

AMOS
Message 2
Amos 5:18-9:15

INTRODUCTION: We are in our second message of the book of Amos, so this is also the last message in this book, since I have limited myself to two messages at the max. In the first message we very briefly noted that Amos pronounces judgments against eight nations which included Judah and Israel, the southern and northern kingdoms of God's people. Then in 3:1-5:15, we saw that Amos gave three messages. In brief, the first message was Amos' warning that judgment is coming. It is too late to turn around, and judgment is even now on the way. The second message was directed, in my interpretation, against the women of the northern nation. In the third message God foretells what is going to happen. There will be wailing in the streets and the highways. They will say, "Alas, Alas!" And the reason? God is passing through and He is not happy!

So, let me give you once more the outline of this book as I gave it. First, the prophecies of Amos against the nations (1-2). Second, the preaching of Amos to Israel, 3:1-5:17. We have looked at those briefly. This morning we want to cover the last two points. So point # 3 gives us the pronouncements of Amos against Israel (5:18-6:14, and fourth, and last, the prophecies of Amos against Israel 7:1-9:15). That means we will cover chapters 7, 8 and 9.

III. THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF WOES BY AMOS AGAINST ISRAEL
(5:18-6:14)

A. Pronouncement of the first woe (5:18-27)

So, we go to Amos 5:18 to begin where we left off. From 5:18-6:14, we have two woes pronounced. The first woe is in 5:18-24. It begins like this, "Woe to you!" When you hear these familiar words in Scripture, you know something very bad is coming! Ninety nine times this word 'woe' occurs in the Bible, 66 in the OT and 33 in the NT. In the first part of verse 18, we have the recipients of this woe (read verse 18). It is those who desire the day of the Lord. And how do they desire the day of the Lord? By living in sin! In North America, including Canada of course, the majority desire the judgment of God. Oh no, they do not say, "Lord we want judgment." But by living in sin, the

message to God is, "We want judgment!" Might I ask, are you living in sin and you know it? Oh, you want good things for yourself, I know you do. But your message to God is, "I want trouble."

But God reasons with them regarding this day that they desire in the last part of verse 18. He says, "It will be a day of darkness and not light!" For the sinner, the day of the Lord will be darkness. For those who repent and turn, it will be light! So look at verses 19-20 (read).

Verses 25-27 are apparently some of the most debated verses in the OT. The debate centers around whether Israel did or did not sacrifice during the wilderness wanderings. I cannot claim any great insights here, except it seems to me that what God is saying is that they had been prone to idol worship from the time they entered the wilderness until this very day. And God says, "I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus." They would be taken captive by the Assyrians, who were beyond Damascus. And in Hosea we had this prophecy as to what would happen to their propensity for idol worship when God scattered them among the heathen. He said in 3:4-5, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." In their captivity God cured Israel forever of her propensity to idol worship.

B. Pronouncement of the second woe (6:1-14)

That is the sum of the first woe just very briefly, and brings us to the second in 6:1-14 (read 6:1). The recipients of this woe are both the southern and the northern kingdom. Zion is Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. Samaria was the capital of Israel. But notice that it is those who are at ease in Zion and trust in Mount Samaria.

Now verse 1 tells us that the recipients to whom this woe is pronounced are at ease. Oh how we want ease. We will do almost anything to be at ease. The other day,

coming to work my mind was weighed down with people cares. And all of a sudden, as I looked outside on the beautiful snow and sunrise, I thought, "Oh, if only I could enjoy life without these cares, these weights." But we know from Biblical examples what happens to those who attain to ease. And those who were at ease in Zion, were not at ease because they trusted in the Lord. They were trusting in Samaria. Trusting in Samaria is like trusting in money or possessions. It is deadly.

And in 6:2 we find a reminder in this first woe (read). Israel is called to consider first Calneh, on the east bank of the Tigris River, in the land of Shinar and built by Nimrod the mighty hunter. Then they were to consider Hamath the chief city of Syria; and Gath, the principle city of the Philistines. Why these three cities? Well to start with Gath, it was the main city of the Philistines but in chapter one it is not even mentioned for it appears this once mighty city was already out of the picture. Calneh was taken by the Assyrians and Hamath by Jeroboam the II and then by Assyria. Having considered then these cities a question is asked of Israel. This question is worded differently by various translators. The NKJV says, "Are you better than they?" The NIV says, "Are they better than you?" The NIV rendering is likely better. It makes the question parallel with the first one. Are they better than you? No! Are they bigger than you? No! So, what should Israel and Judah learn by going to these cities? Well, all of these were once great cities, yet they were overcome by another. Calneh was taken by the Assyrians; Hamath by Jeroboam the II, and Gath by Uzziah. The idea here, I think, is first, that these once great cities had been taken by another. And second, here is Jerusalem, having the privilege of having the only true God and bigger and larger territories, and if they too live in sin like those who do not know God, how much more will they not be overthrown. So the NT says that judgment must begin at the house of God.

