

Amos

Amos 2:14-16: "Flight will perish from the swift, and the stalwart will not strengthen his power, nor the mighty man save his life. 15 "He who grasps the bow will not stand his ground, the swift of foot will not escape, nor will he who rides the horse save his life. 16 "Even the bravest among the warriors will flee naked in that day," declares the LORD.

In verses fourteen through sixteen, Amos warns the rebellious people of Israel. As they knowingly continued sinning and thinking they could escape God's judgment, they were dead wrong. Amos' declaration aims to dispel their mistaken idea that they were safe and, if things got bad, they could save themselves; they had an exit strategy. The swift thought they could run from their trouble; the strong believed they could fight their way out; the mighty believed they could use their wits and resources to stay safe. They are all wrong—Who can run from or outrun God? Where can one go to avoid God? *Psalm 139:7-12, 147:10-12; Proverbs 21:31; Ecclesiastes 9:11-12; Isaiah 31:1, 47:10-15*

Psalm 139:7-12: Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in [a]Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night," 12 even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

Psalm 147:10-11: He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. 11 The Lord favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.

Proverbs 21:31: The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 9:11-12: I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all. 12 Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

Isaiah 31:1: Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord!

Isaiah 47:10-15: "You felt secure in your wickedness and said, 'No one sees me,' your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; for you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me.' 11 "But evil will come on you which you will not know how to charm away; and disaster will fall on you for which you cannot atone; and destruction about which you do not know will come on you suddenly. 12 "Stand fast now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. 13 "You are wearied with your many counsels; let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. 14 "Behold, they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there will be no coal to warm by nor a fire to sit before! 15 "So have those become to you with whom you have labored, who have trafficked with you from your youth; each has wandered in his own way; there is none to save you.

Judgment Against the whole house of Israel

Amos 3:1-2: Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt: 2 "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.

The next four chapters continue with the same theme. God recounts His calling and blessings upon the whole house of Israel – all 12 tribes (*against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family*), along with their utter disregard for these blessings, privileges, and responsibilities that come with being God's special possession. Amos also delivers the dire consequences for their attitudes and actions in disregarding God and His patience

Beginning with Chapter 3:1-8, God shows or delivers His right to judge the nation on account of their sins. From Chapter 3:9-4:3, the wickedness of Israel is exposed, in general. Amos decries the worthlessness of the nation trusting in their idols in Chapter 4:4-13. Then, finally, in Chapters 5 and 6, Amos is given the distasteful and undesirable responsibility of announcing the coming destruction of the kingdom, the inevitable consequence of their wickedness, and rebellion exhibited in the prevailing ungodliness and injustice. *Ezekiel 18:30-32, 33:11; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:8-9; Titus 2:11-13*

Ezekiel 18:30-32: "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. 31 "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

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Ezekiel 33:11: "Say to them, "As I live!" declares the Lord GOD, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?"

1 Timothy 2:3-4: This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:8-9: But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Titus 2:11-13: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus

In the first two chapters, God addressed both nations separately, Judah first and then Israel; their sinners were similar; thus, their judgments would mirror one another. What God said to His people remains true for His people today; we are to watch and pray that we do not likewise fall into the same pit of thinking as God's people we rate special treatment or graces. ***Matthew 26:40-41; Mark 13:33-37***

Matthew 26:40-41: And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Mark 13:33-37: "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. 34 "It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. 35 "Therefore, be on the alert -- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning - 36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 "What I say to you I say to all, "Be on the alert!"

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Beginning in Chapter 3, God levels His charge is against the whole house of Israel, again, all 12 tribes (*against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family*). Israel's special relationship with the Lord (*You only have I chosen*) led to the punishment to come upon them (*I will punish you for all your iniquities*). Israel had special privileges – the Word of God, being led out of the land of Egypt by God (*He brought up from the land of Egypt*), having the visible presence of God, and the many prophets God had sent to them to correct and encourage. They ignored and rejected all of God's many blessings and went their own way. *Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 7:7-8; 10:15-16; 26:18-19; Psalm 147:19-20; Romans 3:1-3; 11:28-29; Acts 7:38*

Exodus 19:3-6: Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'

Deuteronomy 7:7-8: 'The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.'

Deuteronomy 10:15-16: 'Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. 16 'So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.'

Deuteronomy 26:18-19: 'The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; 19 and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken.'

Psalms 147:19-20: He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. 20 He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!

Romans 3:1-3: Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

Romans 11:28-29: From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Acts 7:30,35,38: "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush. ... 35 "this Moses whom they disowned, saying, "who made you a ruler and a judge?" is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. ... 38 "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers, and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

Acts 7:51-53: "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

Amos 3:3-6: Do two men walk together unless they have made an appointment? 4 Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something? 5 Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground when there is no bait in it? Does a trap spring up from the earth when it captures nothing at all? 6 If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?

