Amos 3-5

Review…

- Amos – a herdsman from the valley of Tekoah - a nobody…
  - He was sent to the Northern Kingdom during one of their most prosperous times….
  - Sent because he was available – sent in the power of God – 'the Lord roars out of Zion'…
  - Burdened by God to go and wake up the people of Israel before it was too late!
- Amos began by declaring judgment on 7 nations that surrounded Israel…
  - Each judgment began with 'Thus says the Lord' – because it was God who judged!
  - Each judgment contained the phrase – 'for 3 transgressions – and for 4' – because it was certain…
  - Syria was cruel / the Philistines had no mercy / Tyre broke its promises…
  - Edom was full of rage / Ammon was greedy / Moab was violent / Judah had been led astray by lies
- While Israel would have been more than willing to agree these 7 nations needed to be judged…
  - The purpose behind listing their sins – was to prove a point…
  - God wanted to show the fact that while these nations deserved judgment – Israel was worse!
  - God had saved them from Egypt – gave them Nazarites and Prophets to lead them…
  - Yet they silenced the prophets of God – so now God was going to judge them!

Hear this Word… (*3 sermons*)

- **1st – Hear this word – to the children of Israel… vs. 1-15**
  - 1st – Israel was chosen… vs. 1-2
    - Amos had a message from the Lord - for the 'whole family' brought up from Egypt…
      - Amos will direct 3 sermons (*chapter 3-5*) mainly to the Northern Kingdom…
      - But he encourages Judah to also pay attention – because although they were not as bad…
      - They were on the same path and were in danger of sharing the same fate!
    - God chose Israel alone from all the nations of the earth…
      - Israel is special – because it was through them the Messiah came – **Genesis 22:18**
      - But Israel felt that their special place in the plan of God – came with special benefits…
      - They were the 'chosen people' – they alone were the descendants of Abraham!
      - They had the commands / Law of God – they knew about the Lord!
      - **Matthew 3:9** – "Do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."
      - **James 2:19** – "You believe that there is one God… Even the demons believe..."
      - If you ask most people – they will tell you they are a Christian / American (*no difference*)…
      - They will say they believe in God – may even be proud of their 'belief' in God…
      - Turns out being equal to a rock or a demon – is not enough to get to heaven!
    - In fact Israel was under the greater judgment - because they knew the Word of God…
      - They knew what God expected of them – the difference between right and wrong…
      - There are many who break the law of God – but do not know any better – **Romans 2:12**
      - Those who know what God expects - know the truth of His word...
      - And still choose to sin - that is rebellion against the Lord – and is far greater sin!
      - **Luke 12:48** - "Much is required from those to whom much is given, and much more is required from those to whom much more is given."
  - 2nd – The credentials of Amos… vs. 3-8
    - No doubt the credentials of Amos were being questioned by Israel…

- Who are you to tell us that we are under the judgment of God – who gave you the right…
- No one wants to be confronted about their sin – it is easier to dismiss the messenger!
- If you get an unwanted bill – you do not blame Google mail / or Yahoo / or AOL…
- It is not their fault if your bill is too high – they are just the messengers!
- Yet people seem to like to attack those who bring them the truth…
- Cause it is far easier to blame others – than to admit to our own faults!

▪ So Amos gives them 4 rhetorical questions to prove the point God had sent him!
- Can 2 walk together unless they 'agree on where to meet'?
- Back in the days before cell phones – if you wanted to meet up with someone…
- You had to give instructions to them before hand on when and where to meet
- God had given instructions to Israel – on how they were to 'walk' so they could meet God…
- He sent his instructions through the prophets – like Amos…
- But they had ignored His instructions – therefore they would end up missing each other!
- God has made the instructions for salvation simple – just believe - **Ephesians 2:8**
- God did not make salvation hard – He wants everyone to be saved – **II Peter 3:9**
- But at the same time – it is our choice – heaven or hell / life or death…
- We choose which whether to walk our own way / or 'meet up' with God!

