplined.

I can't turn a blind eye. Don't you know that the judgment of the Lord is that he ignores you? The love of God is that he pays attention to you. Isn't that what the psalmist is telling us? The Lord knows. He acknowledges the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked they'll perish because he doesn't acknowledge them.

This is true in your life as well. Listen, brothers and sisters, if you sin, if you if you hold off and you hope that you're not going to get caught, and then you do the sin and you actually go wait a minute, that wasn't so bad, that was okay. Maybe I could do this a few more times. Maybe I made too big of a deal out of this.

That's the danger. If you do the sin and you get caught, you get convicted of your sin. You you get covered with guilt about it so that you have to repent. That's the blessing. That's grace. We used to tell our seminary students who would get caught in some kind of problem in seminary. They had some sort of moral failure, I'd say. I am so glad it happened to you here so it doesn't happen to you when you're in a pulpit at a church. It's a blessing. You think this is the worst thing in the world that you got caught. It's the best thing in the world that you got caught. Because judgment is what Romans one when the Lord just gives you over to the desires of your heart, look at what he's saying to Israel. He's saying, I have only known you, so I won't just let you go. Do whatever you want to do. You will be punished.

You will be disciplined for all of your iniquities. He then moves on in the second section here, verses three through six to give us seven questions. It is a rhetorical questions, all dealing with cause and effect. Okay. You know, said it's all a cause and effect relationship. Now this is poetry, so bear with me. I think we can understand why he's doing all of these.

And yet I don't even want to pretend to act like I understand shepherding as well as Amos understands it. But it is interesting that he gives all of these examples that would come out of the regular life of a shepherd, because that's what he knows, right? That's what he gets.

Look at, he says, what is one thing that shepherds do? You walk together in the desert. Okay. And if we're out there in the desert, we're walking along with our you're walking along with your sheep and you've got your staff. If there's a guy walking right next to you in that broad expanse of the desert, you better believe that you guys agreed that you're going to walk together.

It would be a strange thing if you were walking out there shepherding, and suddenly another guy appears right next to you, just kind of walking next to you, right? That would be awkward. Have you ever had that happen? You have been downtown Birmingham. You're walking along. Suddenly there's someone like right next to you and you're sort of like, hey, come on, man, give me give me some space, okay?

If you haven't agreed to walk that closely together, there's something odd going on. If you're a shepherd out there and you're in the field when you're walking together, you better believe it's because this person is a friend. He then goes on to say, what about the lion? There's the lion roar in the forest when he has no prey.

This, of course, may have been specifically familiar to Amos, as he thinks about listening for that sound of the lion. I remember being in Colorado years ago, and we were out by a campfire with some friends, by their cabin, and they had a big black dog named Molly. She was a she was a black lab. And I remember Molly was laying by the fire and she got up and she ran all of a sudden just bolted out of the fire light up into the darkness.

And about 10s later we heard a mountain lion go, wow, you know, make that sound that they make me do that. Oh there's Molly. Molly has survived a long time. She and she made it through that night as well. But. But we knew that they had found each other. Right. Because the mountain lion made that noise. The lion roars when he's got prey in his sights.

And then it reminds us of another event where lions roar. This time the young lion has been fed for probably by the parent, and it is in the den and is kind of munching away on the food that they've trapped. The young lions squeal if it doesn't have any food in the den. Again, notice these are all cause and effect.

Now they are. They are, ominous lions, aren't they? It's ominous that it's a lion catching its prey. It's ominous that it's a baby lion feeding away in his den like my dog feeds on apple. Cause I don't know why my dog loves apple. Cause. And if he gets an apple or if I'm eating one, he just sits next to me and he just yelps.

It kind of makes this little noise because he just loves him so much. And if I give it to him, right, he goes and he nom nom nom is away on it in the corner because he's got his praise, captured it right. Notice what he goes on to. Then a bird in a trap. Now this 1st May be a little bit more complicated than just a bird in a trap, okay?

