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## Homiletics

Jakob H. Heckert

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

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## HOMILETICS

### REMINISCERE, THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

SOLOMON

1 KINGS 11:9-14

*Introduction and Propers.* — Since the *Epistle* (1 Thess. 4:1-7) reminds us that God has not called us to uncleanness but to holiness, we take up the account of a king grown careless. He began his reign by calling on God with a faith grounded in God's great and steadfast love shown to David (1 Kings 3:6 ff.). But his kingdom was torn apart when his heart divided and he called on false gods. (1 Kings 11:4-8)

The *Gospel* (Matt. 15:21-28) pictures Jesus Christ, God's Help sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In Solomon's time God's care for the covenant people continues for David's sake; but God's threat to tear it from Solomon's hand foreshadows the day when the "Son of David," called on for help by an outsider to Israel, grants her petition and makes gloriously clear that all who now call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

#### Calling on God

##### I. *God's Plan for a People*

A. God chose a people from whom would come the Redeemer. This people was a "child," and even our Lord could refer to other people as "dogs." The historic people of God reached climax of earthly glory at time of Solomon. But then their real glory as the people of God is climaxed in the faith of David, God's servant. "Son of David" (term as in Gospel) is name remembered when pleading for help, for it signified Messianic possibility. David's house was to bring forth a Savior, Redeemer. From the house of David would come the power for a true faith that alone makes a people God's people.

B. God preserved a people from whom the Redeemer would come. David is dying; no successor has been named, since Adonijah, David's oldest living son, is rejected from the rightful inheritance. David's wife Bathsheba and Nathan plead for Solomon to succeed the king. Genealogies in Matthew show Christ was born of Joseph, the legal line from Solomon. Israel recognized Jesus' regal descent through Solomon. Luke's genealogical record reveals the Messiah is born of Mary. He has the royal line through another son of David—Nathan. Thus with two records—legally Jesus is Descendant of David and spiritually He is Descendant of David. We know Christ is our Messiah and planned Savior legally, physically, and spiritually. In Him we become the people of God.

##### II. *God's Help for His People*

A. Solomon is aware of need of God's help and asks for it. Asking for wisdom and understanding, he receives in addition riches, prosperity, peace, and great borders. Even when Solomon's sins brought the anger of God upon His people, God's long-suffering and steadfast love shown to David remains available to all who call on Him. In new situations every man needs help from God, who never changes.

B. As we cry, "Kyrie, eleison!" God hears. It is difficult for us to understand why He limited Himself to the Old Testament people. If we are honest it is even harder to understand how unlimited is His grace to His New Testament people. He gives more than we ask or seek. Seek first God's kingdom, and discover that not all the wealth of God was used in arraying Solomon in all his glory. God's help is greater than we could think it possible that He might plan. The Son of David is God Himself! The life He



took on He gave up. The life He gives us goes on and on.

### III. *God's Name Worshiped by His People*

A. Solomon's prayer of dedication of the temple urged that God's name be called upon by the chosen and by the stranger. Thus God's name is to be exalted. God's glory filled the temple. God's people worshiped Him, called upon His name.

B. Solomon in weakness married women of surrounding nations (to keep the peace) and for them built temples to their gods. "And the wives of Solomon turned him after other gods." God's name is not honored when those whom He seeks to be His people instead lure His people away. When God is not called upon, God's plan for His people is being set aside.

C. Opponents criticized Jesus for His claims of authority to upset the temple and to upset their understanding of what temple worship involved. His words were that God's house was to be a house of prayer for all nations, but they had made it a den of thieves. Israel was not to be a "band of robbers" and keep God's temple or name for themselves. Jesus was sent for the house of Israel, but when His task of fulfillment was done, He had gained salvation for all the peoples of the earth.

Great should be our faith—that what we seek as we call upon Him may be granted to us.

