

Amos 3:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

Analysis

I will smite the winter house with the summer house (וְהִכַּי בֵּית־בָּחָרֶף עַל־בֵּית) —v'hikeiti beit-hachoref al-beit hakayitz)—The wealthy maintained separate residences for different seasons; winter houses were typically in valleys, summer houses on cool heights. God will strike both simultaneously. **The houses of ivory shall perish** (וְאָבְדוּ בָּתִים בְּשָׁן) —v'avdu batei hashen, literally 'houses of tooth/ivory')—ivory inlays represented extreme luxury (1 Kings 22:39 mentions Ahab's ivory house). **The great houses shall have an end** (וְאָסְפוּ בָּתִים כְּבָים) —v'safu batim rabim)—utter destruction.

This passage condemns not wealth itself but wealth gained through oppression (Amos 3:10) and maintained through indifference to poverty (Amos 6:4-6). Jesus echoed this in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)—accumulated luxury without God is death. Archaeological excavations at Samaria confirm extensive ivory decorations, fulfilling this prophecy's specificity.

Historical Context

The Northern Kingdom's aristocracy lived in unprecedented luxury during Jeroboam II's reign. Ivory fragments discovered at Samaria (1931-1935 excavations) confirm palace opulence. When Assyria conquered in 722 BC, these houses were destroyed—the wealthy who trusted in comfort experienced the judgment they'd ignored.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does having multiple homes or excessive luxury while others suffer represent covenant unfaithfulness?
2. What 'houses of ivory'—symbols of accumulated comfort—might blind Christians today to injustice and coming judgment?
3. How can believers hold wealth and possessions with open hands, recognizing they belong to God and will not endure?

Interlinear Text

בְּקַרְבָּן יְמִינֵי וְהַפִּתְּתִּי
And I will smite and the houses the winter H5921 and the houses with the summer
H5221 H1004 H2779 H1004 H7019

בְּקַרְבָּן יְמִינֵי וְהַפִּתְּתִּי
shall perish and the houses of ivory shall have an end and the houses
H6 H1004 H8127 H5486 H1004

יְהֹוָה נָאָם כִּי יְמִינֵי
and the great saith the LORD
H7227 H5002 H3068

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 36:22 (Parallel theme): Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

1 Kings 22:39 (Parallel theme): Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Judges 3:20 (Parallel theme): And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

Amos 6:11 (References Lord): For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

Isaiah 5:9 (References Lord): In mine ears said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.

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