I mean, it can just mean like. Like we had prey with a lion. We had the food being feasted on by the young lion. Now we have a bird in a trap. Again, another ominous image. You don't want to be a bird who gets caught in a trap. And yeah, we also do know there is something going on with in the Northern Kingdom and in the southern Kingdom for that matter.

That has to do with pagan worship of catching birds or watching the motion of birds. And it's possible because some of the language that's used here is a bit strange. Ezekiel uses it too, and he uses it to describe some kind of a cultic thing that the southern kingdom is doing trapping birds, maybe trapping birds because their souls or their spirits of some kind.

And Ezekiel says, don't do that. If you do that, you're leaving behind the faithful worship of the Lord that he's called us to. So here he says, you're trapping a bird in the trap. Does the trap grab? It's the birds, not in it. Then second snare again. Does the animal. It's the trap jump off of the ground. If an animal hasn't been caught in it.

Notice again a rhetorical question. Then he goes on again. Another ominous one. Does the trumpet blow in the city? A trumpet of alarm. And the people are not afraid. When you hear the tornado horns go off. Are the people not afraid? When that happens Amos is saying, when the trumpet sounds, the city is frightful. Then finally, the thing itself in the last of the questions, does disaster come to a city and the Lord has not done it?

This isn't some way of sort of answering the other six questions, right? Does a thing happen? And there's not a clear cause to it. Can anything happen that's not in the hands of the Lord? Even the disaster that he is about to declare against Samaria is a result of it coming out of the sovereign rule of our God and our King.

So it's important for the prophets, and this is not something we think about a lot because we're reading them from a distance. Remember, as they're offering these prophecies, they're not just telling the kingdom of, of, of Israel, you know, repent so that, the Lord will have mercy upon you. Rather, they are also explaining where it is. This disaster is coming from.

This is the language of theodicy. If you've ever heard this term in theology, this idea of theodicy, which means a justification of God in light of suffering. And many of the prophets do this, they'll kind of slide this into their prophecies. They'll say, don't blame God and say he's unjust because of what he's doing. He is just disciplining you just like he said he would.

Don't blame God. God's hands are clean. He is just sovereignly working out his plan over you. You might say, why this destruction? Why this disaster? Well, listen to the word of the Lord, says the prophet. He'll explain to you why it is the way that it is. So we've got these seven questions. People in the desert, a lion, a child lion, a bird in a trap, an animal in a snare, a trumpet blown in the city, and finally disaster coming upon the city itself.

And then we get to verses seven and eight where the prophet tells us, here's the answer, here's the here's what all these questions mean. For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants, the prophets. The lion has roared. Who will fear it just now? We could put it this way, just as the lion has roared, who will fear it? So the Lord, the Lord God has spoken. Who can help but prophesy? See what he's saying? All of these cause and effect questions I've been asking. These rhetorical questions have cause and effect. Okay, does this thing happen without this thing? Do the effects come without a cause?

Because, no, the effect always has a cause. And then he says, and this is why I'm talking to you right now, because the Lord has spoken. The prophet must communicate it. This is his rationale for the prophecy. Remember when we talked about Amos, we said he's a little bit of a curmudgeon. He doesn't seem to, you know, love his job.

Okay, so listen, I'm not the prophet or a son of a prophet. I'm a shepherd from Tekoa. But the Lord has spoken, and so I must preach it. I must declare what he has said.

Think about. Actually, the prophets often give us this. It's kind of a, a sort of credentialing for the prophet that he tells you. Let me say why I'm here. I'm going to help you understand why I'm here. Think about Isaiah and Isaiah six. He's just finished his introduction to his prophecy in chapters one through five of Isaiah.

And he gets to five. And what does he say? He gives the parable about the vineyard whose wall will be torn down. And he says, so it will be for Jerusalem. Well, those are fighting words to stand up in Jerusalem and say, your wall will be tear down, and it will be the Lord's doing who tears it down.