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## OCULI, THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT KINGS (No. 5 in "Kings")

1 KINGS 12:16, 17

*Proprs.*—A "house divided against itself" is a dreadfully familiar situation today. *Gospel* (Luke 11:14-28). Everyone of us lives in a state of division within himself. Each heart, no matter how swept and garnished, has devilish tenants. They cry con-

tinually, "To your tents—what portion have we in David?" The split that divided God's people was not always a division from God that could be shown on the map. But wherever, as in the *Epistle*, men who were sometimes light walked in darkness, theirs was a divided kingdom. They had split away from God.

There are sins that divide the people of God from God today, sins that divide families, sins that split personalities. All of us with divided lives must look to our own house—but must find our help in the portion we share with David, Jesus Christ.

### A Divided Kingdom

#### I. *Sins of Pride and Jealousy*

A. After Solomon's death Rehoboam is crowned king in Jerusalem. No hereditary monarchy, Israel makes demands. Rehoboam comes to Shechem, for here Abraham built altar, Jacob returned, Joshua summoned tribes for confederacy, and Saul ruled. Ephraim, where Shechem was located, was annoyed because not asked for help at Jephthah's time (Judg. 12). Ephraim helped put Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, as king in opposition to the southern tribe of Judah (Davidic).

At Shechem he is asked whether he will continue policies of Solomon, imposing taxes and servitude for public building program. Older men advise Rehoboam to lighten burdens. Youth wins. "More punishment in little finger than in father's loins." And so the cry "To the tents!" Israel will not recognize Rehoboam.

Pride of Shechem and jealousy over against Solomon, the south, and Jerusalem divided the people of God.

B. These attitudes sent Christ to cross. The religious leaders accused Him of being in league with the devil. Pilate knew it "was out of envy" leaders delivered Christ to him.

Is it possible that nations, families, congregations, synods, friendships can split because of pride and jealousy?



These two cardinal sins caused Lucifer to fall, Adam and Eve to fall. What of us? With such sinning we lose "our inheritance in the Son of Jesse."

## II. *Sin of Mockery of Religion*

A. King Rehoboam would crush the rebellion. Adoniram is sent as taskmaster and tax collector. He is stoned. Rehoboam flees to Jerusalem, summons Judah to war, raising 180,000 men from Saul's tribe, Benjamin, and from David's tribe, Judah.

B. Jeroboam, who had fled to Egypt under Solomon, returns as patriotic leader in Israel. The prophet Ahijah had once predicted Jeroboam would lead northern tribes because of idolatry of Solomon.

Jeroboam leads Israel into idolatry. To break the national pattern of worshiping at Jerusalem, he erects temples and altars at Dan and Bethel with golden calves, as had Aaron. "This is god who delivered you from the land of Egypt." Levi is ignored as a tribe; Jeroboam selects his own priests. He initiates the feast of thanksgiving of his own.

C. Rehoboam in south would make brass shields to replace 150 golden shields in Jerusalem's temple, which Shishak, Egypt's king, had plundered. As in north, so in south, religion was no more the true worship of the true God. Idols and showmanship take over as religion becomes servant of the government. Much religion, but not that Jehovah was Israel's God and Lord. God warned both Jeroboam and Rehoboam through prophets.

D. It is this sin of hypocrisy which Christ condemned in his "woe to the Pharisees." Jesus spoke of "blind leaders of the blind," of pretense in long prayers and fastings. His Sermon on the Mount stressed the secrecy of prayer, the secrecy of fasting, the secrecy of charity. There were white-washed sepulchers aplenty.

Much religion and religiosity Paul noticed present with the Athenians.

Does God want us to have "religion"? Are we "religious" people, and have we yet "lost our inheritance in the Son of Jesse"?

## III. *Sin of Offense*

A. Jeroboam continued to lead others into sin. The seriousness of the sin must be recognized. One day, offering incense to gods, an unnamed man at the altar asked the altar to speak to the king on his doom. Jeroboam put out his hand. "Arrest that man!" When soldiers obeyed, Jeroboam found he could not withdraw his impotent hand. The king asked the man of God to restore his hand, but the man left. An old prophet meets the strange man of God on his way, lies about a message from God, which message he accepted. God met him, lion destroyed him. He is buried by the old prophet with the words, "Alas, my brother!" — Old prophet had led man of God into sin, as Jeroboam had led people into sin.

