48). November 23-29—Obadiah; Jonah; Amos

1) Amos 1:13—**Pregnant Women of Gilead** ~760 BC

The Prophet Amos pronounced God's judgment against Ammon for atrocities committed against pregnant Israelite women: "they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border." Gilead, the Israelite territory east of the Jordan River, faced frequent Ammonite incursions as they sought to expand westward into fertile Israelite lands. The deliberate targeting of pregnant women served a strategic purpose to eliminate the next generation and prevent future resistance and depopulate the land for Ammonite settlement.

This brutal warfare tactic, also practiced by other ancient Near Eastern armies (2 Kgs 8:12; 15:16; Hos 13:16), represented the ultimate violation: destroying both present and future life. These Gileadean mothers died defending their homeland, their unborn children murdered to facilitate territorial conquest. God's refusal to "turn away the punishment" for this crime demonstrated that even in warfare, certain boundaries remain sacred, and those who murder the defenseless (like, pregnant mothers and their unborn children) face divine retribution. ***(See *2 Kgs 8:12; *Hos 13:16)***

2) Amos 2:7—**Maid is Profaned** ~760 BC

The Prophet Amos condemned northern Israel's elite for sex where "a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name." The abused girl was most likely enslaved, or orphaned which made her particularly vulnerable to predatory behavior from men who should have protected her. The phrase "go in unto" indicates sexual intimacy. Even if she were a concubine for one, the other abused her, revealing the depth of Israel's moral corruption. Servant or slave girls suffered repeatedly from sexual violation by masters.

Such exploitation violated Levitical law that forbid sexual relations outside of wedlock and specifically with close relatives' wives (Lev 18:15; 20:11–12). This demonstrated callous disregard for human dignity. Amos linked this sexual sin also to profaning God's holy name, showing that sexual sin, and poor treatment of the powerless destroyed Israel's covenant relationship with God. Her abuse embodied the wickedness that pervaded northern Israel before its destruction in 722 BC. ***(See *Lev 18:6-18; *Ezk 18:6)***

3) Amos 4:1—**Cows/Women of Bashan** ~760 BC

Amos delivered one of scripture's most scathing rebukes to wealthy women, using the biting metaphor of cows for women: "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, 'Bring us some drinks!'" (Amo 4:1, NIV). The prophet compared elite Samarian women to the famous cattle of Bashan, a region east of the Sea of Galilee renowned for its lush pastures and well-fed livestock (Deu 32:14; Ps 22:12). Just as Bashan's cows grew fat on abundant grazing, these women lived in pampered luxury while the poor suffered.

Amos held these women accountable for loving wealth and actively participating in oppression. They "oppress the poor" and "crush the needy" by demanding that their husbands provide endless luxuries, pressuring the men to exploit workers, seize property, and pervert justice to fund their extravagant lifestyle (Amo 2:6-7; 5:11-12; 8:4-6). Their command "Bring us some drinks!" revealed hearts focused solely on pleasure and consumption, indifferent to how their demands devastated less fortunate families.

4) Amos 5:2—**The Fallen Virgin of Israel** (Fictional) ~760 BC

Amos lamented the coming destruction of northern Israel using the image of a fallen virgin: "The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up." The metaphor of Israel as a virgin portrayed the nation in her youth and purity, but now she lay dead and abandoned on the ground with no one to rescue or revive her. In ancient Israel, a virgin's death before marriage was particularly tragic—she died without fulfilling her expected role as wife and mother, leaving no descendants to carry on her family line.

The image of lying "forsaken upon her land" evoked a body left unburied, the ultimate dishonor in ancient Near Eastern culture. The phrase "there is none to raise her up" emphasized Israel's complete desolation—no ally, no protector, no redeemer remained to restore her. This prophecy was fulfilled when Assyria conquered Samaria in 722 BC, scattering the 10 northern tribes and ending Israel's existence as an independent kingdom. Amos's funeral dirge mourned not a future possibility but an inevitable reality, treating Israel's destruction as already accomplished because of her persistent rebellion against God's covenant.

5) Amos 7:17—**Wife and Daughters of Amaziah** ~760 BC

Amos pronounced devastating judgment on Amaziah, a priest of the northern town of Bethel, declaring "Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword." Attempting to silence God's prophet, Amaziah had commanded Amos to stop prophesying against the northern kingdom and return to his hometown in the southern kingdom (Amo 7:12–13). The prophet's response targeted Amaziah's entire household, particularly the women who would suffer the consequences of his rebellion.

The priest's wife would become "an harlot in the city," possibly meaning that she would be raped by conquering soldiers or forced into prostitution to survive after losing her husband's protection and status. His daughters would "fall by the sword," killed in the Assyrian invasion that destroyed Samaria in 722 BC. These women, accustomed to the privilege and honor of belonging to a priestly family in Israel, would experience the ultimate degradation and violent death.

