

Prophets and Plenty

Friction and Fall 6.4

Nach Nook May 23rd 2022

II Melachim 14-15

The Rich

1. Amos 6:4-6

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| <p>השֹׁכְבִים עַל־מִטּוֹת שֵׁן וְסוֹרְחִים עַל־עַרְשׂוֹתָם וְאֹכְלִים כָּרִים מִצֹּאן וְעִגְלִים מִתּוֹךְ מִרְבֵּק; הַפְּרָטִים עַל־פִּי הַנְּבֵל כְּדוֹיֵד חָשְׁבוּ לָהֶם כְּלִי־ שִׁיר: הַשְׂתִּים בְּמִזְרְקֵי זֵן וְרֹאשֵׁית שְׂמָנִים יִמְשְׁחוּ וְלֹא נֶחְלוּ עַל־שִׁבְרֵי יוֹסֵף: לְכֵן עֵתָה יִגְלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ גּוֹלִים וְסָר מִרְחֹחַ סְרוּחֵיהֶם:</p> | <p>They lie on ivory beds, Lolling on their couches, Feasting on lambs from the flock And on calves from the stalls. They hum snatches of song To the tune of the lute—They account themselves musicians like David. They drink [straight] from the wine bowls And anoint themselves with the choicest oils—But they are not concerned about the ruin of Joseph. Assuredly, right soon They shall head the column of exiles; They shall loll no more at festive meals.</p> |
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Those who Languish

2. Amos 4:1

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| <p>שִׁמְעוּ עַד הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה פְּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר בְּהַר שַׁמְרוֹן הַעֲשִׂקוֹת דָּלִים הִרְצִצוּת אֲבִיּוֹנִים הָאִמְרַת לְאֲדֹנֵיהֶם הַבִּיאָה וְנִשְׁתָּה</p> | <p>Hear this word, you cows of Bashan On the hill of Samaria— Who defraud the poor,</p> |
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Friction and Fall
II Melachim 13-17
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| | Who rob the needy; Who say to your husbands, “Bring, and let’s carouse!” |
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Fraud

3. Amos 8:4-8

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| <p>Listen to this, you ‘Emendation yields “who on every new moon devour the needy, and on every sabbath the humble of the land”; cf. v. 5.who devour the needy, annihilating the poor of the land,-^c saying, “If only the new moon were over, so that we could sell grain; the sabbath, so that we could offer wheat for sale, ^dGiving short measures of grain, but using oversize weights for the silver received in payment using an ephah that is too small, and a shekel that is too big,-^d tilting a dishonest scale, and selling grain refuse as grain! We will buy the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of sandals.”</p> <p>The LORD swears by the Pride of Jacob: “I will never forget any of their doings.”</p> <p>Shall not the earth shake for this And all that dwell on it mourn? Shall it not all rise like the Nile And surge and subside like the Nile of Egypt?</p> | <p>שְׂמַעו־זֹאת הַשָּׂאִים אֲבִיוֹן וְלִשְׁבִית (עֲנוּי) [עֲנִי-] אֶרֶץ: לֵאמֹר מִתִּי יַעֲבֹר הַחֹדֶשׁ וְנִשְׁבִּירָה שָׁבֵר וְהַשְּׁבֵת וְנִפְתָּח־הַבֵּר לְהַקְטִין אִיפָה וְלִהְגִּדִיל שֶׁקֶל וְלַעֲוֹת מֵאֲזִנֵּי מִרְמָה: לְקִנּוֹת בַּכֶּסֶף דְּלִים וְאֲבִיוֹן בַּעֲבוּר נַעֲלִים וּמִפֶּל בֵּר נִשְׁבִּירָה: נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּגֵאוֹן יַעֲקֹב אִם- אֲשַׁפַּח לְנִצָּח כְּלִמְעֻשֵׁיהֶם: הֵעַל זֹאת לֹא־תִרְגַּז הָאָרֶץ וְאָבֵל כְּלִי־זָשֵׁב בָּהּ וְעֵלְתָה כְּאֵר כְּלָה וְנִגְרָשָׁה (וְנִשְׁקָה) [וְנִשְׁקָה]: כִּי־אֹר מִצְרַיִם:</p> |
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4. The Prophets, AY Hershel, page 31

The juxtaposition of observing the laws of the Sabbath while waiting for the day to come to an end and of dealing “deceitfully with false balances” (8:5) strikes home a melancholy irony, easily lost on the modern reader. Man is waiting for the day of sanctity to come to an end so that cheating and exploitation can be resumed. This is a stunning condemnation. We are ready to judge a ritual act on its own merit. Properly performed, its value is undisputed. Yet, the prophet speaks with derision of those who combine ritual with iniquity.

