



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Amos 3: 1-15

Amos

“Punishing the Elect”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight we have our second lesson in the Book of Amos and we’re going to look at chapter 3, verses 1 through 15, but before we do, let’s open with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this opportunity to be together again this evening and pray you’d bless it. I pray that if some are still traveling you’d bless their travel and keep them safe and keep all of us safe as we return home. We thank you for the weather and pray that you would keep us safe and give us the warmth of the Spirit this evening as we study. May He warm our hearts with the truth of this text, a text about judgment though it is, but one that gives us the kind of warning we need and it’s all good for us if it’s your word. It’s what we need to hear.

And so help us to understand the message of the prophet and then how it applies to us in this age of the church. Thank you for Amos; we thank you for raising this man up and giving him boldness to speak a very unpopular message. Help us to have that boldness as we live in the midst of an age that’s every bit as wicked as that in which he lived. So we look to you to bless us now and then at the end of the hour we pray you’d bless us as we come again to the throne of grace and seek your help for others and those we know and care about. Thank you for Christ, thank you for all we have in Him. It’s in His name we pray. Amen.

[Message] I recently read in a book I was a reading a statement or kind of a characterization of the influential philosopher Immanuel Kant. The book wasn’t about him, but did bring him in at one point and described his philosophy as reducing Christianity to a rationalistic moralism; that was the expression used. Kant dismissed

all the fundamentals of the faith, substitutionary atonement, justification by faith. He dismissed them all as in his words harmful to religion.

Now he believed the doctrines of grace relieved people of responsibility of living moral lives for themselves. And he wasn't the only one to do that. Thomas Jefferson was like that. You may have heard stories about Jefferson's bible and I think the Jefferson bible may be in the Smithsonian Institution. I haven't seen it. I think it is. But he would sit up late at night by candlelight with scissors cutting portions of the bible out that he didn't like.

He didn't like the apostle Paul, he liked the Sermon on the Mount. Basically reduced Christianity to moralism. And I don't know his thoughts altogether, but I'm sure they're very similar to Immanuel Kant's where he believed man has ability, religion is basically about works and doing good and the idea of grace, the idea of atonement, the idea of justification through faith alone, the idea of election, all of that is detrimental to true religion. It disables people. It removes all motivation to live the moral life that they believed religion was.

And actually that's typical of natural religion. It was what Paul himself faced. You know, you read the Book of Romans and on more than one occasion he talks about the accusations that are made against him in Romans 2, it's said, he quotes at least an objection, "Let us do evil that good may come." Later on it was in chapter 6, "Let us sin that grace might abound." Paul denies all of that, wasn't true of his thinking, it wasn't true of grace at all.

Actually, grace enables people to do good and avoid evil. And those blessed with grace are responsible to live properly, to live a life that is Godly, a life of obedience, a life of discipline and determination. When they don't, then they come under discipline if they're genuine believers and judgment if they're not genuine believers, in fact, if they're apostate. Now that's the lesson of Amos 3. It is about election, unconditional election and the serious consequences that fall on the elect when they don't obey God, on the elect when they don't obey and even worse, of course, ultimately on those who think they are but aren't.

The chapter begins with a call to pay close attention. "Hear the word which the Lord has spoken against you." In other words, this is an important announcement that I'm making Amos was saying. And it was for the whole family, meaning the

southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. The announcement is this: God is going to punish them. That’s what he says in verse 2.

And what makes the punishment so deserving is the great privilege and the high position that they had neglected. The Lord reminds them of that before giving the sentence. First He reminds them of their origin in time and then He reminds of them of their origin of eternity. He describes them in verse 1 as the family which He brought up from Egypt, freed them. He made them a nation when they were a nation of slaves or a people of slaves. Then in verse 2 He calls them His elect. “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth.” He knew them.

That’s how we can translate that. In fact, that’s how the King James Version translates it. If you have the King James, the translation is, “You only have I known of all the nations of the earth.” The word know is used there rather than chose, but it means the same thing. But know is the literal translation of the Hebrew. It’s used, the same word, it’s a very common word in Hebrew and it’s used earlier in Genesis 4:1, “Now the man had the relations with his wife Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain.”

