

Amos – Sermon 15 – From Punishment to Promise – Amos 9:7-15

Intro:

1) Word Picture – Director’s board

- a. The ending scene matters
 - i. Some people cannot stand a movie that doesn’t give full closure
- b. Some movies end like we anticipated, some have surprises, some leave us wanting more details

2) Amos 9:7-15 is the closing scene of the prophet’s message to the Northern Kingdom

- a. He is drawing the message to its conclusion
- b. For 8 chapters now Amos has called out, challenged, warned, and showed Israel their sin and coming judgment
- c. Now – in chapter 9, Amos details the reality of the judgement they face

3) You’ll notice though, this closing scene may not end like you anticipated

- a. Messages of warning, destruction, death, fire, fame, sword – yet the last 5 verses end in a note promise instead of punishment

4) What I love about the ending of this little book – it reveals the heart of God toward His people

- a. His correction has a course
- b. His punishment has a purpose
- c. His scourging has sanctity
- d. In this text, the Lord outlines a plan of hope for the people who are about to face His judgment

5) What we read in this last portion of Amos is a message that moves from punishment to promise

- a. Sermon: From Punishment to Promise
- b. Text: Amos 9:7-15

6) God, through Amos, still addresses Israel’s wrongs giving us lessons on the danger of prideful presumption

- a. One of the dangerous spiritual mindsets Israel had that led them to facing God’s judgment was a prideful presumption
 - i. They not only viewed God wrongly, they viewed themselves wrongly
 - ii. A “don’t you know who I am” mentality
- b. They thought because they had a unique relationship with God, that they could live however they wanted
 - i. Mentality - My privilege affords Protection
 - ii. Truth – Their status called them to a higher life of sanctity
 - 1. Their acquaintance with God should produce accountability before God
- c. In this closing portion of the text – we see a scene of conviction, correction, and consummation

Privilege does not Prevent Accountability – V7

- 1) At this point in Israel's history there were two major issues we can connect to their downfall**
 - a. 1 - They had a false view of God
 - b. 2- They had a false view of themselves
 - c. It's clear from the text that Israel had taken a true doctrine: God had uniquely chosen them, delivered them, and entered into a covenant with them
 - i. And drew a false conclusion – therefore judgment could not befall them
- 2) It's true Israel had a special relationship with God**
 - a. Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; Ps. 135:4
 - b. Amos even acknowledges it – Amos 3:2
 - c. But the status as God's special people was not an exemption from any consequence of sin – rather it should have prompted an acknowledgement of accountability
 - i. IOW – as God's people, they were charged to live holy – Ex. 19:5,6
- 3) At this point in NK history – Israel assumed their status as God's chosen people acted as a security from judgment not a call for holiness**
 - a. In V7 Amos addresses this low view of God and conflated view of self
 - b. "V7 removes any notion that Israel will escape punishment because they are God's special ones."

God addresses their Position

- 1) "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD.**
- 2) Its true that Israel possessed a privileged covenantal position before God**
 - a. But it's also true that they begun to presume upon that privilege
- 3) 2 major presumptions they made that impacted their spirituality negatively**
 - a. They believed their position meant they could behave any way they wanted and God was obligated to bless them because they were His "chosen" people
 - i. They failed to reckon with God's Word in Deut. 28
 - b. They thought that their position before God meant they mattered MORE than everyone else
- 4) To correct this falsehood – God asks Israel this shocking question**
 - a. Understand how scandalous this question would have been to Israel
 - b. Ethiopia – a distant, remote, seemingly insignificant, Gentile people
 - c. By comparing Israel to them – God was effectively addressing Israel's faulty thinking
 - i. Israel assumed they were more grander than this remote country of which they would have given little thought to
 - d. In Israel's thinking – the Ethiopians were a foreign, unimportant, and Gentile people living at the fringe of the known world
 - i. Surely Israel was more important than they – just compare the two!
 - ii. Yet – God's Word – Deut. 7:7,8
- 5) God does compare the two – but it was not what Israel was thinking**
 - a. Goes completely against Israel's current thoughts of themselves
 - b. They were mighty, important, grand, somebody

