

**A Blast from the Past?  
The Problem of Remembering What God Has Done for Us  
Amos 2: 9 – 16**

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As a historian, I have learned something in my research over the years. No one remembers anything that happened earlier in their own lifetimes. Worse, no one takes the time to learn about the past and events from the past, because we are too wrapped up in the present. Over 2000 years ago, King Solomon faced this same problem, and he preserved his concern over it.

Ecclesiastes 1:8–11

“Everything leads to weariness—a weariness too great for words. Our eyes can never see enough to be satisfied; our ears can never hear enough. What has happened before will happen again. What has been done before will be done again. There is nothing new in the whole world. “Look,” they say, “here is something new!” But no, it has all happened before, long before we were born. No one remembers what has happened in the past, and no one in days to come will remember what happens between now and then.” (GNB)

Therefore, I advocate keeping a journal or notebook; some means of recalling how the Lord has moved in our life in the past. We tend to forget how faithful He has been to us in the past and how He showed up when we needed Him whenever we encounter a new trial.

If we keep a record, then whenever we are being tempted in our faith to not believe Him, we can see how He has shown up for us repeatedly in the past.

### James 1:2–5

“Faith and Wisdom My brothers and sisters, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure. Make sure that your endurance carries you all the way without failing, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. But if any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all.” (GNB)

And we need to remember that He did this for us. Israel had an issue with remembering, and it began with a lack of teaching about what the Lord has done in the past.

Let’s set the stage for why they did not remember. Jeroboam I created his own brand of YAHWEH worship by mixing elements of idolatry together with a dash of YAHWEH worship mixed in. He then kicked out all those who would teach his people the truth about the past; they forgot about the past. That yesterday, impacted their today. So, YAHWEH steps in with a history lesson.

### Amos 2:9–11

“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Though his height was like the height of cedars And he was as strong as the oaks; I also destroyed his fruit above and his roots below. And it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you in the wilderness for forty years So that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite. Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets, And some of your young men to be Nazirites. Is this not so, you sons of Israel?” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Last time we were together we began our review of the pending judgment on the Northern Kingdom of Israel. To help us understand the breadth of the rebellion of the people of Israel against YAHWEH and the covenant violations referenced, YAHWEH has Amos let them know the history they have conveniently forgotten. They are His people; He has done mighty things for them, and His expectation is loving obedience in response to the love He has provided them.

Instead, YAHWEH is talking about discipline and judgment because the Northern Kingdom has turned to the no gods.

This is a message being delivered in front of a golden calf by the way at the King of Israel’s private chapel in Bethel just north and west of Jerusalem just inside the southern border of Israel.

There is an obvious lack of understanding on behalf of His people of just how much He has done for them. The offenses they have been accused of are because of this lack of understanding.

They are in the promised land. YAHWEH enabled them to conquer the Amorites, who were squatters in the land and involved in gross immorality.

But back in the day when Abraham was first being called by God, he was told about the length of time to be given to those currently living in the land to come to their senses. Once that time was up, then Abraham’s descendants would move into the land.

Hint: The Amorites don’t come to their senses because they embrace a more sinister relationship impacting their future.

### Genesis 15:16

“And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (ESV)

Talking about that sin, which we will get to, there is also this in the recent history of Israel and sin that they are still engaged in.

## 1 Kings 21:25–26

“However, Ahab was vain so as to sell himself to do evil before the Lord as Jezebel his wife induced him. He was very abominable by going after the idols like all the practices that the Amorites did whom the Lord destroyed from the face of the sons of Israel.” (Brannan, et al. 2020, 3 Kingdoms 20:25-26)

The immorality the Amorites engaged in would be matched and exceeded by the immorality of His own people, the Jews (2 Kings 21-11).

Here in Amos, we find out that the Amorites are more than simply a tribal group of people who must be removed from the land, there was something more sinister about them that Amos talks to pointing back to the corruption of mankind in Genesis 6 that they would understand as the primary cause for the flood.

We have arrived at a point where we need to think and see the world through the eyes of those Amos is talking to.

