

AMOS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Amos chapter 7 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we finish up this book this evening. As we go through these last three chapters of Amos we are going to see a series of five visions of judgments that are going to come upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Now these judgments may seem harsh but understand that God tries to get our attention in a gentle way. But if we refuse to listen and obey, His judgments will get more intense.

Now some may wonder why God does that. Some may feel that God does not love us if He is doing that to us. That is not true. The reason God chastens His people is because He loves them and He wants to save them from destruction.

God's desire is restoration and He is trying to warn us of the dangerous path we are on so that we may change our course and get back into His will. Sin puts us in bondage but Jesus sets us free and that is what God desires for our lives, that we would be free in Him!

With that as our introduction let's begin reading in Amos chapter 7 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

AMOS 7**VERSES 1-3**

1. Here we see the first of these five visions or judgments that are coming upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This first vision of judgment that came upon the land was that of a devastating locust infestation. We saw the devastating effects of locusts back in our study of Joel and they can wipe out the vegetation as they move through an area!

These locusts came after the first cutting, after the King got his share from the people. The second crop was either from the first but more likely the second planting. And without this crop the people were headed for starvation. It is as the Lord warned them in Deuteronomy 28:38, **“You shall carry much seed out to the field and gather but little in, for the locust shall consume it.”**

2. Let me ask you this question. What do you do when you are bugged by something? We see here that Amos brought this before the Lord and you might say it was bugging him, they were locusts. You see, as Amos saw this devastation he intercedes for the people before God. He is asking God to stop this judgment before it was too late and the people are wiped out. And we are told that God relents and ends this locust judgment.

Now as you read that you may be thinking, “Hey, I thought God was going to wipe them out and now, after Amos brings this before God in prayer God stops this judgment. Did God change His mind?”

What does the Scriptures tell us? They tell us that God does not change His mind, that God is immutable or unchanging. In Numbers 23:19 we are told **“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”**

Also, in Malachi 3:6a we are told, **“For I am the LORD, I do not change . . .”** And lastly, we are told in Hebrews 13:8 that, **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”**

Then what is going on here where we see God relent? I think God is showing Amos these things to give him a heart of intercessory prayer for his people. God does the same with us as He gives us a vision of what will happen to the lost so that we too may have a heart of prayer for them.

And I do think the difficulty comes when we try to describe the actions and/or attributes of an infinite God using a human language, and that does not always work. God’s plan, His purposes will stand!

But we see here the power of prayer! Don’t negate prayer but intercede for your family, for your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors, this state, this nation, this world, this church and-so-on! If Amos didn’t pray it seems that God would not have relented but he did bring this before God and God relented from this judgment of locusts. Again, the power of prayer!

VERSES 4-6

1. This second vision of judgment deals with fire and it may be speaking of a drought and when there is a drought there is fire. Look at California and some of the other western coast states that have been burning for most of the summer due to this drought!

Thus, this judgment dried up the water supply that not only affected the food supply, but their own lives.

2. Let me ask you another question. What do you do when you are burned by someone? Amos brought this before the Lord once again. What a great lesson for us. Instead of retaliating, instead of pouring out our vengeance upon people, give it to the Lord.

As Amos sees what is going on he is devastated and he brings it before God, He is interceding before God for the people! And God once again relents, He stops this judgment.

VERSES 7-9

1. This third vision of judgment is this plumb line. And a plumb line was used to see how straight a wall was. And God shows Amos this plumb line in relation to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Keep in mind that when the nation was built it was straight, it was true to the plumb line.

But now, over time, they have become crooked and the only resolution to this problem was to bring this wall, this crooked wall, this nation down. You see, it was beyond repair at this point.

And God is going to judge the people, the religious leaders and the political leaders for their failure to repent and get back in line, to be true to the plumb line! Isaiah 28:17 tells us why these things came to pass. It says “**Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place.**”

Make no mistake about it, God still has a plumb line that He uses and it is the Word of God! I don't care what you say, if you are living contrary to God's Word then your life is not in line, it is off and by the time you get to the end of your life, if there is no repentance and returning to the Lord, you will be far, far off!

