

AMOS

“Woe to the Complacent”

1. Some Background:

- a. Amos 1:1-2
 - One of the shepherds of Tekoa (A town about 12 miles south of Jerusalem).
 - “What he saw” concerning Israel two years before the earthquake.
 - When Uzziah was king over Judah and Jeroboam was king over Israel (roughly 786-746 BC).
 - * During this time Israel and Judah were militarily strong.
 - * During this time Israel and Judah were prosperous.
- b. Amos was from Judah but preached in Israel (There were two Jewish kingdoms in the land at that time - Israel with its capitol at Samaria and Judah with its capitol at Jerusalem).
 - He was a shepherd and a tender of Sycamore Fig trees. (7:14-15)
 - God sent him (7:15). We wasn’t “clergy.”
- c. In Israel there was a great gap between those who were comfortable and the working poor. And the “deck” was stacked to keep things that way. People used their positions for advantage and took advantage of others where they could. Society was overtly immoral.

2. The book begins:

- a. The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem.
 - Israel had abandoned the worship of God and created their own religion: God called it “The sin of Jeroboam.”
 - * See 1 Kings 12:28-31, 2 Kings 17:21-23, 2 Chron 11:15, 13:8-9.
 - * They replaced the worship of God with a man-made religion. (See Ex 20:4-6, Lev 19:4, 26:1 and Deut 4:15-18).
 - * They had instituted a man-made priesthood and God would do away with it (Am 3:14).
 - God had something to say and was warning about what was coming if His people didn’t repent. His word is unyielding (Jer 23:35, 15:19).
- b. A couple things to take away from this introduction:
 - God cares about justice. True justice, not the SJW nonsense rampant in our time.
 - * Not an externally imposed “virtue signaling” pseudo-justice to make one feel good.
 - * The first and second great-commandment-type of justice (e.g., Rom 13:10).
 - God cares about how we approach Him. Man-made religion will not do.
 - God’s calling is not a profession, it is an obedient life. He uses spiritual leaders but also (maybe *especially*) fishermen, farmers, shepherds, lawyers, mechanics, teachers, nurses etc. Will we serve Him where we are?

For next week try to read through this book at least once (Come on ya’ll-it’s only 9 chapters!).

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3. The Danger of Excusing Ourselves While Condemning Others. Amos 1:3-2:16

- a. Judah made the mistake of claiming that God was on their side. Jer 7:4 “He won’t judge us!” We’re His people.
 - But they forgot something very important - 1 Pet 4:17. Judgment begins with God’s people. Those He loves He chastens! Rom 2:9, Heb 12:4-12
 - God is just and will confront sin. Everyone’s. Rom 2:1-15

- b. In Amos 1:3-2:3 God proclaims His coming judgment against the nations around Israel (Aram, the Philistines, the Phoenicians, Edom, Ammon and Moab). To this the Israelites would have given hearty assent!

- c. In Amos 2:4-5 God pronounces judgment against Israel’s neighbor to the South, the Jewish Kingdom of Judah.
 - They had rejected His law.
 - Failed to obey His statutes.
 - Had been led astray by the lies their fathers followed.
 - God would send fire (the judgment of war) against Jerusalem and their other fortresses (Am 6:8).
 - * Folks, the potency of our military, if allowed to be our confidence, is idolatry.
 - * The outward, cultural forms of religion, if allowed to be our confidence, is idolatry.
 - * National pride, if allowed to be our confidence, is idolatry.
 - * God will judge idolatry. Every time.

- d. In Amos 2:6-16 God pronounces judgment on Israel.
 - They abused the poor and manipulated the system to exploit them economically.
 - Justice went to the highest bidder.
 - Morality meant little to them (“Iniquity” - morality was what they determined it would be).
 - Though they had been greatly blessed, they rebelled.
 - * They despised those dedicated to God and sought to corrupt them.
 - * They rejected God’s truth (See Is 30:8-11 for an example from Judah).
 - He would crush them the way a heavily laden wagon crushed anything it rolled over. Israel would suffer military defeat and everything that came with that. Exile, destruction, captivity, etc. They would that they knew and gloried in was living on borrowed time.

On what are we trusting?

