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Go to Bethel and Sin!  
From Text to Sermon (Amos 4:4-13)

William H. Lawson

Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary

# **GO TO BETHEL AND SIN!**

## **From Text to Sermon**

### **Amos 4:4-13**

**William H. Lawson**

This passage as defined has a recognizable beginning and can be distinguished from the preceding passage because the wives of the elite are no longer addressed. Though the passage contains some diverse material, the different elements are united around a concern for religious pride that leads to complacency and unresponsiveness to God's discipline (see Situation and Purpose). In addition, the diverse elements are united by the announcement of God's judgment in verse 12 (see Form and Function). The inclusion of verse 13 in this passage may be questioned. However, verse 13 contains a hymn praising "the LORD God of Armies" that reinforces the announcement of judgment in verse 12 (see Strategy and Structure).

#### **Study of the Passage**

##### **Text and Translation**

**4:4** "Go to Bethel and sin;  
to Gilgal (and) multiply sin.

Bring your sacrifices every morning,  
your tithes every third day.

**5** Burn that which is leavened, a thanksgiving  
and announce freewill offerings—  
proclaim them, sons of Israel,  
for this is what you love to do,"  
declares the Sovereign LORD.

**6** "I\* gave you clean teeth in all your cities and lack of bread in all your places.

Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

**7**“**I**\* also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away.

I sent rain on one city, but did not send rain on another city.

One field had rain; and a field that did not have rain dried up.

**8**So two or three cities wandered to one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied.

Yet you have not returned to me,” declares the LORD.

**9**“I struck you with blight and mildew, multiplying (them) in your gardens and vineyards.

Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees.

Yet you have not returned to me,” declares the LORD.

**10**“I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt.

I killed your young men with the sword, along with the capturing of your horses.

I caused the stench of your camps to go up and into your nostrils.

Yet you have not returned to me,” declares the LORD.

**11**“I overthrew some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire.

Yet you have not returned to me,” declares the LORD.

**12** “Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, Israel.”

**13**For behold! He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man;

he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—The LORD God of Armies is his name.

\*The bold print indicates an emphasis in the Hebrew text that is otherwise difficult to convey in English.

### **Situation and Purpose**

Amos 4:4-13 reflects a situation in which the elite of Israel were proud, complacent, and unresponsive to God’s discipline. Their pride is reflected in Amos’ sarcastic call to worship in verses 4-5, especially verse 5, “‘Burn that which is leavened, a thanksgiving and announce freewill offerings—proclaim them, sons of Israel, for this is what you love to do,’ declares the Sovereign LORD.” They were proud of their piety and wanted to impress others with their devotion to God. Their unresponsiveness to God’s discipline is reflected in verses 6-10 where Amos catalogs God acts of discipline against them, concluding each act

of discipline with, “‘Yet you have not returned to me,’ declares the LORD.” Their pride in their religion probably made them complacent and unresponsive to God’s discipline. The purpose of this passage was to undermine the complacency of the elite in Israel by warning them of God’s displeasure with their worship and judgment for their unresponsiveness to his discipline. Though the passage provides little hope of escaping God’s judgment, it probably was intended to lead them to repent of their sin and turn to God for mercy.

### **Literary Context and Role**

From one perspective the Book of Amos can be divided into two halves based on the nature of the material. Amos 4:4-13 is in the first half of the book which is dominated by prophetic exhortations (chapters 1-6) rather than the second half of the book which is dominated by prophetic visions (chapters 7-9). From another perspective these prophetic exhortations and visions address various aspects of the general situation and for the most part warn the people of Israel of God’s impending judgment. However, there is a considerable amount of overlapping in the problems addressed and the warnings of judgment. This strategy seems to reinforce the warning through repetition. Amos 4:4-13 continues and reinforces the warning against pride and complacency that was anticipated in 1:3-2:16 and developed in 3:1-15 and 4:1-3. This warning is reinforced especially in 5:1-17, 18-27; 6:1-7, 8-14; 7:1-9, 10-17; and 8:1-14. From still another perspective the Book of Amos seems to be structured to allow for some hope without diminishing the warning of judgment. However, Amos 4:4-13 does not allow much room for hope at this early stage of the book’s strategy.

