

AMOS, part 2 – THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

Last week we looked at a book that many people don't even know is in the Bible, the book of Amos. Amos belongs to a group of books that is called the "minor prophets." Amos is not a "feel good" kind of book. Amos' job was to pronounce God's judgment on the nations, on Israel and on Judah because they had forsaken the true God. That is a serious job, and Amos was not a likely candidate for the job. He lived in the wilderness of Judea in a small town called "Tekoa" where he worked as a shepherd and farmer. The interesting thing is that Amos lived in the southern kingdom called "Judah," but God sent him to declare judgment on the rival northern kingdom called "Israel." He is an example to us of how God can use the most unlikely of people if they are surrendered to do His will. Last week we looked more at the man himself. This week, we will look more at the message.

GOD IS JUDGE OVER ALL

You can't read the book of Amos without understanding the fact that God is a God of Judgment.

Amos 1:1-2, "The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—what he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel. 2 He said: "The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers."

The word "roar" has to do with a lion roaring. The lion doesn't roar while it is stalking its prey. The roar comes just at the moment when he begins to make the jump, as he begins the attack.

God Almighty will roar. He will come in judgment. In chapter one, God pronounces judgment against different cities and nations. He tells how the city or nation sinned and then He tells how He is going to judge them.

1. GOD JUDGES PEOPLE WHO IGNORE HIS TRUTH

God places high value on His truth.

Psalm 138:2, "I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word."

It doesn't take long as you read Scripture to see that it is highly exalted in God's eyes. In spite of that, people often pick and choose what they want to believe about God and His ways. The people Amos spoke to were looking forward to what the Bible calls "The day of the Lord." "The Day of the Lord" is a period of time during which God judges His enemies and establishes His kingdom on earth. It's the answer to our prayer, "Thy kingdom come" and is described in [Revelation](#) and many passages in the books of the prophets.

The problem with these people is that they heard only what they wanted to hear about Day of the Lord. They looked forward to the Day of the Lord as a time when God would punish the Gentile nations who had done wrong. What they forgot was the fact that God would also deal with the Jews who did wrong.

Amos 5:18, "Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light."

Amos said, "When you are talking about God and what He will and won't do, make sure you get your facts right. If the Day of the Lord came today, you would be in big trouble.

People are still the same today. They believe what they want to believe and reject the rest. I have heard many people justify their sin by saying something like this, "I know God wants me to be happy, so if doing this makes me happy, it must be alright with God."

It's not going to do us any good to believe things about God that are not true because God remains who He is regardless of what we might say. The Bible tells us that God is loving, merciful and full of compassion, but He is also just, and He punishes sin.

2. GOD JUDGES PEOPLE WHO ARE COMPLACENT

The old parable says one wild duck was flying with a flock of other ducks. During the flight this wild duck left the others to land in a barnyard where there were tame ducks. He enjoyed the corn, so he stayed for an hour, and then for a day, and then for a week, and then for a month. In fact, he enjoyed the corn and the safety of the barnyard so much that he decided to stay the entire summer.

But one autumn day when the flock of wild ducks flew over the barnyard, the duck heard their cries. He was stirred with a strange thrill of joy and delight, and with a great flapping of wings he rose in the air to join his old comrades in their flight. But he found that his good life had made him soft and heavy that he could rise no higher than the top of

the barn. So he dropped back again to the barnyard, and said to himself, “Oh, well, my life is safe here and the food is good.” Every spring and autumn when he heard the wild ducks honking, his eyes would gleam for a moment and he would begin to flap his wings. But finally the day came when the wild ducks flew over him and uttered their cry, but he didn’t pay the slightest attention to them. That wild duck had become complacent and indifferent to its purpose for life. So did the nations of Judah and Israel.

Amos 6:1, “Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come!”

This “woe” was addressed to both Judah (“Zion”) and Israel (“Samaria”) because both kingdoms were indifferent toward the Word of God. Everything was going good. They were prosperous, and they didn’t think they were in any danger. But when God decided to deal with these cities, nothing could stop the enemy.

We, as a nation, have become complacent in many areas. Someone said, “The great threat to the church in America is not that we are persecuted and homeless and driven about like refugees; but that we are so much at home here. We have let the Lord's delay put us to sleep: no sense of urgency, no earnest expectation, no heart-wrenching cry: "Come, Lord Jesus!" And inevitably, when the urgent zeal for the name of God fades, so does the moral power to be pure.”

3. GOD JUDGES PEOPLE WHO REPLACE HIM WITH THE PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD

Amos 6:3-7, “³You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror. ⁴ You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. ⁵You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. ⁶You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. ⁷Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

These people were “living it up” The wealthy slept on beds of ivory and sat on luxurious couches. They also enjoyed elegant feasts, beautiful music and expensive perfumes. The problem was that they weren’t in the least concerned about the way the nation had fallen away from God.

When nations get pleasure-mad, it’s a sign that the end is near. Belshazzar and his leaders were enjoying a costly feast when the city of Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians ([Dan. 7](#)). One of the marks of the last days is the fact that people become “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” ([2 Tim. 3:4](#)).