Twenty-one times in the record Jeroboam is said to have done more wickedly than other kings. He led others into sin.

B. "Whosoever offends one of these little ones. . . ." "Woe to you if you offend. . . ." "If thy hand . . . thy foot . . . thine eye . . . offend. . . ." How many led others into sin in Christ's day by urging them to cry, "Crucify!" and "Away with this man!"

## IV. *The King Who Removed the Sin*

It is only when we know that our portion is in David's Son that our divisions can be healed. God's long-suffering ended, and the kingdom broke up; but His steadfast love endures, and the Kingdom comes in Jesus Christ. He did not lead others into but away from sin. They led Him to the cross for sin. On cross He died to remove all sin. All who look to Him on the cross He forgives.

The sins that crucified Jesus separated us from our Father in heaven. It is the Father's



love in Christ and through Christ which reunites us. We who were far off are made nigh by the blood of the Lamb.

**LAETARE  
THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**ELIJAH** 1 KINGS 17:4

*Introduction.* Suddenly on Israel's stage appears Elijah the Tishbite from Gilead, announcing to King Ahab that for the next three years there will be no rain. But God's servant will be provided for. Elijah is informed by God that he will be fed in the wilderness. He is to learn to know more clearly that he *is* God's servant and that he is to get God's work done.

God is determined that men should know Him and His gracious purposes for mankind. If the gift of food can help men recognize God as God, then God will serve meals. God yearns for men to follow Him and do His will. If miracles will help to get men moving for Him, God will work miracles.

Today God would have *us* know Him and His grace. He gives the world Christ Jesus, *the Prophet* who was coming into the world (John 6:14). Today God would have *us* serve Him, and He daily and richly supplies all that we need for the support and strength of our bodies. Today God would have us remember that we live as His children by His grace and not by our deeds. The bread which our Lord took and the cup He passed to all His disciples we share today, and the miracle of the Lord's Supper is an act of remembrance.

We remember how *we* are fed by God as we see:

Elijah — Fed by God

**I. Food Is Given for a Purpose**

A. Elijah receives food miraculously. The ravens and the widow and the angel wait on him, but it is God who prepares the meals (1 Kings 17:6, 15, 16; 19:5, 6). God

wanted Elijah alive — but chiefly He wanted *Elijah*.

B. Israel's wilderness experience was filled with miraculous meals. "And He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3 RSV). God chose to keep Israel alive, but more vital — He chose *Israel!*

C. The five thousand in the wilderness were fed not only because they needed to eat but also because in the eating they could be shown their need. Food could save their lives — but more importantly, it could help save *them*.

D. God provides for man today through natural means or unusual means. God is not limited nor bound. Baal's "holy land," Syrophenecia, was a land in which He worked in the midst of paganism. His sun rises on the good and the bad, His rain on righteous and unrighteous (Matt. 5:45). There are no "iron curtains" of power to withhold His gifts to men. Though we be faithless, yet He remains faithful. By seedtime and harvest He asserts it. He would have men see His loving purpose behind the gathered produce.

In simple daily bread, in common bread and wine, our Lord feeds. His presence is there with 5,000 on Galilean hills, and His body and blood are ours with us in His Communion.

**II. The Giver God Must Be Acknowledged**

A. Canaanites and Amorites claimed the "mother goddess" (Ashtoreth) and her consort, Baal, as providers. But the real God is not a fertility god, a wind god, rain god, earth god, not mother nature or the good earth, but "the Lord, He is God!" (1 Kings 18:39)

Mount Carmel's clash between 400



prophets of Baal, 450 of Ashtoreth, and 1 of Lord Jahweh demonstrated who is God. Elijah's prayer not only sought a miracle but sought that the people would be brought back to their allegiance to the God of Israel. (1 Kings 18:37)

B. Christ risked being sought after as a "bread king" because He wanted the people to know Him as "the bread of life" (John 6:35). He wanted them to know Him as truly the Prophet come into the world, as a greater Provider than Moses, and "to believe in Him whom [God] has sent." (John 6:29)

C. God wants us to know Him as the Giver of life. We are not slaves under the Law but free children of God (Gal. 4:21-31). He wants us to know that "by the comfort of [His] grace we may mercifully be relieved." (Collect)

### III. *In the Strength God Gives God Must Be Served*

A. Out of sympathy He fed multitudes, but He sought them and the whole world as His servants. He fed Elijah because of a job to be done. Elijah had work to do for the Lord, to declare His glory. We are fed to serve God and our neighbor.