The prophecy illustrated how leadership's sin brought catastrophic consequences upon innocent family members, especially women whose social standing and physical safety depended mainly on male relatives in that culture. Amaziah's wife and daughters became casualties of his choice to oppose God's prophet and maintain the corrupt religious system at Bethel (Amo 7:10–11). Their fate embodied the complete reversal of fortune that awaited Israel's elite when divine judgment finally fell.

6) Amos 8:13—**Fair Virgins Faint** ~760 BC

Amos prophesied a coming spiritual famine when "the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst." This thirst was not for liquid but for "hearing the words of the LORD" (Amo 8:11). The "fair virgins" (or young women in the prime of their youthful beauty and purity) represented Israel's future generation, those who should have been full of vitality and hope. Instead, they would wander desperately seeking divine guidance that God had withdrawn because of Israel's persistent rebellion.

When God's people ignore Him, even the strongest and most promising members of society cannot survive spiritually. These virgins, who should have been preparing for marriage and motherhood, would instead stagger in confusion, unable to find direction or meaning. The prophecy warned that because Israel had taken God's prophetic word for granted and rejected the prophets, the day would come when they desperately wanted to hear from God but could not (Amo 8:12). These fair virgins embodied a generation that would inherit the consequences of spiritual bankruptcy, suffering a famine more devastating than any physical drought.

JONAH: Jesus used part of Jonah's life as a type of His Resurrection (Lk 11:29-32; Mt 12:39-41; 16:4). It is the Galilean women at the empty tomb and Mary of Magdalene specifically who become the first witnesses of Jesus's resurrection.

The book of Jonah has a chiastic structure across the entire book, chapter 1, and 1:3 **(**Wendland, Ernst. "Text Analysis and the Genre of Jonah, Part 2." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 3 (1996): 373–95)

A (1:1–3) — The LORD calls Jonah to go to Nineveh; Jonah flees

B (1:3–4) — Jonah vs. the LORD: Jonah's flight and the LORD's storm

C (1:5–13) — Dialogue between sailors and Jonah: the "fear" motif

D (1:14–2:1)—Sailors pray to the LORD; Jonah cast into the sea; the fish swallows him

E (2:2–9) —Jonah's prayer from the belly of the fish

D' (2:10–3:4) — The fish vomits Jonah; the LORD calls again; Jonah goes to Nineveh

C' (3:5–9) — Dialogue between Ninevites and their king: the "fear/repentance" motif

B' (4:1–9) — Jonah vs. the LORD: Jonah's anger and the LORD's compassion

A' (4:10–11) — The LORD's final word: His compassion for Nineveh

The theological significance of each pairing:

A / A' — The LORD's call to care for Nineveh bookends the entire book. Jonah begins by running from it and ends by resisting it. The LORD's question in 4:11, "Should I not spare Nineveh?", is the answer to everything Jonah refused in 1:1–3.

B / B' — Both sections feature Jonah in direct conflict with the LORD. In B, the LORD uses a storm to stop Jonah's physical flight. In B', the LORD uses a plant, a worm, and a scorching wind to challenge Jonah's spiritual flight from compassion.

C / C' — The pagan sailors and the pagan Ninevites mirror each other perfectly. Both groups respond to divine confrontation with genuine fear, repentance, and prayer — while Jonah, the Israelite prophet, does neither willingly.

D / D' — Both sections involve Jonah being physically moved by divine action. In D, he is cast into the sea and swallowed. In D', he is vomited out and recommissioned. Both involve reluctant obedience.

E — THE CENTER: Jonah's psalm from the fish's belly is the theological heart of the entire book. From a structural point of view, Jonah displays five parts rather than four, a situation somewhat different from the four-chapter division of the Masoretic tradition. The prayer in 2:2–9 is the only moment Jonah genuinely turns to the LORD — which makes the book's bitter irony complete: the man who prayed from the belly of a fish refused to celebrate when 120,000 people prayed from the belly of a condemned city

Jonah 1 is also chiastically organized:

A (1:1–2) — The LORD commands Jonah: go to Nineveh
B (1:3) — Jonah flees from the LORD toward Tarshish/Spain
C (1:4–5a) — The LORD hurls a great storm; sailors are afraid
D (1:5b–6) — Jonah sleeps below; the captain confronts him
E (1:7–8) —the sailors cast lots; Jonah is identified
D' (1:9–10) — Jonah confesses; the sailors are exceedingly afraid
C' (1:11–13) — The storm grows; the sailors row desperately
B' (1:14–15) — The sailors pray to the LORD; Jonah is hurled into the sea
A' (1:16) — The sailors fear the LORD greatly and offer sacrifices

Jonah 1:3 is a micro chiasmus

A. Jonah rose up to flee **unto Tarshish from the presence of the LOR**D,
B. **and went down** to Joppa;
C. and **he found** a **ship** going to Tarshish:
c'. so **he paid** the **fare** thereof,
b'. **and went down** into it,
a'. to go with them **unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD**.