How do we live and pray? See Ez 9:1-6, Am 6:5-7

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Amos 3-4

“God’s Case Against Israel” (or - “Prepare to Meet Your God”).

4. **“Hear the word of the LORD, O people (*Israel and Judah*)** **vs 1-13**
- a. **Alone from all the families of the earth, God had chosen His people - therefore He would punish them for all their sins.** To those to whom much is given, much will be required! (Gen 25:23; Dt 4:37; Mal 1:2-5; Mtt 11:21)
- b. **God had spoken - Israel needed to “fasten their seat belt.”** (Dt 7:7; 9:6 - Israel/Judah did not have a “get out of jail free card” because they were God’s chosen people. If anything, they had a greater accountability.
- God had spoken, the prophets testified (Here is a clear warning of imminent consequences for rejecting God’s message.). Cause and effect: Israel has sinned; God will act! God had spoken and His prophets proclaim His warning of judgment.
 - God calls to Israel’s neighbors to see Israel’s unrest and oppression. All are accountable.
 - * Israel did not know how to do right (Look at how far our own culture has drifted and how things once detested are now cultural norms). They abused the weak and heaped up wealth in their fortresses. (Hos 7:1-7)
 - * They trusted in their fortifications/military rather than God (Am 6:8)
- c. **This is what God decreed: Judgment.**
- An enemy would invade and pull down their strongholds. (For a similar thought re: Judah see Is 1).
 - From this presently powerful, proud and largely godless people, only a remnant would be saved. (“Ear, leg,” - but saved they would be!). Zech 13:7-9; Ez 5)
 - Israel’s false, man-made worship would be ended (See 1 King 13:1-3; 2 King 23:15-20)
 - Israel’s material assets would be destroyed.
- d. **God’s case against Israel** **vs 1-13**
- The wealthy, self-indulgent women of the kingdom were destined for captivity.
 - Israel’s false worship in which they gloried was actually sinful.
 - God’s chastisement had thus far provoked no repentance. (6-11)
- e. **Because God’s warnings had fallen on “deaf ears,” He warned them to prepare to meet Him.** God *never* makes idle warnings.
- One day each of us will stand before Him to give an account. If it were today, would you be ready?
 - * Have you placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, believing that He came to our world as God and man, laid down His life as a pure sacrifice once and for all to pay for our sin, rose from the dead, and is the only One through whom a relationship with God is possible?
 - * Are you seeking to live for Him? You don’t have to be perfect (in fact, in this life it is impossible). We need to seek Him, look for ways to serve, and confess our sin when we fail, even as we praise Him for our forgiveness (Rom 8:1).
 - * If you are not seeking Him - if you are tolerating things in your life that you know are wrong - beware! He disciplines those He loves (e.g. 1 Cor 11; Act 5).

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A lament (or funeral song/dirge)

5. Fallen is “virgin Israel,” left to die where she fell, and deserted. (vs 3-15)
Israel is pictured as a young woman, brutally treated and left to die. Israel was given here a picture of what would come to them if they did not repent.

- a. The nation would suffer “reverse decimation” - of their population, only 10% would survive the coming invasion, sieges, and hardships. See Dt 28:62/Am 5:13 (vs 3)
- b. God calls them to repent and live! (vs 4-5)
 - To forsake the false state/public religion (Bethel / Beersheba)
 - To seek the LORD and live. Or - refuse and perish (Yet - see Is 27:7-8, Ezk 37)
- c. Those who perverted justice would pay the price (vs 12)
 - They used the legal system for their own advantage.
 - They used their position to take advantage of the poor. (See 8:4-6)
 - The righteous kept their heads low in such a corrupt society.
- d. Seek Good and not evil that you may live! *Then* the LORD will be with you, just as you claim He is.
 - Hate evil, love good.
 - Perhaps God will have mercy on you?

6. Judgment is coming to the nation (vs 16-17)

- a. To both the towns and countryside.
- b. Mourning would spread over the land.