The focus is not God getting the land for His people, but His incredible power in how He got Israel to where they are living today.

Remember, Israel is currently at peace, militarily strong, economically powerful and rivaling the days of Solomon in terms of size. We know, based on the fact we are looking at this historically, that in less than 75 years, they will be in exile and the Northern Kingdom gone.

They crossed the Jordan River on dry land, just like they crossed the Red Sea, and then the Lord enabled them to take the land. This is a comment that requires a world view check in.

What is the worldview of Israel? Or rather, what should it be?

What was their understanding of the world they lived in as well as their understanding of reality. It appears that the cultures around them adversely impacted that understanding, and part of what Amos is relating is YAHWEH setting the record straight about those misconceptions of reality. They no longer hold to a Biblical (Torah) worldview just as many who say they stand for the Lord no longer have a Biblical worldview either. In this, we will also have our understanding of reality shaken as well.

The world of Moses, just like ours today, was filled with half-truths and lies about the origins of the world and early history. YAHWEH had Moses provide the correct version of this history in Genesis. Starting with creation and then the fall, to include the corruption of mankind by fallen divine beings, the flood, the origins of the nations and God selecting a nation for Himself out of the nations.

But there were some unusual views and myths in the surrounding nations about this including the corruption story found in Genesis 6. More to come on this.

From the Tanakh.

## Genesis 6:1–4

“When men began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them, the divine beings saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and took wives from among those that pleased them.—The LORD said, “My breath shall not abide in man forever, since he too is flesh; let the days allowed him be one hundred and twenty years.”—It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim appeared on earth—**when the divine beings cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring**. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.” (Jewish Publication Society 1985, Genesis 6:1-4)

These divine beings are called “the sons of God” in most translations.

In Genesis 6:4 we are given a three-word warning pointing to the future, “and later too.” Many overlook that warning.

Amos is referring to the later aspect of this problem created by fallen angels mating with human women creating a race of giants that are not fully human and not fully divine, but in Canaan after the flood.

Our rational 21st century minds rebel at this. If this is true, then this means the supernatural aspects of the Bible are all true. Of course, this also means that the second person of the trinity did indeed incarnate as a man, die on the cross and then rise from the dead too.

We are also told these are the heroes of old, except they really weren't heroes. But the surrounding cultures thought they were calling them apkallu and had allowed that more deviant view to impact what their view of reality truly was.

This view of these fallen ones being heroes, mighty men; and having kids who were also considered that as well is the foundation for their idolatry and what takes place later in Genesis 11.

The event touched on in Genesis 6 is an event that also appears as a major theme in the pseudepigraphal book of Enoch.

We do not consider Enoch to be part of the canon of the Bible, but it is referenced by Peter and Jude among others in the Bible. There are those who say the events of Genesis 6 did not involve fallen angels, but Peter (2 Peter 2:1-10 and Jude (Jude 5-7) do not share that view. I am biased towards agreeing with them that these are fallen angels. Enoch identifies them as fallen watchers (1 Enoch 13:10). The story is found in 1 Enoch 6 – 16.

Watchers also appear in the Bible as faithful divine beings in Daniel 4.

### Questions

I get this question frequently when teaching on this topic. If giants were born as a result of fallen angels and humans mating prior to the flood, does that mean that other fallen angels, who were not punished per Peter and Jude, engaged in this activity after the flood? The answer is yes. Amos points that out to us.

Does this also mean that the reference Jesus makes in Matthew 24:37 to the end of the age being like the Days of Noah has a more sinister supernatural look to it? In other words, Nephilim again? Yes, to that question too. The fallen watchers' actions are the roadmap to the end of the age.