B. Jesus Christ Himself lived and ate and drank among men, not only to possess but to share, not only to live but to die. He rose again not only to have life but to give it to all who would accept. He feeds us with His body and blood that we might remember Him. Remembering Him, we both know and are enabled to find our life in giving it for others.

## JUDICA

### THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

#### ELISHA

2 KINGS 4:9

Historically the Elisha cycle is significant in the *coup d'état* of Hazael (2 Kings 8:7-15) and the *coup d'état* of Jehu (2 Kings

9:1-6). "Elijah's mantle o'er Elisha cast" (Denis Wortman's hymn) exactly describes the situation as Elijah's work is carried forward through Elisha. The house of Omri meets its ultimate doom.

*Introduction.* Elijah was expected to return (Mal. 4:5; Matt. 11:14; Matt. 17:10-12). Both John the Baptizer and Jesus of Nazareth were thought to be Elijah. John said that he was the voice in the wilderness calling men to prepare for God. And Jesus (even as in today's Gospel) announced that He and the Father were one — He was not Elijah but the Christ Himself (Matt. 16). And yet His own people would not recognize Him.

With all the attention Elijah receives, we are prone to overlook the fact that Elisha did see the translation of Elijah and so knew that he was receiving a double share of his spirit (2 Kings 2:9-12). The God who chose Israel as His people continued to shed multiplied grace on them. As we see His grace to His people through these prophets, we cannot but remember His grace to us through His Son.

In these last two weeks before Easter, no matter whether we read Old Testament history or New Testament lessons, our thoughts turn to Jesus the Christ, sent from the Father (John 17) and glorified by the Father (John 8:54). We behold the Holy One of God, the Christ, anointed with the Spirit and power, even as we remember that *we* can be what we are only by the grace of God. All this is in our mind as we look at

#### Elisha — Man of Grace

##### I. *Man of Grace — Holy to God*

A. Elijah felt "even I only am left" of all who were loyal to God (1 Kings 19:14), but there were 7,000 others. God's grace is not confined.

B. Elijah cast his mantle over Elisha (1 Kings 19:19 f.), God poured out His grace on Elisha, and Elisha followed Elijah



(2 Kings 3:11, 12). While Elijah was a man of thunder and lightning, Elisha was a man of dew and sunshine and mercy. God's grace works with varying gifts and talents. (1 Cor. 12:1 ff.)

C. As a "holy" man, Elisha belongs to God. God's Word is "holy" because it is His Word; the firstborn are "holy," for they are His (Ex. 13:2); the "Holy of Holies" is His dwelling place. Elisha is "holy," for he not merely is associated with God, but belongs to God.

D. Jesus Christ is God's holy Child. He belongs to God. As the Gospel for today stresses, He does not have a devil, but He and the Father are one. He is set apart. God's Holy One faces crucifixion, death, but His Holy One would see no corruption (Acts 2:27). In Pilate's presence they deny the Holy One. (Acts 3:14; cf. Acts 4:27)

E. Ours is a holiness because we are in Christ (the Epistle, Heb. 9:11-15). God laid hold of us, redeemed us in Christ. (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13)

### II. *Man of Grace — Concerned for God's People*

A. The wealthy woman of Shunem experienced what others did — Elisha's concern for God's own. Miracles followed: water of Jericho (2:19-22), child of Bethel (2:23-25), widow's oil (4:1-7), meal destroying the death in the pot (4:38-41), loaves multiplied (4:42-44), and even a floating ax (6:1-7). All these testified to God's concern of grace through Elisha. All needs are met by the grace of God.