What happens immediately after he says that we get to chapter six? In the year the king Uzziah died, I was in the temple, and I saw the glory of the Lord, and his robe filled the whole temple. And what happened? I said, oh my God, my God, I am a man of unclean lips. The Lord cleanses my lips.

And then the Lord says, who will go for us? And Isaiah says, here I am, Lord, send me. Why is Isaiah telling us this? Because he just told Jerusalem, Lord, the Lord is going to wipe out the city of God where he chose to put his name. The Lord is going to wipe it out, tear down the wall and let the enemies, like wild animals, run roughshod over the whole of the city.

Do you think I'm saying this? Jerusalem? Unless the Lord gave me these words.

Think of Jesus himself saying I don't do anything or say anything that the father does not give to me. You see, this is the rationale for the prophet. Does the Lord speak and the prophet not prophesy? The prophet would be a fool not to prophesy, just like you would be foolish not to be afraid when the lion roars, because you are his prey.

See, the word of the Lord demands proclamation. It does not return void. As we're reminded in Isaiah 55, the word of the Lord does not return void. It always does a thing. It always goes out. And one of the things it does is that it fills the mouth of the prophet. To the prophet speaks the word of the Lord.

Notice this is not a choice of the prophet. If you are made a prophet, you must go out and do it. This is not because Amos is a sort of a cunning political or cultural mind for the Northern Kingdom. It's not that he's got all these deep insights and all of his own free will. He's going out to offer his critique and his analysis of the people around him.

Rather, he has been given a calling and is grounded in the declaration of God, and he has to go speak it out. This is the foundation for the prophetic word, and this is the foundation for the preached word. And remember what God tells us. Remember what Paul tells us in Ephesians four. The Lord has given us, Christ has given us gifts, and that includes preachers.

Okay, what does that mean? It also includes teachers, also includes evangelists. Because God is a God who reveals himself, he will also give us people who will go out and proclaim the things that he has said. The things that he has given us to reveal himself. This is the grounding of the Great Commission. You have been sent out because God has declared his gospel in Jesus Christ.

It is now only fitting and appropriate and right for you, followers of Christ, to go out and to proclaim his gospel as well. Will the Lord say a thing? Will the lion roar out of Judah and the prophets? The evangelists not go and proclaim it?

See, this is a rationale for us as well as we hear the word of the Lord to respond appropriately. Now look at verses nine through ten. The prophet changes. Now he switches a bit and he directs his attention to Israel. First of all, he lists the other nations Ashdod and Egypt. Interestingly. So these are the Philistines member, Ashtun, Hazor, Hebron, Ekron, those cities.

Those are all Philistine cities. And then he mentions Egypt. And what does he say? He says, proclaim to the strongholds in Ashtun into the strongholds in the land of Egypt, and say to them, assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria, and see the great tumults within her and the oppressed in her midst. This is an embarrassing thing. This is a kind of shame that the pagan Philistines, Egypt, where Pharaoh resided, where the plagues were enacted to show the glory of the Lord against the pagan gods of Anubis, and Nut and almond roar, and all of those Egyptian gods.

The Lord is saying to them, come up, stand on the mountains. You're right there. You're just to the south, you Philistines and the Egyptians come and stand on the mountains and look down on the northern kingdom of Israel. Look at Samaria and see not only the evil, but the judgment that will come as a result of the evil. Evil. This should be an embarrassment to Israel, that the ones that she points a finger at and says they're the wicked ones, they will come and behold her

wickedness. They will come and behold the oppression that is taking place within her myths. The Lord will do this from time to time. He will talk about how his people, Judah and Israel.

It happens with prophets, both of the northern in the southern kingdom. Ezekiel says the same thing about the southern kingdom will become what they, the term that the translation of the word is that you see in your ESV is by words. You'll become a byword to the nations. They'll walk by you and they'll say, I wasn't number ten.

Israel used to be the kingdom, of the God of the universe. But look what they've become. The Lord says I will not be mocked. You alone amongst all the families. Have I known you've known me. You've had my law. You still you were more oppressive than the other nations. As a result, I will discipline you in judgment.

