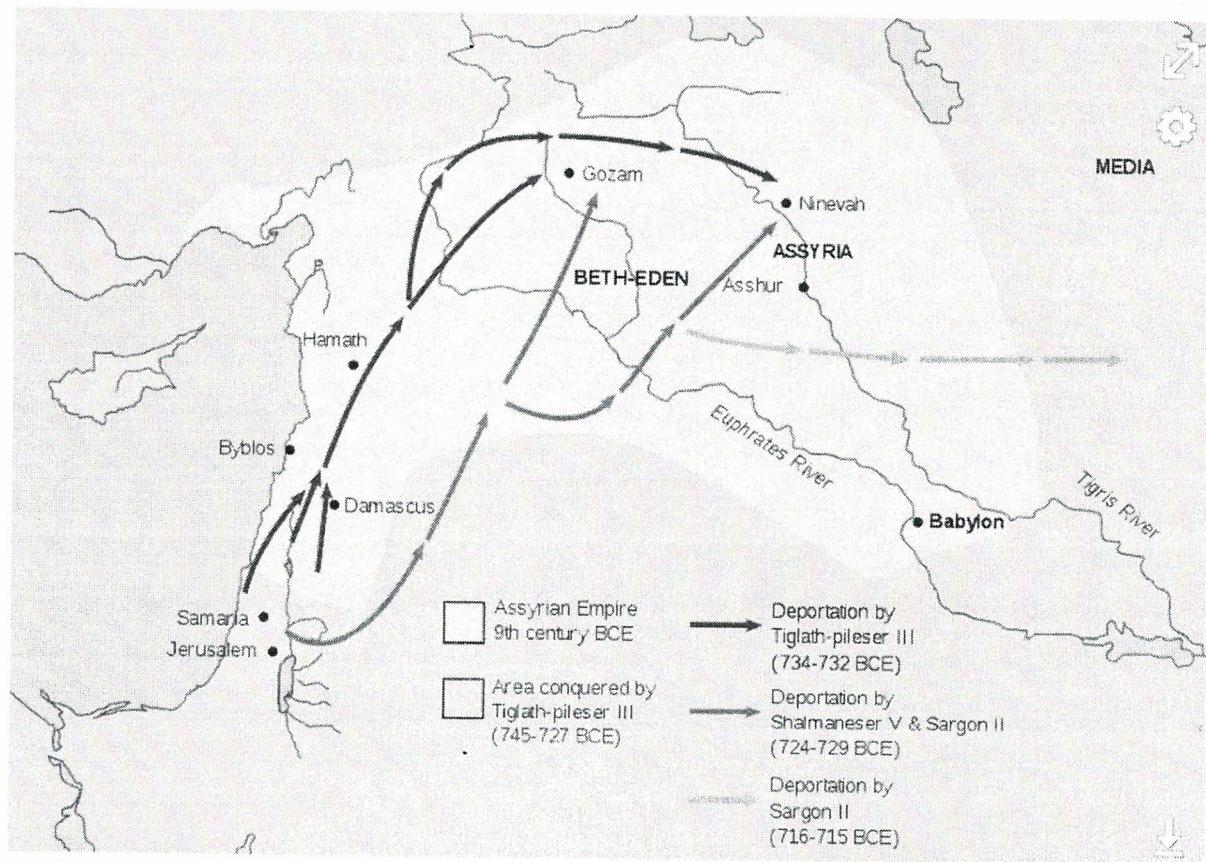


Amos 5

Read Amos 5:1-6: God is having Amos share that the northern 10 tribes will surely be taken into captivity; unless there is repentance. We know that Samaria and Israel were taken away by the Assyrians.

And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day. (1 Chronicles 5:26)

The 10 northern tribes of Israel have never returned. They assimilated into the foreign populations. Was the Israeli removal a 100% ethnic cleansing? These verses speak of 9/10ths of the population. The Bible tells us that they were taken to the cities of Halah and on the Habor; in the upper Mesopotamia Region. Was there a small residual remnant of the northern 10 tribes who did repent or found a way to remain in their land?



Assyrian cuneiform writings state that 27,290 captives were taken from Samaria,^[4] the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, by the hand of Sargon II. Sargon records his first campaign on the walls of the royal palace at Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad):

*In my first year of reign *** the people of Samaria *** to the number of 27,290 ... I carried away.*

"Fifty chariots for my royal equipment I selected. The city I rebuilt. I made it greater than it was before. People of the lands I had conquered I settled therein. My official (Tartan) I placed over them as governor". The description of the final defeat of the Northern Kingdom of Israel above appears to be a minor event in Sargon's legacy. Some historians attribute the ease of Israel's defeat to the previous two decades of invasions, defeats, and deportations. Some estimates assume a captivity numbering in the hundreds of thousands, minus those who died in defense of the kingdom and minus those who fled voluntarily before and during the invasions.

