

02

AMOS 4:1-13

TOO LATE TO REPENT



THIS WEEK'S **focus**

When life is good for us, we sometimes get a bit lazy. Instead of using what we have to bless others, we spend our money and energy on our own pleasure, comfort, or entertainment. However, God wants more from us. We are His representatives in the world, and people will form their opinion of Him based on our behavior. Therefore, we must be sure that we are representing Him well. We do this by taking care of people in need and worshiping Him the way He deserves. The Israelites didn't do this, and when God tried to correct them, they ignored Him. If we want to avoid the punishment they eventually suffered, we must do better. We must stay focused and submissive before God.



CENTRAL **truth**

God holds us accountable when we don't follow His call to obedience.



EXPLORE

scripture

AMOS 4:1-13

AMOS 4:1-3

1 Listen to this message, you cows of Bashan who are on the hill of Samaria, women who oppress the poor and crush the needy, who say to their husbands, “Bring us something to drink.” **2** The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness: Look, the days are coming when you

will be taken away with hooks, every last one of you with fishhooks. **3** You will go through breaches in the wall, each woman straight ahead, and you will be driven along toward Harmon. This is the LORD’s declaration.

AMOS 4:4-5

4 Come to Bethel and rebel; rebel even more at Gilgal! Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tenths every three days. **5** Offer leavened bread as a thanksgiving sacrifice, and loudly

proclaim your freewill offerings, for that is what you Israelites love to do! This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

AMOS 4:6-13

6 I gave you absolutely nothing to eat in all your cities, a shortage of food in all your communities, yet you did not return to me. This is the LORD’s declaration. **7** I also withheld the rain from you while there were still three months until harvest. I sent rain on one city but no rain on another. One field received rain while a field with no rain withered. **8** Two or three cities staggered to another city to drink water but were not satisfied, yet you did not return to me. This is the LORD’s declaration. **9** I struck you with blight and mildew; the locust devoured your many gardens and vineyards, your fig trees and olive trees, yet you did not return to me. This is the LORD’s declaration. **10** I sent plagues like those of Egypt; I killed your young men with

the sword, along with your captured horses. I caused the stench of your camp to fill your nostrils, yet you did not return to me. This is the LORD’s declaration. **11** I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a burning stick snatched from a fire, yet you did not return to me — This is the LORD’s declaration. **12** Therefore, Israel, that is what I will do to you, and since I will do that to you, Israel, prepare to meet your God! **13** He is here: the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, the one who makes the dawn out of darkness and strides on the heights of the earth. The LORD, the God of Armies, is his name.

02

AMOS 4:1-13
CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ AMOS 4:1-3.

.01 What should the women of Israel have done about the condition of the poor and needy? Why do you think they chose not to?

.02 In what ways do people take advantage of the poor and those in need today? Who benefits when this happens?

.03 What does the severity of this punishment tell us about God's love for the poor? What does this tell us about how God should be worshiped?



CULTURE

Thank offerings and free will offerings both involved the sacrifice of animals to God and involved public proclamation and celebration. After each was given, a portion was eaten by the worshipers and their guests. The time they spent enjoying it was intended to be a time of communion with God, who had, in effect, shared His offering with them. These offerings were specifically mentioned in this passage because the Israelites had abused them. Neither was required by law, but the Israelites brought these offerings often. Because the Israelites paid little attention to the requirements of these offerings (see Amos 4:5), we can assume they didn't bring them to express thanks, celebrate God, or enjoy communion with Him, but to draw attention to themselves, look generous, and enjoy time with their friends instead.

▶ **READ AMOS 4:4-5.**

.04 How could we twist the way we worship to glorify ourselves rather than God?

.05 What does your behavior outside of church say about the sincerity of your worship?

▶ **READ AMOS 4:6-13.**

.06 What does the fact that God tried so many times to get Israel's attention teach us about Him?

.07 What kinds of events and situations can God use to get our attention today? How should we respond? Why?

.08 What miraculous things have you seen God do? How should we respond to miracles?



HISTORY

Bethel was the site of an important military victory for Joshua (see Josh. 8:9,11,17) and where the judge Deborah sat to receive God's people (Judg. 4:5). Gilgal was the location of the first worship site in the promised land (see Josh. 4:19-20). The Israelites celebrated their first Passover there, and all of Israel's males went there to be circumcised (see Josh. 5:2-12). These cities represented the consecration of God's chosen people. To participate in false worship there was to demonstrate a profound lack of reverence for God and His covenant with Israel. In stark contrast, Sodom and Gomorrah were centers of perversion. The people there were known for their pride, gluttony, sexual immorality, and apathy toward the poor (see Ezek. 16:49). Because the Israelites of Amos's day were guilty of the same things, it is fitting that God sent the same kind of destruction on them that He sent on Sodom and Gomorrah (see Gen. 19:24-25).





