Amos 6-7

Review…

- Amos gave 3 sermons to the Northern Kingdom - Hear this Word to the Children of Israel…
  - Though God chose Israel alone from all the nations of the earth – He was going to judge them…
  - As much as it was hard to share this – the Lord had spoken and Amos had to warn them!
  - God even called on the nations to come and learn a lesson – Egypt and the Philistines…
  - Come look down on the destruction of Israel – because they do not know to do right!
- Hear this Word you fat cows – the 2nd sermon was to the women of Israel…
  - They lived only for PLEASURE – therefore God would lead them away with a hook in their noses!
  - Those who lived a hypocritical lifestyle - had all outward trappings of religion…
  - But who were only fooling themselves – their judgment was at the doors!
  - In His grace – God did not stand by idly while Israel careened towards destruction…
  - He put distinct roadblocks in their path – trials to get their attention…
  - But since Israel had rejected and all attempts to help them – prepare to meet your God!
- Hear this Word – there is still time to seek the Lord and live…
  - Seek the Lord because even if they lived though the judgment of Assyria – but still did not repent…
  - It would be like escaping a lion – only to run right into a bear!
  - They would only live to face a hasher judgment – the Day of the Lord!

Standing in the Gap…

- **1st – Woe to Israel… vs. 1-14**
  - 1st – The first WOE… vs. 1-2
    - The 'woe' carries the idea of a great sorrow or distress – bad things are coming…
      - Woe because even though Amos gave them the Word of God – 3 sermons – they rejected it!
      - If people reject the Word of the Lord – all that is left is the judgment of God!
      - There is only ONE hope of our salvation – and that comes from believing the Gospel…
      - Woe to those who reject the Word of the Lord – because there is no other answer to sin!
      - **Hebrews 10:26-27** – "If we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies."
    - The first Woe was specifically to the leaders of Israel and Judah (*Zion*)…
      - Because the leaders led the people to reject the 3 sermons that God gave Amos…
      - It was not that the leaders did not see the coming judgment – the Assyrian Empire…
      - But rather than repent – they put their trust in their own might – the mount of Samaria!
      - I know a lot of people who look to politicians (*Bernie Sanders*) to take care of them…
      - But anyone who leads us anywhere but to Jesus will ultimately only lead us to destruction!
    - Look at Calneh (*Aleppo*) / Hamath (city in northern Syria) / and Gath…
      - All cities that were once great – but had already been completely destroyed…
      - Did Samaria think it was better than these fallen cities – they would suffer the same fate!
      - It is funny how it is easy to see the shortcomings of others – but be blinded to our own!
      - No one gets into sin thinking they will become slaves to their sin…
      - We convince ourselves we are still in control – we can stop anytime we want…

- Others might not be able to control it – but we are the exception to the rule!
- We think we can quit anytime – denying our sin is leading us towards destruction!