And the other nations will walk by and say. It's a dangerous thing to fall into the hands of an angry God, isn't it? You'll become a byword. You'll become, an example. You'll become a cautionary tale.

So he calls them out to come and see what? In the city where they should have been storing up righteousness and justice and holiness. They were instead storing up violence and robbery. And as a result, verses 11 through 15, the Lord is raising up an enemy against them, and it is going to be a dire enemy who comes against them.

We'll talk more about the Assyrians down the road, but in 722 Samaria is going to fall. Probably some. What do we say already? Some 40 years or so after Amos is proclaiming these things in 722, the northern kingdom will fall to Assyria, and the Assyrians are a bad group of people. They are a mean group of some of the guys.

Okay. We'll talk a little about empire building later on. The Persians were known for giving the illusion of control. Remember? They sent back Ezra, Nehemiah and those guys. They said, give them enough money. They can rebuild their temple. And then once they get everything up and running, let's put some serious taxes on them, okay? That's the Persian way of growing your empire.

Babylonians. They do it through forced migration. They say if you can cut off people from the fatherland, if you can, you can get them out of the place that they feel connected to, because they all believe that their God gave them that land. If you can cut them off, then they'll disappear. They won't stand up, they won't rise up and riots against you.

And so that's what the Babylonians do. You know what the Assyrians do? It's merely through psychological warfare. They terrify you. They tell you all the things they're going to do. They write about it, generally speaking. History. Historians say that they were probably no more evil

than the, then the Babylonians. So the Persians are really even the Greeks of the Romans, for that matter.

It's just they talked about it more. They would publicize the torture that they would put there. You know, they're prisoners through, if you even remember how Sennacherib taunts Hezekiah in the end of his, of, of his, excuse me of Isaiah chapter 37:38, how he's taunting him and talking about all the things they're going to do to them.

That's classic Assyrian empire building. These are the ones who are going to come and take over the Northern Kingdom. But notice what Amos is saying. This is not out of the control of the Lord. This isn't something that's happening because God has lost a battle to, you know, the Assyrian God. Okay, this is not because our God is not strong enough to stand up against their gods, but rather the Lord is using the Assyrian to discipline the northern kingdom because of their injustice, where they exchange justice for injustice, where they exchanged righteousness for evil.

He is raising up an enemy. An adversary shall surround the land. He says, an adversary shall surround the land.

The passage then moves on. We get a mention of the things, the evils that Samaria has done. They talk. He talks about. There's a mention here of Bethel. The evils that they have done is the storing up of the wealth. We'll see that in a second. And the false worship, we'll come back around to this later. But in Deuteronomy it's very clear there's only one place that you're supposed to worship the living God.

And that's in the place where he has put his name. And that town is now called Jerusalem. Okay, at the time of Amos. So why all of this worshiping in the high places? Why Bethel and Dan? Bethel just means bad El the gates of God. Why say, oh, if I go up on this hill, then I can worship the Lord up there.

Why do that? Well, you can understand kind of the practicality of it. If you're a king in the Northern Kingdom, you don't want your people having to make a migration down to Judah three times a year and participate in festivals only in the temple. You don't want your people to believe that the real center of religiosity is not in your land, but it's down in the South.

So what do you do? You build mockers. You build a kind of temple in a kind of mountain like Mount Zion. It's going to be in another hill. Dan and Bethel are the primary places where these are built, and early on they are just worshiping out an eye. They're just worshiping the Lord. They're. And yet immediately, immediately, the prophet stands up as they're still building the high places.

That unnamed prophet comes out and says, the Lord will have his vengeance. This is not the way he told you to worship him. So we are told the whole of the high places will be torn down, even their altars, as was prophesied by this man, this unnamed prophet back in kings, even down to the altar. Even the horns, which are the points on the corners of the altar, will be torn down.

But notice it won't just be the high places, it will also be the filthy lucre, as it were, the corrupt wealth that you've built for yourself. The Lord is not going to just wipe out your summer house. He's going to take your winter house to down on the coastline. He's not. You don't think that you can have a bugout house somewhere in the mountains, where you'll be able to get away from this?