*"In like manner, the unusual offspring that resulted from the forbidden union described in Genesis 6:1–4, the Nephilim, are analogous to the post-flood hybrid apkallu. The biblical material has the Nephilim as giants and further describes them as "mighty men" (gibbōrīm) and "men of renown" (Gen 6:4). According to Numbers 13:32–33, the giant Anakim (also called Rephaim and Amorites) were descended "from the Nephilim." The correlation of the hybrid apkallu with the Nephilim and their descendants is reinforced by the description of Gilgamesh in Mesopotamian sources.*

*Gilgamesh is explicitly connected to the apkallu in a cylinder which refers to him as "master of the apkallu." Gilgamesh is described in the epic that bears his name as two-thirds divine and one-third human. Gilgamesh was also a giant, standing eleven cubits tall (nearly twice as tall as Goliath)." (Heiser 2020, 121-122)*

Most older commentaries do not reference the apkallu as it is a more recent discovery showing up in recently translated Mesopotamian texts.

In the Book of Enoch, however, the action of the Watchers is clearly rebellious. They swear an oath and bind each other with curses not to alter the plan. They conspire to take human wives, and two hundred of them come down on Mt. Hermon. They have intercourse with the women and beget giants, who cause havoc on earth. The Watchers also impart illicit revelation, about astrology, roots and spells and the making of weapons. (Collins 1999, 893)

The writer of the Book of Enoch had among his objects two main ones. He wished to represent the heathen deities—the “evil spirits” whom men worshipped—and their progenitors, the fallen angels, as being the originators of moral evil. He wished that God’s alleged purpose touching these beings and the practices which they had introduced should be uttered, not by a Jewish prophet, but BY ONE WHO LIVED BEFORE THE EXISTENCE OF JEWS and when their peculiar institutions were unknown. (Huidekoper 1887, 482)

Enoch 6:1–8

“And it happened that when the sons of humans multiplied in those days, they fathered good and beautiful daughters. And the angels, the sons of heaven, saw them and desired them and said to one another, “Come let us choose for ourselves women from among the humans and bring forth children for ourselves.” And Semiaza, who was their ruler, said to them, “I fear you may not wish to do this deed and I alone will be responsible for a great sin.” Therefore they all answered him, “Let us all swear by an oath, and devote one another to mutual destruction, not to turn back from this decision until we complete it and do this deed.” Then they all made a vow together and put each other under a curse in regard to this. These are the names of their rulers: Semiaza (this was their ruler of all the angels), Arathak, Kimbra, Sammane, Daniel, Arearos, Semiel, Iomiel, Chochariel, Ezekiel, Batriel, Sathiel, Atriel, Tamiel, Barakiel, Ananthna, Thoniel, Rhamiel, Aseal, Rhakiel, Touriel. These are the chiefs of tens among them.” (Brannan, et al. 2020, Enoch 6:1-8)

The union of these fallen angels and human women produced giants, Nephilim as they are called in Genesis. But for Babylon and others, they are referred to as apkallu and are the good guys, most of the time.

### Apkallu

*In Mesopotamian religion, the term apkallu (Sumerian abgal) is used for the legendary creatures endowed with extraordinary wisdom. Seven in number, they are the culture heroes from before the Flood...In the myth of the ‘Twenty-one Poultrices’ the ‘seven apkallū of Eridu’, who are also called the ‘seven apkallū of the Apsu’, are at the service of Ea (Enki)...A variety of wisdom traditions from the antediluvian period were supposedly passed on by the apkallū...The tradition of the apkallū is preserved in the bīt-mēseri ritual series and also by Berossus.*

*The seven sages were created in the river and served as “those who ensured the correct functioning of the plans of heaven and earth”. Following the example of Ea, they taught mankind wisdom, social forms and craftsmanship. The authorship of texts dealing with omens, magic and other categories of ‘wisdom’ such as medicine is attributed to the seven apkallū. (Greenfield 1999, 72-73)*

The ‘sons of God’ in Genesis and the Watchers in Enochic literature are fully divine, as also were the antediluvian apkallus in the Mesopotamian tradition. The four post-flood apkallus were ‘of human descent’, which means that apkallus could mate with humans, as the Watchers did. (Annus 2010, 282)

Amos 2:9–10

““Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, **Though his height was like the height of cedars And he was as strong as the oaks**; I also destroyed his fruit above and his roots below. “**And it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you in the wilderness for forty years So that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.**” (NASB 2020)

