

Amos 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.

Analysis

For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred (כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה הָעִיר הַיֹּצֵאת אֶלֶף תִּשָּׁאֵר מֵאָה, ki khoh amar Adonai YHWH ha'ir hayotset eleph tash'ir me'ah)—this verse quantifies the catastrophic military losses described in verse 2's funeral lament. The phrase "went out" (yatsa, יָצָא) means marching out to battle. Cities that fielded 1,000 soldiers will see 900 killed—90% casualty rate. The phrase **and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten** means cities fielding 100 soldiers will lose 90—again, 90% casualties. This isn't normal attrition but near-total annihilation.

The title "Lord GOD" combines Adonai (אֲדֹנָי, sovereign master) with YHWH (יְהוָה, the covenant name)—emphasizing both sovereign authority and covenant relationship. The Lord who made covenant with Israel now announces covenant curse. Deuteronomy 28:62 warned: "You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God." Amos announces this curse's fulfillment. The 90% casualty rate would devastate Israel's ability to field armies, ensuring swift conquest.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare often involved entire male populations—cities contributed soldiers proportional to their size. A 90% loss rate would mean virtually every family losing fathers, sons, brothers. This scale of devastation actually occurred during Assyria's

conquest. Assyrian annals boast of massive Israelite casualties and deportations. The northern kingdom never recovered—Assyria deported surviving elites and repopulated the land with foreigners, creating the mixed population later called Samaritans (2 Kings 17:24-41). Amos's specific numbers (1000→100, 100→10) emphasize the mathematical precision of coming judgment—not vague threat but specific prediction. When it literally fulfilled within 30 years, it vindicated Amos as true prophet.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do specific numerical predictions (90% casualties) demonstrate God's sovereign control over historical events?
2. What does it mean that covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28) are as certain as covenant blessings?
3. How should the church respond when seeing spiritual decline that mirrors Israel's trajectory toward judgment?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	אֲדֹנָי	יְהוָה	הָעִיר	וְהַיּוֹצֵא אֶת
H3588	H3541				
	For thus saith	the Lord	GOD	The city	and that which went forth
	H559	H136	H3069	H5892	H3318
אֶל לָף	תִּשָּׁא יֵר	מֵאָה	וְהַיּוֹצֵא אֶת	מֵאָה	
by a thousand	shall leave	an hundred	and that which went forth	an hundred	
H505	H7604	H3967	H3318	H3967	
תִּשָּׁא יֵר	עֶשֶׂר	לְבַיִת	יִשְׂרָאֵל:		
shall leave	ten	to the house	of Israel		
H7604	H6235	H1004	H3478		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 6:13 (Parallel theme): But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Isaiah 1:9 (References Lord): Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

Isaiah 10:22 (References Israel): For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

Romans 9:27 (References Israel): Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Deuteronomy 28:62 (References God): And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 4:27 (References Lord): And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

Amos 6:9 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die.

Ezekiel 12:16 (References Lord): But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am the LORD.