B. Jesus of Nazareth is accused of having a demon (the day's Gospel). His sympathy for others manifested itself in miracles as a "sample" and "sign" of His concern and His ability to do all things well. Whether healing the blind (John 9) or raising the dead (John 11) He manifested the glory of God. He gave His life into death; this, too, was the hour of His glory (John 17).

Today's Epistle stresses the sacrifice of Christ that we might see His concern in the atonement. "A holy Man of God passeth by!"

C. Our conscience has been "purified from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Works that live are deeds done for the living as unto God.

### III. *Man of Grace — for All People*

A. God's grace is not only for Elisha, for God's people, but also for all people. Foreigners knew God's grace when Israel did not. (1 Kings 17:1, 8-16; 1 Kings 18:1; 2 Kings 5:1-14)

B. Israel runs to Baal (2 Kings 3:13), shows little respect for the prophet (2 Kings 2:23), unlike the woman of Shunem. Even a servant of the prophet of God seeks profit and is punished (2 Kings 5:27, Gehazi). Men today — even men under grace — prefer not to hear the words of God and reveal thereby the old nature that resists grace and that "is not of God."

C. Jesus of Nazareth is rejected by His own. The voices of foreigners, Pilate and the centurion, declare that there is no fault in Him. People who are "not-My-people" say He is righteous and the "Son of God."

D. Jesus' grace is for all, for the Jew first but not for him alone. Sinners afar off are justified. By His entering the Holy Place with His own blood He has secured an eternal redemption for all the world.

*Conclusion.* In death (2 Kings 13:21) the bones of Elisha were the means of a miracle of life. It is in the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth that we witness the miracle of life, our life, our eternal life. By His grace we are made men of grace.

### PALMARUM THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT

AMOS

AMOS 5:16-24

*The Propers.* The Lord appears at Jerusalem and is welcomed as David's Son. The



people remember well God's promised deliverance; they use Zechariah's words (Zech. 9): "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud," etc. Zechariah spoke such words in a background of doom against Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon. The prophet Amos, too, speaks of God's judgment against other nations and Israel. None escape the judgment. But the Epistle explains how our Lord undertook our deliverance, and the Introit Psalm dramatizes His suffering of our condemnation.

*Introduction.* Jesus came not to deliver Israel from her political enemies and gain a temporal victory. He came for judgment against sin and unbelief (John 9:39). He came to defeat Israel's own sins and the consequence of sin in the life of each of us. The people's welcome on Palm Sunday speaks of a hope that is but a match light compared with the sunlight of the victory assured on God's Friday. The palms are given on the wrong day!

In the midst of sin and doom today our Lord comes with victory to give away. He looks to us to live out our baptismal covenant pledge of loyalty to God and of renouncing the devil and his works. A Lord who weeps over Jerusalem for not knowing, for ignoring, who wept over Israel and Judah many times before, must He weep over God's people today?

#### Amos — Mourning over Israel

##### I. *Wrongs Committed*

A. The cruelty of nations such as Damascus (1:3), the slavery of Gaza (1:6), the unbrotherliness of Tyre (1:9), the pitilessness of Edom (1:11), the atrocities of Ammon (1:13), and the desecrations of Moab (2:1) were matched by Judah's rejection of the Lord's Law and Israel's sins of contempt for God and people. While Amos's message is for Israel, yet he speaks to the "whole family" (3:1), the house of Jacob (3:13). In every case doom for sins will come; for Israel and Judah also. (2:4, 6)

B. The wrongs of our nation are not unknown to God. Earth has a picture window — before God there are no secrets. He knows. "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Sin pays! — Rom. 6:23 — but "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

##### II. *Responsibility Ignored*

A. Israel was known by God, and Israel knew God (3:1, 2). They knew the "day of the Lord," when God would act. They remembered God's justice, righteousness, and power to save. And still they sinned.

