

Amos 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

Analysis

Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? (בְּיִשְׁאָג אֶרְרִיה בְּעֵר וְתַרְף אֵין) (לז)—The Hebrew yish'ag (roar) describes the lion's triumphant cry after seizing prey, not the hunting growl. **Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?** (קָרְאָה כְּפִיר קְוִלָּה מִמְּעֵנָתָה בְּלִתִּי אִם־לִכְדָּה) (לט)—The kephir (young lion) roars only after capture, not before.

This is the second in Amos's chain of seven rhetorical questions (vv. 3-6) establishing cause-and-effect logic. The lion roars because it has prey; the effect (roaring) proves the cause (captured victim). Applied to Israel: God's announced judgment (the roar) proves Israel's guilt (the prey). The nation cannot claim innocence when the Lion of Judah roars their condemnation. Amos himself is the roar—his prophetic message signals Israel has already been 'caught' in covenant violation, awaiting inevitable judgment.

Historical Context

Shepherds in 8th century Judea knew lion behavior intimately. Lions inhabited the Jordan Valley thickets and preyed on livestock. Amos, himself a shepherd from Tekoa (Amos 1:1), used this vivid imagery his audience understood: lions don't roar randomly but only after successful kills. The roar warns other predators and celebrates the catch.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Study Questions

1. When God's Word confronts your sin, do you rationalize it away or recognize that divine discipline proves His just assessment of your guilt?
2. How does understanding judgment as God's 'roar' change your view of both His holiness and His redemptive purposes?

Interlinear Text

בִּישָׁא	ג	ל	ו	א	ו	בִּית
roar	Will a lion	in the forest	when he hath no prey	H369	H0	cry out
H7580	H738	H3293	H2964			H5414

לְכָד:	אֵם	בְּלַת	וְ	מִפְעָע	נָתָן	וְ	קָוְלוֹן	כִּי
will a young lion	H6963	of his den		nothing	H518		if he have taken	

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 11:10 (Parallel theme): They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar then the children shall tremble from the west

Psalms 104:21 (Parallel theme): The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God

Amos 1:2 (Parallel theme): And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

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