

When the Lion Roars

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[0 : 00] Amen. Amos chapter 3, we read in verse 8, The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

Various stages throughout this chapter, the prophet Amos is using the imagery of the lion and its strength and its power and likening the situation to just as people would tremble and just as they would be aware of the power, strength and ferocity of the lion.

So likewise, they ought to be aware that when God speaks, there is nothing they can do but tremble and obey. The lion hath roared, who will not fear?

The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? And the thrust of this particular verse, and we'll set its context in just a minute, but of this particular verse is that once the Israelites were in the northern breakaway kingdom that was based in Samaria or the southern kingdom of Judah, still based in Jerusalem, people tended to think that when the prophets spoke, they were just kind of had a bee in their bonnet about something, they were just letting off a bit of steam or they were on a hobby horse, they were just kind of giving forth their own opinions.

And so people didn't really pay too much attention to them, thought, well, that's just your view, that's just your opinion, you say that, but we don't agree with that. And the prophet here is making out that, you know, we can't do anything else except speak what God has said.

[1 : 35] The Lord had spoken, who can but prophesy? If he has given us the word to speak, we have to speak it out. We don't have an alternative.

Any more than anyone other than a fool would not be scared when a lion is right on them and roaring. But lion has roared, who will not fear? Of course we'd all fear.

Even the little soundtrack we had there with the children. It's a wee bit scary enough, almost if you could imagine the real creature right there roaring at you. It's something that would cause fear, particularly to people who were familiar with the danger and presence of lions in their country.

The lion of the Lord, who will not fear? Everybody would fear. Everybody would be scared. The Lord had spoken. Who can but prophesy? Even if the prophet wanted to do something different, he wouldn't be empowered to do so.

And Jeremiah, who perhaps had the hardest time of many of the prophets in his day, he testifies to this, whereas in Jeremiah 20, where he said, I'm almost fed up, you might say, of people not listening to his word from the Lord.

[2 : 47] And he's so discouraged. And we read in chapter 20, verse 9, then I said, after, since I cried out, I cried violence and spoiled, because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto thee, and a derision daily.

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

It's like the longer he kept it bottled up inside, it was like it was burning only inside. He just had to speak it out. And only by speaking it out, was there sort of this physical relief of the tension that there had been inside.

Paul speaks of a similar thing with regard to the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9, verse 16, For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.

And that's the sense here that Amos is talking about. He says, you know, the Lion of Lord, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? That's the sense, he can't do anything else, except speak the word of the Lord.

[3 : 58] And so the context of this here is what we find in northern Israel, the two tribes, remember, who you might say were in a worse case than Judah, because although Judah was still quite, you know, very sinful and many bad kings in it, Samaria, northern Israel, had become institutionalized in its idolatry.

It had been the idolatry, the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan, had become the state religion, as it were, which meant that if people simply sort of followed the state religion, they were already in a state of idolatry.

It's as if someone were to make, say, Catholicism the official religion of a country, and another country, it still had nominal, liberal Protestantism and so on.

Now, they're all still sinful before the Lord, but at least there's the opportunity for people to be genuinely and devout and faithful where it is still biblical Christianity that is being followed rather than a form of idolatry or superstition.

This is the problem in northern Israel here, where it is institutionalized idolatry, and that, of course, gives forth all the kind of fruits of that which Moses is testifying against.

[5 : 16] In verse 1, just to get a sense of context here, verse 1, Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt.

The whole family. The Lord's judgment, although being delivered in a time when the northern ten tribes had long since separated from Judah in the south, based in Jerusalem, yet still, the judgment is against all the twelve tribes taken together.

It's the whole family which I brought up out of Egypt. And again, reference to the fact that originally when they went down into Egypt, it was just one extended family, literally. And the Lord thinks of the children of Israel as one family, his family, and it's against the whole family that he is testifying here against Judah and in northern Israel.

Although Amos is from Tekoa, which is in the south, it's just over ten miles south of Jerusalem, most of his ministry takes place in the northern kingdom of Israel.

And although the northern capital, Samaria, is especially in view, if you look, of course, verse 9, you know, assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria and so on, yet the message is to be applied, you know, to all, both Israel and Judah, the whole family.

[6 : 38] We might extend that across not only geography, but time, of course, and say it's not just, not just the twelve tribes, not just the geographical place of Israel, it's all the Lord's people, everywhere, this applies to.

Where there is unfaithfulness in us, in the Lord's people, that grieves the Lord far worse than the infidelity of the pagan nations round about.

