

Amos 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day,
saith the Lord GOD: there shall be many dead bodies in every
place; they shall cast them forth with silence.

Analysis

The prophecy 'the songs of the temple shall be wailings in that day' announces reversal of worship into mourning. The Hebrew 'shirot hekhal' (temple songs) likely refers to Northern Kingdom shrines at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:28-33), not Jerusalem's temple. These songs of false worship will become 'yelelylu' (wail/howl)—shrieks of anguish. 'Many dead bodies' (rav ha-peger) scattered everywhere in silence emphasizes judgment's totality: so many corpses that survivors can only throw them out silently, too stunned for proper burial or mourning. This echoes Amos's repeated 'I will not revoke the punishment' refrain—God's patience exhausted, judgment irreversible. When religious ritual masks social injustice and idolatry, God rejects worship and brings calamity.

Historical Context

Spoken shortly before Assyria's conquest of Israel (722 BC), this prophecy was fulfilled when Samaria fell after three-year siege. Assyrian annals describe deportation of 27,290 Israelites and resettlement of foreign peoples. The massive casualties, starvation during siege, and subsequent destruction would have produced exactly the scene Amos describes: countless dead, survivors too traumatized for normal mourning rituals. The 'songs' reference Jeroboam I's alternate worship system that led Israel into persistent idolatry. God's judgment fell because Israel combined religious observance with exploitation of the poor (8:4-6)—the very injustice the covenant was designed to prevent.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Does my worship please God, or does it mask compromise and injustice in my life?
2. How do I respond to warnings that my society's sins may be provoking divine judgment?

Interlinear Text

תֹּאַמֵּן בְּהֵא בְּיַמִּים הַיּוֹם
shall be howlings And the songs of the temple in that day
H3213 H7892 H1964 H3117 H1931 H5002
saith

מְלֹא כָּל הָרָא אֶתְנָא
the Lord H3068 there shall be many dead bodies H3605 in every place
H136 H7227 H6297 H4725

תְּשַׁלֵּן
they shall cast them forth with silence
H7993 H2013

Additional Cross-References

Amos 5:23 (Parallel theme): Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

Amos 5:16 (References God): Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.

Leviticus 10:3 (References Lord): Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

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