

Amos 5 is written like a funeral song. God is essentially saying, “Israel, I am singing your lament before you die—because I love you enough to warn you.” It is one of the most sobering and tender chapters in the book.

1. A Funeral Song Before the Death (Amos 5:1–3)

*“Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:
The virgin of Israel has fallen;
she will rise no more.
She lies forsaken on her land;
there is no one to raise her up.
For thus says the Lord God:
‘The city that goes out by a thousand
shall have a hundred left,
and that which goes out by a hundred
shall have ten left
to the house of Israel.’”* (Amos 5:1–3, NKJV)

Amos begins with a lament, not a gloating speech. It is like God is singing a funeral over Israel while she is still standing. The “virgin of Israel”—once young, full of promise, protected—is about to fall.

“Rise no more” in this context means that this generation will not recover from the coming judgment. The cities that send out a thousand soldiers will be reduced to a tenth of that. Assyria will come, and the Northern Kingdom will be shattered.

This does not mean God is done with His people forever. Other Scriptures, and even Amos later (Amos 9), speak of God’s mercy and future restoration. But it does mean this: a generation can harden itself to the point that judgment is unavoidable.

2. “Seek Me and Live” – Not Places, Not Rituals, but God Himself (Amos 5:4–6)

*“For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel:
‘Seek Me and live;
but do not seek Bethel,
nor enter Gilgal,
nor pass over to Beersheba;
for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,
and Bethel shall come to nothing.
Seek the Lord and live,
lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph,
and devour it,
with no one to quench it in Bethel.’”* (Amos 5:4–6, NKJV)

Twice God says, “Seek Me and live” and “Seek the Lord and live.”

Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba were religious centers. People made pilgrimages there. But these places had become polluted by idolatry and empty religious practice. So God says:

- Do not seek the *place*;
- Do seek the *Lord*.

Their problem was not lack of religion; it was lack of repentance and lack of relationship with the living God.

Application

- It is possible to be busy with religious locations, activities, and traditions, yet be far from God.
- God's invitation is still: "Seek Me and live." Not "seek church culture and live," not "seek spiritual feelings and live," but "seek Me."

3. The God They Ignore: Maker of Pleiades and Orion (Amos 5:7–9)

*"You who turn justice to wormwood,
and lay righteousness to rest in the earth!
He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning
and makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out on the face of the earth; the Lord is His name.
He rains ruin upon the strong, so that fury comes upon the fortress."* (Amos 5:7–9, NKJV)

They have twisted justice into bitterness and thrown righteousness to the ground. In the middle of that, Amos reminds them who God is:

- He made Pleiades and Orion—well-known star clusters and constellations.
- He controls light and darkness.
- He commands the waters and the forces of nature.
- He can bring down the fortresses of the strong.

In other words: the God they are ignoring is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. The idols at Bethel and Gilgal did not stretch out the heavens—God did. That is why it makes sense to seek *Him* and not lifeless religious substitutes.

Application

When we are tempted to trust:

- Money,
- Politics,
- Human strength,
- Religious systems—

we should remember: the Lord made the stars, the seas, and the seasons. He alone can truly save, sustain, and judge. It is foolish to trust what we have made instead of the One who made us.

4. Injustice, Bribery, and a Corrupt System (Amos 5:10–13)

*“They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,
and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.
Therefore, because you tread down the poor
and take grain taxes from him,
though you have built houses of hewn stone,
yet you shall not dwell in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink wine from them.
For I know your manifold transgressions
and your mighty sins:
afflicting the just and taking bribes;
diverting the poor from justice at the gate.
Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time,
for it is an evil time.”* (Amos 5:10–13, NKJV)

The “gate” was the place where court cases were decided. God says:

- They hate the one who tells the truth.
- They trample the poor and tax them harshly.
- They afflict the just, take bribes, and deny justice to the powerless.
- The times are so corrupt that those who are wise often remain silent, because it is dangerous to speak.

God warns them: you have built beautiful houses with carved stone and planted lush vineyards—but you will never enjoy them. Judgment will cut your prosperity short.