One commentator tells a story about, of how during the days of the Third Reich, in Nazi Germany, somebody was arrested for some political independence of thought, or whatever, and he was arrested by the Gestapo, he was imprisoned, he was tortured, he stood up to it all, and he didn't give in, and he managed to withstand all the attempted brainwashing, and all the terrible things that were done to him, and then eventually he was released.

And he was released, and he got home, and then shortly after that, people heard he committed suicide. And he thought, well, why the hell did you do that? You know, you stood up to all the torture, you stood up to all the imprisonment, and the beatings, and the ill treatment you got at the hands of this tyrannical regime, why would you then just give it all up afterwards?

But those who were closest to him, of course, and his family, knew the reason. He could withstand anything they threw at him before, but when he got out, after he got out, he discovered that the reason he'd been arrested in the first place was because it was his own son who had betrayed him.

[8 : 10] And that was what broke his heart. That was what destroyed him, because it so grieved him. We'll touch on this in the evening, as we'll see, with Mark's account of the gospel there, but here we have a situation where the Lord is especially grieved with Israel, because it is Israel.

He thought better of them. He hoped for better from them. And I think perhaps part of the message for us here, in this day and age, is that whilst, yes, we might say, oh, well, we're better than some people.

We look around at this unbelieving world, and we say, well, at least we are to an extent, the Lord's people. Well, yes, that may be true. But that also means there is a higher responsibility upon those who seek to be the Lord's.

We have to recognize that if we are truly his children, then more is expected of us against the whole family, he pronounces this judgment.

The whole family, not just in ancient times, but right across history, right throughout the ages, right into this modern age, and right through to the end of time. It will be the case that the Lord looks for more love and response and faithfulness from his own family, his own children, than he expects from the rest of the hidden world.

[9 : 32] We can't compare ourselves with those who are unbelievers and say, well, at least I'm not as bad as that. We should look at ourselves in the light of Christ and say, how am I in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ and our need for forgiveness and progress?

You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Now, known in the sense of, it's not that God's knowledge is somehow lacking with all the others.

Obviously, it means known in the sense of acknowledged. To know is to acknowledge the legitimacy of something or somebody. Nowadays, in political terms, we tend to use that recognize. You know, if you recognize a newly independent state, then it means that you acknowledge the legitimacy of its being set up. When the American Revolution was going on and the colonists were fighting against King George and so on, a lot of the help they got came from the French because the French decided to recognize the legitimacy of the colonies and their breakaway movement. If they had regarded them as simply rebels in their own country against their own king, they probably wouldn't have helped them. But because they are saying, no, no, this is a legitimate independence movement, it's a new country, people are setting up their own legitimate rights, so we are going to help them.

[10 : 54] And so they did. And they recognized the new country in the same way, you could say, perhaps more controversially nowadays, President Trump choosing to cite his embassy in Jerusalem as opposed to Tel Aviv.

he is recognizing in that political sense what Israel claims as its own capital, not passing, commenting on it one way or the other, just saying, this is the same idea, you recognize in the sense of to know, I acknowledge, I accept the legitimacy of, and often cite the instance of Pharaoh, of course, often to take the negative in Exodus 5 at verse 2, where he says, I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

Now it doesn't mean I've never heard of the God of the Hebrews, he means, I do not recognize, I am a God in my own country, the Nile is a God, all the different gods of Egypt are gods, I do not recognize as a legitimate God, the God of the Hebrews, I do not worship, acknowledge, I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go.

So there's that sense, which is probably the most normal sense of the word to know. Some commentators take it in the more intimate sense of marriage, you know, Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived, and so on.

The Lord has espoused one bride to himself, one bride with mutual obligations and responsibilities of love and faithfulness to one another, his protection and her obedience and his provision for and her raising of children, and the unfaithfulness of Israel, then is a doubly heartbreaking shame, almost.

[12 : 38] It's almost like a shaming of the Lord as a wrong spouse. It's not just that your heart is broken by the infidelity, there's also the sense of shame, and inevitably that shame brings forth a sense of reaction, of anger.

And, you know, obviously you have to be careful and say, well, God can feel shame. Obviously God has never done anything wrong, he is perfectly sinless, but there is the sense of the sorrow, the brokenheartedness, the feeling let down, the feeling shamed by Israel's infidelity.

You only have I known, perhaps, in the marital sense, certainly in the sense of recognition, in a political, in a family sense, therefore, will I punish you for all your iniquities.