Immorality

5. Amos 2:6-8

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| <p>Thus said the LORD: For three transgressions of Israel,</p> | <p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־ שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי</p> |
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| <p>For four, I will not revoke it: Because they have sold for silver Those whose cause was just, And the needy for a pair of sandals. [Ah,] you ^aUnderstanding sho'afim as equivalent to shafim. Emendation yields: "Who crush on the ground / The heads of the poor, / And push off the road / The humble of the land";who trample the heads of the poor Into the dust of the ground, And make the humble walk a twisted course!^{-a} Father and son go to the same girl, And thereby profane My holy name. They recline by every altar On garments taken in pledge, And drink in the House of their God Wine bought with fines they imposed.</p> | <p>יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל-אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֵנוּ עַל- מִכְרָם בְּכֶסֶף צְדִיק וְאֲבִיוֹן בְּעֵבוּר נַעֲלִים: הַשֹּׁאֲפִים עַל-עַפְרֹ- אָרֶץ בְּרֹאשׁ דְּלִים וְדָרְךָ עֲנִוִים יִשׁוּ וְאִישׁ וְאָבִיו יִלְכוּ אֶל-הַנְּעֻרָה לְמַעַן חַלֵּל אֶת-שֵׁם קִדְשִׁי: וְעַל-בְּגָדִים חֲבָלִים יִשׁוּ אֶצֶל כָּל-מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּין עֲנוּשִׁים יִשְׁתּוּ בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:</p> |
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Complacency

6. Amos 6:13-14

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| <p>[Ah,] those who are so happy about Lo-dabar,^sTwo towns east of the Jordan recovered for Israel by Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14.25). For Lo-dabar, cf. 2 Sam. 9.4, 5; 17.27; for Karnaim, cf. Gen. 14.5. Who exult, "By our might We have captured Karnaim"!^sTwo towns east of the Jordan recovered for Israel by Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14.25). For Lo-dabar, cf. 2 Sam. 9.4, 5; 17.27; for Karnaim, cf. Gen. 14.5. But I, O House of Israel, Will raise up a nation against you—declares the LORD, the God of Hosts— Who will harass you from Lebo-Hamath To the Wadi Arabah.</p> | <p>הַשְּׂמֵחִים לֹא דָבָר הָאֲמָרִים הַלְוֹא בַחֲזֹנָנוּ לְקַחְנוּ לָנוּ קַרְנַיִם: כִּי הִנְנִי מִקִּים עֲלֵיכֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת גּוֹי וְלִחְצוֹ אֶתְכֶם מִלְּבוֹא חֶמֶת עַד-נַחַל הָעֲרָבָה:</p> |
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7. Amos 9:10

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| <p>All the sinners of My people Shall perish by the sword, Who boast, "Never shall the evil Overtake us or come near us."</p> | <p>בַּחֶרֶב יָמוּתוּ כָל חַטְּאֵי עַמִּי הָאֲמָרִים לֹא-תִגֵּשׁ וְתִקְדִים בְּעֵדֵינוּ הָרָעָה:</p> |
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Warnings

8. Amos 1:1

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| <p>The words of Amos, a sheepbreeder from Tekoa, who prophesied concerning Israel in the reigns of Kings Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake. He proclaimed:</p> | <p>דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס אֲשֶׁר-הִיָּה בְּנִקְדִים מִתְקוּעַ אֲשֶׁר חָזָה עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּימֵי עֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה וּבִימֵי יִרְבָּעָם בֶּן-</p> |
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Friction and Fall
 II Melachim 13-17
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The LORD roars from Zion,
Shouts aloud from Jerusalem;
And the pastures of the shepherds shall languish,
And the summit of Carmel shall wither.