Application

The sins God names are not abstract:

- Exploiting the poor,
- Twisting the legal system,
- Silencing those who speak truth.

God takes injustice personally. Our faith cannot be real if we:

- Turn a blind eye to exploitation,
- Use power to protect ourselves but not the vulnerable,
- Despise those who speak uncomfortable truth.

5. “Seek Good and Not Evil” – Hate Evil, Love Good (Amos 5:14–15)

*“Seek good and not evil, that you may live;
so the Lord God of hosts will be with you,
as you have spoken.
Hate evil, love good;
establish justice in the gate.
It may be that the Lord God of hosts
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”* (Amos 5:14–15, NKJV)

Here is a clear call to repentance and a change of life:

- Seek good, not evil.
- Hate evil, love good.
- Establish justice where decisions are made.

This is what real repentance looks like: not just religious words, but a change of heart that shows up in how we live.

“It may be that the Lord... will be gracious” – Amos does not presume on God, but he knows God’s character. The Lord delights to show mercy when people truly turn back to Him.

Scripture elsewhere says:

“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.” (Proverbs 8:13, NKJV)

Real reverence for God produces real hatred of evil—not hatred of people, but hatred of what destroys people.

Application

In our culture, evil is often:

- Redefined,
- Minimized,
- Entertained,
- Marketed as “freedom” or “self-expression.”

But God still says:

- “Seek good.”
- “Hate evil, love good.”
- “Pursue justice.”

A heart that truly reveres God will not flirt with sin or treat it as harmless. It will also move toward what is good—truth, mercy, purity, honesty, compassion.

6. Wailing in the Streets and a Dark Day of the Lord (Amos 5:16–20)

“Therefore the Lord God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

*‘There shall be wailing in all streets,
and they shall say in all the highways,
“Alas! Alas!”*

*They shall call the farmer to mourning,
and skillful lamenters to wailing.
In all vineyards there shall be wailing,
for I will pass through you,’
says the Lord.” (Amos 5:16–17, NKJV)*

God pictures a time when wailing fills the streets. Farmers and professional mourners alike will lament. The vineyards—once symbols of joy—will echo with sorrow.

Why? Because God says, “I will pass through you.” Not to bless, but to judge.

“Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!

For what good is the day of the Lord to you?

It will be darkness, and not light.

*It will be as though a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him!*

*Or as though he went into the house,
leaned his hand on the wall,
and a serpent bit him!*

Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light?

Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?” (Amos 5:18–20, NKJV)

Some in Israel were “desiring the day of the Lord”—perhaps thinking, “When God intervenes, He will vindicate us and defeat our enemies.”

God replies: “You are not ready. For you, that day will be darkness, not light.”

The images are vivid:

- A man escapes a lion—only to meet a bear.
- He finally reaches home, exhausted, leans on the wall—and a snake bites him.

The picture: you cannot outrun God’s judgment. Without genuine repentance, every apparent escape leads only to another crisis.

Application

The final “day of the Lord” will be both:

- A day of salvation and joy for those who belong to Christ,
- A day of darkness and judgment for those who reject Him.

It is not enough to “like the idea” of God’s kingdom. The question is: Am I right with the King?

7. God Rejects Empty Worship (Amos 5:21–24)

*“I hate, I despise your feast days,
and I do not savor your sacred assemblies.
Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,
I will not accept them,
nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.
Take away from Me the noise of your songs,
for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.
But let justice run down like water,
and righteousness like a mighty stream.”* (Amos 5:21–24, NKJV)

These are some of the strongest words in Scripture about hypocritical worship:

- God says, “I hate and despise your feasts.”
- “I will not accept your offerings.”
- “Take away from Me the noise of your songs.”

The problem is not that they are worshiping too much—it is that they are worshiping with unrepentant hearts.

What does God want instead?

*“But let justice run down like water,
and righteousness like a mighty stream.”* (Amos 5:24, NKJV)

He wants **justice and righteousness** to flow freely and steadily, like a river that never runs dry.

