

Amos 3:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

Analysis

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? (אִם-יִתְקַע) —The shofar (ram's horn trumpet) signaled military invasion, summoning citizens to defensive action. Charad (be afraid/tremble) describes the visceral terror when enemy attack is announced. **Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?** (אִם-תִּהְיֶה רָעָה בְּעִיר וַיְהִי לָא עָשָׂה) —Ra'ah (evil/calamity) here means disaster, not moral evil. This climactic question asserts God's absolute sovereignty over judgment.

The final cause-effect pair reaches theological bedrock: no calamity occurs without divine agency. This doesn't make God the author of sin but affirms His sovereign governance even in judgment. When Assyria destroys Israel (fulfilled 722 BC), it won't be geopolitical accident but covenant curse (Deuteronomy 28:49-52). The Reformers emphasized this: God's providential control extends to all events, including judgments that use secondary human agents. Isaiah declares the same truth: 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil' (Isaiah 45:7).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cities relied on watchmen who blew the shofar when spotting approaching armies (Ezekiel 33:1-6). The sound triggered immediate community response: securing water, barricading gates, mustering militia. Hearing

the shofar without responding meant certain death. Amos uses this to show Israel's complacency despite prophetic warnings.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile God's sovereignty over calamity with His goodness, and how does Christ's suffering under divine wrath (Isaiah 53:10) illuminate this paradox?
2. When has a personal 'trumpet blast' of warning (illness, financial loss, relational breakdown) been God's call to repentance that you initially ignored?

Interlinear Text

אָם	יִפָּקַע	שׁוֹפָר	בְּעִיר	וְעַם	לֹא	יִחַךְ דּוֹ
H518	be blown H8628	Shall a trumpet H7782	in a city H5892	and the people H5971	H3808	not be afraid H2729
אָם	תִּהְיֶה	רָעָה	בְּעִיר	וַיְהִי	לֹא	עָשָׂה:
H518	H1961	shall there be evil H7451	in a city H5892	and the LORD H3068	H3808	hath not done H6213

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:7 (Evil): I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

Zephaniah 1:16 (Parallel theme): A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

2 Corinthians 5:11 (References Lord): Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Genesis 50:20 (Evil): But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Jeremiah 4:5 (Parallel theme): Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.

Jeremiah 6:1 (Evil): O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

Acts 2:23 (Evil): Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Acts 4:28 (Parallel theme): For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Jeremiah 10:7 (Parallel theme): Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.

Ezekiel 33:3 (Parallel theme): If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;