▪ Will a bird fall from the sky without a snare catching it?
- Or will a snap trap spring closed – without catching whatever tripped it…
- The picture is powerful – like a spring loaded bear trap – snapping shut on its prey…
- God had laid a trap for the nation of Israel – to catch them in their iniquity…
- Amos was the trap – the Lord had sent him to see if the people would rebel or repent…
- And they had sprung the trap – and there would be no escaping the judgment that followed!

▪ Will the trumpet be blown in the city – without causing panic?
- In days of antiquity the 'alarm' for a city of an approaching enemy was a trumpet…
- When the people heard the blast – it was a warning great danger was at the gates!
- Amos was the trumpet – he was sounding the alarm – God was at the gates…
- Israel had made Him an enemy – and He was there to bring calamity!

▪ Will a lion roar when he has no prey?
- Lions stalk their prey – they do not announce their position unless they were attacking…
- And young lions will not come out of their dens unless their parents caught their prey!
- The Lord does nothing without first revealing it to His prophets…
- The Lord had roared who could not fear - He had spoken how could Amos not prophesy!
- God has spoken to us as well – we know His Word – we know the Truth...
- We know there is only one way to get to heaven - and only one alternative - hell...
- Knowing the truth - how can we hold back from sharing - how can we keep silent!
- **Jeremiah 20:9** - "His word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am weary of holding it in!"

o 3rd – The judgment of Samaria… vs. 9-15

▪ God calls on the nations to come and learn a lesson…
- Publish in the palaces of Egypt / Ashdod (*Philistines*) - come to the mountains of Samaria…
- Come look down on the destruction of Israel – because they do not know to do right!
- God would send an enemy to surround the city – Assyria – **II Kings 17:5**
- As a shepherd recovers only pieces of the sheep from the mouth of the lion (*leg / ear*)…
- So only a remnant of Israel would survive – a scant few make it out alive!
- The destruction would include their golden calves – the altars of Bethel…
- As well as the wealthy and rich – those who dwelt in palaces of ivory!

- God desired to use Israel as a light to the nations…
  - But in their rebellion they instead became a warning – showing the judgment of God!
  - The Lord desires to bless us – beyond what we could ever imagine – **Ephesians 3:20**
  - Yet that blessing is contingent on our willingness to obey – **James 1:22**
  - The Lord will use our lives either way – as an example / or a warning – our choice!
  - **Joshua 24:15** - "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..."