However, it has also been suggested that the numbers deported by the Assyrians were limited and the bulk of the population remained *in situ*.^[5] There is also evidence that significant numbers fled south to the Kingdom of Judah. There is also a reference to the Jewish repatriation during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Some other tribes were mentioned as returning.

All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. They were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness.
² *Now the first to resettle on their own property in their own towns were some Israelites, priests, Levites and temple servants.* ³ *Those from Judah, from Benjamin, and from Ephraim and Manasseh who lived in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 9:1-3)*

According to 2nd Chronicles, Chapter 30, there is evidence that years later at least some people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were not exiled. These remaining few were invited by King Hezekiah to keep the Passover in a feast at Jerusalem with the Judean population. Hezekiah sent his posts to spread the word among the remnant of the Northern kingdom; the posts were mocked during their visit to the country of Ephraim, Manasseh and Zebulun. However, some people of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. In a later part of the chapter, even people from the Tribe of Issachar and the strangers that "came out from the land of Israel" were said to take part in the Passover event.

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD, the God of Israel. (2 Chronicles 30:1)

In 2nd Chronicles, Chapter 31, it is said that the remnant of the Kingdom of Israel returned to their homes, but not before destroying Ba'al and Ashera places of Idol worship left in "all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh".

Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and broke in pieces the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, and broke down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities. (2 Chronicles 31:1)

Somehow 12,000 children of Israel from each tribe will return by the end of the tribulation. That would require that somehow an awareness of their genealogical ancestry. That is not an available data base at this point in time. In addition, Ezekiel speaks of the re-uniting of Judah with the northern 10 tribes in the last days. Hebrews from all around the world have been returning to their homeland for decades. Many children of Israel have already returned from the Ukraine, Argentina, Ethiopia and other places.

"Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ⁵This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath^[a] enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' " ⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' " ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. ¹¹Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' ¹²Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴I will put my Spirit in you and you will

live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD. ’’ (Ezekiel 37:4-14)

Do modern Jews have any idea which tribe they are from? The latest such study, which was published today in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*, shows a genetic connection among all Jews, despite widespread migrations and intermarriage with non-Jews. It also apparently refutes repeated claims that most Ashkenazi Jews are descended from Central Europeans who converted to Judaism 1000 years ago.

Historians divide the world's 13 million living Jews into three groups: Middle Eastern, or Oriental, Jews; *Sephardic* Jews from Spain and Portugal; and *Ashkenazi* Jews from Europe. Although the Bible traces Jewish roots back to the time of Abraham some 4000 years ago, most historians have concluded that the actual Jewish identity dates to only a little over 2000 years ago.

The origins of today's Jews have been less clear, especially those of the Ashkenazis, who make up 90% of American Jews and nearly 50% of Israeli Jews. Ashkenazi Jews settled in Germany in the 9th century C.E. and developed their own language, Yiddish.

The bottom line is that somehow these scattered, diluted, and mixed tribes will somehow become aware of their specific origins. They will return to Israel. This requires some level of faith. In the 1940's; Bible teachers were still teaching that prophecy in the Old Testament of Jews living in their homeland was really just a figurative reference to the church (because there were no Jews living in their land). This was a big mistake to not take the Bible verbatim. The Jews returned, and re-established Israel in 1948; after it not being a country or occupied for 2,000 years! The same unforeseen miracle could be true regarding the northern 10 tribes.

Read Amos 5:7-12: Why do we keep returning to revisit the events leading up to the capture of the 10 tribes? It is hard to focus on a story that is re-told 20 times in scripture. We know that these accounts were written for our learning. What part of it are we not processing; so that we just see this as repetitious?

We need to look at the forensics leading up to the departure more carefully, and circumspectly. Amos begins to speak in a psalm. It is like a country song, or a ballad of the infamous people who refused to change their ways.

Where are we in story? For starters, they turned *judgement* into *wormwood*. Wormwood is a metaphor for bitterness and the curse. It is toxic and very unpleasant. Instead of building a satisfying society of mutual respect and sweet freedoms; there were cruel abuses. What public edicts are we making that leave a bad taste in the mouth of the common people?