God is not against pleasure. It is His desire that we enjoy life and the things He gives us, but when those things become more important to us than He is, we've just stepped over a line that leads to His discipline.

4. GOD JUDGES PEOPLE WHO IGNORE HIS BLESSINGS

Judgment is in proportion to privilege. The nation of Israel had been specially chosen by God.

Amos 3:2, ““You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.”

God loved Israel and blessed the nation. God had redeemed the Jewish people out of 400 years of Egyptian bondage and had given them a land flowing with milk and honey. He blessed them so that they became a rich and powerful nation.

The same is true of our country. Our country is unique in the fact that it was founded on Christian principles.

Patrick Henry said, “It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. “

John Quincy Adams said, “The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: that it connected, in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity. “

George Washington said, “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

This country was built on Christian principles, and there is no question that God has blessed it. But in recent years that has been changing drastically. In the late 1950's the Supreme Court began its separation of Church vs. State issues. In 1962 the Supreme Court declared it was unconstitutional to pray in schools. In 1963 the Supreme Court ruled against Bible reading in schools stating that if portions of the New Testament were read without explanation they could be psychologically harmful to the child. In 1965 the Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutional for a student to pray out loud. (It was OK to use God's name in vain. That's protected by free speech, but to praise God in prayer was unconstitutional). And we have gone “down hill” from there.

We have to remember that the greater the privileges God gives us the greater is our responsibility to obey Him. The greatest threat our country has does not come from some

other nation. The greatest threat we have comes from the fact that we are progressively forsaking God.

5. GOD JUDGES PEOPLE WHO PASS THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Amos 1:3-6, “This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth, 4 I will send fire upon the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben Hadad. 5 I will break down the gate of Damascus; I will destroy the king who is in the Valley of Aven and the one who holds the scepter in Beth Eden. The people of Aram will go into exile to Kir,” says the LORD. 6 This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom....”

The statement, “for three sins, even four” is found many times in the book. That is a technical phrase and it simply means God has had enough. It means they have gone too far. That’s like the story of the old farmer who was riding in his buggy with his wife. The mule balked, and the farmer said, “that’s one. He rode a little further and the mule balked again. The farmer said, “that’s two.” The mule balked again and he walked around to it and said, “that’s three, and he hit him over the head with a board. He got back in the buggy, and his wife said I really think that you shouldn't have done that. That was too much. The farmer replied, “He said that’s one.”

That is what Amos is saying. He is saying “that’s 3. You have gone too far. Twenty-seven years after Amos made his prophecies, in came the Assyrians and took Israel captive. God knows what is going on in Washington. He knows what is going on in our governors' mansions and in the mayors' offices and all the rest of it. He may be patient and merciful, but the time will come when the lion will roar.

WE CAN AVOID GOD’S JUDGMENT

1. WE MUST HAVE A HOLY DISCONTENTMENT

The Scripture teaches us that we should be both contented and discontented at the same time. In fact, one of the best indicators of your spiritual condition is found in what you are content with and what you are discontented with in your life. You should be contented with the gifts the Lord has given you, but discontented with your level of spiritual growth and the fruit you have born for Him. If you are discontented with the things God has given you, you will likely fret and fume and doubt God. If, on the other

hand, you are discontented with your spiritual life, that holy discontentment will give you an unquenchable thirst to know God and serve Him more fully.

2. WE MUST SEEK THE LORD

Amos 5:4, "This is what the LORD says to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live."

What does it mean to "seek the Lord"? To seek the Lord means first of all to change our thinking from self focus to focus on God. It means forsaking sin and turning to the Lord for mercy. Seeking the Lord also means getting serious about worship. It means being prepared to worship. Many people come to church on Sunday with no preparation at all for what is going to take place there. It is as if something magical is going to take place simply because we show up. What are some things that can help us to get the most out of our worship?

a) Take note...

of how God has been trying to get your attention. Five times in Amos 4 God says that he had done specific things in the lives of his people to turn them back to himself. And five times it says, "Yet you did not return to me." Each of these things God had done to get their attention were explained as natural events with no divine cause.

God is doing things in your life which are gracious messages to return to him and trust him. Take note of what he has been saying.

b) Renounce all known sin...

in your life before coming to worship God. Worship will inevitably become a weak, empty form and ritual if we try to keep on with it while our hearts are running after other gods.

c) Go to bed early...

enough so that you are fresh and emotionally alive Sunday morning. The price of late night movies or parties on Saturday will be powerless worship Sunday morning.

d) Get up in time Sunday...

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so that you do not have to rush to get to church, but have a little time to be alone with God and ask his blessing on you and your family and on the church. I can almost promise you that your depth of your communion with God in the service will be directly proportionate to the way you have sought the Lord for his blessing Saturday night and Sunday morning.

The book of Amos is all too relevant to our time. He is the awesome Judge of the universe. The good news is that He wants a relationship with Him. If you seek Him, you will find Him.