### **Form and Function**

Amos 4:4-13 can be classified generally as a prophetic exhortation. Exhortation can be generally defined as commands or prohibitions reinforced with explanations and reasoned arguments. In prophetic exhortation commands or prohibitions sometimes indicate the appropriate response. However, in most cases the appropriate response is expressed indirectly as an expectation or is only implied. In prophetic exhortation the reasoned arguments provide the motivation for obedience and are dominated by assurance and warning. The warnings alert sinners to the danger of God’s displeasure and judgment that results from their sin and thereby encourage repentance. The assurances affirm the faithfulness of

God to the faithful and thereby encourage faithfulness. The Book of Amos is dominated by prophetic exhortations that have warnings of judgment, but few direct commands and prohibitions. Though no direct indication of the appropriate response is provided, the implication is that the readers should heed the warnings of God's judgment and repent. Amos 4:4-13 follows this characteristic form of prophetic exhortation. A command is given in verse 12, "prepare to meet your God, Israel." However, this command does not indicate how they should prepare. Nonetheless, the sarcastic call to worship in verses 4-5, condemning them for their religious pride implies that they should repent of their pride. In addition, the rebuking refrain in verses 6-11, "Yet you have not returned to me," implies that they should return to God. The announcement of God's judgment on them in verse 12a provides the motivation for repenting of their religious pride and returning to God. The hymn in verse 13 reinforces the need to prepare to meet God by emphasizing how awesome he is. Sarcasm and irony play a significant role in this passage and will be discussed later (see Analysis of the Details).

### **Strategy and Structure**

The strategy of Amos 4:4-13 centers around the command in verse 12b, "prepare to meet your God, Israel." The sarcastically rebuking call to worship in verses 4-5 supports this command by identifying the worship of the elite as sin. The rebuking examples and illustration of unresponsiveness to the LORD's discipline in verses 6-11 support this command by identifying the unresponsiveness of the elite as foolish. The announcement of judgment in verse 12a supports this command by warning the elite of God's impending judgment. The song in verse 13 reinforces the command in verse 12 by warning the elite of the awesome prospect of meeting the LORD God of Armies.

- I. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Worship (4:4-5)
  - A. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Worship/Sin at Bethel and Gilgal (4a)
  - B. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Offer Sacrifices, Tithes, and Thank Offerings (4b)
  - C. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Announce and Proclaim Freewill Offerings (5a)
  - D. Identified as the Word of the Sovereign LORD (5b)

- II. Rebuking Examples and Illustrations of Unresponsiveness to the LORD's Discipline (4:6-11)
  - A. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Famine (6)
    - 1. Description of judgment
    - 2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
  - B. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Drought (7-8)
    - 1. Description of judgment
    - 2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
  - C. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Pestilence (9)
    - 1. Description of judgment
    - 2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
  - D. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Plague and Warfare (10)
    - 1. Description of judgment
    - 2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
  - E. Rebuking Example of and Illustration of Cataclysmic Judgment (11)
    - 1. Description of judgment
      - a. Example of Sodom and Gomorrah
      - b. Illustration of a burning stick
    - 2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
- III. Announcement of Judgment (4:12a)
- IV. Command to Prepare to Meet God (4:12b)
- V. The Awesome God whom they will Meet (4:13)

### **Message or Messages**

The elite in Israel should prepare to meet God by repenting of their religious pride because their religious pride is sin. The elite in Israel should prepare to meet God by repenting of their unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because their unresponsiveness is foolish. The elite in Israel should prepare to meet God by repenting of their religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him

because they will certainly meet him in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

### **Analysis of the Details**

#### **Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Worship**

Amos begins dramatically by rebuking the elite in Israel for their religious pride with a sarcastic call to worship. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. In this context Amos is clearly being derisive. Amos sarcastically calls them to worship at Bethel and Gilgal; offer sacrifices, tithes, and thank offerings; and announce and proclaim their freewill offerings. From the very outset Amos identifies their worship as sin. Only at the end does he reveal the nature of their sin, their love of announcing and proclaiming their offerings.

**Sarcastically rebuking call to worship/sin at Bethel and Gilgal.** Amos begins his sarcastic call of the Israelites to worship in the first half of verse 4, “Go to Bethel and sin; to Gilgal (and) multiply sin.” Bethel and Gilgal were places where God had revealed himself in Israel’s history and important centers of the worship for the people of Israel in Amos’ time. Amos employs these geographical references to make the connection with the worship of the Israelites. The unacceptability of their worship is indicated by the word “sin.” Through sarcastically calling the people of Israel to worship at Bethel and Gilgal, Amos was dramatically identifying their worship at these religious centers as sin and expressing God’s displeasure with their worship. In this way Amos was undermining their religious pride and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by repenting of their pride.