- **2ND – HEAR THIS WORD - YOU FAT COWS… VS. 1-13**
  - 1st – The dangers of prosperity… vs. 1-5
    - Amos was obviously single – there is no way he could have gotten away with this otherwise!
      - Amos likens the women of Israel to fat cows – (*Bashan - known for healthy fatted livestock*)
      - The women had become 'fat' from the oppression of the needy and poor…
      - They lived only for PLEASURE – calling out to their Lord (*adonai*) for more wine!
      - Therefore God would lead them away with a hook in their noses – like a fish on a hook!
      - They would be led out through broken walls – thrown out of their houses (*harmon*)!
      - Money is not evil – but there is a danger in prosperity – we forget what is most important…
      - We get caught up in the pursuit of things that do not matter…
      - The latest fashion – the newest movies – the best restaurants…
      - In our prosperity we spend less time with God - and forget all He did for us...
      - Forget God saved us from our sin for a purpose – so that we could live our lives for Him!
    - God warns them about continuing to live their hypocritical lifestyle…
      - They come to Bethel (*golden calf*) and worship – Gilgal to multiply transgression…
      - Gilgal – where Israel first entered the Promised Land – **Joshua 5:10-15**
      - They bring their sacrifices every day – their tithes every 3 years – **Deuteronomy 14:28**
      - Offer sacrifices – leavened thanks – free will offerings – which they love to brag about…
      - In other words they had all outward trapping of religion in place…
      - But they were only fooling themselves – judgment was at the doors!
      - Many Christians today think as long as they look good – then God is with them…
      - But the question is what do we get excited about / what do we talk about the most…
      - Plastic Christianity is only skin deep – the questions is what is in our heart!
      - **Luke 6:24** - "Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks…"
      - We cannot serve both Jesus and the things of this world – with a disloyal heart…
      - If we live for the things of this world – veiled by Christianese – we only fool ourselves!
  - 2nd – The purpose of trials… vs. 6-11
    - In His grace – God did not stand by idly while Israel careened towards destruction…
      - He put 5 distinct roadblocks in their path – trials to get their attention…
      - But in spite of His best efforts – the result was the same each time – they did not repent!
    - 1 - God gave them clean teeth – meaning they had nothing to eat – but they did not repent…
    - 2 - God withheld the rain – just when the later rains were due (*April/May*)…
      - He made it rain on one city and not another – showing it was not a drought – but judgment!
      - People had to travel from one city to anther just for water - but they did not repent!
    - 3 - God blasted (*hot east wind*) their crops with blight and mildew…
      - And when their crops did grow – locusts came and ate it - but they did not repent!
      - The first 3 attempts by God to get their attention all focuses on food and water…
      - God knows how to get our attention - one of the best ways is food...
      - When we are full/in need nothing - we tend to get arrogant - ignore God...
      - So God will allows us to go through times of 'famine' - no food / no money...
      - God desires to teach us - His kids - how to live a pure and holy life!

- 4 - God sent plagues on Israel – like He had done to Egypt…
  - Their young men were killed in battle – their horses were taken captive…
  - The stench of their dead filled the air – but still they would not repent!
- 5 - God overthrew some of their cities like Sodom and Gomorrah…
  - Those who were not destroyed – were saved like a half burned stick pulled from the fire!
  - The attempts of God became more desperate the more Israel hardened their hearts!
  - Because sin is devastating - if we refuse to repent of our sin - it will destroy us...
  - That is why God is willing to do almost anything to get our attention…
  - If we do not listen to the tap on the shoulder – He will swing the BIG stick…
  - Because the cost of not repenting is to great – it is eternal separation from God!
  - **Hebrews 3:13 -** "Exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

o 3rd – Prepare to meet your maker… vs. 12-13
- Since Israel had rejected the prophets of God – and all attempts to get their attention…
- God issues them a military challenge to come out to battle – prepare to meet your God…
- Lets see how far your strength - and that of your gods - will help you against Him…
- The one who formed the mountains – that created the wind – and turn morning to night!
- The one who knows the inner thoughts of a man - the Lord of hosts is His name!
- We might snicker at the idea of men being able to 'fight God'…
- But the truth is we often try to 'fight the will' of God in our own lives…
- God wants us to live for Him – and we stubbornly insistent on doing things our own way…
- Like Jacob when he wrestled with God – only to finding the blessing in his surrender!
- It is only when we are exhausted / defeated – that we finally look up and find the answer!

- **3RD – HEAR THIS WORD – THE LAMENTAION OF ISRAEL… VS. 1-27**

o 1st – Seek the Lord and live … vs. 1-15
- Amos final sermon is a dirge – a song – sung for a forsaken nation… vs. 1-5
  - The virgin of Israel has fallen – she lies forsaken on her land – no one to help her up…
    - Israel would be devastated in battle – left like a little girl helpless on the ground…
    - A city that sent 1000 people men into battle – would only see 100 return…
    - The city that sent 100 men – would only see 10 come home!
  - The solution was so simple – SEEK the Lord and live – 3 times He will give this command…
    - Do not seek Bethel - golden calves – because false idols could not save them…
    - Do not seek Gilgal – the past glory – because the past could not help them…
    - Do not seek Beersheba – Judah – because their brother was just like them!
    - Sadly – we tend to look everywhere but to the Lord in times of trouble…
    - We put our confidence in banks / 401ks / social security – to provide…
    - We run to friends / family / Facebook – Instagram and Twitter – for advice…
    - Confused and frustrated by the trials of life – and our constant failures…
    - We long for yesterday – rather than trust in the Lord tomorrow…
    - All the while God patiently waits saying – just SEEK the Lord and live!
- SEEK the Lord and live – before He consumes you with a fire… vs. 6-11
  - You who twist justice into bitterness (*wormwood*) – casts righteousness to the ground…
  - The Lord is the one who made the Pleiades (*seven sisters*) and Orion (*constellation*)…
  - The Lord who makes night into day – and turns day to darkest night…
  - Who calls the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth – water cycle!
  - He will rain down ruin upon the strong / proud – crushing their defenses…
  - Upon the ones who hate those who correct them – despise those who speak the truth!

- Therefore – because you trample and steal (*tax*) the poor… vs. 12-15
  - You will build stone houses – not live in them / plant vineyards - not drink from them…
  - Because God sees your MANY MIGHTY sins – you silence the upright…
  - You take bribes – and keep the poor from being able to get justice at the gate of the city…
  - So that even the wise keep silent – because they know it is an evil time!
  - SEEK good (*the Lord*) and not evil – that you may live / so the Lord will be with you…
  - Hate evil and love good – and God may yet be gracious to the remnant of Israel!
  - There is no end to the variety of challenges and tribulations that we face in life...
  - If we asked around – every one of us could share our own story – trial...
  - No matter what the question – the answer never changes – turn from the world (*hate evil*)…
  - And SEEK Jesus – His grace is more than able to save us from our troubles!

o 2nd – The Day of the Lord… vs. 16-20
- From the cities (*streets*) to the county (*vineyards*) there will be wailing…
  - Call everyone (*farmers to professionals*) to come and wail – because the Lord is coming…
  - Woe to those who desire 'the Day of the Lord' – thinking God will be an answer…
  - It will be like a man who fled from a lion – only to meet a bear!
  - It will be like a man who fled into the safety of his house – only to be bit by a snake!
- In other words if those who lived though the judgment of Assyria – but still did not repent…
  - Would only live to face a hasher judgment – the Day of the Lord!
  - I fear some people think they have 'escaped' judgment when they survive the trials of life…
  - I read an article about a women who was happy that his husband cheated on her…
  - She used it as motivation to loose over 100 pounds – and now is a motivational speaker…
  - The story struck me – because it completely missed the point…
  - The trials of life are not judgment – they are meant to be opportunities to repent…
  - Because if we do not repent now – we face the wrath of God on the Day of the Lord!

o 3rd – The hypocrisy of Israel… vs. 21-27
- God despised the feasts of Israel – He would not accept their offerings…
  - He refused to listen to the noise of their songs – closed His ear to their music…
  - What He wanted was a flood of justice – and a mighty river of righteousness!
  - But Israel had always been rebellious – from the beginning - 40 years in the wilderness…
  - Even there they blended their worship of God with their idols…
  - Sikkuth your king (*Sak-kut / Saturn – Babylonian God*) - Chiun your star!
  - Steven – standing up boldly for the truth - quotes this very passage in **Acts 7:43**
  - Using the Septuagint translations of the names Moloch (*king*) and Remphan (*star*)…
  - Showing that Israel would continue to be rebellious all the way into the NT!
- Therefore God would send them into captivity beyond Damascus (Assyria)…
  - The problem with people – is that it is very hard to change…
  - Like Israel it is easier to question the messenger – than to examine ourselves…
  - It is easy to think because the outside looks good – the heart does not matter…
  - It is easy to justify the trials we are going through – ignore the warning…
  - It is easy to forget that the one lesson God is trying to teach us – is to SEEK HIM…
  - But the truth is there is no more important lesson we will every learn…
  - Because eternity is guaranteed to everyone – where we spend eternity is the question…
  - The Day of the Lord is coming – today is the day to change!