Had relations is literally knew. And the man knew his wife. That’s the word that’s used here. It refers in Genesis to a physical relationship. It refers to a very personal, the most person physical relationship a man and a woman can have, two people can have. And that’s really the idea here. It is entered into a personal relationship with them. Obviously God knew more nations than Israel; He knows them all.

He knows all the nations, but He had a unique relationship with Israel, one in which He chose them. Chose one family out of all the families of the earth to be in a special relationship with Him. He passed over all of the others, He chose Abraham, He built a people from Him that goes back to Genesis 12:1-3, it’s a call to Abraham, His promises to Abraham, the relationship He entered into with Abraham. God took the initiative, Abraham simply responded. God chose him from the foundation of the earth.

His choice wasn’t based on anything foreseen in Abraham or in any of Abraham’s descendants. Moses made that very clear. I think we’ve quoted it – I don't know I quoted it last week, but I’ve quoted periodically Deuteronomy 7 where Moses explains Israel’s relationship with God and explains to them in verse 7 and 8

that the Lord chose Israel not because they were great, because they weren't great. They were small; they were insignificant.

He chose them because He loved them. That's the only reason one can find. Go back to the very reason God made a choice of a people for himself, Israel and then spiritually the church that goes back to the love of God, but how we explain that, that's the mystery. He loved them because He loved them, that's grace. And grace is sovereign and free. And that's true of us in salvation. We love Him because He first loved us. We chose Him because He first chose us. That's 1 John 4:19, unconditional election, absolute divine sovereignty are taught all through the bible.

I was talking with one of the young men just earlier and he reminded of the Cuban pastor that was here two, three weeks ago and someone asked him, I think Larry asked him how he became a Calvinist and he said he read the bible. You can't read the bible, really read the bible and not come to that. That's a very good answer. That's the true answer. It's all through scripture.

So is human responsibility. Both are taught in the bible, both are taught right here in this verse. “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth,” what a privilege they had. I chose you. “Therefore I will punish you for your inequities.” Great privilege involves great responsibility and because God's chosen people had failed miserably, God would judge them seriously.

This announcement that the prophet has just made to the people may have surprised them. They knew they were the chosen people, they took I think we could probably say pride in the fact that they were the chosen people. They knew their privilege. They didn't expect discipline because they were the chosen people. You discipline the Syrians, you discipline the Philistines, you discipline the gentiles, but we're the chosen people. So Amos explains the reason for the announcement of judgment on them, on Israel in verses 3 through 8 and he does so in a very logical way to show that this punishment that he's announced is inevitable.

He does it in a series of rhetorical questions. “Do two men walk together,” he asks, “unless they have made an appointment? Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey?” Now the answer to both of those rhetorical questions is no, he's not seeking information. It's a way of saying, no, that doesn't happen. Men don't walk together unless they've made an appointment. And so it goes with questions that illustrate from human relations and nature that actions always have an appropriate

cause. If two men walk together, the cause is they've made an appointment. If a lion roars in the forest, there's a reason for that, there's a cause for it. He has prey that he's stalking.

And then in verse 7 Amos comes to the point and says, “Surely the Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servant, the prophets.” In other words, just as a lion wouldn't roar unless it had a victim, so too a prophet wouldn't speaking unless God had revealed His will to Him. So he's speaking this hard message to them because God's given it to him. The cause of this message is God Himself. And obviously God had spoken to Him and God had revealed the punishment prophesied because they, Israel, had sinned against Him. Man, that's the cause of God's prophecy against them.

These questions may have only been proverbial, kind of rhetorical to help them see the point that Amos was making, and they not go any farther than a lion roars because it has prey, that's the cause of the roar and I prophesied because God has caused me to prophesize, reveal His will to me. And God's revealed His will to me because you've sinned. So it maybe just showing cause-effect relationship to make this point, but also, and some think this is the case that there's more to it than that, that each of these questions really are theological in nature and they carry with them the indictment. Each one carries the indictment against the nation. I think there's something to that.

Verse 3, “Do two men walk together unless they have made an appointment?” Well, Israel and God had walked together. Israel and God, they walked together through the wilderness, didn't they? And really, in a sense, they walked together all through their relationship, and the reason is because they had made an appointment. They were in covenant together. They had agreed, Israel had, at Mount Sinai in Exodus 24:3 to keep the whole law, they would do it. But they hadn't. They'd broken the appointment.