**Sarcastically rebuking call to offer sacrifices, tithes, and thank offerings.** Amos continues his sarcastic call to worship in the second half of verse 4 and the first line of verse 5, “Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every third day. Burn that which is leavened, a thanksgiving.” This detail cluster combines sarcasm and literary allusions. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. In this context Amos is clearly being derisive. Numbers 28:3 requires that the people of Israel offer two lambs a year old without defect every day as a regular burnt offering. Deuteronomy 14:28 requires that the people of Israel bring their tithes of

produce every three years. Leviticus 7:13 requires that the people of Israel present an offering with cakes of bread made with yeast along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving. Amos employs these literary allusions to make the connection with the worship of the Israelites. Amos has already identified the worship of the Israelites as sin in the first half of verse 4. Through sarcastically calling the Israelites to bring their sacrifices, give their tithes, and burn their leavened bread, Amos was dramatically identifying their worship practices as sin and expressing God's displeasure with their worship. In this way Amos was undermining their religious pride and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by repenting of their pride.

**Sarcastically rebuking call to announce and proclaim freewill offerings.** Amos concludes his sarcastic call to worship in the second half of verse 5, “and announce freewill offerings—proclaim them, sons of Israel, for this is what you love to do,” declares the Sovereign LORD.” This detail cluster combines sarcasm and the use of significant words. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. In this context Amos is clearly being derisive. The words “announce” and “proclaim” in the context clearly refer to the Israelites’ practice of declaring aloud their participation in worship. Rather than worshipping as an expression of their devotion to God, the elite in Israel were worshipping because of their desire to impress others with their piety. Their misplaced desire in worship is made clear with the explanation, “for this is what you love to do.” Through sarcastically calling the Israelites to announce and declare their worship, Amos was dramatically identifying their religious pride as sin and expressing God's displeasure with their worship. In this way Amos was undermining their religious pride and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by repenting of their pride.

### **Rebuking Examples and Illustrations of Unresponsiveness to God's Discipline**

Amos alludes to several judgments that God had brought against the Israelites in verses 6-11. These verses seem to stress the variety and severity of God's judgments. The variety of God's judgments is stressed by the diverse judgments described, including famine (verse 6), drought (verses 7-8), pestilence (verse 9), plague and warfare (verse 10), and catastrophe (verse 11). The severity of the judgments is stressed at numerous points. The famines were so severe that the Israelites had no need to



brush their teeth (verse 6). The droughts were so severe that even when the Israelites traveled to a city that had water they couldn't get enough to satisfy them (verse 8). The plagues were so severe that they are compared to the plagues with which God struck Egypt as described in Exodus 7-11 (verse 10a). The warfare was so severe that the stench of the rotting bodies was stifling (verse 10b). The catastrophes that struck some Israelites were so severe that they are compared to the utter devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah as described in Genesis 19 (verse 11a). Amos concludes his emphasis on the severity of God's judgments with a simile, "You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire." The Israelites had come so close to being consumed by God's judgment that they had already begun to burn. Through stressing the variety and severity of God's judgments, Amos emphasizes that God had done everything he could to warn the Israelites. Therefore, they had no excuse for their failure to respond.

Amos intertwines a refrain within his allusions to God's judgments in verses 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11, "Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD." This refrain is repeated five times for emphasis. This refrain is loaded with irony. Irony describes a circumstance or result that is the opposite of what one might expect, frequently to draw attention to its remarkableness, appropriateness, or inappropriateness. In this context Amos is clearly drawing attention to the remarkable inappropriateness of the Israelites' failure to heed God's warning judgments. God had done everything he could do to warn the Israelites through his diverse and severe judgments. They should have heeded his warning. Through this rebuking refrain, Amos was forcing the Israelites to recognize the foolishness of their unresponsiveness to God's discipline. In this way Amos was undermining their complacency and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by returning to him.

### **Announcement of Judgment**

Amos announces God's judgment against the proud, complacent, and unresponsive Israelites in verse 12a, "Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel." However, it is uncertain what Amos was referring to with these words. Some commentators think that a more specific announcement of judgment has been lost (Mays, p. 80). Stuart believes that the announcement of judgment refers back to the preceding descriptions of judgment that would be unleashed together without restraint (Stuart, 339). Another possibility is that Amos was pointing to some catastrophe

as he was delivering this prophetic message as an illustration of God's judgment. Amos might even be using a rhetorical figure of speech known as *aposiopesis* or *sudden silence*, which is commonly used in a threatening way (see E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, 151). Whatever Amos is referring to, he announces God's judgment to reinforce the need to obey the command that follows.

