



[Amos 5:18-20](#)

(18) Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

For what good *is* the day of the LORD to you?

It *will be* darkness, and not light.

(19) It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion,

And a bear met him!

Or *as though* he went into the house,

Leaned his hand on the wall,

And a serpent bit him!

(20) *Is not* the day of the LORD darkness, and not light?

Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

New King James Version

These verses bear a definite affinity with Jeremiah 7, where the prophet warns his audience against giving heed to “deceptive words” (verse 4) and behind them, of course, fallacious doctrines. These people “entered these gates [of the Temple] to worship the LOORD” (verse 2). Yet, much like those to whom Amos spoke earlier, they were guilty of perpetrating vast social injustices, justifying themselves all the while in the name of religion. Jeremiah asks, rhetorically:

Will you steal, murder, commit [adultery](#), swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, “We are delivered!”—only to go on doing all these abominations? (verse 9)

He has already pointed out the moral depravity, however:

For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the

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widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever. (verses 5-7)

These people considered themselves safe because of their religious heritage, typified most saliently in Solomon's Temple (verse 4). They thought, “[God](#) would never destroy that!” God instructs the people otherwise, asking them in verse 12 to go “now to My place that was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of My people Israel.” History has shown that the threats of the “severe” God are not idle:

Therefore I will do to the house that is called by My name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of My sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim. (verses 14-15)

— Charles Whitaker

To learn more, see:

[The Goodness and Severity of God \(Part Two\)](#)

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