

Amos 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

Analysis

Continuing the oracle against Damascus: "But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad." Fire represents divine judgment throughout Scripture (Genesis 19:24, Leviticus 10:1-2, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). Hazael and Ben-hadad were Syrian kings who oppressed Israel (2 Kings 8:7-15, 13:1-7, 22-25). Hazael assassinated his predecessor to seize power—a usurper God would judge. The phrase "devour the palaces" indicates total destruction of royal power. This teaches God's sovereignty over nations—He raises and deposes kings, judges tyrants, and vindicates the oppressed. No human authority exists outside His permission (Romans 13:1), and all will give account. The Reformed doctrine of common grace explains why God blesses or curses nations temporarily based on justice and mercy, while reserving final judgment for the eschaton.

Historical Context

Hazael ruled Syria approximately 842-800 BC; Ben-hadad II his son/successor (2 Kings 13:3). Syrian forces inflicted severe damage on Israel during this period. God's judgment came through Assyrian conquest—Tiglath-Pileser III destroyed Damascus in 732 BC, about 30 years after Amos prophesied. This fulfillment vindicated Amos's message: God keeps His word, sometimes through other pagan empires He sovereignly controls.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's judgment of pagan nations for war crimes demonstrate universal moral law?
2. What does it mean that God uses one wicked nation to punish another, then judges both?
3. How should believers pray for and engage with unjust political authorities?

Interlinear Text

אֶנְחָנָה וְתַ	אָכַל הַ	סְזַא לְ	בְּבַיִת	אֲשֶׁר	וְשָׁלַח	חַטָּאת
But I will send	a fire	into the house	of Hazael	which shall devour	the palaces	
H7971	H784	H1004	H2371	H398		H759

בְּנֵי תְּמִימָה
H0 of Benhadad
H1130

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 49:27 (Parallel theme): And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Ben-hadad.

Jeremiah 17:27 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

2 Kings 6:24 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

2 Kings 13:25 (Parallel theme): And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

2 Kings 13:3 (Parallel theme): And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days.

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