Either way, it is obvious that the relationship between the Lord and Israel is uniquely different from the relationship that he had with any other nation.

And it is for this reason that he says, therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Matthew Henry, the commentator, says this, he has the distinguishing favours of God to us.

[13 : 50] If they do not serve to restrain us from sin, shall not serve to exempt us from punishment. The distinguishing favours of God to us, if they do not serve to restrain us from sin, they shall not serve to exempt us from punishment.

It's all very well to say, oh yeah, we're in a misrelationship with the Lord, he's our Father and we're his people and so on. Well, that's fine. That should keep you from certain sins that you may not otherwise be inclined to follow because you are the Lord.

That should keep you from these sins, at least help you to be kept from these sins. But if we say, oh no, it doesn't matter because I'm the Lord, I can do whatever I like, you know, it's all by grace, it means I'm free to do whatever I want, I can sin.

If it doesn't keep you from restraint, it won't keep you from punishment because God's hatred is not against individuals, God's hatred is against sin and when he finds that sin in his people, it must bring forth a measure of punishment or at least discipline.

Israel shall be punished because their sins dishonor him, affront him and grieve him and mourn the sins of others. God must vindicate his honour by demonstrating that he hates sin and indeed that he hates it most than those that are nearest to him.

[15:15] Can two walk together except they be agreed? Now, obviously there was a time, we might say, when the Lord and his people did walk together. Leviticus 26, verse 12, we read, and I will walk among you and will be your God and ye shall be my people.

In other words, there was a time when I walked with you, there was a time when you walked with me, but now, we might say, even then, there was the warning of what would happen if they betrayed him.

The same chapter we read in verses 23 and 24 in Leviticus 26, and if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

You see, what we're getting from the Lord is exactly what we say we want. If we say, well, I don't want to do what God commanded, I want to walk my own way, I want to walk contrary to the Lord, that's fine.

Then the Lord says, okay, that's fine. Then you walk contrary to me, it means I am walking contrary to you. I will walk contrary to you. You've set yourself against me, therefore I am against you.

[16:29] It's what you chose, it's what you wanted. You didn't want me to be in your face directing and ordering how you should live and your commandments that you didn't want to keep. Okay, you turn your back on that, you don't want to walk with me, you walk contrary to me, that's okay, then I am by definition walking contrary to you.

Now, the implications of that, of course, are huge and frightening, or they should be frightening for the Lord's people anyway. There is a sense also in the original Hebrew of two only being able to walk together if they have made an agreement beforehand to meet up.

It's like if you were going on a journey with someone and you were to say, okay, we'll meet you in Burness and we'll meet up at the bus station and we'll get on such and such bus together, we'll take the bus down to Perth and then we'll get on the train there or whatever.

You can't really engage in those travel arrangements and expect it to happen on spec. You can't, oh, we'll just miraculously bump into each other and then we'll get on the same bus. No, you can't walk together, you can't take this journey together unless you have agreed and arranged beforehand what your arrangements are going to be.

You're going to arrange to meet up, you're going to arrange to meet a certain place a certain time and then you'll take your journey together. In the original, there's this sense of can people walk together, can they take this journey together unless they have agreed beforehand that this is what they're going to do.

[17:59] Now, if it is understood in this sense, then the pre-existing arrangement has been broken by Israel. You know, how can we make this journey together unless we've agreed beforehand to walk together?

The two walk together except they be agreed. It's like Israel has just not turned up. They've not turned up to the agreed or even. They're not able to make the journey together.

They can't even start to walk with the Lord. They can't even begin to make the journey because they haven't turned up. They haven't agreed beforehand that they're going to do this. The Lord is seeking to enter into this covenant with his people.

He's seeking to say, we'll meet together, we'll walk together. I'll be your God, I'll walk with you, you'll be my people, you'll walk with me and this pre-arrangement and this is what the Lord desires to do and seeks to do from all eternity, the covenant of grace into which we are enabled by grace to enter and this arrangement beforehand, we enter into and walk with the Lord and Israel here is saying,

they're not working with the Lord.

They're not, they haven't turned up, they're not making the journey. They have broken this agreement. They are simply not there with the Lord as per the appointment and therefore they cannot walk with him.

[19 : 21] Can two walk together and accept they be a rebel? Of course they can't because if one isn't there, they're not making the journey together by definition. Will a lion roar in the forest where he hath no prey?