God lays out the cause and effect of the trouble to beset Israel. The first charge against Israel is that their relationship was a mutual agreement. God is not arbitrarily picking Israel out for punishment; they had formed an agreement, a covenant, which Israel was violating. Two men do not walk together unless it has been arranged – to walk with God, one must walk by his standards. *Genesis 17:1-2; Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:6-7*

Genesis 17:1-2: Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly."

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Leviticus 19:2: "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

1 Peter 1:14-16: As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

1 John 1:6-8: If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

4 Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something?

The metaphors of verses 4 through 6, connected to the relationship identified in verse 2, lay out the basis for the pronouncements in verses seven and eight, judgment is coming because of their sin, and Israel cannot feign ignorance. God is using earthly examples that all the people understood and agreed to drive home the certainty of His coming judgment. First, God rhetorically asks, “*Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey?*,” i.e., does a lion roar for nothing? Secondly, God similarly asks, “*Does a young lion growl from his den*” when he has nothing to protect – the answer to both questions is, No, of course not. Both speak of death and is showing God is not sending His prophets but that He is already to the point of judging the people. ***Hosea 5:14-15***

Hosea 5:14-15: For I will be like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver. 15 I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

5 Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground when there is no bait in it? Does a trap spring up from the earth when it captures nothing at all?

In verse 5, God uses the example of a bird being captured in a trap. The bird is not captured unless the trap is sprung; the bird springs the trap when it goes for the bait in the trap. Israel had sprung the trap in pursuing the bait of pleasure in sin; a trap spring does not release unless something releases the trap – someone had to set the trap. Judgment does not come, if one does not pursue the bait and trip the trap. ***Proverbs 20:17; Hebrews 11:24-25***

Proverbs 20:17: Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

Hebrews 11:24-25: By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin

6 If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?

In verse 6, God looks at the safety of the people in a fortified city. Until trouble comes, the trumpet is not sounded, but once the trumpet is sounded, the certainty of trouble has arrived. The people of the city are no-longer safe, as they were before the trumpet was blown. The sounding of the prophets is the blowing of the trumpet in the city; the *calamity* coming upon the people is by the doing of the Lord – Amos was giving the warning to all that the judgment of God was coming upon them. ***Psalm 10:9-10; 91:2-3; 104:21;; Ezekiel 33:2-4; Daniel 9:13-14; Joel 2:1***

Ezekiel 33:2-4: "Son of man, speak to the sons of your people and say to them, "If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows on the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head.

Daniel 9:13-14: "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. 14 "Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

Joel 2:1: Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; surely it is near,

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Amos 3:7-8: Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. 8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

God is merciful – even when judgment is due, God first warns the people through those who are called by Him and serve Him – the prophets – Amos in this case. Amos was not a professional prophet – he was a farmer called of God to deliver this message – and he did. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has roared and called for judgment. *Genesis 6:13; 18:17-18; Psalm 25:14; Jeremiah 20:9; John 15:15; Acts 4:19-20; 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 9:16*

Genesis 6:13: Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

Genesis 18:17-18: The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?"

Psalms 25:14: The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant.

Jeremiah 20:9: But if I say, "I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name," then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it.

John 15:15: "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Acts 4:19-20: But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Acts 5:19-20: But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, 20 "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

1 Corinthians 9:16: For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.

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Amos 3:9-10: Proclaim on the citadels in Ashdod and on the citadels in the land of Egypt and say, "Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria and see the great tumults within her and the oppressions in her midst. 10 "But they do not know how to do what is right," declares the LORD, "these who hoard up violence and devastation in their citadels."

God instructs Amos to declare or publish the upcoming judgment of Israel in the palaces of the ungodly – the pagans, those that do not know God, the Philistines and Egyptians.
Matthew 10:26-27

Matthew 10:26-27: "Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

How far had the nation of Israel fallen away from God that the ungodly were called on to view:

- the acts of violence and the abominations in the palaces of Samaria
- and to bear witness against Israel; justify God and affirm His fairness

Even these idolaters, in looking on the iniquities of Israel, will condemn them, how much more will the Holy God! The ungodly will declare the Lord is just; man is unjust. Likewise, God summoned the pagans that they may themselves take warning; for, if judgment begins at the house of God, as they will see it does, what shall be the end of those estranged from Him? **1 Peter 4:15-19; Revelation 6:9-10**

1 Peter 4:15-17: Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Revelation 6:9-10: When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

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Israel had fallen so far from God, they did not, could not, do right – they had lost all sense of moral direction. They had the new morality – do whatever feels good. They had filled their treasuries with their immorality – oppressions, murder, robbery and adultery – and their insatiable lust for more of everything – money, power, possessions, and immorality. **1 Kings 21:1-16; Jeremiah 22:13-17; Micah 3:1-4; Habakkuk 2:9-12**

Micah 3:1-4: And I said, "Hear now, heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel is it not for you to know justice? 2 "You who hate good and love evil, who tear off their skin from them and their flesh from their bones, 3 Who eat the flesh of my people, strip off their skin from them, break their bones and chop them up as for the pot and as meat in a kettle." 4 Then they will cry out to the LORD, but He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time because they have practiced evil deeds.

