

Small Group Notes

Sermon: 28 April 2024

Notes by Sam Gardner



SCRIPTURE

Amos 9

OVERVIEW

So far through chapters 1-8, we've had 131 verses of Amos bringing accusations against Israel, and laying out the actions God will take against them. Chapter 9 starts out no different, with Amos explaining in verses 1-10 the destruction that will befall Israel in response to their idolatry, immorality and exploitation of the poor and vulnerable.

God's response is total because he is **COMPLETELY JUST**. He must confront evil in Israel as well as the nations surrounding – and he must do more than simply tear down their pagan temples; he needs to deal with the Israelites themselves. They had a great calling to be God's chosen people, which didn't exempt

them from consequences for their sinful ways. In fact, they carried a great responsibility to be God's representative on the earth, so their behaviour required great consequences.

Yet, with the final 5 verses of the entire book, Amos shows that Israel will not be utterly destroyed. God intends to rebuild and repair Israel – and more, by blessing them with a great abundance of nations, land and produce. He will plant them in the land, never to be uprooted – a literal as well as metaphorical picture, promising them security in their relationship with God.

God will do this because he is COMPLETELY MERCIFUL. He made a covenant promise to Israel that, through the line of David, they will be secure forever. Israel did not deserve His mercy, yet he cannot compromise His character and His word. Although He is willing to bring the kingdom of Israel to an end when they are overtaken by the Assyrians in 722 BC, but with God, destruction is never the ultimate destination for His people, but rather it is always restoration.

We know that ultimate restoration is only found in Jesus. In dying on the cross, he paid the full price for sin, taking on the complete justice of God. In rising again, believers not only receive new life but eternal life – a complete restoration of right relationship with God. And not because of earning it, but because God is completely merciful.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the main ways you define 'justice' and 'mercy'? How do you think our culture defines these terms?
2. What do you find easy to understand about God's actions towards Israel in V1-10? What do you find hard? Why might this be?
3. Christians are not condemned by God when they sin, but they should experience the conviction of the Spirit that leads to repentance. How do we balance being genuinely sorry for our sin whilst remaining assured we are still saved?
4. Hope finally arrives in V11-15. Israel is promised more than restoration – they will be richly blessed! What does the stark contrast with V1-10 tell us about the scale of God's mercy and grace towards Israel? How should Christians apply this to themselves?