יֹאֵשׁ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנָתִים לִפְנֵי
הָרֵעֵשׁ:
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׁאָג וּמִירוּשָׁלַיִם
יִתֵן קוֹלוֹ וְאֶבְלוּ נְאוֹת הָרְעִים וְיִבֶשׁ
רֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל:

9. Zechariah 14:5

וְנִסְתָּם גִּיאֵהָרִי כִּי־יָגִיעַ גִּי־הָרִים אֶל־אֶצֶל וְנִסְתָּם כַּאֲשֶׁר נִסְתָּם מִפְּנֵי הָרֵעֵשׁ בַּיָּמִי עֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וּבָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָל־קְדוֹשִׁים עִמָּו:

“You [pl.] shall flee [to] the Valley in the Hills, for the Valley of the Hills shall reach up to Azal. You shall flee as you fled because of the earthquake...” And the Valley in the Hills shall be stopped up, for the Valley of the Hills shall reach only to Azal; it shall be stopped up as it was stopped up as a result of the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah.—And the LORD my God, with all the holy beings, will come to you.

10. Antiquities of the Jews, Book IX 10:4

4. While Uzziah was in this state, and making preparation [for futurity], he was corrupted in his mind by pride, and became insolent, and this on account of that abundance which he had of things that will soon perish, and despised that power which is of eternal duration [which consisted in piety towards God, and in the observation of the laws]; so he fell by occasion of the good success of his affairs, and was carried headlong into those sins of his father, which the splendor of that prosperity he enjoyed, and the glorious actions he had done, led him into, while he was not able to govern himself well about them. Accordingly, when a remarkable day was come, and a general festival was to be celebrated, he put on the holy garment, and went into the temple to offer incense to God upon the golden altar, which he was prohibited to do by Azariah the high priest, who had fourscore priests with him, and who told him that it was not lawful for him to offer sacrifice, and that “none besides the posterity of Aaron were permitted so to do.” And when they cried out that he must go out of the temple, and not transgress against God, he was wroth at them, and threatened to kill them, unless they would hold their peace. In the mean time a great earthquake shook the ground and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king’s face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately. And before the city, at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke off from the rest on the west, and rolled itself four furlongs, and stood still at the east mountain, till the roads, as well as the king’s gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction. Now, as soon as the priests saw that the king’s face was infected with the leprosy, they told him of the calamity he was under, and commanded that he should go out of the city as a polluted person. Hereupon he was so confounded at the sad distemper, and sensible that he was not at liberty to contradict, that he did as he was commanded, and underwent this miserable and terrible punishment for an intention beyond what befitted a man to have, and for that impiety against God which was implied therein. So he abode out of the city for some time, and lived a private life, while his son Jotham took the government; after which he died with grief and anxiety at what had happened to

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him, when he had lived sixty-eight years, and reigned of them fifty-two; and was buried by himself in his own gardens.



11. Fact-checking the Book of Amos: There Was a Huge Quake in Eighth Century B.C.E., Haaretz, Jan 3 2019

Prof. Wolfgang Zwickel of the University of Mainz helpfully points out a key archaeological clue to quake versus enemy action. In the case of war, Zwickel says, destruction layers wouldn't necessarily be everywhere. Cities that submissively opened their gates to the marauder would be spared. But if all the cities in a large area evince destruction levels, the likelihood is quake.

Evidence of catastrophe in eighth-century B.C.E. northern Israel is legion. A destruction layer at Hazor was dated by Israel Finkelstein and Yigal Yadin to 760 B.C.E., the right time frame for Amos. At Lachish, David Ussishkin found a destruction level from the same time. Acre also has a similar layer dating to the mid-eighth century B.C.E. that, Zwickel points out, could have been courtesy of the Assyrians or quake.

Moving onto Megiddo (which the Christians call Armageddon), the archaeologists describe "tilted walls and pillars, bent and warped walls, fractured building stones, dipping floors, liquefied sand, mudbrick collapse and burnt remains" (Shmuel Marco and Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, with Amotz Agnon of Hebrew University and Ussishkin).

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Tel Abu Hawam, in Haifa Bay, had been settled from the Bronze Age, if not earlier, and a powerful town had arisen there some 3,000 years ago. But it was destroyed after the quake and not rebuilt. Damage found at Tel Dan also fits the timeline of the biblical quake.

What about the Assyrians? Hebrew University's Agnon explains that some of the damage the archaeologists found could not possibly have been achieved with the primitive tools of the Bronze Age or even the early Iron Age.

Tel Shafi, for instance (formerly the Philistine city of Gath), had a 4-meter-thick (13-foot) wall that fell onto its side in the eighth century B.C.E. It would have taken a hand of god, not a donkey with headgear, to push that thing over. "That damage couldn't have been man-made," Agnon says.



