



## Amos 5.<sup>10-13</sup>— meditation

---

- <sup>10</sup>They hate those who call for justice in governance.  
They abhor those who speak truthfully.
- <sup>11</sup>Therefore, because of your plundering of the vulnerable  
by the grain taxes you extract from them,  
you have built the most luxurious of homes,  
but you will not live in them;  
you have planted cherished vineyards  
but you will not drink their wine.
- <sup>12</sup>For I am well aware of the magnitude of your criminality,  
and the vastness of your corruption:  
oppressing the innocent, taking bribes,  
and deny the impoverished a hearing.
- <sup>13</sup>The one prospering in such times remains mute,  
for such times are depraved (author's translation)

Amos was a brave man and faithful, honest messenger of God. We must honor him by being equally brave and honest. Indeed, he lamented the wickedness of cowardly and self-serving silence during depraved times such as ours. Such cowardly and self-serving silence is, in very truth, a sign of personal depravity—one that deepens societal depravity. Here, then, is his lament and warning.

The one prospering in such times remains mute,  
for such times are depraved.

Those who are prospering because of societal depravity, going unscathed by its wickedness, must not remain silent and inactive.

So, what sorts of times can be called, “depraved”? Amos describes some of them in this reading. For starters, in speaking of the wealthy and powerful, Amos charged,

“They hate those who call for justice in governance.  
They abhor those who speak truthfully.”

This “justice in governance” takes in more than justice in our criminal justice system. It most certainly includes justice in legislative laws, policies, and programs. But it does most definitely include criminal justice. So, here is my breakout from muteness.

Recently, a sitting member of congress, Representative Louie Gohmert of Texas, complained in all seriousness and on camera before an audience of perhaps millions, “If you're a Republican, you can't even lie to Congress or lie to an FBI agent or they're coming after you.” Just let that sink in. A sitting member of congress is incensed that one cannot lie with impunity; incensed that liars might be held accountable.

This bit of depraved indifference to justice was spewed in response to the arrest of Peter Navarro against whom a grand jury of peers, after being presented with evidence, issued a two-count indictment for contempt of congress. In spite of having openly expressed his contempt for congress on camera before millions, Navarro has expressed outrage that he was arrested and handcuffed. Oh, the nerve of treating him like every other criminal! Don't they know who he is?

You see, both men think that the rich and powerful such as themselves should not be held accountable for their criminal behavior. Just like ancient Israel's wealthy and powerful, they attempt to establish one set of laws for the ordinary Joe and another set for the high and mighty. Gohmert, Navarro, dozens and dozens of U.S. representatives and senators, and a certain treasonous former president despise justice and truth. They despise it as a basis of governance. And they certainly despise it as a basis for holding the wealthy and powerful accountable for their depraved indifference to justice.

Tragically, this American depravity is eerily similar to that which Amos observed in 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Israel and described in verse 10. But this is not the extent of 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Israelite depravity. Unfortunately, it is not the extent—not even close—of America's 2022 depravity. As Amos goes on to describe further and deeper depravities, we will follow Amos' example of truthfulness in the face of depravity in subsequent meditations.

We would love to compose only light and happy fare filled with naught but “the pleasing word of God... which healeth the wounded soul.”<sup>1</sup> But, we, like Amos, live in depraved times. We will not be complicit in the depravity through self-interested silence and cowardly inaction. We will, rather, like Amos, remind those whose conscious has not yet been completely “seared with a hot iron.”<sup>2</sup> that the word of God warns and informs; that sometimes, before it can comfort it must discomfort, sometimes with the sharpness of a “two-edged sword.”<sup>3</sup> With its piercing warning, it can liberate us from the values and principles of the ungodly, the unethical, the corrupt, and the anti-social. It can liberate us from the depravities of our time and nation. It can guide us toward a society that is healthy and enduring. It can guide us into the kingdom of God.

So, yes, we are so bold as to invite others to avoid the muteness that has so often been found among those who have prospered in the midst of depravity; among those who dared not risk that which “moth and rust doth corrupt.”<sup>4</sup> among those who have, themselves have not felt the pinch of injustice that so many have and do. Let's not fall prey to same muteness of Amos' day.

The one prospering in such times remains mute,  
for such times are depraved.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

*(edition: april 23, 2024)*

---

<sup>1</sup> See Jacob 2.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 4.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 4.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 6.<sup>19</sup>