So in verse 4 Amos asks, “Does a lion roar in the fore when he has no prey? Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something?” God was roaring through the prophet. In fact, back in chapter 1 last week when we began this study, verse 2, the word roar is used. It's not sure there – some think it's thundered, others roared, but this would suggest that in chapter 1 it's roar because here that's the word that's used.

“The Lord roars from Zion,” in chapter 1 and the same word’s used here of a lion roars. And the point is since no lion roars unless it has a victim before it, neither would God. He’s roared from Zion. Why? Well, he must have an object of judgment in front of Him, a prey, so to speak, and Israel is His prey. And the rest of the questions all have a kind of ominous sense about them, verse 5, “Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground when there is no bait in it? Does a trap spring from the earth when it captures nothing at all?”

No, of course not. But is the trap that the prophet’s referring to here of God’s judgment about to close on them? That’s perhaps what the prophet’s trying to create in the minds of the people, look, the trap’s about to close on you. There’s a reason you’re in it. You deserve to be in it. Now in verse 6 there’s a change in these questions, these rhetorical questions. So far they require the answer no. Here, in verse 6 it’s yes.

And this fourth question is theological, “If a trumpet blows in a city will not the people tremble?” The trumpet signaled the approach of an enemy causing citizens to tremble with fear. Everyone listening to Amos would have agreed with all of this. Everything that he said, they answered, “Yes, that a lion won’t roar unless there’s prey, a trap won’t close unless a bird’s in it, yes, that people will tremble when the trumpet blows and signals an enemy coming. But the next question might have caused some hesitation in them. It does, I think, with most people, many people. Not most people here, I doubt, but most people have some questions about what Amos said.

And of course if you believe in the word of God, you’re in a difficulty because you can’t deny it so you have to figure out a way to explain it again. But people have trouble with this. If calamity occurs in a city, has not the Lord done it? God causes calamity. Literally that word calamity is evil. And I think the King James Version translates it evil in the city. But that word, which often means evil in the sense we think of evil also means misery, distress, calamity, earthquakes would be evil. They would fit into that as well. Things like that.

Well, some people would not be willing to answer yes to that. God doesn’t cause these things to happen. God doesn’t cause misery. God doesn’t cause an enemy to come down and destroy a city. But that’s the answer that this question requires. And Amos isn’t asking for information. He isn’t asking for a debate, the

point is he’s saying God does cause these things. He’s not saying He’s the author of evil, let me make that clear. But he was saying that God acts judicially to bring disaster on a city and a people when they deserve it, when they’ve sinned and they’ve transgressed.

And he’s saying it to the people who thought they were exempt from that. I’m sure they were scratching their heads and they were wondering, how can this be? He claims to be a prophet or we assume he’s a prophet, but how can this be true, what he’s saying? We’re God’s chosen people. He wouldn’t let calamity come on us. But that’s what Amos was telling them. The God who delivers from slavery in Egypt and gives success in life punishes the guilty. And they were guilty. And God can do that and do all of this because He’s sovereign. He controls the nations.

I think most people, most believers, most people who profess faith in Christ would say to a man, woman, whatever, yes, God’s sovereign, but then they redefine it. And when I say God’s sovereign, and I’m saying this based simply upon the things that Amos has said in the first few chapters, that means He’s sovereign over all of the nations, over their destinies and over the nations that come down and attack other nations. God is bringing a nation against this nation and discipline them. That’s what unfolds through the rest of the Book of Amos. See it in chapter 6, he gets into detail about it. The Lord who controls everything is the God that Amos proclaims. Everything that happens in this world, God directs it. And He’s the very reason, the only reason for Amos’ credibility. It’s a hard message that he’s preaching here.

He’s giving this difficult message to – well, I think people we have to say were unbelieving Israelites. But what he was saying, this message that he’s preaching was due to the will of God, not the will of Amos. This isn’t something Amos wanted to go up and say to the people of Israel, to leave his home in the south and go up there and preach a very unpopular message. This is God’s message.