Now let us read verses 3-6 to see the reason this judgment (read). Then in verses 7-14, we have Israel's retribution for their sinfulness (read vs/ 7, 14). So, those are the two pronouncements of woe. The first was a woe pronounced on those who desire

the day of the Lord, a day of darkness and trouble. And how did they desire it? By living in sin. The second pronouncement is against those who are at ease, and trust in other things than the Lord.

IV. THE PROPHECIES OF AMOS AGAINST ISRAEL (7:1-9:15)

That brings us to the prophecies of Amos against Israel in the last three chapters and they are given in five visions. We find the first vision in 7:1-3 (read).

A. Vision one (7:1-3)

The first vision is about a locust plague, and these were common in Israel. But these locusts came at the beginning of the late crop. The kings crop was already in. The first crop went to the king. And these locusts cleaned everything up that would have made the late crop which left the common people without a crop.

And when Amos had seen this vision, he cried out to God, and God relented. The KJV says God repented, and there is nothing wrong with that translation. It means God changed His mind.

B. Vision two(7:4-6)

In the second vision Amos saw what I think is a drought. It is so hot that the great bodies of water suffered and it devoured the territory. And once again Amos prayed and averted judgment.

Now I do not understand these two averted judgments. Nor do I understand why Amos did not pray after the next three visions, but he did not. And maybe one lesson can be learned, and that is that the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. But this brings us to the third vision.

C. Vision three (7:7-17)

So let us read about this third vision to see the content of this vision (read 7-9). The vision is of a plumb-line. The plumb-line was used to check to see if the walls were straight. P.H. Kelly says, "There is a sense in which the ministry of Amos was a plumb line

with which God measured and tested his people. Among those whom he checked and found to be crooked were the women of Samaria (4:1-3), the idle rich (6:4-7), the judges (4:10-13), the merchants (8:4-7), and above all, the priests (7:10-17)."

What is interesting about this vision is that before Amos could pray for Israel, as he had in the other two visions, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel sent complaint to Jeroboam, the king of Israel. The priest's message was, "Amos is conspiring against you in the midst of the house of Israel, and his words, Oh my, the land can't bear all he is saying. And do you know something else O king? He has said you, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely go into captivity."

So look at verse 12-3 to see how the king responds to Amos from Amaziah's words (read). And we have Amos' response in verses 13-17 (read).

D. Vision four (8:1-14)

The fourth vision is a vision of a basket of summer fruit (read 8:1-2). The summer fruit indicated that summer was over. Now let me just briefly give what this vision is about. It is this: "Israel, it is too late for you. You are finished." The prophet Jeremiah in 8:20 sums it up like this: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved." It is too late.

So, look briefly at verses 11-12. If you want to do an interesting study, mark in the OT everywhere where God warns Israel that if they disobey Him, He will scatter them among all the nations of the world. That began just a few years after Amos wrote this book, and it continued into the 1900's, not too far removed from our time.

E. Vision five (9:1-15)

That brings us to Amos' fifth and last vision, and here we have two key points as I see the passage. In verses 1-10 we have Israel's retribution for her sins. Then in 9:11-15, we have Israel's restoration. So, we will begin with Israel's retribution.

1. Israel's retribution (9:1-10)

To view Israel's retribution let us read verses 1-9 (read). Now we want to spend some time here. The altar referred to here is not in Judah, but Israel. It was an altar that was used for ungodly purposes. And what God is saying is I will scatter My people among all the nations and they will suffer terribly. Even if they dig their way into hell, thence shall My hand take them. If they should climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down. They will have no place to hide, neither in the top of Carmel, nor in the depths of the sea. And when they go into captivity, there My sword shall find them. I will set Myself against them for evil, and not for good. And then He says, "For lo, I will command and I will sift the house of Israel among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve..."

I would like to take you through the Bible to show you what God had warned Israel about time after time after time. He said if you disobey me with all the great privileges you have had, I will scatter you among all the nations and it will become so bad that in the morning you will say, "Would to God it was evening, and in the evening you will say, would to God it was morning."

In the book of Lamentations Jeremiah mourns the fall of Judah and Jerusalem. And in 2:15 he says, "All that pass by clap *their* hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, *saying*, *Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?*" I am just reading Mark Twain's account of when he traveled to Israel, just about the time our Mennonites made exodus from Russia to Canada. And those words of Mark Twain describe his version of the whole land of Israel.

But we are not quite done with the book of Amos, for before he closes his book he tells us about the restoration of Israel in 11-15.

2. Israel's restoration (9:11-15)

Let us begin our look at Israel's restoration by reading 9:1 (read). Before we read the rest of this chapter, let me give you a little background.

We have read earlier that God would sift His people among the nations. In 9:11 the Lord now speaks of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David. That means God will bring the remnant He has sifted in the nations out of those nations and return them to Israel. I want to show you that promise in just the book of Jeremiah. We could go back to Moses writings. But let us go to Jeremiah 16 (read 14-15, 23:3-8; 24:5-6; 30:10-11; 31:8-10). In another message I will show you some of the regathering that happened just in this month of November. This regathering is still happening and has been going on for about 100 years already.