### **Command to Prepare to Meet God**

Amos states the implication of the warning of God's judgment in verse 12b, "and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, Israel." Implied within the command is a call to repent of those sins that have previously been identified—religious pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to God's warning judgments. In addition, the command contains a warning that is developed in the subsequent verse. This warning is ironic. Irony describes a circumstance or result that is the opposite of what one might expect, frequently to draw attention to its remarkable-ness, appropriateness, or inappropriateness. The elite in Israel had been going to their centers of worship in Bethel and Gilgal. The correct reason for doing so would be to meet God in worship and to hear him speak. However, the elite had been worshiping to impress others with their piety and ignoring God's attempts to get their attention. Nonetheless, Amos warns that they would meet God anyway, but in judgment. It is remarkably appropriate that those who went to God for the wrong reasons would still meet him in judgment. Through this command, Amos was calling the Israelites to repent of their religious pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to God's discipline and reinforcing the need for them to repent by warning them of the danger of meeting God.

### **The Awesome God Whom They Will Meet**

Amos concludes with a hymn of praise to God that reinforces his command to prepare to meet God in verse 13. Most of the elements of this hymn accentuate the awesome majesty and power of God as the Sovereign Lord of creation. God is the one who "forms the mountains," "creates the wind," "turns dawn to darkness," and "treads the high places of the earth." Amos employs an illustrative figure known as anthropomorphism in the last of these lines. Anthropomorphism is a type of metaphor that illustrates the divine nature by describing God in human terms. The metaphor exalts God literally by elevating him above everything on earth. A distinct element of the hymn is in the third line, "and

reveals his thoughts to man.” This line serves in this context to emphasize that people are without excuse since God reveals his thoughts. The final line of the hymn is climactic, “The LORD God of Armies is his name.” The Hebrew word translated “Armies” is frequently translated “Almighty” and emphasizes the unlimited power at God’s disposal as the commander in chief of all the heavenly host. Through this hymn Amos stresses the frightening prospect of meeting the LORD God of Armies who is the sovereign Lord of creation for those who have violated his revealed will.

### **Commentaries Consulted**

Mays, John Luther. *Amos, A Commentary*. *The Old Testament Library*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1969.

Smith, Billy K. *Amos*. *The New American Commentary*, Vol. 19B. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995.

Stuart, Douglas. *Amos*. *The Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 31. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987.

### **Application of the Message**

#### **Establishing the Correspondence**

The situation addressed by this passage corresponds closely to a situation in the modern church. Christians sometimes become proud of their faithfulness to the outward forms of Christianity. These Christians may become complacent, thinking that their lives are pleasing to God. As a result they may not be responsive when God disciplines them. These correspondences between the original and modern situations provide a strong basis for applying the message of Amos 4:4-13 to the modern situation.

#### **Distinguishing the Contextualized**

Some contextualized elements do occur in this passage. The places and forms of Christian worship are different than those of Israel. Christians don’t go to Bethel or Gilgal and don’t offer the sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament law. In addition, the announcement of judgment is specifically addressed to Israel. Nonetheless, these differences can be

generalized or related to contextual equivalents. In the statement of the applied message that follows I have tried to ease the tension between the original a modern situation by employing Israel as a warning example.

### **Applying the Message**

Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride because Amos rebuked the elite in Israel for the sinfulness of their religious pride. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for foolishly ignoring God's discipline and failing to return to him. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD warned the proud and complacent in Israel that they would certainly meet God in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

### **Proclamation of the Message**

**Title:** Go to Church and Sin

**Text:** Amos 4:4-13

**Objective:** The objective of this sermon is to lead Christians to repent of their religious pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to God's discipline and dedicate themselves to living their lives wholeheartedly for God.