I have seen this over and over again. I know someone on Facebook who is not walking with the Lord. This person knows the truth, has been brought up in the church, but has turned from the Lord. There is no plumb line and as I see what this person posts it is obvious that there is no plumb line in their life and if they continue down this path it will lead them farther and farther away from God!

That was the Northern Kingdom of Israel and God says that He is going to bring them to nothing, His judgment will be complete!

2. Now some of you may be thinking, "Wait a minute Joe, you didn't read about Amos praying for them in this vision of judgment." You are right, there is no praying and there is no relenting on God's part, judgment did come upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Why didn't Amos pray? Maybe because the Lord did not stir his heart to pray, to intercede. Since the nation did not respond to the previous judgments they were going into captivity. There is no more praying for them as we saw in Jeremiah for the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

In Jeremiah 7:16-20 we are told, **“Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. Do they provoke Me to anger?” says the Lord. ‘Do they not provoke themselves, to the shame of their own faces?’ Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place - on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched.’”**

I think that is what we see here with Amos even though it does not say it. Amos does not pray for the people here because the Lord had not placed that upon His heart and like I have said, judgment came upon them by the Assyrians!

3. Now Amos is making these judgments against the land, against the people, against the leaders, against the priests. How do you think they will respond to that? We do not have to guess because we are told as we read on.

VERSES 10-13

1. Keep in mind that Amaziah was a priest who ministered in Bethel, the place where the golden calf was erected to worship God by. And understand that Amaziah was not a priest of God, for he is coming against the prophet of God, Amos. And this priest tells the King they can't stand to hear Amos any longer, they can't bear to hear his words anymore.

Why was he so upset? Because when the light of God exposes the darkness of their sin, of their lifestyle then the darkness tries to put out the light. They don't want their sin to be exposed.

Thus, bars are dark so you can do things and not be seen. It is as Jesus said in John 3:19-20 **“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”**

Now let's put this into perspective and bring it to the days we are living in because much has not changed over the years. People who are living in sin don't want to hear anything that goes against what they are doing, they can't bear it any longer!

So what they do is they try to silence the Word of God or change the meaning of what God is saying so they can live in sin comfortably. They try to silence those who are speaking forth the Word of God. And tragically, many of these attacks against God's Word and those who are speaking it come from the religious organizations just like this priest, Amaziah! Like I have said, not much has changed over the years.

2. Now Amos must have gotten under the skin of Amaziah because Amaziah is angry at Amos, very angry. How do I know that? Because he tells Amos to go back to where he came from and in this case Amos was from the land of Judah, Tekoa.

Amaziah tells Amos if he wants to say these things then do it in your own land but not here anymore. Not in Bethel, for this is the place where the King dwell's and he does not want to hear these things, nor do the people. He wants Amos to go home and leave them alone!

Listen to what Clarke wrote regarding this, "Hireling priests of this kind have ever been the great enemies of the true prophets of God; and when they could bring no charge of false doctrine or immorality against them, have accused them of conspiring against the government; and because they have preached against *sin*, have held them up as exciting insurrection among the people."

When I look at what is going on in the apostate church today, it is no different than what we are seeing here in Amos. When we speak of God's plumb line, the Word of God they don't like it. They justify their sin, they negate the Word of God and they come against those who are speaking forth the Word of God! I understand this from the world but from the so-called church, shameful!

Let me show you the danger as we move away from God's Word and where it is leading us to. We are told,

For example, consider a new version of the Bible authored by Eugene Peterson known as "The Message." Described as a "contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events, and ideas in everyday language," this "paraphrased" version of the Bible, in reality, is nothing more than Eugene Peterson's thoughts and views. Peterson has taken the carefully translated words of the Bible and put them into his own words and chosen idioms.

