

The Roar of the Lion
God's Passion for Justice



**A Famine
For Hearing
God's Word**

Amos 8:1-12

Amos 8:1-3

- A vision Amos sees of God's judgement upon Israel
- The 4th of 4 visions starting in Amos 7
- A play on words ending with Israel's 'end has come' (v2) and 'summer fruit' (v1)

Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, 'When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale?'

We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practise deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.'

Amos 8:4-6

**Why
Judgement?**

Amos 8:4-8

Lacking Justice & Care

- Booming times/business leaders anxious to do business
- Trample the poor (v4)
- Ignore the Sabbath (v5)
- Actions of exploitation (v6)

Insatiable Greed

- Waiting for the new moon & Sabbath to end (v5a)
- Not honouring the spirit of the Sabbath

Cheating Customers

- Use of false weights & shekels (v5b)
- Rigged scales

Extreme Exploitation

- Poor Sold as Slaves (v6)
- Dishonest measurements on scales – see Leviticus 19:35-37; Micah 6:9-11

God's Concern

- Not just concern for worship
- Concern also for ethics through the week – social justice
- Sanctuary & shop

Result

- God's judgement upon Israel (v7-8)
- The sound of an earthquake (v8)

Going
Forward

1. God's Concern

- God cares for the poor and oppressed
- The prophet brings attention to the poor and powerless

2. Religion & The Everyday

- Faith & 'business' are linked
- There is to be no convenient dichotomy between the two spheres

This prophetic word rejects that dichotomy between faith and life. Religion, it says, has to do with the whole of life, holy day and holy place, but also every day and every place.

James Limburg

3. The Dangers of The Love of Money

- See Rich Young Ruler story as a parable for our day (Matthew 19:16-22)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

1 Timothy 6:10

4. Greed

- One of the Seven Deadly sins
- Speaks to our attitudes towards possessions & wealth – a desire for avarice or profit overrides a concern for the powerless
- Stealing (Exodus 20:15)

5. 'Famine for God's Word'

- Part of the nation's judgment
- They will seek to hear the word but they will not find it

He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 8:3

Not By Bread Alone

- It reminds us of what is really important and what is simply passing

So I say to you, seek God and discover Him and make Him a power in your life. Without Him all of our efforts turn to ashes and our sunrises into darkest nights. Without Him, life is a meaningless drama with the decisive scenes missing.

But with Him we are able to rise from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope. With Him we are able to rise from the midnight of desperation to the daybreak of joy. St. Augustine was right - we were made for God and we will be restless until we find rest in Him.

Martin Luther King, Jr.