**Proposition:** Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for the sinfulness of their religious pride. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for foolishly ignoring God's discipline and failing to return to him. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD warned the proud and unresponsive elite in Israel that they would certainly meet God in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

## Introduction

Why have you come to church today. A primary reason Christians should come to church is to encounter God and hear him speak. However, Christians sometimes come to church because they are proud of their piety and they want to impress others with their devotion. They often do not really want to encounter God and hear him speak and in fact may be ignoring God's attempts to get their attention through discipline. The Israelites of the Northern Kingdom were proud, complacent, and unresponsive to God's discipline. As a result God warned them through the prophet Amos to prepare to meet their God. We also need to hear this warning that is recorded in Amos 4:4-13. *Read Amos 4:4-13.*

- I. **Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride because the LORD rebuke the elite in Israel for the sinfulness of their religious pride.**
  - A. A call to worship is a common element found in many worship services. One of the most frequently used calls to worship is the *Doxology*—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." However, it is clear that Amos is being sarcastic in his call to worship. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. Amos is not trying to be funny!
  - B. Amos rebuked and condemned the spiritual pride of the Israelites by sarcastically calling them to worship at Bethel and Gilgal and equating their worship with sin—"Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more."
  - C. Amos rebuked and condemned the spiritual pride of the Israelites by sarcastically calling them to offer their sacrifices and bring their tithes and identifying their sin as pride—"Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings—boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do,' declares the Sovereign LORD."
  - D. *Enlist a member of the congregation or class with dramatic ability the week before to play the role of a modern day Amos. At this point have him interrupt the sermon or Bible study and deliver the following modernization of Amos' sarcastic call to worship. "Go to church and sin; go to Sunday School and sin*

even more. Read your Bible every morning and bring your tithe every week. Thank the Lord for how wonderful you are and brag about your willingness to give to him—boast about it, you Christians, for this is what you love to do,' declares the Sovereign LORD."

- E. You should prepare to meet God if you are proud of your piety because religious pride is sin.

**II. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any unresponsive to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for foolishly ignoring his discipline and failing to return to him.**

- A. Amos described the various and severe judgments that God had brought against the Israelites because of their sin.
- B. Amos emphasized the severity of God's judgments in two ways. First, he compared God's judgments against some Israelites to his judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah—"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." According to Genesis 19:24-26, God rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah and everyone on the entire plain was consumed along with the vegetation. Even Lot's wife became a pillar of salt when she looked back. Second, Amos compared the Israelites to a burning stick—"You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire." They had come so close to being consumed by God's judgment that they had already begun to burn.
- C. Amos rebuked the Israelites by repeatedly emphasizing their ironic failure to heed God's warning judgments despite their variety and severity—"Yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me,' declares the LORD." By repeatedly emphasizing their failure Amos underscored their extreme foolishness.
- D. You should prepare to meet God if you have been unresponsive to his discipline because unresponsiveness to his discipline is foolish.

**III. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD warned the proud and unresponsive elite in Israel that they would certainly meet God in judgment**

**and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.**

- A. Amos announced God's judgment against the Israelites because of their pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to his discipline—"Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel." The meaning of Amos' warning is uncertain. Some think that a more specific announcement of judgment has been lost. Others think that Amos is referring back to the judgments already described that will be unleashed together without restraint. Another possibility is that Amos was pointing to some catastrophe as an illustration of God's judgment of Israel. Whatever the specific meaning of Amos' words, he was clearly warning the people of Israel of the reality of God's judgment of them for their religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline.
- B. Amos warned the Israelites to prepare to meet their God—"and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel." The desired result of worship is to meet God. However, the people of Israel had been going to Bethel and Gilgal because of their religious pride while being unresponsive to God's discipline. Amos warned them that they would still meet God, but for judgment rather than worship.
- C. Amos described the frightening prospect of meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment—"He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the LORD God of Armies is his name." *Prepare a brief slide presentation depicting the awesome majesty and power of God as revealed in the wonders of nature and show it as Amos 4:13 is read slowly, emphasizing the final line.*
- D. You should prepare to meet God if you are proud of your piety and unresponsive to his discipline because you will certainly meet him in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

## **Conclusion**

Why have you come to church today? A primary reason Christians should come to church is to encounter God and hear him speak. However, Christians today sometimes come to church because they are proud of their piety and they want to impress others with their devotion. They often do not really want to encounter God and hear him speak and in fact

may be ignoring God's attempts to get their attention through discipline. The Israelites of the Northern Kingdom were also proud, complacent, and unresponsive to God's discipline. As a result God warned them through the prophet Amos to prepare to meet their God. We also need to hear this warning that is recorded in Amos 4:4-13. You should prepare to meet God if you are proud of your piety and unresponsive to his discipline because religious pride is sin, unresponsiveness to his discipline is foolish, you will certainly meet him in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect. You can be prepared to meet God by repenting of your religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and truly devoting yourself to him.