For example, consider the following portion of Scripture taken from John 3:17 - “that the world through him might be saved.” Peterson’s rendering reads: “He came to help, to put the world right again.” It does not take a biblical scholar to understand that “saved” means that we can be redeemed from the judgment we deserve for our sins so that we can go to heaven. It should be obvious that using “help” instead of “saved” completely distorts the meaning of what Jesus said. And “to put the world right again” has nothing to do with the salvation of souls. In fact this sounds like the social gospel to reform the world through political action. . . .

Rick Warren is not only supportive of the “emerging church,” he believes that it is exactly what is required at this time. He believes this is what “the purpose-driven” church that he founded will become in the “postmodern world.” He notes:

In the past twenty years, spiritual seekers have changed a lot. In the first place, there are a whole lot more of them. There are seekers everywhere. I’ve never seen more people so hungry to discover and develop the spiritual dimension of their lives. That is why there is such a big interest in Eastern thought, New Age practices, mysticism and the transcendent.

Further, he explains what the “emerging church” must do in order to emerge:

Today seekers are hungry for symbols and metaphors and experiences and stories that reveal the greatness of God. Because seekers are constantly changing, we must be sensitive to them like Jesus was; we must be willing to meet them on their own turf and speak to them in ways they understand.

- <http://www.understandthetimes.org/commentary/c29.shtml>

Here is the danger. If you have no plumb line, if you are changing the Word of God or negating the Word of God then where will you end up? You will end up apart from God and part of the One World Religion that is quickly coming upon us! And as we are seeing, they are telling us to change our views, change our beliefs or leave them alone! We don't "meet them on their own turf" but according to God's Word, which is unchanging. You see, it is not much different than what Amos was going through.

And now listen to how Amos responds to this.

VERSES 14-15

1. Amos was not raised up a prophet nor did he come from a family of prophets. He was a herdsman, a shepherd, a man of the field. He was just out working when God called him into the ministry.

That should be an encouragement to each of us because God calls common people to do His work in a powerful way. He is not interested in the titles or degrees after your name but the name you are placing your life in, Jesus Christ!

If you ever think you are qualified for the ministry, don't go into it, you are not ready. If you feel unqualified, those are the people God is looking for because it won't be them but the Lord who is working through them. You can never be too small for the ministry but you can be too big!

2. And here is something we need to remember. We are all different and God will use those differences in us. I am not Pastor Chuck nor do I try to be like him. I am who God made me and I am sure you have figured out the way I teach, I haven't changed in these 20 years! But it is still God's Word that is spoken.

Spurgeon put it like this, "Every prophet has a manner and style peculiarly his own. Although God speaketh through them all, yet they lose not their individuality or originality of character. The breath which causes the music is the same, but no two of the instruments give forth precisely the same sound. It is true they all utter the words of God; but each voice has its own special cry, so that though God is pre-eminently seen, yet the man is not lost."

Absolutely and keep in mind that you need to be sure of your calling or the people will discourage you, like they tried to do with Amos. But his reply was, "**... And the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'**" Amos 7:16. And Amos did!

3. One more point here and that is regarding how bad the Northern Kingdom of Israel had become. They were so bad that God has to go to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, to a herdsman, and bring him into Israel to pronounce judgment upon them. No wonder they didn't like him!

4. Listen to how he finishes this up as he lets them know who he is speaking for and the judgment that is coming upon them for their refusal to listen and telling him to get out of town!

VERSES 16-17

1. Because you refused to listen to the Words of the Lord, Amos is telling them, then here is what will happen to you. Yes they tried to stop Amos from speaking forth any more words of judgment but Amos feared the Lord and not man. May that be the passion of our heart and if it is not, if we fear man it will lead to compromise in our life!

