

Message #7

Amos 6:1-14

Years ago someone told me that they had worked for years for a company, who paid them good wages and gave them good benefits. He said after a time, there was almost a complacency that had set in among the employees. They just expected things to always be that way. They thought that they were secure and some people actually felt so much at ease that they seemed to become lax in doing their job. Some would come to work and waste more time than they worked. One day it was announced that the plant was closing. The jobs were gone. It was over. In one day everything came crashing down.

That kind of thing is exactly what Amos warns that God is about to do to His own people. Amos says that very same thing is about to happen to you. At the time Amos wrote Amos, God's people had a good life. They were enjoying a life of prosperity and ease. They felt good about themselves. They felt good about life. They felt secure. They were religious people, who talked about God and regularly went to worship services and gave their offerings. But the problem is they were not really focused on carefully and accurately understanding and applying God's Word and it was all about to come crashing down.

There is nothing wrong with being content with who we are or with what we have. In fact, that is a mark of godliness. Paul said when godliness is accompanied by contentment it is a means of great gain (I Tim. 6:6). **But there is something wrong with being content with where we are in our spirituality** because the mandate of God is we are to grow and pursue applying the Word of God until we get to the finish line.

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE FEEL AT EASE AND SECURE WITH THEMSELVES AND ALL THEY HAVE AND ALL THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED AND THEY START FORGETTING ABOUT ACCURATELY UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING GOD'S WORD, HE WILL ULTIMATELY BRING HIS JUDGMENT AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE.

When Jesus addressed the seven churches of Revelation, He warned all but two churches that they were lapsing into a state of complacency that did not please Him. He gave a warning to the churches of Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea. Those seven churches represent types of churches that will exist throughout the Church Age and the warning to those churches is basically the same that Amos gives to Israel. Do not get sloppy and lax in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Keep your focus on God and His Word or else He will judge.

Now there are a series of key observations we want to make from this sixth chapter:

OBSERVATION #1 – Amos states that the judgment God promises against His own people will be a “woe” judgment. **6:1**

Now we know from studying the book of Revelation that “woe” judgments are very serious judgments. They are the worst kind of judgments. Amos begins by aiming this one at certain people of God and specifically at the two main cities of the south and the north. **Zion is Jerusalem and was the capital of Judah in the south and Samaria was the capital of Israel in the north.** So this particular warning is aimed at all the people of God.

Now the target of this prophecy is clearly stated in **verse 1**, those who were at “ease.” The word is used to describe a “reckless ease” (S. R. Driver, *Amos*, p. 191). These people living in these cities felt at ease and they felt secure with themselves. In other words, they did not think they needed to keep studying, learning and growing in God’s Word. They were perfectly happy with who they were and what they were.

In fact, at the end of **verse 1**, we learn that they had a great confidence in the “distinguished men,” who were the political leaders of the nations. In other words, **their confidence was not in God, it was in politicians. They thought they were enjoying the good life because of the politicians, not because of God. They were forgetting the fact that God was the one who gave them the good life.**

In fact, the kings mentioned by Amos in **Amos 1:1** had serious problems. The king of Judah was Uzziah, who was basically a good, God-fearing king, but then he got thinking more highly of himself than he should and God struck him with leprosy (II Chron. 26:1ff). However, the king of Israel was Jeroboam, who was an outright evil king who did more evil than all kings before him (I Kings 14:9). So these people were pinning all of their hopes for a good life of ease on their politicians and God does not ever want His people thinking like that.

The people of Israel trusted in these political leaders for their success and they forgot about God. These were prosperous times in both the north and south and the people forgot about who gave them their prosperity.

OBSERVATION #2 – Amos says take a look at what God did to previous places that were once great. **6:2-3**

Amos says let’s take a journey through history and think about some of the places that were once great thriving, rich, successful areas and let’s see what God did to those places. Amos lists three places that were all larger and more powerful than Samaria:

- 1) Calneh, which was located to the east,
- 2) Hamath, which was located to the north, and
- 3) Gath, which was located to the south.