That at least some Amorites were unusually tall would have been proof to the Israelites they had descended from the Nephilim—and that case, of course, was made in Num 13:32–33. For an Israelite, all this meant that the native population of Canaan had a supernaturally sinister point of origin. This wouldn’t be just a battle for land. It was a battle between Yahweh and the other gods—gods who had raised up competing human bloodlines that were opposed to Yahweh’s plan and people. (Heiser, The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible 2015, 197)

Amos, by referring to this after citing the wrongdoing of YAHWEH's people, Israel, is showing that not only is this rebellion against YAHWEH, but by rebelling in the way they have, they have aligned themselves with the other side. They are traitors to YAHWEH.

Israel's penetration into Canaan was the manifestation of Yahweh's irresistible power in battle by which he is able to overthrow the greatest of men. (Mays 1969, 50)

The various ideas that existed in Israel at the time is not new. Cosmas Indicopleustes, writing in the 6th century AD writes the following.

*For the writers of Chaldaean history as being more ancient, and living farther east, have mentioned in their works both the deluge and the building of the Tower, since they saw that Tower with their own eyes under the process of construction, being no doubt well aware that the men of that time, in fear of another flood, erected it for themselves as a place of refuge and safety.*

*But the men of later times, when they had read Moses also, and found that Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred, was the tenth from Adam, they feigned that they also had ten kings, who had reigned 2242 myriads of years, as has already been said. Of these the first was Alorus, that is, Adam; the second Alaaprus, Seth; the third, Almédôn, Enoch; the fourth, Ammeôn, Cainân; the fifth, Ammegalaros, Mahalaleel; the sixth, Daonus, a keeper of sheep, Jared; the seventh, Euedôrachos, Enoch; the eighth, Amempsinachus, Methuselah; the ninth, Otiortes, Lamech; the tenth, Xisuthrus, Noah. In his time they say the great flood recorded by Moses occurred. (Indicopleustes 1897)*

Mesopotamian culture had created alternative narratives of creation and the flood with different names and different views of what took place. Moses set the record straight. But this alternative story was part of the idol worshipping background Israel and Judah had to deal with in the surrounding nations. Our culture today continues this ancient game by trying to rewrite creation into evolution.

Moses tells us the man who built the ark is Noah, but he shows up with other names as well in the surrounding nations, Ziusudra, Atra-hasis or Utanapishti. He is also considered to be a giant by some too.

Genesis 6:9

"Now these are the generations of Noah: Noah, a righteous person who was perfect among his generation. Noah was pleasing to God." (Brannan, et al. 2020, Genesis 6:9)

Here in Genesis 6:9, we find out that is not the case. Noah is תָּמִים (tamim) "whole, entire...intact...unobjectionable...free of blemish...blameless." (Holladay and Köhler 2000, 391)

Noah is 100% human being and untainted by the Nephilim.

The Babylonian sages traced their origins to primordial times prior to the cosmic deluge, when there were primeval heroes who received from the gods the knowledge necessary for the forging of human culture. These were the apkallus, who had access to divine knowledge of all things. One of the most renowned human apkallus was Utnapishtim, who escaped the destruction of the flood due to the warning from the wise and benevolent deity, Ea. (Almost but not quite what Moses relates to us in Genesis.) After the flood had completed its destruction and the earth was re-created, Utnapishtim, now granted the status of a god, provided for the continuity of civilization. (Perdue 2008, 366-367)

Noah is in the line of Christ (Luke 3:36; cf. 3:38). At no point could it be claimed that the ultimate seed of Eve, the messianic deliverer, was the son of any elohim besides Yahweh. (Heiser, The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible 2015, 109)

To Babylon and others, the apakallu were good guys. In reality, it is Babylon's name given to what we see called Nephilim, Rephaim, Sons of Anak, or the Amorites in the Bible. Amos is drawing the attention



of Israel back to reality. They are not good guys, they are evil, demonic and the primary cause of the flood.

