

Amos 4

- A. Judgment on an Unrepentant People (ch. 4)
1. Judgment on the socialites (4:1-3)
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 3. Past calamities brought no repentance (4:6-11)
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God's Punishments Have Not Reformed Israel

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, [fn1] "Bring *wine*, let us drink!"

Cows: פָּרוֹת *parot* cows. Herded animals, without moral direction.

Husbands: לַאֲדֹנָיָם *la-ad'ney'hem* to the master/lord/husband their.

^{4:1} Literally *their lords or their masters*

Just as the Lord wanted Israel to regard Him as their Husband, Israel instead went out after anything else to call their 'adoni' 'my husband.' See Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 31.31-32:

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

And 2 Corinthians 11.2:

² For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

² The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:
"Behold, the days shall come upon you
When He will take you away with fishhooks,
And your posterity with fishhooks.

³ You will go out *through* broken *walls*,
Each one straight ahead of her,
And you will be cast into Harmon,"
Says the LORD.

With fishhooks: a very painful but effective way of obtaining obedience or compliance from someone. Also, you would not treat anything valuable in this fashion. Thus the value of Israel in the eyes of the Assyrians when they conquer the land.

Harmon: הַרְמוֹנָה *ha-harmonah* the fortress/palace. Apparently used as a picture of captivity.

4 "Come to Bethel and transgress,
At Gilgal multiply transgression;
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
Your tithes every three days. [fn2]

Bethel and Gilgal: the two places in Israel that were set up to promote the counterfeit religion for the northern ten tribes. See M'lakhim alef (1 Kings) 12.28-29:

- 28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"
29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

Your tithes every three days: לְשִׁלֶּשֶׁת יָמִים מִעֲשָׂרְתֶּיכֶם *lish'loshet yamim ma'as'roteykhem* to three days tithe your. This makes

4:4 Or years (compare Deuteronomy 14:28)

- 28 "At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. 29 And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Or, as 'every third day,' meaning the third day of the week. This would be a tithe on laborers, craftsmen, and businessmen, in opposition to God's laws concerning tithing, which are only focused on agribusiness and on a yearly cycle for each type of produce. See D'varim (Deuteronomy) 14.22-23

- 22 "You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23 And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.

5 Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,
Proclaim *and* announce the freewill offerings;
For this you love,
You children of Israel!"
Says the Lord GOD.

Sacrifice...with leaven: what is wrong with this picture? See vaYikra (Leviticus) 2.11:

- 11 'No grain offering which you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the LORD made by fire.

For this you love: Israel loved perverting God's holy lifestyle. Is anything today different, when preachers lead people to disregard God's commands to pursue their own doctrines or lusts?

Israel Did Not Accept Correction

6 "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities.
And lack of bread in all your places;

Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

7 "I also withheld rain from you,
When *there were* still three months to the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part withered.

8 So two *or* three cities wandered to another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

9 "I blasted you with blight and mildew.
When your gardens increased,
Your vineyards,
Your fig trees,
And your olive trees,
The locust devoured *them*:
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

10 "I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt;
Your young men I killed with a sword,
Along with your captive horses;
I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

11 "I overthrew *some* of you,
As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

As God overthrew: אֱלֹהִים כִּמְהַפְּכַת אֱלֹהִים *k'mah'pekhat elohim* as overturning God. Suddenly God is speaking in the third person of

12 "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;
Because I will do this to you,
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

All this as promised by God in D'varim (Deuteronomy) 28.15-68.

Why does God do this? To bring Israel back, because God loves Israel. See Hoshe'a 4.6-8:

6 "Therefore, behold,

I will hedge up your way with thorns,
And wall her in,
So that she cannot find her paths.
7 She will chase her lovers,
But not overtake them;
Yes, she will seek them, but not find *them*.
Then she will say,
'I will go and return to my first husband,
For then *it was* better for me than now.'
8 For she did not know
That I gave her grain, new wine, and oil,
And multiplied her silver and gold—
Which they prepared for Baal.

13 For behold,
He who forms mountains,
And creates the wind,
Who declares to man what his [fn3] thought *is*,
And makes the morning darkness,
Who treads the high places of the earth—
The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.

4:13 Or *His*

'His' may make more sense in the context.

What right has God to do all this? The world is His and everything in it.

T'hilim (Psalm) 24.1:

1 The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.

Who has the right to complain? ...

Iyov (Job) 38.1:

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:
2 "Who *is* this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
3 Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me.