We're just talking with the children. He's not going to roar when he's busy creeping up on his prey. If he hasn't got it yet, he's not going to give his position away. The roar is by definition, I have cornered my prey or I have got it and I am claiming it as mine.

There's not going to be a roar unless he has already secured what he intends to do. Well, the young lions in the sense of the cubs in the den, little lion cubs who are just weaned off their mother but they're not strong enough to go out and hunt themselves for the prey and they lie very quiet in their den, apparently.

They lie very quiet and they won't stir, obviously for, you know, security, for danger from other predators while they're still vulnerable and young. So they'll stay quiet until the parent comes with the prey, with the kill that they have brought back and then the scent of it rouses them up and they start mewling and they start crying and that's the sense of it.

Will a young lion cry out of his den if he, and that's the old lion, has not brought them anything, has not taken anything? So it's, will a lion, i.e. an adult lion, roaring in the forest, putting up no prey, will a young lion, the cubs, cry out if he, the old lion, or she, have taken nothing?

[20 : 48] They're not going to start mewling and crying in the den unless mum or dad has come home with something. It's the scent that arouses them, that awakens them and if there's nothing they're still going to stay quiet.

The fact that they've begun getting up and mewling about and so on, it's because there is prey. There is something for them to consume. It's by design. It's only because something has happened. Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth where no djinn is for him? Bird doesn't just drop out of the sky or just suddenly get caught. It's because somebody has laid a snare. The fowler or the bird catcher has laid a snare and he has done so with design.

He intended to catch the bird and the only reason a bird is caught is because somebody has done it by design. Shall one take up a snare from the earth and have taken nothing at all?

In other words, if these judgments are happening to you, Israel, God has intended them to happen. He is seeking to teach Israel something here.

[21 : 51] He is seeking to teach his people. Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth where no djinn is for him? Of course not. If there is a trap there, somebody set the trap. It didn't just happen by nature and grow up into a trap sort of miraculously.

Somebody prepared and set the trap. They intended it to be there. They intended to catch the bird and they are not going to lift that trap and take it away until and unless they have caught something. In other words, God is not going to lift his judgments or the purpose of his wrath against Israel, against his people until and unless it has produced the desired result.

You see the illustration. If the hunter has put down the trap, he's not going to say, oh, well, empty trap. I'll just take it away again. No, he's going to leave it there until it catches something. Then he'll take it away. And if God is sending judgment on his people, he's not going to stop the judgment if it hasn't produced the result, if it hasn't brought them back in humility and repentance to him.

If it has not yet turned to him, the prey has not been caught. The desired result has not been achieved. He's not going to take away the snare, the trap, the judgments until that desired result has been achieved.

[23 : 06] Shall a trumpet be blown in the city and the people not be afraid? The trumpet was the sound of the approaching enemy. Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Now here is the fact, the promise, is it why? That God always makes known his plans to people, always makes known what he intends to do one way or another.

Now where it talks about evil in the city, it doesn't mean oh God therefore is the author of evil. The evil of sin which is producing the judgment is from ourselves.

The sin is from ourselves. That evil is from ourselves. The evil of sin's consequences. You might talk about evil consequences, evil results that follow. These follow as a result and the troubles thereof are from the Lord.

God brings the judgment upon sin and it's not a nice thing to experience. That's the evil that's being talked about. If there's judgment, if there's trouble, if there's evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it, God has done it because there's evil there in the first place and that brings forth its own punishment, its own judgment.

[24 : 19] Is he not going to reveal what he says to his prophets? Of course he does. The Lord will always make known the reason why something is happening. In Genesis 18, remember that Abram is classified as a prophet in scriptural terms and Bible terms.

Genesis 18, we read at verse 17, the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed to him.

For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of them.

He makes known his intended will to his prophets. But in a wider sense, of course, all the Lord's people are in a sense meant to be in this relationship with him.

And he does make known what he intends to do to his people. Psalm 25, at verse 14, we read, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant.

[25 : 28] And in the New Testament, of course, Jesus says something very similar. John 15, at verse 15, henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not that his Lord doeth. But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

So in other words, what the Lord does, he lets his people know what he is doing. He makes his will clear to them. Now, okay, they may not be terribly ready to hear it, they may not want to hear it, but he makes it clear to them.

The Lord will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants, the prophets. Now, that word nothing is significant. Because not just, well, sometimes he'll let you know and sometimes he won't. Maybe this is one of those occasions. The Lord always, if you think about it, makes known what he intends to do. If there's going to be judgment coming in a place, even on Sodom and Gomorrah there, he let Abraham know and Abraham was able to plead and intercede for a lot.