These are not beings to worship. Not hardly. But the people of the northern kingdom have been sucked into the lie of the surrounding nations simply because there is no one, or very few who are, teaching them the truth anymore.

Jewish authors systematically discredited the Mesopotamian primordial sages (apkallu in Akkadian) as the Watchers and Nephilim, while making them a part of their national history. In Jewish reinterpretation, Mesopotamian antediluvian sages became illegitimate and wicked teachers of humankind. Moreover, this demonization process was partly built upon the Mesopotamian traditions themselves, as the apkallus were occasionally envisaged as evil beings at least in some Mesopotamian theological quarters, and to inhabit the netherworld. (Annus 2010, 280)

Numbers 13:32–33

“Then they presented the Israelites with a discouraging report of the land they had investigated, saying, “The land that we passed through to investigate is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw there are of great stature. We even saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak came from the Nephilim), and we seemed like grasshoppers both to ourselves and to them.”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Based on what Amos is telling us, this was not hyperbole. The problem, the people of Israel had forgotten who had to be defeated simply for them to be in the Promised Land. The enemy of YAHWEH.

In the view of the biblical writers, Israel is at war with enemies spawned by rival divine beings. The Nephilim bloodlines were not like the peoples of the disinherited nations. Genesis 10 clearly casts the human inhabitants of those nations as owing their existence to Yahweh, as they descended from Noah’s sons and, therefore, Noah—all the way back to Adam, Yahweh’s first human son. The Nephilim bloodlines had a different pedigree. They were produced by other divine beings. They did not belong to Yahweh, and he therefore had no interest in claiming them. Coexistence was not possible with the spawn of other gods. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 203)

Amos is saying to us that the battle to take the promised land, the land filled with giants was not a battle for land, but it was a physical manifestation of the war declared by God in Genesis 3.

Moses attacked and defeated the Amorite kings Sihon and Og. We are told Og was a giant. Then Joshua moved onto Jericho back in the south. Why not enter from the north?

Why Jericho, why were only certain villages dedicated to destruction? It goes back to the descendants living there not being wholly human but being hybrids. There is also interesting evidence found at Jericho regarding this as well. Caches of skulls, some a bit different looking.  
Jericho

With the move of the Northern Kingdom to embracing the worship of Baal and creating a state religion mixing YAHWEH and fertility gods, they were not only confused about who YAHWEH is, but they were seriously confused about the supernatural players involved.

Amos, after citing their crimes, clearly ties their behavior to having forgotten just who it was that defeated the giants they found in the land when they invaded. That supernatural war was still going on, and they had sided with the narrative of the surrounding nations that these were good guys and not bad. Worthy of worship.

What was considered heroic by the surrounding cultures, was, per Moses, corruption.

Who was it that destroyed these hybrid beings descended from fallen divine beings and human women? YAHWEH says it was Him. And for these hybrids, it was to be total destruction. No more offspring from them. There was a gene pool problem that God was dealing with.

Amos 2:9

“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Though his height was like the height of cedars And he was as strong as the oaks; I also destroyed his fruit above and his roots below.” (NASB 2020)

The Amorites “are characterized as having been particularly tall and strong, a description which underscores the enormity not only of Yahweh’s saving act but also of Israel’s subsequent depravity as described in 2:6b–8.” (Wolff 1977, 168)

This reminder is sobering, God judged the former inhabitants of the land. This anticipates the coming judgement on Israel for exceeding the sin of those former inhabitants.

The Lord reminds Israel that the Ammonites (sic) were destroyed for the very things they were now doing. “If I didn’t spare them, do you think I’m going to let you do these things indefinitely?” He asks. (Courson 2006, 787)

Amos 2:10

“And it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you in the wilderness for forty years So that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.” (NASB 2020)

YAHWEH backs up 40 years from the taking of the land to explain how His people were even in the position to go in, in the first place. The first step to take down the giants involved the redemption and rescue of His people from Egypt.

The picture Amos draws for us is one we also need to be aware of as these are all types of what we see in the New Testament.