Just as there is always a cause behind an effect, whether it is an agreement between two men who walk together or a trumpet that causes people to stumble, God is the cause of his message. His message mean Amos’ message. Verse 7, “Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.” That’s the basis of Amos’ credibility. God has spoken to him and give him His word, given him divine revelation. That, in fact, is the only basis of authority Amos had.

That’s the only basis of authority a preacher has. It’s not his ability to speak well, it’s not his personality, it’s not his education. It’s none of that. All of that may be very good and helpful in proclaiming a message or teaching the bible, but the authority that that person has is the word of God. And it goes no farther than the word of God so that if I get up and I speak and say something that’s false, that’s not authoritative. If I speak something that’s true to the word of God, it’s an accurate explanation of scripture, that’s authoritative. Not because I said it but because it’s the word of God. And it’s the same with Amos.

In verse 8, Amos gets very direct with the people. And he’s speaking on the authority that God has made known His will to him. So this is God’s word that he’s speaking. And he gets very direct with the people. He drops the ifs and he tells them straight out, “A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?” So Amos has no choice but to speak.

Jeremiah would put it a little differently a generation later. The word of God was like a fire shut up in his bones. He could not but speak he said. He gave a very unpopular message to the south, to Jerusalem and that people rejected it in the same basis, we’re the chosen people, this can’t be. You’re a traitor. He didn’t even want to preach. He had to preach. It was like a fire shut up in his bones. And so Amos says, “Who can but prophesy?” God has communicated His word to me and he has to do it.

Preaching’s not always an easy task. It’s a pretty easy with you all. I mean you’re very much in agreement, I think, but it’s not always easy. And if we preach through the bible, we come to passages like verse 6 which people don’t want to hear because they don’t like the grace of God. They don’t like the sovereignty of God. But God has spoken in His word and if we’re going to preach or teach the bible, then we must teach it, not pick and choose but teach it all, teach the whole counsel of God. That’s what Paul did. Remember, he reminds the Ephesian elders when he’s in Ephesus, “I didn’t hold back anything. I preached the whole counsel of God to you.”

That’s what we must do. I must teach it and if it’s the word of God, you must believe it. Not because I say it, probably the things I say will confuse you oftentimes. But if you read the word of God and you’re diligent about it, you’ll come to these very things and you must believe it. You have no choice. You have to submit to it. It’s God’s word. Well, that’s what Amos was saying, a lion has roared, God has

spoken in judgment and He’s spoken of judgment and Amos had no choice but to preach to an unwilling crowd.

And all of this, all of this so far has been introduction. Amos has been justifying his ministry of judgment. He’s preparing them for what he’s about to say and so what he’s been doing is showing I have to preach this, it’s the message God’s given me. Just as every effect has a cause, this is the effect. The cause is God has spoken so here’s the message. And then he begins this message of judgment to them and does it by having prepared them for the message calling witnesses against the nation as though the nation were being brought into a courtroom and put on trial.

See this in verses 9 and 10. The two witnesses he calls interesting are gentiles, gentile nations, the Philistines and the Egyptians. “Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria,” he says in verse 9, “And see the great tumults within her and the oppressions in her midst.” And obviously wasn’t an actual invitation to have Philistines and Egyptians come and sit in on a trial that was actually taking place. It was all intended to make clear to the people, those to whom he was speaking to Israel that they were violators of God’s law. They deserved to be brought into a court of law, as it were. They had oppressed people with violence.

That unfolds later in the chapters to come and he deals with that in detail. And their guilt was so great that even the heathens were to sit in judgment on them. What a shameful thing that was. What a testimony that was in and of itself as to how guilty Israel was of violating the covenant they made with God and living contrary to it. That’s a shameful thing when those who profess faith in Christ, to bring it into our context, live a life that doesn’t measure up to the unbelievers, when non-Christians have more integrity than professing people do, professing believers.

And that was the case here. That’s the implication here. You’re worse than these unbelievers, you’re worse than these gentiles, these heathens. That happens. Samaria, which is mentioned here in verse 9, was the capital of the northern kingdom. Very likely that this sermon is taking place at Bethel, the shrine, the sacred site for these people. But the capital of the northern kingdom was Samaria. It’s where citizens should have found truth and justice. It’s where the courts would be.