B. God's triad of famine, drought, and blight would be sent. He had tried so often to have them return (5 times: "yet you did not return to Me"). Famine (4:6-10) failed; "Prepare to meet God." (4:12). There is no escape from judgment: locusts (7:1-3), plumb line (7:7-9), fire (7:7-9), summer fruit (8), the "Lord at the altar." (9:1-10)

C. Yet God's is a love that will not let Israel go, a love that seeks the lost sheep, kisses the prodigal son before he says, "I'm sorry," takes to His heart a faithless wife. This is His covenant love.

D. When we, His children, sin, He will punish, will plead, and will pardon with His grace in Christ Jesus, our Savior.

##### III. *Ritualism Abhorred*

A. The "noise of our songs," our "solemn assemblies," our "feasts" and festivals will not wipe away His tears for us.

B. Accompanying our worship must be our heart's attitude. We are unworthy; only He is worthy; and our "worth"-ship is in Him alone. In Christ alone is salvation; in none other, and this includes me.

##### IV. *Restoration Promised*

A. A remnant (5:15) may taste of His grace and love. All around us is hopelessness. Within us is despair.

B. But God acts (9:11-15). Restoration



is possible and promised with God. James quotes these words (Acts 15:15-17), for blessing comes even to the Gentiles. Israel is rebellious, and God's own people kill their Christ. But God is merciful and gracious. While we and they are yet sinners, He died FOR US.

C. In the midst of deserved doom and impending judgment God Himself gives hope and forgiveness.

*Conclusion.* Jesus calls us to mourn not for Him, not for Israel, but for ourselves, who commit wrongs, ignore responsibilities, play with our rituals. Our tears of repentance are wiped away by His hand, His crucified hand.

Elmhurst, Ill. GEORGE W. BORNEMANN

### TEXTUAL STUDIES

#### *A Study in Amos 5:16-24*

*The Prophet.* Amos prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (787—746), possibly from 760—750 (7:10, 11). He came from Tekoah at the borderline of the Judean desert about 10 miles south of Jerusalem. By occupation he was a shepherd and dressed fig-mulberry trees (7:14). God called him and sent him to Israel (the Northern Kingdom) as a prophet. After some years in Israel, he was accused of inciting a rebellion against the king and deported (7:12). In point of time he was the first of the great prophets. Through him we know something about the religious, social, and economic conditions of eighth-century Israel.

*The Historical Setting.* Before 722 B. C., Israel was the greater of the two states, a result of the fatal policy of Rehoboam in 922 B. C. Bethel, Gilgal, and Samaria were the centers of national interest. Since it was more exposed to hostile nations than Judah, it entered more readily into the arena of international diplomacy. For over 100 years

Israel had been controlled by Syria. Hazael began the conquest of Israel, and Benhadad III completed it. Israel had been reduced to a vassal state. When Assyria attacked Syria, Israel found itself free to act. Under Jehoash and Jeroboam II, Israel freed itself from Syrian control and extended its borders. During this time Israel experienced great prosperity, which brought luxury and licence. The religious observances were retained, but they became hollow. The connection between religion and morality was increasingly ignored. Injustice, aggression, dishonesty, and sexual immorality flourished. Beliefs, practices, and rites of Canaanite deities were introduced into the worship of the Lord. The national life was corrupt. If Israel remained as it was, it could have no hope for the future. Assyria would overrun it.

*The Message.* Amos was sent to Israel to reveal the deep-seated corruption. He came to sound the last alarm before the end. His goal was to avert Israel's doom, if possible. If it would heed his call and repent, there would be hope. If not, the day of the Lord would come upon it. This day would not spell deliverance but judgment. Luxury, unrighteousness, and *pro forma* religion can only arouse God's wrath and cause judgment to descend.

For Amos, God is the Lord of all nations and all nature. He had revealed His power in history by saving for Himself a nation, Israel. He preserved this nation by His free choice. He commanded it to live by His will. As long as it obeyed God's will, it remained in the covenant. By disobedience Israel had forfeited the covenant protection. Because of its behavior Amos had to tell Israel that the day of the Lord would bring judgment rather than deliverance. In destroying His people God would vindicate His righteousness.