He's going to get both of your houses. If you don't know what a Bugout house is, don't worry about it, all right? It's not like you're going to be able to have a, you know, a bomb shelter that you can hide away in for ten years with your, you know, stored up provisions. He's going to take them all.

You see, his judgment will be complete. It raises the question, doesn't it, Lord, who can stand in Israel? Who indeed can stand? I am mindful of of Christ saying of the rich that they can't even enter into the kingdom of God, because it's easier to get a camel through the eye of a needle. And the disciples standing around Jesus say, who then can stand, oh Lord?

And he says, who can stand? All things are possible for God. You see, when the corrupt wealth and the false worship of Israel is brought to its knees in 722 B.C., there is a prophet who's watching this happen. It's Isaiah. He says. Those people are now in darkness, but they're going to see a great light. Let's remember what Moses told us back in Deuteronomy 30 that the exile is never the end.

It's just the veil of fire, right? Isaiah uses a different term, doesn't he? He says it's a crucible that's going to melt away the dirt that's in your silver, and you'll be able to scrape it off the top and then pull out the pure silver from underneath. He says. Here, when he watches the northern king kingdom fall, he says, Zebulun, Naphtali.

In the region of the Galilee, those who are now in a dark gloominess will see one day a great light and a child will be born to us, and he will be in the line of David, and he'll unite the kingdom. Remember in Matthew four, where Jesus, having resisted the temptations in the wilderness, he came out of Egypt.

The way Matthew tells the story comes out of Egypt, out of Egypt. I called my son, says Matthew, citing Moses six seven. He then goes through the waters of baptism, emerging on the other side. He goes out into the desert for 40 periods of time, just like Israel. God knows he's

living out Israel's redemptive history, coming out of Egypt, going through the waters into the desert.

But he resists, and he succeeds where Israel fails. And then what happens? Where does he go? He goes right into Galilee, in Zebulun and the region of Naphtali. And Matthew tells us that was to fulfill what Isaiah said about that northern kingdom. They were in great darkness. But now the light has risen again. The dawn has come. Even kind of interestingly, according to Matthew, it seems to be that those who went into darkness first, the northern Kingdom in 722, they get to see the great light first, because he hasn't forgotten about Samaria.

Moses tells us, because the Bible is a book about endings, Moses tells us that the exile is never the end, but the restoration was always meant to be better than the previous experience. And as Christ comes in and he establishes his kingdom, we get to see how that is the case. Hearts truly are circumcised in the spirit. The kingdom is truly joined together.

We have even talked about the woman at the well yet, which I'm so glad Rob mentioned to her earlier in the service. The woman at the well, the Samaritan. What's Jesus doing there? Why is he there? The disciples say you shouldn't be here. Jesus having you read Amos. And she goes, yeah, I know. Haven't you read Deuteronomy 30?

Haven't you read what Moses said about exile? Samaria was always meant to be a part of my plan. So we get to watch that unfold, that Christ never meant for one minute to leave the lost tribes of Israel behind. They were always meant all. Israel was always meant to be a part of his kingdom. And isn't it a gift that we get to be a part of his kingdom too?

Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly father, as we consider these things, we are quickened because we know that these sins that we hear them to the prophet talking about are not so far from us. They're not so difficult for us to understand. We know what it's like to not worship in a way that is appropriate. It's not to worship in the way that you've called us to worship. We know what it's like to benefit from wealth that makes us complacent, not take seriously the teachings of your word. We know what it's like, Lord, to even hear the words of the prophet and say, prophet, don't say these things, word of God, don't say these things to us. Speak smoothly, speak softly. Dear Lord. We pray that as we hear these things in the power of the spirit, that you would show us Christ, the perfect righteous Israelite, the one who ran the race where we failed, where they all failed, and with whom we get to be united through the power of the spirit that we might benefit from his achievements, or let us see him. Let us behold him, and let us praise his name. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.