The Jews were slaves in Egypt. YAHWEH rescued them from that. He redeemed them and then supernaturally protected them for 40 years in the wilderness making sure they had water and food. He did this so they could be in the position of taking the land.

Now the Lord jumps ahead to talk of the blessings He gave His people. All of this was blessing but the emphasis with the Amorites and Egypt is on how YAHWEH defeated the enemy and all the false gods associated with them to get the Jews to where they are as Amos addresses them.

Amos 2:11

“Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets, And some of your young men to be Nazirites. Is this not so, you sons of Israel?” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Once the people were settled into the land, God raised up prophets from His people and He also raised up Godly Nazarites.

Who or what are the prophets?

The prophet is a ‘spokesman,’ one who represents another, and Exodus, 7:1 is the best definition or description of what a prophet is, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. (Griffith-Thomas n.d., 3)

Exodus 7:1–2 “And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.” (ESV)



Not all were men.

Seven prophetesses Who are they? Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther. (Neusner 2011, 69)

He said to him, “You have no tribe in Israel from which prophets did not go forth. The tribe of Judah and Benjamin produced kings on the instructions of prophets.” (Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* 2011, 106)

...only those prophets who had prophecies containing a lesson for future generations were recorded. Rabbinical tradition states that there were forty-eight Hebrew prophets, seven Gentile prophets, and seven prophetesses. (Warren 2003, 7)

...a general definition of prophet or prophetess is a person who acts as a mouthpiece for God, receiving a message from him and proclaiming it in accordance with his commands. However, this term could also be used of one who pretended or actually believed that he or she was a mouthpiece of God. This definition would also point out the fact that prophecy was not exclusively predictive. A prophet was both an intermediary and an intercessor. (Warren 2003, 7)

Forecasting future events was only a small part of what prophetic figures did and what they were about. Prophets were simply people who spoke for God—men and women who, at God’s direction, looked their fellow Israelites in the eye and told them they were being disloyal to the God to whom they owed their existence and who had chosen a relationship with them over everyone else on earth. Prophets told people the unvarnished truth and often paid dearly for it. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 232)

Jeremiah 23:22

“But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.” (ESV)

What about a Nazarite? Not to be confused with Nazarene.

There is a specific law regarding Nazarites.

The Hebrew term for “Nazirite” comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to separate” נזר (nzt). Numbers 6 presents the distinguishing features of the vow as:

- abstaining from anything related to grapes and/or alcohol
- refraining from cutting one’s hair
- avoiding dead people (even family members) (Franklin 2016)

Yes, Samson didn’t exactly follow all of this.

Amos is making it clear that from the same people who are currently all about “what’s in it for me,” there were those who dedicated themselves to YAHWEH, as well as those who were called by Him to speak for Him. The intent “was to recall the foundations of Israel’s faith. No Israelite could formulate that faith without knowing the content of v. 10. By contrast, v. 11 is referring to the measures God took in order to preserve that faith in history through the gifts bestowed on special persons.” (Jeremias 1998, 41)

YAHWEH has summarized, through Amos, what He has done to call, preserve and protect His people from the point of redemption to the current day. He put them there, no one else.

YAHWEH wants them to know there have been those who have been wholly dedicated to Him. The intent was so they would point the nation to Him.

How did the nation respond?

Amos 2:12

“But you made the Nazirites drink wine, And you commanded the prophets, saying, ‘You shall not prophesy!’” (NASB 2020)

So, in Israel, which at this time was living in the lap of luxury with governmentally sanctioned oppression of the poor, they found themselves involved in what we see many around us today involved in, self-indulgence, ostentatious displays of wealth, and debauchery.

Into this God sent Prophets and Nazarites. The people of Israel took joy in forcing the Nazarite to break their vow by forcing them to drink wine.

Every Nazarite who made his appearance in public would be a living protest against the sensual ways of the leading inhabitants. We can well understand that these self-indulgent nobles and wealthy citizens would not unfrequently endeavour to induce one of these devotees to break his vow. It would be a triumph for them if they succeeded. (Exell n.d., 17-18)

No one wanted to hear a word from the Lord, no one wanted to hear a prophet.