And it worked. When God was going to send a flood and destroy the whole earth, Noah, the preacher of righteousness, let the people know. He declared to them what God was going to do.

[26 : 39] They didn't believe him. They didn't listen. They didn't get into the ark in time, but he told them. Whatever God is going to do, he lets people know.

The fall of Samaria, the fall of Jerusalem, his prophets were constantly telling the people what was going to happen. They didn't listen. But the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth this secret unto his servants, the prophets.

The lion hath roared. Who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken. Who can but prophesy? This then is the context.

Because if a lion roars, people will fear it. When God speaks, the prophets must say, this is what's going to happen. This is what is going to happen to you, Israel or Judah.

And just to get the sense of what unfolded in terms of Amos' particular ministry, it says, publish in the palaces of Ashdod, that is taken as being symbolic for all of the Philistines.

[27 : 42] It's one of the five cities of the Philistines. And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold, the great tumults in the midst of all, and the oppressed in the midst of all.

In other words, poetically, there is the invitation to the Philistines and to the Egyptians, pagans, to come and settle on the mountains round about Samaria, not for any military sense, but to look at the city, to behold, to see in a poetic sense what goes on there.

See the amount of oppression, see the amount of bloodshed, the tumour, the mob rule in the midst of the city, and the oppressed in the midst of all. Who are the ones who are ground down?

They are the innocent, the poor, and the Lord's people. Who are the ones who are doing the oppressing? The powerful, the mob rule, the violent. This is what Samaria is like. The Egyptians and the Philistines are invited to gather to witness what becomes of it.

For they know not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, and adversaries shall there be even round about the land. [28 : 54] And he shall bring down thy strength from thee and thy palaces shall be spoiled. Now, of course, that particular prophecy was a prophecy of the destruction of Samaria.

And that is exactly what happened. We read about its fulfillment. Second Kings, chapter 17, verses 5 and 6. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years.

In the ninth year, Hosea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Hala and in Habor by the river of Gozan and the cities of the Leeds.

So, in other words, a three-year siege that we can't really imagine to imagine the horrors of what would take place in a three-year siege. But there was nowhere to go for Samaria.

It was surrounded by the enemies and eventually it was destroyed. In adversity, there shall be even round about the land and he shall bring down thy strength for thee. Northern Israel as a political entity simply ceased to exist.

[29 : 57] They went off into captivity and that was the end of it. Judah still continued a little while longer but it demonstrated how God does not owe anything to any nation or state just because they have the name of having been the Lord's people just because they call themselves Israel.

It doesn't mean they can practice paganism and evil and so on and just get away with it. God hates sin. He's going to bring judgment on sin. You choose to walk away from the Lord that's fine.

See how you get on with these pagan kings. See how the enemies of the world deal with you when you don't have the Lord to protect you. It's not rocket science. In his self-interest the lion hath roared who will not fear the Lord God hath spoken who can but prophesy.

They can't do anything else. They may want to keep quiet. They may want to just say no, no, no let's just pretend it's not happening but they can't do anything else.

They are compelled. You know as Paul says woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. Not everyone may be called to preach. Not everyone is called to be a prophet but as we saw the Lord's secret is with them that fear him.

[31 : 16] Once we know the truth of what God is going to do in the world and with the world and we see the offer of salvation and forgiveness and escape that he has freely offered for those who will trust him and put their faith in him then we cannot pretend that we don't know.

We can't sort of unknow it. Once you know it you're faced with that reality. Do I act in it? Do I do something about it? Do I put my trust in this God?

