

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 (וְהִכֵּיתִי בֵּית־הַחֹרֶף 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 בָתֵּי הַשָּׁן) 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** (וְסָפוּ בָתֵּי־רַבִּים) 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

Psalms 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

וְהִכִּיתִי י'	בְּתֵּי יָם	הַחֹרֶף	עַל	בְּתֵּי יָם	הַקֵּץ יָץ
And I will smite	and the houses	the winter	H5921	and the houses	with the summer
H5221	H1004	H2779		H1004	H7019
וְאֶבֶד ו'	בְּתֵּי יָם	הַיָּשׁוּן	וְסָפָה ו'	בְּתֵּי יָם	
shall perish	and the houses	of ivory	shall have an end	and the houses	
H6	H1004	H8127	H5486	H1004	
וְרַב יָם	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה:			
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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