- 2nd – The second WOE – to those deny the day of doom is near… vs. 3-7
  - The day of doom – the day of judgment (*Assyrian captivity*)…
    - There is a day coming when Israel would pay the penalty for their rebellion…
    - It will be a 'day of doom' because it would mark the destruction of the Northern Kingdom!
  - Woe to them - because they are the ones who caused the violence to come near…
    - Ironically it was their denial of the day of doom – that caused it to come faster…
    - Israel lived a life abandoned to pleasure – no thought of their eternal destiny…
    - This led to a moral decay that infected the whole nation – the only solution…
    - The day of doom – they would be snatched from their parties – taken away into captivity!
    - One day all will stand before the throne of God to be judged - **Revelation 20:11-12**
    - For too many it will be a day of doom – because it will be the day they are thrown into hell!
    - There will be two sets of books opened - 'The books' and the Book of Life…
    - If your name is found written in the Book of Life – then you are saved…
    - If not – then the Books are opened – and you are judged according to your works…
    - Every thing you did - every word you said - every thought you think!
  - Why did Israel deny the day of doom…
    - Because there was incredible prosperity in Israel at this point in their history…
    - They lay on beds of ivory (*luxury*) / ate lamb and cows from barns (*no hunting - easy life*)…
    - They sang idly on new instruments they invented (*lots of spare time*)…
    - They drank wine from bowls (*excess*) / anointed with the best oils (*opulence*)…
    - But for all of their wealth and ease in life – they were not grieved by sin of Israel!
    - Because they were content to live for the brief pleasures of life – rather than for eternity!
    - In 1850 – 99% of the 1 billion people in the world lived in extreme poverty (*less $2 a day*)…
    - In 1950 – that percentage had been reduced to only 75% of the 2.5 billion people...
    - Today that number is amazingly only 10% of the worlds almost 7 billion people!
    - And here in American – more than 60% of us spend more than $50 a day!
    - We live in a time of prosperity unlike the world has EVER seen - have excess of everything…
    - We never have to wonder where our next meal will come from…
    - Have so much we have almost forgotten what a need is – have everything we want!
    - As a result most people DO NOT want to talk about the day of doom…
    - Did you ever notice that our culture does not like to talk about death…
    - Life is great – there is no reason to think about what happens after this life…
    - They would rather live blissfully ignorant of the judgment waiting at their door!
- 3rd – The desolation of Israel… vs. 8-11
  - God swore by Himself – He would destroy (*shut up*) the city of Samaria…
    - 'Swore by Himself' shows the absolute certainly of the intent of God - **Hebrews 6:13**
    - But since the destruction of a city can be hard to grasp – Amos gives an example…
    - If 10 men live in one house – all 10 men will die – from war / famine / disease…
    - When their uncle comes to burn the bodies – suggesting disease as the cause of death…
    - He will ask someone in the house – is there anyone still alive – and there is one left…
    - And the uncle will tell him to hold his tongue – because they Lord intends to kill them all!
    - Both great (*rich*) and small (*poor*) houses will be smashed into bits!
  - All because God loathed the pride of Jacob – He hated their palaces (*display of riches*)…
    - We toss the word pride loosely these days – we are 'proud' of our accomplishments…
    - But pride is perhaps the original / and likely most dangerous sin in life…
    - Original because it was the sin that got satan kicked out of Heaven - **Isaiah 14:14**

- Dangerous cause God pours out Grace on the humble – but resists the proud - **I Peter 5:5**

o 4th - The foolish confidence of Israel… vs. 12-14
- Israel bragged about Lo-debar – literally nothing – but they thought they had it all...
  - They argued they had arrived – had power and dignity by their own strength (*Karnaim*)!
  - **I Corinthians 4:7** – "What do you have that God has not given you? If all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?"
  - Everything we have we received from God – so it is not ours to glory over...
  - Our intellect / our ability / our family / our country – all were given to us!
  - We have nothing that we have not been given – so all the credit goes to God!
- The examples of foolishness…
  - Just as it is foolish to let a horse gallop on rocks – ruin their hooves / break a leg…
  - And it is foolish to plow a rocky field with an ox – nothing will grow in spite of the work…
  - It was just as foolish for Israel to turn justice into poison / righteousness into bitterness…
  - And think there would be no consequences – God would judge them!
  - He would raise up Assyria – to oppress them from Hamath (*north*) to Arabah (*south*)!
  - I love going out to pick fresh blueberries – I love to eat them more…
  - But I would be a fool to plant a apple seed – and expect blueberries to grow!
  - In the same way we will reap what we sow in our life – **Galatians 6:7**
  - If we sow to the flesh - sexual sins / covetousness / jealously and anger...
  - Then it should come as no surprise that we reap corruption / destruction...
  - Whether it is some disease / prison / death - sin will destroy our life...
  - And in the end it will keep us out of heaven – **Galatians 5:21** - miss out on eternal life!

- **2ND – LOVING PERSECUTION… VS. 1-17**

o 1st – The first two visions of Amos… vs. 1-6
- The Lord began to show Amos visions of different ways He could destroy Israel…
  - The first was by locusts – which would devour all the vegetation in the land…
  - They would strike during the late crop – after the king had taken the first fruits…
  - So the blunt of the loss would fall on the common people – not the king…
  - Amos pleaded with the Lord to forgive – so that Jacob (*Israel*) could stand...
  - Because Jacob (*Israel*) was insignificant – and has no chance against the Lord!
  - So the Lord relented – and did not destroy Israel with a plague of locusts!
- The second vision was of a great fire that devoured everything in the land…
  - Amos pleaded with the Lord to stop – so that Jacob (*Israel*) could stand...
  - Because Jacob (*Israel*) is insignificant – and has no chance against the Lord!
  - So the Lord relented – and did not destroy Israel with a consuming fire!
- Standing in the gap…
  - When God determined to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah – He first told Abraham…
  - Abraham bargained with God to spare the cities – 'if there are ten righteous' - **Genesis 18**
  - Like Abraham and like Amos we have the opportunity to stand in the gap…
  - Knowing the destruction that is coming – we can pray for our nation…
  - Because perhaps the Lord might relent – and give more time for people to repent!
  - **I Timothy 2:1-2** – "All supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority…"

o 2nd – The third vision of Amos… vs. 7-9
- God showed Amos a wall made with a plumb line – we would say a level…
  - God was going to set a plumb line in the midst of Israel – to measure their righteousness…
  - God would no longer pass by their sin – they would have to pay the price…

- God would destroy their temples - raise His sword against the house of Jeroboam…
- Perhaps speaking of the end of line of Jeroboam II - death of Zechariah - **II Kings 15:9-10**
- Or perhaps speaking of the end of Northern Kingdom that started with Jeroboam I!