What if I'm wrong? Well what if you are wrong? You know if let's say for the sake of argument if we can say just in speculative terms supposing there was no God supposing all the Bible was just you know mythical ancient writings anything really in a thing suppose there was no heaven no hell and it's just as high as the tallest tree and that's all there is there's only material things in this world so everything's permissible people can do whatever they want evil wise and you've got nothing to appeal to you can't say for God's sake don't do that you can't pray to anyone who supposedly doesn't exist you have no hope of retribution no hope of justice at the last day no hope of any place any afterlife where things are going to be put right no higher power to whom you can appeal there's nothing there's no hope there's no forgiveness there's no reason for forgiveness it is hell that is what you are left with if there is no God if it is not real then this is just hell we live in now because there is no God no input no goodness no graciousness it's all just self interest if that were true but of course the evidence demonstrates it cannot be true not only is the word of God a living word not only do we see in creation around us order and beauty and balance and sophistication which could never just happen by itself by sort of random collision of atoms and so on there is design there is perfection there is beauty there is light there is goodness in this world which could not exist if there is no God no spiritual reality if it's all just all just tangible all just what you can touch and taste and see and feel if there is no no spiritual reality no afterlife no nothing none of it fits none of it makes sense but when you begin to say yes but suppose then that there is a God and that he is as he declares himself to be then everything begins to fit into place we don't have all the answers we would like just yet but everything begins to take shape it begins to make sense it's like a jigsaw you've got maybe three quarters or four fifths in place you can see the picture emerging you can see how all the pieces come together you haven't found every single piece yet but you can see exactly how it's meant to be you can see what is emerging you can see how it all makes sense that it is not random it is by design and there is a deliberate policy here

God's deliberate policy is one of grace God's deliberate policy his desire is to save his desire is to redeem and it is because of the dangers in which he sees his children walk that he sends his prophets to warn that that they might be spared that they might be saved that even in the midst of judgment we read verse 12 as the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs and a piece of an ear so shall the children of Israel be taken out to dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed and in Damascus in a couch and so on now this is partly a reference to how if a shepherd had lost a beast a goat or a sheep or whatever then he had to take back he had to find a wild beast to take and he had to go afterwards and retrieve some of the carcass something whether an ear or a couple of legs or a piece of ribcage or whatever it might be and this had to be taken back to the owner to demonstrate that a wild beast had taken that particular sheep or goat or lamb or whatever it was in other words that he himself had not just eaten it or stolen it or taken it for himself so if he took it back to his owner then he would not be held responsible for it because he couldn't be everywhere all the time but if there was no evidence of why this creature had disappeared then the shepherd would be liable for the cost of it so he takes these tokens of its having been torn by a wild beast having been destroyed by a lion a piece of an ear a leg he takes this back to his owner it's all that is left of the lamb or the sheep or the beast that the lion takes and so likewise the Lord says even in the midst of your destruction

I'll take something out of Samaria there'll be little pieces with which I can begin to rebuild again here he and testify in the house of Jacob saith the Lord of all the wealth all the luxury of Samaria I'll destroy the altars I'll destroy the summer house the winter house nothing's going to be able to stand before me and I think oh that's terrible oh that's awful but what is it that God is destroying it is the oppression the evil the blatant luxury and grinding down the poor it is the forgetfulness of him because forgetfulness of God is what brings forth this triumph of the strong getting stronger and richer and grinding down the poor it is the forgetting of the Lord which means that we forget the poor we forget the weak we forget kindness we forget charity we forget mercy because we have forgotten the Lord the lion hath roared who will not fear the

[37 : 34] Lord God hath spoken who can but prophesy when we know what God's teaching is and now of course in our day we're not dependent on simply the lone voice of a prophet in the city we have before us not only God's entire written revelation from start to finish through which he speaks and breathes and works in the hearts of his people we have his word we have his spirit but the Lord has in his mercy put us in a culture in time where we are literate we are able to read it it's not just mysterious scrolls on a shelf in a synagogue somewhere this is before us in our hands we can read it we can understand what God is saying there'll be some things we don't understand but there will always be enough that we do because the Lord makes known his will why does he do this not so that he can punish us more harshly but so that he can show us the way of mercy the way of deliverance the way of salvation and now that we know it we cannot do other we have a choice always now that we know it do we just pretend we didn't know it do we just ignore it and take that choice or now that we know what the Lord requires of us can we do anything else other than respond to him and follow him and go deeper with him and go further with him yes of course it will be a long journey in some ways in other ways it may be a lot shorter than you think none of us knows how long we have but can two walk together except they be agreed can we even begin this journey unless we enter into this arrangement unless we enter into this covenant with the

Lord them two walk together except they be agreed while the lion roared in the forest when he hath no prey the lion hath roared who will not fear who is going to be the prey if they are not delivered out of his hands who is going to be destroyed if they are not redeemed who is going to be lost if they are not saved it is us it is us it is us the lion hath roared who will not fear the Lord God hath spoken who can but prophesy when we hear the roaring of the lion let us heed the mercy and love of the Lord that desires to deliver us because however strong the lions of this world may be the Lord is stronger than them all and he alone can be the savior of the husband ac Whole

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