God addresses their Past

- 1) **"Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt?"**
- 2) **The Exodus was viewed, all throughout the OT, as God's great act of redemption and deliverance**
 - a. Israel had seen this mighty act of God as proof of God's favor toward them
- 3) **The problem was not Israel remembering God's deliverance – that was encouraged**
 - a. The problem was Israel using yesterday's deliverances as an excuse for today's disobedience
 - b. Instead of viewing God's deliverance as a motivation for their faithfulness, Israel used it to manufacture a false security
- 4) **Further – it is clear, by how Israel viewed the great act of the Exodus, that they missed the main point of the event**
 - a. Ex. 13:8,9 – God was the One in which the event should have glorified
 - b. God was the main character in the Exodus – yet Israel began to view themselves as such

God addresses His Providence – V7c

- 1) **"And after God mentioned the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites probably expected God to say something about how unique they were: of all the nations in the world, God chose only them, delivered only them, and had a covenant with only them. But God did not say that next." – Alan Moseley**
- 2) **Israel had falsely assumed that God's great acts of providence were isolated to them and therefore were exclusive to their relationship**
 - a. Providence – in theology, the care and superintendence which God exercises over His creatures." – Webster 1828
 - b. Israel believed that God's providence only belonged to them
 - i. V7 addresses this presumption
- 3) **In effect, Israel thought God bringing them up out of Egypt revealed how special they were**
 - a. God replied – I also brought the Philistines out and the Syrians out
- 4) **Again – the act of the exodus was not to magnify the specialness of Israel, it was to magnify the greatness of God**
 - a. Red Sea crossing – Ex. 14:13
 - b. Yet – due to their faulty view of self, Israel saw these sovereign acts of God as displays of their significance rather than God's greatness
- 5) **Important note – God is not minimizing the unique redemptive significance of Israel's exodus, He was magnifying the universal scope of His sovereignty**
 - a. God is here revealed as governing all of nations histories, not just Israel's
 - b. This verse was a powerful affirmation of God's sovereign almightiness to both deliver nations and destroy nations

Here's the picture

- 1) **God addresses their position – chosen, but not exempt**
- 2) **God address their past – delivered, but not immune**
- 3) **God addresses His providence – sovereign over all**

Preservation does not Prevent Punishment – V8-10

1) Having clearly established God's authority to judge (v5-7) Amos now communicates God's decision to judge

- a. V8-10 are the final statements of judgment in the book of Amos
 - i. They vow an impartial and certain death to all the sinners of the land
- b. What we learn in these verses: God can preserve His promises while still punishing continued rebellion
 - i. V8 tells us God will destroy the sinful kingdom, but that He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob

The Perception of God – V8

1) V8 starts with a connection back to V4

- a. Normally God's gaze towards His people is a welcomed blessing
 - i. Ps. 33:18,19; 34:15, Numb 6:24-26
- b. God's eyes on His people often communicated His watchful care and protection
 - i. But when you're in consistent and persistent rebellion – it's a different story
- c. Notice – this gaze is connected to judgement

2) Throughout this book – Israel has acted as if:

- a. God didn't care about their sinful rebellion against Him
- b. God didn't see it
- c. V8 destroys those assumptions

3) Textual insight

- a. Behold – look, take notice, calls attention to detail
 - i. "Amos is arresting the hearer's attention"
- b. Eyes of the Lord – anthropomorphic language describing God's perfect awareness
- c. Lord GOD – the Sovereign Lord
- d. Sinful kingdom – Israel
 - i. Note – does not say sinful people or leaders – but Kingdom
 - 1. Their entire national identity, which should be holy, is now labeled as sinful

4) This phrase highlights the perfect perception of God

- a. Nothing has occurred in Israel that God was unaware of
 - i. He saw their: oppression of the poor, back-room bribes, deceitful commerce, sexual immorality, idolatrous worship, hypocritical hearts, deafness to His Word and warnings

5) What is the outcome of God's perception of this sinful Kingdom?