Instead, Amos says in verse 10 that they do not know how to do what is right. These judges, the leaders, the people there, those in authority do not know how to do what’s right. They had hoarded up violence and devastation in their citadels. They

had fortresses and towers there in Samaria which were for the defense of the city. The New International Version translates this, “Who hoard plunder and loot in their fortresses.”

Now that’s the idea I think that Amos is getting at. Instead of the strength of the city being a defense for the people, it protects the oppressor’s loot. In other words, they should have had confidence or looked at these fortresses, these citadels as being places that would help them in their defense against an enemy and what would those fortresses were being used for were like banks or vaults to keep the loot that the leaders and judges had taken from the people. That’s where they stored it all.

And so these leaders who didn’t give justice to the people but rather robbed the people put it all in these places and they thought that their loot was safe there. But they thought wrong. God sees it all and He will plunder them. He will plunder the plunderers. Verse 11, that’s what He says. “Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘An enemy, even one surrounding the land, will pull down your strength from you and your citadels will be looted.’”

This isn’t Amos speaking, this is the Lord speaking through Amos, but it said, “Thus says the Lord God.” Because of their sins of greed and oppression, the nation surrounding Israel will pull down their citadels and take all of that stolen loot hidden in them. Now that would be bad, the wealth of these people would be taken away, these guilty people, would be removed from them, that’s what He’s saying. Everything you thought you had stored up for yourself, God’s going to take it away because it’s unjustly gotten by you.

But that’s not the worst of it, the gentile armies would also destroy the nation like a hungry lion devouring a lamb. Verse 12, “Thus said the Lord, ‘Just as the shepherd snatches from the lion’s mouth a couple of legs or a piece of ear, so will the sons of Israel dwelling in Samaria be snatched away – with the corner of a bed and the corner of a couch!’” Shepherds who lost a lamb to a lion would have to salvage some piece of the animal to prove to the owner of the flock that a lion had taken it and that they hadn’t simply lost it. If he couldn’t prove that a lion had taken the lamb and devoured it, then the shepherd would have to pay for the loss.

So a piece of an ear or a piece of a leg of the lamb would prove that the lion was successful, that the lion had devoured the lamb. And the equivalent of that would be what’s left of Israel, not much. The gentiles will ravage the nation and all that will

be left is the corner of a bed, like the lamb and all that's left is the piece of an ear. Well, the corner of a bed or the cover of a couch, parts of furniture for relaxing suggesting the ease, maybe the feasting, probably really the decadence of the people that is the cause of their sin and the cause for this judgment.

And what Amos is saying is all these luxuries that you have, your wealth and your couches and your easy life, all of that's ending. It's coming to an end. God's judging you. That chapter ends with God through Amos calling again for witnesses to hear the sentence He will pass on the guilty nation. He will end the nation's religion and luxury. The sentence is passed on the house of Jacob which recalls the patriarch Jacob whose name was changed to Israel and the covenant that God made with him and his descendants.

So it recalls God's grace to His people who were chosen by Him. They are His elect nation. But that doesn't spare them the due penalty of their sins. Verse 14, “For on the day that I punish Israel's transgressions, I will also punish the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and they will fall to the ground.” Bethel was located on the southern border of Israel. It was one of the two sacred sites. The other one was Dan to the far north.

I don't remember if we talked about this last week or not, but those were the two sacred sites and there were golden calves set up at both places as an alternate religion to what was taking place in Jerusalem at the temple. Jeroboam set them up when Solomon's kingdom was divided and he did so in order to keep the people from returning to Jerusalem for worship because he felt if they did that, then the kingdoms might be reunited again and he wanted to keep that unification from happening.

But when Amos was prophesying, there were more than one altar there at Bethel. There were pagan altars along with the golden calf. The religion in the north had been paganized, and the same in the south also. But at this time there were also altars there, synchronistic kind of religion. Altars dedicated to different gods along with this golden calf and the altar that was there. The one dedicated to the Lord God though is what he's speaking of here. And he's saying he was going to cut off the horns of it. And the horns of the altar were on the four corners of it and they function to hold the sacrifice in place. It can be placed on the altar and tied to the horns of the altar so that it would be kept stationary.

