

Amos 5:16-27 “Longing for the Day”

For the Children: Many schools have a prize-giving at the end of each year. Sometimes, boys or girls fully expect that they are going to receive a prize. If it does not happen that way, the student might be very upset. God has promised to give His children a prize – one we don't deserve: salvation. But there are some who expect it, thinking they deserve it, but they will miss out. It is only given to those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus. It is not for those who only pretend to believe in Him. **Questions:** How can you tell if someone is only pretending to believe in Jesus? Does God ever withhold salvation from members of His Church? How can we encourage ourselves to look forward to the Day of Judgement?

Introduction:

First Point: False Assumptions About the Day of the Lord

- 1) **The Day Always Brings Peace to God's People:** Israel was applying false assumptions about their present relationship with the Lord, to the future Day of the Lord – which can refer to any time God brings a special act of salvation or judgement. They assumed that this Day would be all sweetness and light for them, but it would actually be a Day of grief that affected the entire nation (vss. 16-20).
- 2) **The Lord Will Be with Us No Matter What:** Israel assumed that the Lord would always be “with” them. But the Lord can be “with” His people in different ways – either to save or to judge and chastise (v. 17).
- 3) **The Lord Cannot Judge His Own People:** Some assume that God is unable to judge His own people, either because He is not strong enough or because He would never be so “harsh.” This is a worldly assumption (2 Pet. 3). He is the Lord of Hosts (vss. 14, 16, 27), able to judge the world. He is also “Yahweh,” who always keeps His covenant-Word to curse covenant-breakers who do not repent.
- 4) **Religious Rituals Always Protect Us from God's Wrath:** Israel assumed their religious rituals would keep them safe from God's wrath. But He says He hates/takes no delight in/rejects their festivals, assemblies, offerings and worship (v. 21f). Such rituals were never the reason God helped His people – for example, in the wilderness (v. 25). They should not assume these things would suffice if Israel was rebelling against the Lord.
- 5) **Past Blessings Guarantee Future Blessings:** Past blessings do not guarantee future blessings, if God's people rebel against Him. In all this, there is a concern about false security – as seen in the illustration from animal attacks in situations where men think they are safe (vss. 18-19).

Second Point: How to Look Forward to the Day of the Lord

- 1) **Focus on the Lord:** God's people can be assured of salvation, peace and blessing on the Day of the Lord – if we place our trust in the Sovereign God Himself. He is our Creator, Ruler and Saviour. He is Yahweh, the faithful, covenant-keeping God. He is the Source of our security on the Day of the Lord, through His Son. That is why the Bible calls Him our Rock/Stronghold/Fortress etc. The more we look to Him, versus ourselves or our enemies, the more secure we should feel.
- 2) **Focus on His Promise:** The only security to which we may lay claim is that offered by God's Word. Amos had already held out that hope of rescue for a remnant (vss. 4,6,14,15). The Name “Yahweh” implies that He will bless according to His covenant-oath. Israel's history e.g., in the wilderness, backs this up. This especially means focusing on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as our certain hope for the Day of the Lord.
- 3) **The Other Side of the Covenant:** However, God's covenant also warns of curses upon unrepentant covenant-breakers. The promises are for those joined to Christ by faith. Faith includes personal commitment. Israel lacked that commitment, we must be sure we do not. For the Lord desires righteousness (based on inner love of Him) and justice (the application of that to our relations with others). He calls on Israel to let these things “roll down” like an abundant, permanent flow of water. True religion must start in the heart and flow to all of life. Only then will our worship be acceptable. Only then may we legitimately claim to the Lord's promise of security on the Day of the Lord applies to us.

Conclusion:

