

Maranatha Fellowship CRC
Farmington, NM 87401
Sunday, April 30, 2023, 10:00 AM

Scripture: Amos 5:24

Message: God's Justice: God Judges His People for Their Social Injustice

Context: Amos prophesied during a period of national optimism in Israel. The business was booming, and boundaries were bulging. But below the surface, greed and injustice were festering. Hypocritical religious motions had replaced true worship, creating a false sense of security and growing callousness to God's disciplining hand. Famine, drought, plagues, death, and destruction – nothing could force the people to their knees.

Like a basket of rotting fruit, the nation of Israel stands ripe for judgment because of its hypocrisy and spiritual indifference. Amos, the country farmer turned prophet, lashes out at sin unflinchingly, trying to visualize the nearness of God's judgment and mobilize the nation to repentance. The name *Amos* means "Burden-Bearer." The prophet *Amos* lives up to the meaning of his name by bearing up under his divinely given burden of declaring judgment to rebellious Israel.

God is good all the time. He judges evil among Israel and the nations. Even though Israel would have to experience judgment, God would still deal mercifully with them. Amos 9:11-15, he ends his prophecy with a promise of restoration. He sees a distant day when the people of God will be gathered again under a Davidic king.

God's long-term purposes are to restore His world and build a new covenant family. Only these new people will include other nations, and their relationship with God will never again be broken. This restoration time will culminate in a restored creation so fruitful that the harvesters won't be able to keep up. But we must also understand that Amos' prophecy will begin to be realized hundreds of years later.

A distant descendant of David, who broadens the definition of "God's people," would include all nations. It is through this one that God will one day restore all things (Acts 3:21). And so, through Amos' words, we still hear his call to learn from Israel's hypocrisy and disaster and truly worship this God, which should always lead to justice, righteousness, and loving our neighbor.

Outline:

- I. Introduction – 'Who is Amos?'
 - A. Some Probing Questions
 - B. **Illus.** "Buckle Up Warning"
 - C. The Book of Amos – A Preview

- II. The Eight Prophecies (1:3-2:16)
 - i. God calls Amos to the unviable task of leaving his homeland in Judah to preach.
 - ii. Amos' eight oracles (Amos Chapters 1 and 2)
 - iii. Seven times, God declares, "I will send fire" (1:4, 7, 10, 13, 14; 2:2,5)

- III. The Three Sermons of Judgment: Israel's Present (Amos 3:1-15), Israel's Past (Amos 4:1-13), and Israel's Future (Amos 5:1-6:14)

- IV. The Visions of Judgment and Promises of the Restoration
 - A. The Five Visions of Judgment upon the Northern kingdom of Israel (7:1-9:10)

- i. The vision of the Locusts (7:1-3)
 - ii. The vision of the Fire (7:4-6)
 - iii. The vision of the Plumb Line (7:7-9)
 - iv. The Opposition of the Amaziah (7:10-17)
 - v. The Vision of the Summer Fruit (8:1-14)
 - vi. The Vision of the Stricken Doorposts (9:1-10)
- B. The Five Promises of the Restoration of Israel (Amos 9:11-5)
- i. The theme of divine retribution with oracles, sermons, and visions
 - ii. A note of Consolation
 - iii. God reinstates the Davidic line to renew the land and restore the people
- C. Conclusion
- i. Through Amos' words, we still hear his call.
 - ii. We must learn from Israel's hypocrisy and disaster and truly worship this God, which should always lead to justice, righteousness, and loving our neighbor.
 - iii. Jesus came to establish the new covenant family, God's people, and a new community.
 - iv. Jesus lived out the truth He taught.
 - v. Through his words, actions, and emotions, Jesus communicates God's compassion, mercy, and justice.
 - vi. Jesus sent His Spirit to Guide us
 - vii. Some practical implications

Questions and Answers (Refer Amos 1:1-2; 1:2-2:16, 3:1-6:14, 7:1-9:10, and 9:11-15) NIV for answers; Circle the correct answer)

1. Amos' earnest and forceful message against Israel's sins and abuses is poorly received. The prophet presents a painfully clear message for Israel. What is this message of God?
 - A. "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" (4:12)
 - B. "Hear this word" (3:1, 4:1, 5:1)
 - C. Only A
2. The four divisions of the Book of Amos are:
 - A. The eight prophecies (1:1-2:16)
 - B. The three sermons (3:1-6:14)
 - C. The five visions (7:1 – 9:10)
 - D. The five promises (9:11-15)
 - E. All of the above
3. The first two judgments of locusts and Fire did not come upon the northern kingdom because Amos was interceding. There is power in intercessory prayers, and God listens. Circle one. A. True B. False
4. Amos delivers three sermons and reminds God's people – of the message of God (3:1-6:14) through his Three Sermons, each beginning with the phrase, "Hear this word" (3:1, 4:1, and 5:1): A. It's a general pronouncement of judgment because of Israel's iniquities. B. The second sermon exposed the people's crimes and described how God had chastened them to return them to Himself. Five times he said, "Yet you have not returned to me" (4:6, 8-11) C. The third sermon lists the sins of the house of Israel and calls the people to repent. But they hate integrity, justice, and compassion, and their refusal to turn to Yahweh will lead to their exile. D. All of the above.
5. **Take home** lesson today: all of us, who are called to Christlikeness, should communicate the truth of God's compassion, mercy, and justice through how we live. A. I am not sure B. I can't entirely agree on C. Yes, I agree.