*The Book.* The book falls into three parts: (1) an introduction (1-2); (2) three sermons elaborating on the accusations made in



the introduction (3-6); and (3) a number of visions based on the preceding sermons (7-9). The third sermon makes up the immediate context (5-6). It speaks of the imminence of doom (5:1-17), the day of the Lord (18-27), the worthlessness of the nobles (6:1-7), and again emphasizes total destruction (6:8-14).

*The Text.* The text can be divided into three sections: (1) the impending lament (vv. 16-17); (2) the day of the Lord as judgment over Israel (18-20), and (3) the rejection of worship without justice (21-24).

V. 16. The rich city dwellers had reduced the poor country people to serfdom and often to outright slavery. Through Amos the covenant of God (Yahweh, cf. Ex. 3:14; 20:1), the Lord of His people (cf. Amos 7:7-8), and the God of the hosts of heaven and earth (Josh. 5:14, 15; 1 Sam. 17:45), speaks to the rich in Israel. They disregard His will and pervert justice in the gate. Therefore He announces that there will be lamentations in every broad open place because of the destruction of Israel's army (cf. Micah 1:11). Everywhere outside the houses within the city walls people will say, "Woe, woe!" The rapacious city dwellers will have to call on the poor, oppressed farmers to mourn for their dead (cf. 8:10). The professional wailers will not be available. They will lament with the other people of the city over the loss of their loved ones. (Cf. 5:3; Jer. 9:17-19)

V. 17. Rich city dwellers will not only lament over their dead in the city. They will carry on the lament in their expensive orchards and vineyards, which they planted with money and goods extorted from the poor farmers (cf. 5:11). God will pass through Israel and strike down their sons as He once did in Egypt (cf. Ex. 12:12). They oppress the poor country people as the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites (cf. 8:4-6).

Vv. 18-20. The prophet speaks a woe upon the rich who desire the day of the Lord. They think that it will be a day of deliverance from all enemies (cf. Micah 7:8-10). God will judge the sinners and reward the righteous (Is. 2:12; 13:6, 9; Zeph. 1:7-9), they said. Instead the day of the Lord will be a day of judgment also for Israel (cf. Joel 2:1, 2, 31). To drive home the point that judgment is inescapable under the present condition, Amos uses an illustration. The rich will be like a man who meets a lion on the road. He turns around and runs. Hardly has he fled a few yards when he is met by a bear. Should he escape the bear and arrive home safely, a serpent will bite and kill him. At the conclusion of the illustration he repeats his words about the day of the Lord. He is concerned that the people take him seriously. The connection between "day of the Lord" and "deliverance" is so close that the prophet has to hammer away at it before he gets through. He stresses that the day of the Lord will consist in the gloom of captivity rather than in the brightness of God's eternal presence.

Vv. 21-23. God hates and despises the pilgrim festivals (cf. 8:10; Ex. 23:15-17) of the rich. They can afford to make the trips to Bethel and Gilgal and bring the required sacrifices. The poor farmers have to serve as their slaves. God could not accept sacrifices which were produced by unrighteous slave labor. Through injustice they had become slaves of the rich city dwellers. The sacrifices involved are in particular livestock and produce of the land. These are the things which the rich can produce cheaply since they control the land. The rich mulct the poor and use some of the abundance for their religious obligations. This is not worship; this is manipulation. God is reduced to an idol who produces on demand. In such worship God cannot find any delight. He must reject and condemn it.

The rich worship God with such a multi-



tude of songs and harps that the result of their endeavor is not harmony but cacophony. The same people lie upon their ivory couches at home, and sing idle songs upon the harp. They eat lambs from the flock and calves from the stall, drink wine out of bowls, and anoint themselves with olive oil (cf. 6: 4-7). They use the same instruments and the same type of song (רִנָּה) for their revelings as they employ for worship.

V. 24. Instead of the kind of worship that

justifies extortion and oppression (cf. 5:7, 17; 16:12) and resembles the revelries of the rich, God asks for justice in the gates where decisions are made and conduct that is honest and upright before God and men. Micah states, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8)

Wentzville, Mo. JAKOB H. HECKERT