Application

We can have:

- Beautiful music,
- Moving services,
- Full calendars,
- Skillful preaching—

and yet, if we cling to sin, ignore justice, and refuse to repent, God is not impressed.

Real worship:

- Flows from a heart that has turned from sin to God,
- Shows in how we treat people,
- Loves what God loves and hates what God hates.

8. Hidden Idolatry and Captivity Beyond Damascus (Amos 5:25–27)

*“Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?
You also carried Sikkuth your king
and Chiun your idols,
the star of your gods,
which you made for yourselves.
Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus,”
says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. (Amos 5:25–27, NKJV)*

God reminds them:

- Even in the wilderness, there was often idolatry mixed in with their sacrifices.
- They carried images and symbols of false gods—Moloch, Chiun, the “star” of their gods.

They had a long history of trying to serve God and idols at the same time. God will not share His glory.

So He declares: “I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus.” Historically, that is exactly what happened when Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom and took them away.

God’s Word proved completely reliable.

A Challenge for Believers

If you are already a follower of Jesus, Amos 5 presses into some crucial areas of our lives.

9.1 Seek the Lord Himself

God’s call is: “Seek Me and live.”

- Not “Seek a feeling.”
- Not “Seek a movement.”
- Not “Seek a religious identity.”

Seek Him—the living God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Ask yourself:

- Am I content with religious activity instead of a living walk with God?
- Do I seek Him in His Word, in prayer, and in obedience—or have I settled for external routines?

9.2 Hate Evil, Love Good

God calls His people to:

- Seek good, not evil (Amos 5:14),
- Hate evil, love good (Amos 5:15).

This is not about being self-righteous or harsh toward people. It is about aligning our hearts with God's heart.

Ask:

- Are there sins I treat lightly—things God calls evil that I tolerate, excuse, or enjoy?
- Do I actively pursue what is good: honesty, purity, mercy, generosity, integrity?

The cross reminds us how serious sin is: Jesus had to shed His blood to save us. The resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. That should shape how we view sin and righteousness.

9.3 Let Justice and Righteousness Flow

God says:

"Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." (Amos 5:24, NKJV)

We cannot control everything in society, but we can:

- Treat people with fairness and dignity,
- Refuse to participate in or benefit from exploitation,
- Use whatever influence we have to help—not crush—the weak,
- Speak truth even when it is unpopular.

Faith in Jesus should show up in how we do business, how we handle power, and how we treat those who cannot repay us.

9.4 Examine Your Worship

God rejected feasts, offerings, and songs because the people's hearts were hard.

We should honestly ask:

- Do I sing, serve, and give while holding on to secret sin?
- Have I "left my first love," going through motions but lacking love for God and people?

If the Spirit is convicting you, do not brush it aside. Confess your sin, turn back to the Lord, and ask Him to rekindle your love and obedience.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NKJV)

10. An Invitation to Those Who Have Not Yet Given Their Life to Jesus

If you have not yet trusted Jesus Christ, Amos 5 is both a warning and an invitation.

The warning is clear:

- There is a coming “day of the Lord”—a day when God will judge with perfect justice.
- For those who reject Him, that day will be darkness, and not light.

But the same God who warns has also provided a way of mercy.

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God:

- Took on human flesh,
- Lived a sinless life,
- Went to the cross and shed His blood to pay for our sins,
- Rose from the dead on the third day.

His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. At the cross, the judgment we deserve fell on Him, so that all who turn to Him in faith can be forgiven and reconciled to God.

You do not prepare to meet God by piling up religious works. You prepare by coming to His Son in repentance and faith.

If you sense God drawing you, you can respond with a sincere heart. There is no magic formula, but you might pray something like this:

“Lord God, I admit that I have sinned and gone my own way. I deserve Your judgment. But I believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross for my sins, and that He rose from the dead and is God, Savior, and Lord. I turn from my sin and put my trust in Him. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and make me Your child. Help me to live for You from this day forward. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

If you truly come to Him, He will not reject you.