

AMOS 5:1 – 17

^{5:1} Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:

² “Fallen, no more to rise,

is the virgin Israel;

forsaken on her land,

with none to raise her up.”

³ For thus says the Lord God:

“The city that went out a thousand

shall have a hundred left,

and that which went out a hundred

shall have ten left

to the house of Israel.”

⁴ For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel:

“Seek me and live;

⁵ but do not seek Bethel,

and do not enter into Gilgal

or cross over to Beersheba;

for Gilgal shall surely go into exile,

and Bethel shall come to nothing.”

⁶ Seek the Lord and live,

lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,

and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,

⁷ O you who turn justice to wormwood

and cast down righteousness to the earth!

⁸ He who made the Pleiades and Orion,

and turns deep darkness into the morning

and darkens the day into night,

who calls for the waters of the sea

and pours them out on the surface of the earth,

the Lord is his name;

⁹ who makes destruction flash forth against the strong,

so that destruction comes upon the fortress.

¹⁰ They hate him who reproves in the gate,

and they abhor him who speaks the truth.

¹¹ Therefore because you trample on the poor

and you exact taxes of grain from him,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not dwell in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.

¹² For I know how many are your transgressions
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and turn aside the needy in the gate.

¹³ Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time,
for it is an evil time.

¹⁴ Seek good, and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
as you have said.

¹⁵ Hate evil, and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;

it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:

“In all the squares there shall be wailing,
and in all the streets they shall say, ‘Alas! Alas!’

They shall call the farmers to mourning
and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation,

¹⁷ and in all vineyards there shall be wailing,
for I will pass through your midst,”

says 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 do you notice about the overall tone and structure of this section?
- The beginning of the passage (vv. 1–3) reads like an obituary. What has happened to Israel? How might they have heard or responded to this message?
- Twice the command is given: “Seek the Lord and live” (vv. 4, 6). According to the passage, what does this look like in practice? How might that differ from what they assumed it meant? What are the consequences of either heeding or ignoring this call?

- Verse 7 offers a strong accusation. What does it mean to turn justice into wormwood and to cast down righteousness? How does the rest of the passage illustrate this claim? What specific behaviors are described?
- The central section (vv. 8–9) is a hymn. What does it reveal about who God is? Why might these attributes be highlighted in this moment? Why is this theological portrait placed at the center of a judgment passage? What implications would this have for the listeners?
- Verse 13 seems to function like a proverb. How does it connect with what comes before and after? What might Amos be suggesting by including it here?
- The passage ends with vivid images of mourning and lament. What emotions or responses do these verses evoke? Why is God the one “passing through” their midst in judgment?
- The passage highlights both God’s judgment and His graciousness. How are these held together in the text?
 - What are the results of each?
 - Why is it important that both God’s justice and His mercy are revealed here?
 - How should Israel respond to both of these aspects of His character?
- 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

- Where are you actively seeking God’s ways in your daily life? What would it look like for you to “seek good” and “establish justice” this week—in your home, church, or neighborhood?
- Are there ways—seen or unseen—that you benefit from systems that hurt others? Where might your silence be contributing to injustice or unrighteousness?
- Do you live with a reverent awareness of God’s holiness, justice, and presence? What habits or attitudes could help you walk in that awareness more consistently?
- When was the last time you stopped simply to worship God for who He is? How does His power over creation and history shape the way you trust Him and obey His Word?