No doubt this sifting among the nations and regathering to Israel of Jewish people will continue into the time of the tribulation. Then will come Israel's darkest hour, an hour even darker than Hitler's gas chambers and ovens. And at the end of that time, God will finally have accomplished His purposes.

And so, according to Amos 9:1-10, Israel was to suffer horrendously. In the not so far distant past we have seen the Jewish holocaust. Though it would seem it could not get much worse than that, it will. During the tribulation time, a time worse than the holocaust is coming for the Jews. But when God is done with them, they will be finally and fully restored to the land of Israel, and to God. A large part of the first part of this prophecy we can now see in history. Most of it is already past. Today it is still in progress. But very soon the tribulation will begin and in seven years, this prophecy will be completed.

When those seven years of the tribulation have been completed, we will see verses 11-15 begin to be fulfilled. Let us read them (read). In these

verses we have Israel's restoration. Now this is a major prophecy. And here is the question I would ask. What time is the prophet speaking of here? When Amos was prophesying, the tabernacle of David was still standing. We are in the mid 700's BC. The temple had stood now for about 300 years. But in 586, the tabernacle of David was destroyed by Babylon. Then in 538 the Jews who had been dispersed began to return to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah and once more the temple was rebuilt, only this time it was not nearly as glorious. Then, just before the time of Christ, that wicked Herod who then ruled, tried to buy the favor of the Jews and for over 46 years he rebuilt and beautified the temple until it was once more a most glorious construction. But I recommend that that was not the tabernacle of David that Amos is referring to. The Shekinah glory of God never entered that temple. God's presence was not there in the way it had been in the tabernacle of David.

I believe that the tabernacle of David here referred to is the millennial temple described in Ezekiel 40-46. So turn with me to Ezekiel 43 (read 1-4). Here is the tabernacle of David that Amos referred to. And so to our question, what time does Amos 9:11 refer to? I believe it refers to the millennial temple which will be built shortly after the close of the tribulation.

Now we don't have time to cover the whole chapter, but go to Acts 15. Let me briefly give you the background before we look at the Apostle James to this reference in Amos to this restoration of Israel. The unforeseen Church of the NT had been born in Acts 2, and Paul and Barnabas had been sent out as missionaries of this new work. They had great success as many were converted and saved and numerous churches were started. But then Jewish opposition set in and these Jews said, "Woa, just a minute. In order for these Gentiles to be truly saved they have to fully follow the law of Moses." Well, Paul and Barnabas went back to Jerusalem to see the Apostles about this. Now let us read verses 13-18 (read).

Now let me very briefly give you the picture according to James. He is saying that after the Lord has visited the Gentiles and taken out from among them a people for His name, a reference to the Church age, then the Lord will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David.

It is then, after the millennial temple has been built, that the millennium will run its course. Then will go into fulfillment all of what is here promised regarding the land of Israel.

Now before I close, let me just briefly show you from Romans 11, why God brought into being the Church, that is why you and I are to be Christians. So let us read verses 1-2a (read). Now go to verses 7-11 (read). So verse 11 clearly states that He saved the Gentiles and set up the Church to provoke Israel to jealousy. And if Dr. J. Otis Yoder were here, he would say, "We have provoked them all right, but not to jealousy."

CONCL: So, we have fairly flown over the book of Amos. In the first message we saw that God warned the nations surrounding Israel and Judah, and Israel and Judah as well. The all knowing God knew their every sin, and their sins have passed the point of no return. May I remind us this morning that that holds true for individuals as well. If we insist on living in sin, the time will come when the day of grace is over.

Then, in the first of three messages, Amos warns Israel that punishment is coming. And according to Don McGee, in the book of Amos it is too late for repentance. Judgment is now only a matter of time. In the second message, the cows of Bashan come under scrutiny and then judgment is promised. In the third message God foretells what will happen. There will be wailing in the streets, and in the highways, they will say, "Alas, Alas." And the reason for that cry is that God will be passing through!

This morning we considered the second half of the book of Amos, two woes, and five visions. The first woe was pronounced against those who desired the day of the Lord. The second was to those who were at ease on Mount Zion and did not trust in the Lord. Then we came to the five woes.

Two were averted by Amos' prayers, but the other three would come to pass. The third one was the vision of the plumb-line and the fourth, the vision of the basket of summer fruit. The message in this fourth vision was that the summer fruit was in the basket, and it was too late for Israel to repent.

In the fifth vision was the vision of the Lord standing at the altar. It was a vision of judgment, and God will now deal with Israel and scatter her among the nations and sift them like wheat or corn. This may be a prophecy with far and near fulfillment. The northern kingdom was scattered in 722 BC and the southern kingdom in 586. They did return and rebuild their temple, but in 70 AD, after the time of Christ, the temple was destroyed once more and Israel remained scattered until the last 100 years of our time. The temple has never been rebuilt again, but in our passage we have promise that it will happen again, and that Israel will ultimately turn back to God. Thus closes the book of Amos. And it ends like this: And they lived happily ever after.