These three city/states were, at one time, powerhouses that were dominant. At one time, they dominated more people than either city of Samaria or Jerusalem.

Now the people of Judah and Israel all knew about these cities and how important they once were. Amos says look at them now. They all went down. Every one of these places, that, at one time, had been such a powerful, dominant, successful place, was brought down by God.

In the peak of their power, God dropped these kingdoms and cities. Amos says to Israel and Judah, take a good look at this. All of those cities were much stronger than Samaria and God destroyed every one of them.

Listen very carefully to what Amos is saying here to God's own people—**there is not a city or a nation that cannot be conquered and destroyed by God. It is possible to have such a false confidence in yourself and in political leaders that you actually think we cannot ever be destroyed. Whenever people become indifferent to God and His Word, He can and will topple the power, even that of His own people.**

OBSERVATION #3 – Amos describes the life of ease and luxury that God's people were enjoying. **6:4-6**

There are six descriptions Amos gives God's people of the life they had.

Description #1 - They had luxurious furniture. **6:4a**

What is described here is that these people did not just have tables and chairs; they had imported beds and couches that were inlaid with ivory. The picture here is that these people are just stretched out and enjoying a lap of luxury.

The most expensive bed mattress in the world is a Vividus Mattress which costs \$59,750. It is made of cashmere, flax, horsehair, lamb's wool and silk. It is claimed that it will give you the most comfortable night's sleep you will ever have. The most expensive sofa is a Plumebanche sofa that costs \$184,000. It is made of solid mahogany and has leather upholstery.

Now these people had this stuff. They had their high-class mattresses and their sofas and couches. They were living like the elite rich and famous.

Description #2 - They had delicious food. **6:4b**

Now the word for "lamb" is not the normal word. This was a special delicacy that was beyond the normal lamb meal. The "calves" these people were eating were special fed calves who did not even go out to graze with the rest of the herd.

One of the most expensive steaks you can eat is a 12-ounce Kobe Strip Steak that will cost you \$350. One restaurant in New York sells on the average 25 per night. These people had this kind of food every single night.

Description #3 - They had their own music. **6:5**

They used the harp and they did not like the old hymns David wrote, so they wrote their own about themselves. They wrote their own worship songs. We are living in a time when most people who go to worship don't like the old hymns. They don't like the old standard God-honoring music so they write their own shallow choruses and fickle lyrics.

Description #4 - They had plenty of wine. **6:6a**

The most expensive wine glass that you can buy today costs \$3,750. It has a small diamond on the stem and it is made from borosilicate that is a type of glass that is known for its high resistance to thermal shock even when held in warm hands.

These people drank their wine from things more expensive and elaborate than this. They didn't drink the wine out of a normal wine glass or cup, they used expensive sacrificial bowls. Those bowls were larger than cups and they had special religious connotations with them. Probably what they were doing was they were so arrogant they were actually using sacred vessels designed for worship and were drinking out of them.

Description #5 - They had their own anointing. **6:6b**

They anointed themselves as being spiritual and worshipful. They anointed themselves with only the finest oils. They would actually anoint themselves as being great spiritual leaders of Israel with the finest oils money could buy. This was not your standard olive oil, this was rich oil filled with aromatic spices and perfumes.

Description #6 - They did not have any sorrow. **6:6c**

They had plenty of happiness, but they did not grieve over the sin and the evil stuff of Israel. There was not a repentant spirit among any of these people. They thought they were perfectly fine. They were not convicted about their sin. They did not grieve over the fact that, spiritually speaking, they were in ruins. They were just going along in life in a festive way when in all reality they were spiritually destitute.

OBSERVATION #4 – Amos predicts what God is going to do to His own people. **6:7**

Because God's own people had fallen into this self-indulgent, arrogant attitude of complacency against Him and His Word, He says, "The party is over." Their revelry was all about to end. It will all come crashing down.

He said you are about to go from having everything to having nothing. You are about to go from your state of luxury to a state of poverty.

God says I am going to target My own people for judgment and I am going to cause them to go into exile and in 722 B.C., just 35-40 years after Amos made this prediction, the Assyrians came into Israel and the party ended. They literally took the people away.

OBSERVATION #5 – Amos reiterates the specific things that God will do to His own people.
6:8-14

There are nine specific key facts Amos brings out here:

Fact #1 - God swears by Himself that His judgment will come against His own people. **6:8a**

Notice this is the LORD God of hosts, which means God controls everything in heaven and on earth.

Fact #2 - God hates the arrogance of His own people and He hates their citadels. **6:8b**

These arrogant people strutted around so high and mighty thinking they were so secure and God hated it.

Fact #3 - God will completely deliver up the city and its contents. **6:8c**

God says you know those nice plush things that you are enjoying inside your houses and cities, well, you are about to lose it all. I am about to take it all away.

Fact #4 - God will orchestrate the death of every man in the house. **6:9**

The point of this is to show that some of the mansions were so big that they could actually house ten men, plus the women and the children. If you lived in this kind of house, you would naturally think you were secure. God says when I send My judgment, you will all die; I don't care how big your house.

Fact #5 - God will bring His own people to the point where they do not even want to mention His name. **6:10**

God's own people will know that God has orchestrated this and even as they are taking bodies out to bury them, instead of repenting and getting right with God, they challenge people not to even mention His name. They will be so afraid of God that they will not want to even mention His name for fear He will do more destructive damage.

Fact #6 - God will command that all houses in the city be destroyed. **6:11**

The mansions to the huts; the rich to the poor houses will all be destroyed by a judgment of God. From the wealthy to the average to the poor, when God sends judgment it hits everyone.

Fact #7 - God will judge because His own people refuse to repent and continue to do that which is not logical. **6:12**

Amos asks two questions that both expect a “no” answer. You do not run horses on rocks and you do not plow rocks. In other words, you would never continue to do such foolish things for you would ruin everything.

Yet God says you continue to not do what is righteous and just in My sight. You refuse to pursue Biblical righteousness. In fact, you have turned righteousness into a bitter wormwood type of existence.

The logical thing to do, in view of the potential judgment of God, is to turn to God and His Word, but they would not do that. They continue on the destructive path.

Fact #8 - God will judge because of your self-confident arrogance. **6:13**

These people strutted around trusting in themselves. They were arrogant. Lodebar and Karnaim were a couple of non-important cities that Israel had apparently conquered. Neither were known for their military prowess and the Israelites had apparently conquered these two minor cities.

They boasted about the fact that they had done this. They held their heads high and their chests out and they said they did it by their own strength. They forgot about God and His Word. They did not trust in God; they trusted in themselves.

Fact #9 - God will raise up a nation to come against Israel and conquer her. **6:14**

This judgment would be a complete conquering from Hamath in the far north to Arabah in the far south. Both Israel and Judah would be completely conquered and destroyed as a direct judgment of God.

Now the real problem with these people was not in the abundance, it was in their arrogance. They forgot about the importance of studying God’s Word so they could apply it so they could become more righteous. They were just enjoying a good life of ease and God says you have lost your way and I am about to destroy your world.

There is an ease that should never exist within the people of God. The danger of sitting under serious, accurate teaching of the Scriptures is that we become fat and undisciplined and lazy and inactive. James Montgomery Boice once said there are thousands of Christians, but very few of them actually do anything exceptionally good. He said most are not even good responsible citizens let alone ambassadors for Jesus Christ (*The Minor Prophets*, p. 169).

If you are a believer in this church, there is work to do. We have a church to build. We need your involvement. We need your commitment. We need your prayers. We need your support. We have people to reach. This is no time for ease. This is not the time to sit at home on couches and do nothing. Get active and help us do this work for God that is based on His Word.