

Least of These, Lesson #5, The Cry of the Prophets

Memory Verse

Micah 6:8 (NKJV) “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

1 Sam. 8:10–18, Amos 5:10–15, Mic. 6:8, Gen. 19, Ezek. 16:49, Isa. 1:15–23.

The Recurring Call to Justice

1 Samuel 8:4–5 (NKJV) Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵ and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

1 Samuel 8:10–18 (NKJV) So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. ¹¹ And he said, “This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. ¹² He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. ¹⁴ And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. ¹⁶ And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. ¹⁸ And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day.”

Amos

Amos was one of the Twelve Minor Prophets. An older contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah, Amos was active c. 760–755 BCE during the rule of kings Jeroboam II and Uzziah. He was from the southern Kingdom of Judah but preached in the northern Kingdom of Israel. Amos wrote at a time of relative peace and prosperity but also of neglect of Yahweh's laws. He spoke against an increased disparity between the very wealthy and the very poor.

Matthew 25:31 Least Of These

Amos 7:14 (NKJV) Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: “I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit.

Amos 2:4–5 (NKJV) Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have despised the law of the Lord, And have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed. But I will send a fire upon Judah, **And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.**”

2 Kings 25:8–10 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ He burned the house of the Lord and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. ¹⁰ And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

Amos 3:9–11 Read

Amos 5:11–15 Read

Amos 8:4–6 (NKJV) Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail, ⁵ Saying: “When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sab bath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit, ⁶ That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals— Even sell the bad wheat?”

Micah

Micah 6:8 (NKJV) “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” What are ways, right now, that you can live out these words?

Micah 2:8–11 (NKJV) “Lately My people have risen up as an enemy— You pull off the robe with the garment From those who trust you, as they pass by, Like men returned from war. ⁹ The women of My people you cast out From their pleasant houses; From their children You have taken away My glory forever. ¹⁰ “Arise and depart, For this is not your rest; Because it is defiled, it shall destroy, Yes, with utter destruction. ¹¹ If a man should walk in a false spirit And speak a lie, saying, ‘I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,’ Even he would be the prattler of this people.

Micah 3:8–12 (NKJV) *But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, And of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin. ⁹ Now hear this, You heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, ¹⁰ Who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: ¹¹ Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, “Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us.” ¹² Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.*

“Thus did the Romans treat Jerusalem when it was taken by Titus. Turnus Rufus, or as he is called by St. Jerome, Titus Arinius Rufus, or Terentius Rufus, according to Josephus, caused a plough to be drawn over all the courts of the temple to signify that it should never be rebuilt, and the place only serve for agricultural purposes. See the note on Mat_24:2. Thus Jerusalem became heaps, an indiscriminate mass of ruins and rubbish; and the mountain of the house, Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood, became so much neglected after the total destruction of the temple, that it soon resembled the high places of the forest. What is said here may apply also, as before hinted, to the ruin of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in the last year of the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of the Jews.” — Adam Clark

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 16:48–50 (NKJV) *“As I live,” says the Lord God, “neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. ⁴⁹ Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.*

Jude 7 (NKJV) *as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

Ezekiel 34:2–4 *“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ You eat the fat and clothe*

yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. ⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.

John 10:11–13 (NKJV) *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.*

Ezekiel 34:11–13 (NKJV) *‘For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.*

“Against the marked oppression, the flagrant injustice, the unwonted luxury and extravagance, the shameless feasting and drunkenness, the gross licentiousness and debauchery, of their age, the prophets lifted their voices; but in vain were their protests, in vain their denunciation of sin.”—Ellen G. White, PK, p. 282.

Isaiah

Isaiah 1:15–23 (NKJV) *When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. ¹⁸ “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. The Degenerate City ²¹ How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.*