Public drug use in San Francisco was thrust into the spotlight last week when a series of shocking videos uploaded to YouTube showed dozens of drug users, seemingly unaware that they were being filmed, sprawled out in a Bay Area Rapid Transit station and openly injecting drugs as commuters walked past. Others appeared to be unconscious, lying next to a pool of vomit. "They're doing it more blatantly now," said Brady, who contended that drug users face few repercussions from law enforcement. "They know they're not going to get in trouble or get arrested." Complaints about human waste on the streets have also spiked, from 5,771 in 2009, to 20,960 in 2017, a jump of 363%. Since 2014, the number of reports has doubled. And complaints about encampments of homeless people have risen from 586 in 2009 to 42,208 in 2017 — a surge of almost 7,200%. California law prohibits possession of drugs like heroin. However, the law allows people convicted of "nonviolent" drug offenses to receive treatment rather than jail time. And in 2014, voters in the state approved a law that allowed simple possession of drugs such as heroin to be classified as a misdemeanor, rather than a felony. The proposition was endorsed by prominent newspapers including the Los Angeles Times, as well as advocacy groups such as the ACLU.

In San Diego County, the combination of drugs and homelessness turned deadly last year when an outbreak of hepatitis A eventually killed 20 people. A county spokesperson said that the majority of people who contracted the disease during the outbreak had been "homeless and/or illicit drug users."

Last week, the union representing employees of the California Department of Transportation filed a grievance over what it described as hazardous conditions cleaning up waste from encampments. One union member told the Sacramento Bee that he had been exposed to blood, needles, and feces. All said; we reap a harvest of a ruined society when we try to let everybody live an unrestrained life.

God tells us that we need to take this problem to *the creator of the universe*. God created the evapotranspiration rain cycle. Should San Francisco spend another \$245 million on homelessness; this year...or should they repent? It is only getting worse. God has the power to raise the helpless and hopeless situations into healthy lives. God specializes in turning ruined and lost lives into blessed lives.

They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. 'The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 'The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and liftest up. 8He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them. (1 Samuel 2:5-8)

These verses talk about how man has always hated being rebuked for righteousness. There are two options. We can succumb to society, and reap exactly what we have. Otherwise; we can stick to God's plan, and all of the worldly personal attacks and criticisms that come with it.

Those in positions of power seem to live above the law. They are in a class of mutual protections and security. The choice is simple. We can stand by and let the foundations of our society be completely eroded; until we are in captivity and anarchy...or we can turn to God in prayer and action. Apparently that is not happening; because the problem is getting worse. We need a bottom-to top transformation in our society. It starts and ends with God. We cannot otherwise solve these problems.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Read Amos 5:13-27: Whatever we do will multiply. If we live unto ourselves; we contribute to an uncaring and indifferent world. If we look for an opportunity to help others; we can expect some needed assistance along the way. We can live alone; without help. We can also live with a lot of alliances and helpers. We receive what we provide to others.

There are many discussions in the Old Testament about refraining from sin; and being morally sound. The New Testament emphasizes the sincerity and

development of our relationship with God. Amos is not talking about walking in the Spirit. He is telling the children of Israel to stop damaging each other. He is talking about respecting God's laws.

The Old Testament is known as *The Law* (5 books of Moses); and *The prophets*. The Law was written to unbelievers. The New Testament was written to believers. The Old Testament seems to be an account of how mankind cannot sustain a godly society. The New Testament is about fine-tuning our lives, to walk with God.

For as many as are of the works of ¹²the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.” ¹¹Now that no one is justified ¹³by ¹⁴the Law before God is evident; for, “¹⁵THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” ... Why the Law then? It was added ¹⁶because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the ¹⁷agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. (Galatians 3:10 & 19)

Millions of Hebrews exited Egypt and witnessed God's miracles for 40 years. The net result of that massive display of mercy was a zero spiritual gain. God gets an A+; and man fails again.

So the LORD'S anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying, ¹¹‘None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, ¹²except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully.’ ¹³So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed. (Numbers 32:10-13)

Should we view Amos's writings as fatalistic? Is he wasting his time? Is he handing out inner tubes at the edge of a waterfall? There was no recording of repentance in the northern 10 tribes.

Psalm 53 and Psalm 14 are quoted by Paul in Romans. This was all a huge investment of human lives; to convince us that we need a savior.