Habakkuk 2:9-12: "Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house to put his nest on high, to be delivered from the hand of calamity! 10 "You have devised a shameful thing for your house by cutting off many peoples; so you are sinning against yourself. 11 "Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, and the rafter will answer it from the framework. 12 "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with violence!

Amos 3:11-12: Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "An enemy, even one surrounding the land, will pull down your strength from you and your citadels will be looted." 12 Thus says the LORD, "Just as the shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth a couple of legs or a piece of an ear, so will the sons of Israel dwelling in Samaria be snatched away -- with the corner of a bed and the cover of a couch!

The adversary was the king of Assyria, who defeated Israel and took them into captivity – hence the lost ten tribes of Israel. The palaces of Israel were destroyed – their ruins are with us today. **2 Kings 17:1-23, 18:9-12**

In the Law, if one man lost another's man livestock, for which he was responsible for he was not required to make restitution if he could produce partial remains of the animal. The destruction of Israel would be the natural cause and effect of ignoring God and His commandments. **Exodus 22:10-15**

The destruction will be complete and nothing of will be left of value. They will not be able to escape; wherever they turn, they will run head long into an enemy. Those that escape the judgments will escape with as great difficulty.

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The corner of a bed and the cover of the couch – while they are sitting in their palaces, in their places of honor, the lion will snatch and destroy them (as a lamb from the flock). Judgment will come on Israel (Samaria to Damascus - Jeroboam II defeated Syria and took Damascus for Israel). **2 Kings 14:25-28**

Amos 3:13-14: "Hear and testify against the house of Jacob," declares the Lord GOD, the God of hosts. 14 "For on the day that I punish Israel's transgressions, I will also punish the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and they will fall to the ground.

The horns on the altar were sacred to the Israelites and symbolized power, safety and security. The horns held the sacrifice to the altar as part of the ceremony and is where the blood of the sacrifice was applied – cutting is a symbol of rejection (to be cutoff). **Leviticus 4:30; 1 Kings 1:50, 2:28**

Jeroboam set up an altar to imitate the altar of God in Jerusalem; God pronounced His rejection of Jeroboam's altar at the would-be consecration. Although Jeroboam had faithfully copied the outward form of worship, he could not duplicate nor have true worship with man-made worship. **1 Kings 13:1-5; 2 Kings 23:15-16**

One hundred and fifty years had passed since God's rejection of Jeroboam's altar had been given by the prophet – but the judgment still stood. Although the day was not yet and Josiah was still unborn, Amos renews the sentence – to reaffirm God's righteousness and mercy – as a warning. **2 Peter 3:2-9**

Jeroboam's attempt to replicate true worship with his own version, drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. False worship and heresy are more deceiving as they attempt to make themselves look like true worship, but they are nonetheless deadly; false worship and heresy never stop – they continue to develop themselves, never stopping and spread like cancer. **2 Kings 17:21-23; John 4:22; 1 Corinthians 10:20-22; Colossians 2:8-12**

The patience of God for enduring the sins of the people had ended, He was going to vindicate His holiness and "visit their transgressions" (all their sins, those remembered and those forgotten, those old and new) – because they had not repented and they had rejected the only way the Lord had provided to remove the stain of their sins – Him! Man's sin is not only the cause for his punishment, but becomes part of his punishment – it returns upon his own head as it were. **Acts 17:30-31**

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Amos 3:15 "I will also smite the winter house together with the summer house; the houses of ivory will also perish and the great houses will come to an end," declares the LORD.

The destruction of the inhabitants of Israel will be full and complete – not only the poor habitations and villages in the country will be destroyed, but so will the residences of royalty in the fortified cities. The leaders of Israel had built for themselves opulent summer and winter homes, while oppressing and taking advantage of the people. Winter houses of the great were in sheltered positions facing the south, to get all possible sunshine; summer houses in forests and on hills, facing the east and north. ***Judges 3:20; Jeremiah 36:22***

Ahab and Jezebel had built a house of ivory – their magnificent winter home, not built of ivory, but in which ivory vessels, ornaments, and inlaying abounded. ***1 Kings 22:39; Psalm 45:8***