7. Woe to those who long for the Day of the LORD. (See Is 5:19, Jer 17:5, Mal 2:17, 3:1-5)

- a. It would be a hard time, a dark time.
- b. False religion is hated by God (See Is 1, Jas 1:26-27)
 - There is no right way to do something wrong.
 - “Worship” by those in rebellion against God is an offense to Him.
 - Let justice roll on!
 - Outward religious acts are not a source of security.
- c. Israel was destined by their rebellion for judgment. To exile they would go.

God disciplines His own:

Yet some deem their prosperity as a sign of God’s approval. Hos 12:8

His kindness is often a call to repentance. Rom 2:4-5

God’s call to repentance is ignored at our peril. Rev 3:21

We shouldn’t mistake God’s grace and patience as a “get out of jail free” card.

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6. Woe to you who are complacent (“at ease/secure”) in Judah and Israel.

- a. “You notable men (“men of mark”) of the foremost nation.
- b. You who people seek out (to render judgment etc.)

7. Look around to once great but presently reduced nations.

- a. They were better off and greater. Calneh, Hamath, Gath - all have suffered judgment and do you think you will escape?
- b. By continued rebellion, they had brought the “evil day” closer, even while they supposed that their fall was put at a distance.
 - They lived in luxury and self indulgence.
 - The moral / spiritual decline (the “breaking/fracture/crash” of Israel) their nation did not trouble them. (Yet God saw this much differently - Ezk 9:1-11).
 - Those who survived would go into exile.

8. God detests/resists (“sets Himself against”) the proud. (1 Pet 5:5b, Prov 3:34)

- a. He abhors (“loathes”) Jacob’s pride (“excellency/arrogance”).
- b. He detests his fortresses (“palaces/citadels”).
- c. Judgment was coming.
 - It would be devastating (Warfare and siege).
 - The LORD had given the command - it was judgment time.
 - Israel and Judah’s rebellion was totally out of place.
 - Their pride was worthless.
 - God was stirring up a nation against them who would assail them from one end of their land to the other. (See Lam 4:12-13 - Others besides themselves, thought them to be secure and strong, yet they were going into judgment). We can’t rest on past blessing!

Folks, nations come and go. God raises them up and takes them down. What endures and outlasts all else? His kingdom! (e.g. Dan 2/7).

Pray for an outpouring of His Spirit on our society. Pray for revival.

Pray for God’s direction in life.

Seek Him.

Think in eternal terms. There are bigger things afoot than an election, stock market etc.

Focus on the eternal.

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1. The Plumb Line

- a. God showed the prophet two options for judgment (See also 2 Sam 24:13).
 - A locust plague (After the king’s share had been taken and right at the time for the second harvest - a pending disaster.)
 - Judgement by fire - an even worse potential disaster.
- b. God showed Amos a straight wall and a plumb line.
 - He was setting His plumb line (His holiness/word) among His people Israel.
 - * Heb 4:12 - God’s word doesn’t change.
 - * Jer 44:28 - His word stands!
 - False worship would be destroyed.
 - The house of Jeroboam would be destroyed.
 - The Yardstick by which everything is judged is the holiness of God and His word.***

2. False / Compromised Religion Hates the Truth

- a. Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel opposed Amos and his message.
 - He denounced Amos to the king.
 - He told Amos to “get out” and cease his prophesying.
- b. Amos responded:
 - “I didn’t choose this, God sent me.”
 - God has a message for *you* Amaziah: You say “shut up,” God says, “fasten your seat belt.”
 - * Your wife will become a prostitute in the city.
 - * Your kids will die.
 - * Your property will be divided up by others.
 - * You will die in foreign exile (See 2 King 17:6, Hos 9:13)
 - When God fulfills His word in judgment, it is because we rebelled.***

Ps 119:89-96 His word is settled - it stands firm. (See also Ps 119:151-152)

Is 55:9-11 His word will achieve His purpose.

Jer 15:19-21 The people may turn to God but His prophet must not turn to them.

Either His word means what it says and can be relied on or it means what we say. We can’t have it both ways. Israel gave lip service to God but remained under condemnation and were judged. They had centers of worship, but did not seek God according to His word/command. Partial obedience is disobedience. God will hold His people accountable.

Be encouraged - He is faithful and will finish what He starts: (Ps 138:8, 1 Cor 1:4-8, Phil 1:6)