▪ Amos did not intervene this 3rd time…
- Because although we are called to pray for our nation – stand in the gap…
- In the end every person must stand before the plumb line of God…
- And that plumb line – is the Law of God – and His standard is perfection - **Matthew 5:48…**
- When we understand the standard of God – we see our need for Jesus - **Galatians 3:26**
- It is not being a sinner - we all are **Roman 3:23** - that keeps us from heaven…
- It is rejecting the solution for sin that God provided in Jesus Christ!

o 3rd – Rejecting the prophet… vs. 10-13

▪ Amaziah – the priest of Bethel – sent word to the king Jeroboam II…
- Presumably this was the high priest who oversaw the worship of the golden calves…
- No doubt the words of impending judgment did not settle well with him…
- So he told the king that Amos had been conspiring against him and Israel!
- The king will die by the sword – and the people would be taken away into captivity…
- Amaziah demanded Amos go back to Judah – eat bread (*work*) and prophecy there!

▪ While the judgment was correct – Amos was not conspiring / he was warning!
- People do not like it when we point out their sin – they quickly get offended…
- They make it personal and more often than note begin to attack us…
- Not because of what we are saying – but because the Spirit is convicting them!
- We cannot make people turn back to Jesus – but we can warn them - **Hebrews 3:13**
- We might think it is kinder not to confront someone who is sinning…
- But the truth is leaving someone in their sin – is condemning them to hell!

▪ The reason for the visions – to prepare Amos for the persecution…
- Amos had seen the was coming – God had shown him the destruction of Israel…
- So that he would have compassion on the people – even the spiteful rebellious ones!
- I wonder what it would do to us if we were given a glimpse of hell…
- Eternal fire – torment in absolute Darkness – day and night forever - **Revelation 20:10**
- Eternally separated from God - left to weep and gnash for eternity with no hope!
- Would we care if people mocked – would anything keep us from telling them about Jesus!

o 4th – The response of the prophet… vs. 14-17

▪ Amos clarified – he was not a prophet / or the son of a prophet…
- He was just a shepherd and a fruit picker – in other words he was no one!
- But the Lord took Amos while he watched the sheep – and sent him to warn Israel!
- One Sunday after filling in for Pastor Clark a guy came up to me after church…
- He wanted to question the content of the message – rightfully so!
- But he introduced himself as 'John the Eschatologist' – I could not even spell that…
- I responded – my name is 'David the sinner' – it left him speechless!
- Praise God being used by the Lord has nothing to do with us – we are NOT qualified…
- But like Moses who argued with the Lord – I am not eloquent – **Exodus 4:10**
- God simply answers – who made your mouth – if we are just willing to speak!

▪ To Amaziah - the one who questioned the Word of the Lord…
- The one who demanded Amos not prophecy or 'drop' the Word of God on Israel…
- His wife would become a prostitute / his children would die in battle…
- His land would be given to someone else / and he would die in a foreign land…
- Oh – and yeah – Israel would be carried away captive because of their sins!

- Amos was bold – unafraid – uncompromising in his message – because he was full of the Spirit!
  - Like Peter who was brought before the 71 man counsel of the Sanhedrin – **Acts 4**…
  - The same men who only months before had condemned and crucified Christ…
  - Who stood up FULL of the Holy Spirit – and professed the name of Jesus…
  - The same Jesus whom they crucified – but God raised from the dead!
  - It was not Peter who was speaking – but the Holy Spirit speaking through Him!
  - Many times we are to shy to share Jesus - we are afraid of what people might say...
  - But we do not go out in our own strength - we go out in the power of the Spirit...
  - The number one result of being filled with the Holy Spirit - is boldness!
  - Many times we are also shy because we do not know what to say...
  - But it is not our words people need to hear - they need the Word of God...
  - Do not worry about what to say - just open your mouth - God will speak through you!