2. And here is the reality folk's. Many don't want to hear the Words of God, they don't want to hear about judgment but by closing your ears to what God has said does not mean they won't come to pass as we see here! For Amaziah, his family will be judged, destruction will come upon them, and Amaziah will be taken into captivity and die there. And all Israel will be carried away by the Assyrians in judgment. They should have listened! May we learn the lesson!

AMOS 8VERSES 1-3

1. Here is the fourth vision of judgment given to Amos and the picture here is the summer fruit has been gathered, the season is over, and so too for the nation of Israel. In other words, this was fruit that was *ripe* and would not keep long.

What the Lord is saying is that just as this fruit will not keep long, the time is short for Israel! Think about fruit that is ripe, if you let it sit for a short time it will rot away. That is the picture here. You see, God's judgment is coming upon them and as God pours out His wrath upon them they will be going into captivity.

It is the end of the nation and Hubbard picks up on this as he wrote, “The overt connection between the vision and Israel’s fate was in the word-play based on the similar sounds [between *summer* and *end*] . . . The point of this vision, then, is the finality of judgment.”

And that will be seen in the fact that God will not hear their cries any longer. And what we see is the songs will be gone, no more joy, no more signing but there will be wailing. But why? Because the land is filled with dead bodies, bodies that have been left in the street to rot! Not a pretty picture but God did warn them and they refused to listen!

We saw this in Genesis chapter 6 where God warned the people for 120 years before the flood came and wiped them out, only sparing eight people, Noah and his family. Imagine, 120 years Noah was warning the people as he built the ark and they refused to listen and the judgment came!

Remember what Genesis 6:3 says, “**. . . ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh. . . .’**” Why was God’s Spirit not working with man any longer? Because, “**. . . the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**”

I wonder how far America is from reaching this point where God will no longer strive with this nation because of our wickedness, our immorality and our turning from God. And yes the unsaved are bad, but they are only doing what is in their nature. I am more concerned right now about the church who is acting like the world and tries to worship God as they please instead of in Spirit and truth!

What can we do? Isaiah tells us “**Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.**” Isaiah 55:6-7. May we not forget that!

VERSES 4-6

1. I find this interesting that they were religious but they were so caught up with the material things that they could not wait for the Sabbath and the New Moon to be past so they could buy and sell once again. The worship of God got in their way of making a profit, of having fun!

Now before we are too harsh on them it was not that long ago when stores were closed on Sunday's because that was the day we worshiped the Lord. Now look at where we are at. Not only are stores open on Sunday's but we have sporting events for professionals and everyone else. There is all kinds of activities that compete for our attention with the Lord and the Lord ends up losing out! Well, I shouldn't say the Lord loses out, in the end we do! You see, we are no different. We have not learned the lesson.

2. Now you may not see it as such a big deal but look at how it affected Israel. They took advantage of the poor, they cheated them with deceitful balances, bad wheat, they bought and sold them like a possession!

Make no mistake about it, God will fight for the poor. He is the defender of the underdog for He hates those who oppress them, take advantage of them. There is an interesting verse found in the book of Proverbs that makes this point, “**He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.**”

I guess the opposite end of the spectrum is if you oppress or steal or take advantage of the poor you are doing that against the Lord! I don't think many people look at it that way but it is a reality. And when a society reaches that point where their own personal interests, where their own actions to satisfy self are more important, then we end up oppressing others and then it is just a matter of time before they destroy themselves!

VERSES 7-8

1. The idea here is that time does not erase sin. Just because you did a sin 20 years ago doesn't mean it is gone because it has passed some time constraint. Time does not erase our sin but Jesus does! And the reason He does is because He paid the debt that we owed for our sin. If you think that good works puts you into the book of life, think again!

In Revelation 20:11-15 we are told, **“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”**

The only way to get your name into the Book of Life or to stay in the book of life is not by your good works but by His finished work! You must repent of your sin and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life – ***PERIOD!***

2. Yes God is gracious, He is merciful and many times people think that God does not care what we do because of His longsuffering! God says that He knows what they are doing and in Revelation as Jesus writes to the seven churches He tells them, “**I know your works . . .**”

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 4:13, “**And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**” Both saved and unsaved will appear before Him. The saved will appear before the Bema Seat or the Judgment Seat of Christ where the Lord will look at the works we have done and reward us for faithful service unto Him, service that was done out of a right heart.

