

AMOS 3:1 – 4:3

^{3:1} Hear 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 “You only have I known

of all the families of the earth;

therefore 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 Is a trumpet blown in a city,
and the people are not afraid?

Does disaster come to a city,
unless the Lord has done it?

⁷ For the Lord God does nothing
without revealing his secret
to his servants the prophets.

⁸ The lion has roared;
who will not fear?

The Lord God has spoken;
who can but prophesy?"

⁹ Proclaim to the strongholds in Ashdod
and to the strongholds in the land of Egypt,
and say, "Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria,
and see the great tumults within her,
and the oppressed in her midst."

¹⁰ "They do not know how to do right," declares the Lord,
"those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds."

¹¹ Therefore thus says the Lord God:

“An adversary shall surround the land
and bring down your defenses from you,
and your strongholds shall be plundered.”

¹² Thus says the Lord: “As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion
two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in
Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed.

¹³ “Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob,”

declares the Lord God, the God of hosts,

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

I will punish the altars of Bethel,
and the horns of the altar shall be cut off
and fall to the ground.

¹⁵ I will strike the winter house along with the summer house,

and the houses of ivory shall perish,
and the great houses shall come to an end,”

declares the Lord.

^{4:1} “Hear this word, you cows of Bashan,
who are on the mountain of Samaria,
who oppress the poor, who crush the needy,
who say to your husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink!’
² The Lord God has sworn by his holiness
that, behold, the days are coming upon you,
when they shall take you away with hooks,
even the last of you with fishhooks.
³ And you shall go out through the breaches,
each one straight ahead;
and you shall be cast out into Harmon,”
declares the Lord.

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Take time to read the passage carefully for yourself. Notice and mark down its structure, repeated words, key movements, and anything that stands out or raises questions. The questions below are offered as tools to help you notice, reflect, and respond to the text—use those that are most helpful for you or your group.

EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

- What repeated words and themes stand out in this section? Why do you think the call to “hear” is so frequent?

- How does this section connect with the earlier oracles in Amos 1–2? In what ways is the message intensifying or narrowing in focus?
- What different titles or images are used for God in these verses? What do these reveal about His character and His relationship to His people?
- What specific sins or patterns of injustice are named in this section? How would you summarize the spiritual condition of Israel at this point? What do these accusations reveal about what God despises—and what He expects from His people?
- In Amos 3:3–6, the prophet asks a series of rhetorical questions. What is the structure and purpose of this technique? How do these questions draw the listener in—and then confront them? What kind of response is Amos ultimately pressing for through this series?
- In Amos 3:9–12, God prepares a courtroom scene. Who are the witnesses, and why is their identity significant? What is the case, and what is the final verdict?
- What does the metaphor in verse 12 (a shepherd pulling pieces from a lion’s mouth) communicate about the result of God’s judgment? Why might this image be especially powerful or disturbing?
- God says He will “punish the altars of Bethel” (3:14). Why is this so significant, and what does it reveal about Israel’s religion and misplaced hope?
- In Amos 4:1–3, Amos addresses the “cows of Bashan.” Who is being confronted, and why is this image appropriate? What attitudes or behaviors are being judged here?
- How do the metaphors of hooks, breaches in the wall, and exile contribute to the sense of finality in this passage? What might these images evoke in the original hearers?
- Summary:
 - What do we learn about God in this passage?
 - Write a one or two-sentence summary of the main point of this text. What is God’s word for you from this passage? How will you respond?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- Are there ways your comfort may be tied—directly or indirectly—to the suffering of others? Have you participated in any of the transgressions listed in this passage, even in subtle or systemic ways? In what ways might your life resemble the “cows of Bashan”?
- When judgment came, all that remained were fragments of luxury—bedposts, couches, splintered symbols of self-indulgence. What objects or habits symbolize your life? What do they say about what you value most?
- Are there areas where your outward expressions of worship are not matched by inward obedience? Where are you placing your trust—your wealth, your status, your spirituality, or the mercy of God?
- How do you respond to the idea that even disaster may serve God’s purposes? Do you find that view unsettling, comforting, or challenging? What might God be doing—even in moments of disruption or loss? How does this speak into the things you’re seeing in the news or events unfolding in the world around you?
- Are you cultivating a heart that listens deeply and regularly to God’s Word? Are there parts of His Word that you tend to avoid? What would it look like to be someone known for truly listening and responding?

- Does your life reflect God's concern for the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable? Where might God be inviting you to use your voice, time, or resources to lift others up? What next step could you take in faithful compassion?