

# When God Calls The Common: Amos

## Amos 4:1-5

### **Amos 4:1**

*(KJV) Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.*

*(NIV) Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, "Bring us some drinks!"*

Hear this word. The words that proceed from the mouth of Amos are the words of God. The Israelites would do well to listen since the irreversible prophesied punishment was on the way! So what stirred up the wrath of God here? According to the text, the wealthy—and oppressive—fat cows of Bashan, who were women of means but not of morals, lazy, demanding, selfish, and who smelled of the spirit of entitlement. Like the dung from a well-fed cow would their sin pile up and pile up. Their cup of iniquity had overflowed! Their oppression and crushing of the poor had to be addressed by God, whose love of the poor and divine sense of justice would not allow this continuing atrocity.

The husbands of these fat cows were not leaders in their homes but mere manservants complicit with their wives' wickedness. Imagine a people so highly called of God becoming hard-hearted and living low—contributing nothing to the world in the way of godliness. Withered branches.

### **John 15:6**

*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

### **Revelations 20:11-15**

*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you ever regarded passages in the Bible concerning hell as being too harsh? Why do you think that is? Would you be willing to reevaluate such teachings about hell as the Holy Spirit illuminates them for you?

We can surely see this spirit of self and entitlement pervasive in the world today. And those blinded by this spirit of the world (1 John 2:15-17) do not see the tragic end of their ways.

**Proverbs 14:12**

*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Who in your life right now might God want to alert to their mortality and their unpreparedness for eternity? Pray and ask God.

**Amos 4:2**

*(KJV) The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.*

*(NIV) The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his holiness: "The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks.*

Sworn by his holiness. We are called to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16). We are called ones, beloved. We are accountable and responsible to God, because of the calling on our lives. How much more would the Israelites—as God's first family (Amos 3:1-2)—be accountable to their God?

So what is God going to do? He will be as a fisherman casting his line out to catch these corrupt leaders—fat cows—and cast them out into eternal hellfire. These lines refer to actual weapons of capture that could be thrown out to hook enemy soldiers.

Beloved, I hope we can see ourselves in this passage today, and that we would apply the Word of God to our hearts in order to not be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin:

Hebrews 3:13

But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

**Proverbs 4:23** *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

Note well, dear Christian: God will deal first with His own. And His judgment will be effective. Our self and our sin, our greed—which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5)—requires nothing less than immediate repentance and restoration of right relationship with God.

\*STUDY POINT: Identify three passages in the New Testament in which a Bible figure, convicted of sin, repented immediately. What was the outcome? How could the outcome have been different had this Bible figure gone on in his sin?

**Amos 4:3**

*(KJV) And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her; and ye shall cast them into the palace, saith the LORD.*

*(NIV) You will each go straight out through breaches in the wall, and you will be cast out toward Harmon," declares the LORD.*

God's punishment on Israel would blow out holes in their fortresses, through which the fat cows would try to escape. However, God has already compromised the security of their

defences and will cast them out through the breaches and into harm.

There is no escaping the punishment of God! He will deal with sin in the camp first (Joshua 7:10-26), then ultimately sin in the world (Revelation 20:11-15).

### **Amos 4:4**

*(KJV) Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years:*

*(NIV) "Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years.*

Amos is essentially saying with ironic hyperbole: "You Israelites, since your hearts have been hardened by your continual sin, go all the way—sin more and more, let it pile up like dung from a cow—and while you're at it, worship God by offering sacrifices and tithes!"

Now why would Amos, with such sarcasm, equate their gross sin with the worship of their God? Easy answer here: because both were dead works! God will never receive worship—then or now—if our hearts are far from him. Worship becomes dead, religious ritual when our heart engagement is absent.

### **Isaiah 29:13**

*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

### **Amos 4:5**

*(KJV) And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.*

*(NIV) Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings—boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do," declares the Sovereign LORD.*

Does God have a sense of humour? Well, He certainly has a sense of irony! He encourages the Israelites to keep on with their external religious rituals (Matthew 23:27-28). God knows their hearts are hard. He knows the futility and vanity of their worship of self.

Fat cows.

God, may we walk with You and for You with authenticity and sincere love, according to the Holy Spirit, Who lives gloriously within us. In Jesus Name.

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland