

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**
 - o **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 fattened 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!**
 - o **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 another 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 allow 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 too 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 LAMENTATION 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!