Rejection of Prophets

12. Amos 7:10-

Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel: "Amos is conspiring against you within the House of Israel. The country cannot endure the things he is saying. For Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall be exiled from its soil.'"
 Amaziah also said to Amos, "Seer, off with you to the land of Judah! 'Lit. "eat bread." Earn your living there, and do your prophesying there. But don't ever prophesy again at Bethel; for it is a king's sanctuary and a royal palace."
 Amos answered Amaziah: "I am not a prophet, i.e., by profession. and I am not a prophet's disciple. I am a cattle breeder. Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields "sheep breeder"; cf. the next verse and 1.1. and a tender of sycamore figs.
 But the LORD took me away from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'
 And so, hear the word of the LORD. You say I must not prophesy about the House of Israel or preach about the House of Isaac; but this, I swear, is what the LORD said: Your wife shall be ravished; cf. Lam. 5.11. play the harlot in the town, your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line. And you yourself shall die on unclean soil; Cf. Hos. 9.3 and note. for Israel shall be exiled from its soil."

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲמַצְיָה כֹהֵן בֵּית־אֵל אֶל־יִרְבֵּעַם מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר קִשֵּׁר עָלַי עֲמוֹס בְּקִרְבִּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־תוֹכֵל הָאָרֶץ לְהַכִּיל אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרָיו:
 כִּי־כֹה אָמַר עֲמוֹס בְּחִרְבִּי מִוֹת יִרְבֵּעַם וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל גְּלוּהָ יִגְלוּהָ מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: } ס }
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמַצְיָה אֶל־עֲמוֹס חֲזֵה לָךְ בְּרַח־לָךְ אֶל־אָרֶץ יְהוּדָה וְאָכַל־שָׂם לֶחֶם וְשָׂם תִּנְבְּא: וּבֵית־אֵל לֹא־תוֹסִיף עוֹד לְהִנְבֵּא כִּי מִקִּדְשׁ־מֶלֶךְ הוּא וּבֵית מִמְלָכָה הוּא:
 וַיַּעַן עֲמוֹס וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֲמַצְיָה לֹא־נִבְיָא אֲנִי וְלֹא בְּנִי־אֲנִי כִּי־בֹקֵר אֲנִי וּבֹלֵס שִׁקְמִים:
 וַיִּקְחֵנִי יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרֵי הַצֹּאן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה לָךְ הִנְבֵּא אֶל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 וְעַתָּה שָׁמַע דְּבַר־יְהוָה אַתָּה אָמַר לֹא תִנְבֵּא עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא תִטִּיף עַל־בֵּית יִשְׁחָק:
 לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֲשַׁתְּךָ בְּעִיר תִּזְנֶה וּבְנֵיךָ וּבְנֹתֶיךָ בְּחִרְבִּי יָפְלוּ וְאֲדָמָתְךָ בְּחֶבֶל תִּחְלַק וְאַתָּה עַל־אֲדָמָה טְמֵאָה תָמוּת וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל גְּלוּהָ יִגְלוּהָ מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: } פ }

13. TB Pesachim 87b

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אמר רבי יוחנן: מפני מה זכה ירבעם בן יואש מלך ישראל להמנות עם מלכי יהודה? מפני שלא קבל לשון הרע על עמוס.

Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Due to what reason was the less than righteous Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel, privileged to be counted in the verse together with the righteous kings of Judea? It is due to the fact that he did not accept slander about Amos.

מנן דאימני? דכתיב: "דבר ה' אשר היה אל הושע בן בארי בימי עזיה יותם אחז יחזקיה מלכי יהודה ובימי ירבעם בן יואש מלך ישראל".

The Gemara asks: **From where do we derive that he was counted** together with the righteous kings of Judea? **As it is written:** "The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, son of Beerai, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judea, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel" (Hosea 1:1).

ומנן דלא קיבל לשון הרע? דכתיב: "וישלח אמציה כהן בית אל אל ירבעם מלך ישראל לאמר קשר עליך וגו'", וכתיב: "כי כה אמר עמוס בהרב ימות ירבעם וגו'". אמר: חס ושלום אמר אותו צדיק כה, ואם אמר — מה אעשה לו? שכינה אמרה לו.

And from where do we derive that he did not accept slander? As it is written: "Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-El sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying: Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel" (Amos 7:10). **And it is written:** "For thus said Amos: Jeroboam shall die by the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land" (Amos 7:11). **Jeroboam said: Heaven forbid that that righteous person, Amos, said this, that I will die by the sword; and if he indeed said it, what shall I do to him and why should I punish him? The Divine Presence said it to him, and he is required to transmit his prophecy.**

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