02

AMOS 4:1-13

NOW

what?



CENTRAL truth

God holds us accountable when we don't follow His call to obedience.

.09 What can we do to make sure we are not contributing to the oppression, use, and abuse of the poor? How can we love and serve them instead?

.10 How can we guard our hearts against insincere worship?

.11 How should we respond to the difficult events and situations that God allows to come into our lives?

.12 What can we do to make sure that God is recognized for who He is and what He has done?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE AMOS 4:12

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

AMOS 4:1-3

DWELL

Amos turned his attention to the wealthy women of Samaria, comparing them to the well-fed and pampered cattle of Bashan, a region known for its lush pastures. Like these lazy cows, the women of Samaria only thought of their own happiness, treating the poor with cruelty and indifference and even nagging their husbands to wait on them. Because of this, God swore to punish the women, leaving them to the cruel treatment of their enemies.



What does it mean that God swore “by His holiness”? How does this add weight to Amos’s message?



How can you and other students today care for the needy today and avoid behaving like these women?

MEMORIZE

Add reminders to your phone, computer, or calendar to read Amos 4:12 every morning and night this week.

PRAY

Pray that God would show you opportunities to care for those in need around you

day 2

AMOS

4:4-5

DWELL

Bethel and Gilgal were popular places to worship God at the time. So why would Amos tell the Israelites to go and sin there? Isn't that the opposite of what they should be doing? That was exactly his point. Instead of truly worshiping God, the Israelites were bringing their offerings and bragging loudly about it. They were going through the motions of worship, but their worship was empty and meaningless.



Why was it a problem that the Israelites were “loudly proclaiming” their offerings? What did this say about them?



What attitude should we have rather than bragging about the way we worship or serve God?

MEMORIZE

Write Amos 4:12 on a sticky note and place it on your bathroom mirror. Read it to yourself each time you brush your teeth or wash your hands.

PRAY

Ask God to forgive you for sometimes caring more about how your worship looks to other people than caring about genuinely connecting with Him.

day 3

AMOS

4:6-10

DWELL

“I tried to get your attention so many times! But you wouldn't listen!” This is essentially what God is saying to the Israelites. He could have destroyed them entirely at the first sign of disobedience, but in His love and mercy, He kept trying time and time again to get their attention. Blessing them with protection hadn't worked, as we learned in Amos 2:9-11. So then He tried with discipline. But the Israelites were stubborn and instead of repenting and returning to God, they continued to ignore Him.



Why do you think the Israelites didn't repent even though God sent famine, drought, disease, and war against them?



Is there a time in your life that God might have been trying to send you a message, but you ignored it? What was it? Why did you ignore it?

MEMORIZE

Pick a song you enjoy and read or sing Amos 4:12 aloud to the beat of that song. Read the verse this way throughout the week, trying to recite more of it from memory each time.

PRAY

Ask God to show you if there is an area of your life where He has been trying to get your attention. Ask Him what He wants you to learn.

day 4

AMOS

4:11-13

DWELL

Sodom and Gomorrah were described in Genesis as cities of immense evil and sinfulness, and God destroyed them completely in judgment (see Gen. 18:16–19:29). Even judging some of their cities the way He had judged Sodom and Gomorrah had not gotten the Israelites' attention this time around. They didn't think to ask "Why? What is God trying to tell us?" when faced with the calamities God sent their way. They didn't repent or change their sinful ways. So now, as a result, they would face the full power of God's wrath.

↑ Why did God describe Himself with the details in verse 13? What do these descriptions teach us about God?

↔ Why is it so easy for us to forget about our almighty God's glory and power? How can we remind each other?

MEMORIZE

Write Amos 4:12 on the center of a sheet of paper, then add drawings or doodles around the edges that relate to the verse. Hang it somewhere you will see it every day.

PRAY

Re-read Amos 4:13 as a prayer and spend some time reflecting on its words. Praise God for being the almighty Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

day 5

JAMES

5:1-6

DWELL

Eight hundred years after Amos was written, James condemned the rich for some of the exact same behavior that Amos warned about. The specific example he gave was that greedy landowners were withholding wages from their workers. They were living luxurious lives, but James reminded them that their wealth was temporary: clothes can be eaten by moths, and precious metals corrode with age. The treasure they were storing up for themselves would not last. God had heard the cries of the people they had mistreated, and He would judge the rich accordingly.

↻ How do these verses compare to Amos 4, especially verses 1-3? What do they teach us about God's priorities?

➔ Read Matthew 6:19-20. How can we be sure that we are storing up the right kind of "treasure"?

MEMORIZE

Write each word of Amos 4:12 on a separate note card. Shuffle the cards and try to put them in the correct order. Do this throughout the week until you can do it without checking the answer.

PRAY

Ask God to show you whether you are paying more attention to the kind of treasure that will rot away or the kind that will last forever.