For the unsaved, they will appear at the Great White Throne Judgment as we have read in Revelation where their works will determine their degree of punishment in the Lake of Fire. God cares and He won't forget!

VERSES 9-10

1. Now is this looking ahead to the Tribulation Period? It could be because we do see cataclysmic events in the heavens taking place. But I also see this as a picture of what took place when Jesus went to the cross of Calvary to pay in full the penalty for our sins. Not many commentators deal much with this, they just pass over it. For me, I think it is an important prophecy of what the Lord would do, the one who will not forget your sin over time but has come as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world!

In Luke 23:44-49 we read **“Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, ‘Certainly this was a righteous Man!’ And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.”**

From 12 noon till 3 pm the sky grew dark. And in His death there was no rejoicing, it was very solemn, it was truly a bitter day. And for me, the clincher that this is speaking of Jesus is what the last part of verse 10 says, **“I will make it like mourning for an only son.”**

John 3:16-17 says, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

So I see this as when Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary and for the Jews who rejected Him, judgment was coming. And for the nation, judgment was less than 40 years away as the Romans would come in and destroy Jerusalem.

VERSES 11-14

1. God spoke through His Word and through the prophets, but the people refused to listen. Thus, God was silent, no new revelations were given. From the close of the book of Malachi until we come to the New Testament, some 400 years, God was silent! There was a famine in the land, a famine of hearing from God, and now the people couldn't find it, they couldn't hear it, no matter where they were running to.

Now we might think that a physical famine is the worst kind but God is saying that a spiritual famine is worse. Why is that? Because the death of this body is not the end of our existence. But if we reject God's Word, if we reject God then in our death we will be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity! That is a far worse death than physical death because, let's face it, these bodies will not last forever but our spirit and soul will, either with the Lord or apart from Him!

2. Now as much as there was a famine in the days of Amos we see another one in the days we are living in. And it is not that people don't have the Word of God, they just are not interested in it or they want it to say things that make them feel good about the way that they are living. To do that you have Bibles that distort the Word of God, you have teachers that are willing to tickle the ears of the people and thus, the deception that Jesus warned us about in the Last Days is upon us because people are not testing what is being taught with the Word of God!

Listen to what one writer wrote regarding what we see happening in churches today. He wrote,

“It is well and good for the preacher to base his sermon on the Bible, but he better get to something relevant pretty quickly, or we start mentally to check out.” That stunningly clear sentence reflects one of the most amazing, tragic, and lamentable characteristics of contemporary Christianity: an impatience with the Word of God.

The sentence above comes from Mark Galli, senior managing editor of *Christianity Today* in an essay entitled, “Yawning at the Word.” In just a few hundred words, he captures the tragedy of a church increasingly impatient with and resistant to the reading and preaching of the Bible. We may wince when we read him relate his recent experiences, but we also recognize the ring of truth.

Galli was told to cut down on the biblical references in his sermon. “You’ll lose people,” the staff member warned. In a Bible study session on creation, the teacher was requested to come back the next Sunday prepared to take questions at the expense of reading the relevant scriptural texts on the doctrine. Cutting down on the number of Bible verses “would save time and, it was strongly implied, would better hold people’s interest.”

As Galli reflected, “Anyone who’s been in the preaching and teaching business knows these are not isolated examples but represent the larger reality.”

Indeed, in many churches there is very little reading of the Bible in worship, and sermons are marked by attention to the congregation’s concerns, not by an adequate attention to the biblical text. The exposition of the Bible has given way to the concerns, real or perceived, of the listeners. The authority of the Bible is swallowed up in the imposed authority of congregational concerns. . . .