What then? ¹²Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹²ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE

BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE. [”]³ “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING, ” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; ¹⁴ “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; ¹⁵ “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, ¹⁶ DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, ¹⁷ AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN. ” ¹⁸ “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES. ” (Romans 3:9-18)

The Old Testament is like an archive of the history of mankind failing. It is like looking at an endless junkyard, full of wrecks. That sets the stage for the importance of Jesus. Jesus offers a *friends and family* package. We can try in vain to work our way up through good behavior; and eventually fail. Alternatively, we can come into heaven as a VIP guest; without having any proof of goodness. It seems very unfair for a sinful person like myself getting into heaven; and so many Eagle Scouts and noble patriots who did not make it in. It almost seems to be an example of favoritism over more-solid citizens.

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in ^{the} Jesus Christ to all who believe. (Romans 3:21-22)

I suppose that is why we will throw our crowns at Jesus' feet. It is to say; that we did not effectively earn anything. It changes the focus from us qualifying; to God's goodness and love.

It can seem righteous to call down judgement on sinners. We are warned here to not get excited about the coming tribulation. Nobody will enjoy what leads up to that ride. The tribulation and end times is a little like the Old Testament. There were vicious invasions, cruel warlords, plagues and droughts. These coming cruel days are amidst an increasingly- heartless society.

God is telling us that there are times when people who are seeking God's help seem to go from *one difficult situation to another*. Years of their life can seem to be like *an unending and deep rut*. It's an unsustainable burn out. It can be very frustrating to live out a bad dream; that repeatedly goes from one defeat to yet another failure. We may have had our time under *Murphy's Law*. God tells us that it is wise to not try to outwardly-conclude all of the reasons and causes. In some cases; it is because we are not doing anything to make this a better place for others. In other words; sometimes you cannot fix your problem directly. Your assignment is to make the world a more-blessed place for all of the people who encounter you. Our natural reaction to hardship is to lick our wounds, and try to resolve the irritation. We want to get squared-away before we go out and provide inconvenient assistance. It is counterintuitive to go out of your way to bless someone when you

are broken down and getting nowhere. The point is that maybe you are being forced to demonstrate where your hope comes from. Does your hope come from getting back to your own challenges; or does it come from the LORD? It takes a lot of faith to just walk away from your screaming priorities, and help your neighbor with their burden. We can be so tightly-scheduled that being a good Samaritan is not a scheduling possibility.

Jesus gave us some good examples of allowing at-hand ministry opportunities to disrupt our laser focus on getting things done. Jesus was on an undeniable quest to embrace the cross. It was a repulsive and scary thing; which he was going to get done; no matter what. As he approached Jerusalem for the last time it was if his death march became a consuming quest.

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51)

Even so, Jesus pulled over; and took care of an unscheduled, random request for a personal need. Jesus hit the pause button on his death march to improve the quality of life for a stranger.

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ⁵¹“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” ⁵²“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:46-52)

This scripture is ministering to me. I can even become angry when asked to help people if I am all *tied up in knots* over a confusing little project. I would much rather complete my intended task; and then go help them. I tend to try to do one thing to its completion at a time.

These verses tell us that the crops will be failing because God is passing through. We tend to associate God blessing nature (like the Garden of Eden), when God is present. It is a greater blessing to have a distressed nature turn our hearts to our deliverer; than it is to take in the beauty of God’s creation. I have seen things fall

apart immediately after taking new steps in faithfulness and obedience. It is counterintuitive; but it should cause us to re-evaluate what makes us happy.

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." [a] (Hebrews 12:6)

What does it mean to let righteousness run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream? It is something that comes from the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel gave us a picture of a man near the temple in the Millennium in Jerusalem. There will be stream that flows from the throne of God eastward; to heal a sick world. For some of us; we walk in ankle-deep blessings. We want to maintain control. For others; we want a greater spiritual blessing and fellowship. We are willing to go out into the deeper water (giving up more control of our lives). The Holy Spirit is a force, propelling us to a collapsing world. The ultimate experience is to give up trying to stand up on our own power. It is better to let the power of the Holy Spirit to carry you away; without your efforts to force a direction. For all of that to happen; we need to find out where God is moving; and come along side of him to partake.

I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. 3 As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits^[a] and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. 4 He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. 5 He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. 6 He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this? (Ezekiel 47)

We are not comfortable giving up control over our lives. God allows us to see that our steering can lead to shipwrecks and pain. It takes a while to convince us to let him drive. Losing control over our affairs might be the best thing that ever happened to us. Having our hopes and dreams dashed might be what saves our lives.