If the horns of the altar are cut off, then it would be impossible to make sacrifices on it. And that's the point. He's going to end their sacrifices. He's going to end their religion, their religion that they think is genuine and He says, the Lord says is false and He's going to make it so there'll be no sacrifices anymore on the altar. And they would have no luxurious homes. That's how the chapter ends.

“I will also smite the winter house together with the summer house; the houses of ivory will also perish and the great houses will come to an end,' declares the Lord.” This was a wealthy nation that He's speaking to, what normally only kings could afford, many others had. There was a rich class in Samaria having summer and winter houses and houses decorated with ivory. It doesn't mean that the whole house was ivory, but archeologists have found pieces of ivory that were ornaments that went into these wealthy homes. And it indicates that the nation was wealthy, that he's speaking to. This is a time of great prosperity in the north.

But the strength of a nation is not in its economy, it's in righteousness. Israel lacked that. They had prosperity, but they didn't have righteousness. They didn't have justice. So God would put an end to that nation's wealth, he would remove the nation, put an end to its false religion. Now how does all of this apply? Well, first if God would judge Israel, His chosen people, won't He judge America which is not His chosen nation but is just as guilty of the crimes that are set forth in this book as Israel was?

He judges nations generally, that's already been made clear from the first two chapters of this book. So that's an application. Nation can't continue to live in its own way and live in rebellion to God's word and expect to survive and prosper. But I think more to the point, is that we apply this prophecy to the church, God's chosen people. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:17, “For it is time for the judgment to begin with the household of God.” And if it begins with us first, what would be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

God's going to judge those who believe the gospel. They will surely judge those who don't, but it begins with those who profess faith. The church, it begins with us. So again, to kind of go back to the beginning, election, grace is not a reason for indifference. It doesn't lead to that. Not if it's rightly understood. It does just the opposite. Charles Hodge is a name I think most of you are familiar with, a Princeton theologian of the 19th Century. He studied in Germany as a young man. He spent two

years over there and became very familiar with what was going on in the churches and the theology that was becoming so influential all over Europe and would become very influential in America.

That’s one reason he went. He needed to hone his German so he could read the books coming out from the German theologians and sit in on the classes and learn what was being taught. But he was there as a young man and very pious and I mean that in the best sense of the word, a devout Christian. And he went to the churches that were there and was very disappointed by the preaching that he heard in Germany at that time. The sermons were, as he described them, mainly hortatory, that is exhortive, exhorting people to live a good life which is good in and of itself, but they lacked any theological development, any real substance to them. And so they were very shallow sermons.

Where he did find people were theological, he also found they were dead. In one of his letters home he referred to a group of reformed Germans, what we refer to as Calvinistic Germans and referred to their belief in predestination. And he said, “And with these people, it led to antinomianism, and it led to a disregard of God’s law and moral standards. These people,” he wrote, “feel themselves above the gospel and all its ordinances. And when they condescend to enter a church, it is easy to see from their listless, careless, assured manner that they think the doctrines which they hear are only fit for babes.”

He’s highly critical of those people. Now he was a man who believed firmly in the doctrines of predestination and election and recognized that the shameful conclusions that those people drew from that, for them, those doctrines became a pretext for sin. The land of Luther was something in the past by that time. You read that and you think no wonder that nation came under the ungodly influences that drove it less than 100 years later into the First World War and then the Second World War and the Holocaust.

There was a rebellion against everything that the Reformation stood for by the time Charles Hodge went over there in the 1820s or ‘30s. Unconditional election is never a pretext, a basis, a reason for sin. It is true, election is true. Predestination is true. It leads to holiness or it’s completely misunderstood and misused. And when that happens, the consequences are grave. They are judgment. That’s what happened to Israel.

It's easy to drift and become like Israel, privileged but indifferent, so may the Lord protect us from that. I think we have an understanding of these great doctrines and that which Amos sets forth in verse 2, but we should never be presumptuous about things and need to protect ourselves from materialism and worldliness, ingratitude and selfishness, all of which characterize the nation of Israel when judgment came. Well, may God, by His grace, protect us from that. Let's bow in a word of prayer and then we'll look to the Lord further.

[Prayer] Thank you, Lord, for this time together. Thank you for your word. Thank you for The Book of Amos and for his ministry, pray that you'd teach us through it. Thank you for all that we have in Christ. Pray these things in His name. Amen.