The fixation on our own sense of need and interest looms as the most significant factor in this marginalization and silencing of the Word. Individually, each human being in the room is an amalgam of wants, needs, intuitions, interests, and distractions. Corporately, the congregation is a mass of expectations, desperate hopes, consuming fears, and impatient urges. All of this adds up, unless countered by the authentic reading and preaching of the Word of God, to a form of group therapy, entertainment, and wasted time - if not worse.

Galli has this situation clearly in his sights when he asserts that many congregations expect the preacher to *start* from some text in the Bible, but then quickly move on “to things that really interest us.” Like . . . *ourselves*?

One of the earliest examples of what we would call the preaching of the Bible may well be found in Nehemiah 8:1-8 . . .

Ezra and his companions stood on a platform before the congregation. They read the scriptural text clearly, and then explained the meaning of the Scripture to the people. The congregation received the Word humbly, while standing. The pattern is profoundly easy to understand: the Bible was read and explained and received.

As Hughes Oliphant Old comments, “This account of the reading of the Law indicates that already at the time of the writing of this text there was a considerable amount of ceremonial framing of the public reading of Scripture. This ceremonial framing is a witness to the authority of the Bible.” The reading and exposition took place in a context of worship as the people listened to the Word of God. The point of the sermon was simple: “to make clear the reading of the Scriptures.”

In many churches, there is almost no public reading of the Word of God. Worship is filled with music, but congregations seem disinterested in listening to the reading of the Bible. We are called to sing in worship, but the congregation cannot live only on the portions of Scripture that are woven into songs and hymns. Christians need the ministry of the Word as the Bible is read before the congregation such that God's people - young and old, rich and poor, married and unmarried, sick and well - hear it together. The sermon is to consist of the exposition of the Word of God, powerfully and faithfully read, explained, and applied. It is not enough that the sermon take a biblical text as its starting point.

How can so many of today's churches demonstrate what can only be described as an impatience with the Word of God? The biblical formula is clear: the neglect of the Word can only lead to disaster, disobedience, and death. God rescues his church from error, preserves his church in truth, and propels his church in witness only by his Word - not by congregational self-study. . . .

- <http://www.albertmohler.com/2014/05/14/why-so-many-churches-hear-so-little-of-the-bible/>

And in hearing that listen once again to what we read in Amos 8:14, "**Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, Who say, 'As your god lives, O Dan!' And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives!' They shall fall and never rise again.**" This is a warning to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and their false worship.

You see, this god in Dan and Bethel were these golden calves that were made and that is how they were worshiping God by. But God did not accept it. In fact He said that they were guilty of sin before Him, from Dan all the way down to Beersheba, the full extent of the land. Judgment was coming!

And for the church today this is a wake-up call. We can't worship God any way we want. We must worship Him in *spirit*, we must be saved. And we must worship Him in *truth*, according to His Word. Apart from that God does not accept it and like the Northern Kingdom of Israel, He calls it a sin!

AMOS 9

VERSES 1-4

1. This is not speaking of the Temple in the Southern Kingdom of Judah but this most likely is speaking of the altar to Baal in Samaria. And yes there was such a place in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. That is how bad it had gotten. And God says He is going to bring the roof of this temple down and not in a good way. This judgment would destroy lives, you will not be able to escape!

Now in the midst of this judgment people will try to hide from God. It always amazes me those who try to hide from the judgment of God, the presence of God. There are those that are survivalists, storing up food, water, guns and ammunition to protect them from the coming judgment.

But where are you really going to hide from God? The Psalmist put it this way, and rightly so. In Psalm 139 he said, **“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.”** Psalm 139:7-12. God’s presence fills the universe, you can’t hide from Him!

You see, in a sense God had drawn a line in the sand and told His people not to cross it. But the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not listen, they crossed that line and now they were going to pay the penalty for their wickedness. They were going into captivity!