Sounds like our culture today. How is this done? Satan has been about the business of undermining the message of the church today. Our goal was stated by Peter.

1 Peter 2:11–12

“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.” (NRSV)

Only 6 percent of American adults possess a biblical worldview. The incidence was higher in certain portions of the population, such as theologically defined born-again Christians (19% had a biblical worldview), people who regularly attend an evangelical Christian church (21%), and SAGE Cons (44% among those who are Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians). (Barna 2022, 8)

Or to put it simply, we are rapidly approaching the same place that the Israel of Amos was in.

So far in our culture, it is the courts who have defended our right to speak out in the name of the Lord, but for how much longer. In the Israel of Amos and Hosea, Prophets were hunted down and killed. In our culture, at present, it is more subtle...“those who tend to have Christianophobia are in a better position to punish Christians in nonviolent ways because they possess more social power than those who tend to exhibit overt racism, Islamophobia or homophobia. For example, some colleges have driven conservative Christian student groups off campus with policies requiring those groups to open up their leadership to non-Christians. It is a policy that is technically “neutral” but one with a strong disparate impact on conservative Christian groups. “ (Yancey 2015, 22)

To operate as a believer in our culture today, we need to be prepared to be marginalized, called names, be refused promotions, have our jobs eliminated, and, at times, deal with local governmental persecution.

Be prepared to be stereotyped. “These stereotypes characterized Christians as intolerant, bigoted, stupid, insane, evil, claiming victimhood, backward, violent, immoral, hypocritical, sexist, homophobic, racist, xenophobic, wanting to take over society, hostile, childish, like sheep, rude, mean, arrogant, proselytizers, dangerous, manipulative, dishonest, noisy, irrational, antiscientific, not able to critically think and more.” (Yancey 2015, 32-33)

This is our reality.

## 2 Timothy 3:12–16

“Now in fact all who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil people and charlatans will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. You, however, must continue in the things you have learned and are confident about. You know who taught you and how from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” (NET 2nd ed.)

## Amos 2:12–16

“But you made the Nazirites drink wine, And you commanded the prophets, saying, ‘You shall not prophesy!’ Behold, I am making a rut in the ground beneath you, Just as a wagon makes a rut when filled with sheaves! Refuge will be lost from the swift, And the strong will not strengthen his power, Nor the warrior save his life. The one who grasps the bow will not stand his ground, The swift of foot will not escape, Nor will the one who rides the horse save his life. Even the bravest among the warriors will flee naked on that day,” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

God will deal with the oppressor.

Amos makes it clear to the ruling elite of Israel that they will pay for the sins already enumerated as well as taking God’s chosen ones, prophets and Nazirites, and marginalizing them, persecuting them, forcing them to sin, or murdering them.

Jesus also picked up on this theme.

## Luke 17:1–2

“Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”” (NKJV)

YAHWEH announces judgement on Israel. Just as a cart with a heavy load makes ruts in the road, the Lord is groaning under the weight of the sin of Israel.

These verses depict the utter defeat of the Israelite forces. Instead of standing with strength and courage to confront the foe, they will scatter and run. This portrayal of military disaster differs from what is predicted for the other nations in both its length and content. (Carroll R. 2020, 198)

This will be fulfilled in 722 BC.

## 2 Kings 18:9–12

“In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.” (ESV)

We are living in a time period that Jesus talked more about than any other. He warned of actions and activities that would take place just before His return, as promised, for His own.

Amos warned Israel of what was coming in a few years. They had reached a tipping point from which there was no going back. This is a warning that also continues to sound true for us today. Our culture is racing towards that same tipping point. I believe we don’t have that long until He returns.

#### Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

How do we do that?

#### Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

Let’s recap what we just learned.

### ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

Repentance is what God required of Israel, they didn’t repent, and they were judged and sent into exile. He stands ready to save and ready to make all things new today. It is our choice.

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