VERSES 5-10

1. Man thinks that he is in control but that is foolishness. Never forget who is in total control, **YAHWEH!** He does as He pleases and thus, we would be wise to follow after Him rather than going against Him.

It is as Psalm 135:5-14 says, **“For I know that the LORD is great, and our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he makes lightning for the rain; he brings the wind out of His treasuries. He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh and all his servants. He defeated many nations and slew mighty kings – Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan – And gave their land as a heritage, a heritage to Israel His people. Your name, O LORD, endures forever, your fame, O LORD, throughout all generations. For the LORD will judge His people, and He will have compassion on His servants.”** Perspective is everything, the right perspective! God is in control!

2. For the people in the Northern Kingdom, they thought they were better than the pagan nations around them but God is saying that they are no different. God chose them to be a light in the world, to show people the truths of God and to live their faith, the things they said they believed. But they didn't and God was going to judge them for it. But in His mercy He will not completely destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel, He will leave a remnant behind.

I think that is a good warning for the church today. We are here to be a light in the world, to show people the truths of God and to live out our faith, the things we say we believe. But if we don't God will judge us as He did Israel because judgment begins at the house of God!

3. Now in verses 9 and 10 of Amos chapter 9 we see two different groups of people, those who will be sifted in this judgment, they will be scattered and those who will be destroyed. Who will be destroyed? It is the **SINNERS** who will be destroyed. That means that the others must have repented as this judgment came upon them and they were spared!

4. Now things don't seem too good here for the children of Israel. It seems like a hopeless situation, but God will never leave us in a condition like that. There was a woman from the deep south who was going through some very tough times and as she opened God's Word she was comforted. And her pastor wanted to know how things were going and she told him that the Lord had comforted her, and the verse he gave her was Luke 2:1.

And as he listened, he became confused, he didn't understand how that verse could comfort her. That verse says "**And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.**" So she told this confused pastor the reason she was comforted by this verse. You see, "It came to pass, not to stay!" Let us not forget that. Here, in the blackness of this judgment God is going to shine His bright light of hope to them. This judgment would come to pass not to stay!

VERSES 11-12

1. David was a godly man who loved the Lord and all the other Kings of Israel were judged by God according to the standard of David. And for the most part, his dynasty was like a place of protection for the nation. But it was going to be torn down as judgment was not only coming upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel but also upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah! But God says He will rebuild it and it will be the Lord who sits on the throne of David. And I love this in the Old Testament because it says that not only will the Jews be saved but also the Gentiles!

VERSES 13-15

1. God always has a faithful remnant that love Him and He will restore them. Today we see Israel back in the land but not dwelling in safety. In fact there is a push to get them out of the land and that push is growing. Under Hitler some 6 million Jews were murdered and the cry of Jews today is, "Never again!" Tragically, the Antichrist, during the Tribulation Period, will destroy two-thirds of the Jewish people, maybe some 11 million people!

And in Israel today, most of the nation are atheists or agnostics in their beliefs, they have no love for God. But God will use the 7 years of the Tribulation Period to draw His people to Him and by the end of the 7 year Tribulation Period the nation of Israel will turn to Jesus as their Messiah.

They, along with believing Gentiles will enter into the Millennial Kingdom. In the blackness of God's judgment comes the light of His glory and the promise of restoration! And God promises no less for us, for those who turn to Him, restored lives, eternal life with the Lord!

2. As I close our study this evening and we close the book of Amos, let me leave you with these words from Spurgeon regarding what we are to do. He wrote, “The duty of the Church is not to be measured by her success. It is as much the minister’s duty to preach the gospel in adverse times as in propitious seasons. We are not to think, if God withholds the dew, that we are to withhold the plough. We are not to imagine that, if unfruitful seasons come, we are therefore to cease from sowing our seed. Our business is with act, not with result. The church has to do her duty, even though that duty should bring her no present reward.”

Absolutely! We are, as Paul said, to **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:2-5. May we do that!