- a. Destroy – shamadh – to be desolate, to lay waste, to utterly destroy
- b. Ironic imagery – they boasted of their great wealth, status, houses, military
 - i. It will all be laid waste
 - ii. It was insufficient to actually help
 - iii. They built their life on sinking sand
- c. Interesting
 - i. Word has a hiphil stem – causative

1. Rather than seeing their destruction as simply an act of the enemy forces, God wanted them to know He was the One orchestrating it
- ii. Perfect tense – although it was a future event, it was spoken with divine certainty

The Preservation of God – V8b-9

1) Once you read the definite language in the beginning of V8, its like you read a contradictory statement at the end

- a. Is it a contradiction? No
- b. The NK will absolutely be destroyed
 - i. But God has decided to leave a remnant
- c. God does not utterly destroy His purposes for His people

2) Notice the imagery – V9 – it brings clarity

- a. The picture here is of grain being shaken in a sieve
- b. Sifted – to shake, to toss – denotes a vigorous back and forth motion
- c. It's a picture of what's about to happen – Israel's world is about to be shaken
 - i. They will be: displaced, scattered, exiled, tossed out, destroyed

3) Yet notice the word of hope in this scene of chaos – V9b

- a. Two interpretations of this phrase
 - i. Least grain - pebble
- b. Could refer to – the coarse-meshed sieve used at the beginning stage of sifting
 - i. Used to sift out clods of dirt, pebbles, and debris allowing the grain to pass through
- c. Could refer to – the fine-meshed sieve used near the end of the process used to sift out the chaff and dust catching only the useful grain
- d. Either interpretation – the point is the same: God's righteous judgment would separate the repentant from the sinner

The Punishment – V10

1) God clearly states the intention of His judgment – to render judgment on the sinners

- a. Sinner – offender, criminal, a person who habitually sins
 - i. Root – chata – to miss the way

2) Interesting – note what the sinners thought

- a. V10b
- b. Sentence – the sinner in greatest danger is often the sinner most convinced that he is safe

3) Textual insight

- a. Overtake – come near, approach, to touch
- b. Prevent – go before, to meet

The Punishment does not Prevent the Promises – V11-12

- 1) **After all God's judgments are past – when the nation has received the punishment for their sin – the Lord will move in mercy to bring restoration and renewal**

The Period of Restoration

- 1) **In that day**
 - a. The previous references to “that day” in Amos have been a reference to judgment
 - i. Its typically a prophetic word of judgment
 - b. However here – after the sifting – “that day” refers to a day of restoration
 - c. Here's what I love – judgement is not God's final word concerning His people

The Person of Restoration

- 1) **Tabernacle of David**
- 2) **Interesting God says it this way**
 - a. The NK was under the rule of Jeroboam II
 - b. The SK was under the rule of Uzziah
 - c. God did not say He will raise up Jeroboam or even the NK
 - i. Rather – He goes all the way back to David
- 3) **Connecting the restoration to David was a way to tell the people – even though they were unfaithful – God would not be**
 - a. God made covenantal promises to David that He would live up to – 2 Sam. 7:12-16
 - b. Even though the people were not living up to God's Word – he would live up to His Word
- 4) **This promise of restoration is beautifully messianic**
 - a. The fulfillment of the Davidic covenant was ultimately fulfilled by Jesus Christ
 - b. This little promise in Amos was pointing us forward to great redemption of Jesus
 - i. He will raise up the fallenness and build up the broken

The Purpose of Restoration

- 1) **Notice V12 begins with “that”**
 - a. Gives us a purpose for the rebuilding of David's house
- 2) **This united, restored kingdom under a Davidic ruler will be a source of blessing to everyone – even Gentiles**
 - a. Edom – the historic relatives and enemy of Israel
 - i. Descendants of Esau
 - b. All the heathen which are called by my name
 - i. God's name is placed among the heathen
- 3) **The hope here is more than the rebuilding of a monarchy – it's a new Davidic ruler having power over all peoples**
 - a. Q – who will do this?
 - i. Ans – the LORD (v12)
- 4) **How do we know this is pointing us forward to Jesus?**
 - a. Acts 15:13-18 – James at the Jerusalem council

The purpose of this restoration is salvific and messianic

The Promise Produces Permanent Restoration – V13-15

- 1) **These closing verses are unique – they close on a high note of blessing from a book that has been focused on conviction and judgment**
 - a. Here we read of prosperity, peace, and permanence
 - b. Notice the language of restoration
 - i. Instead of a drought and famine – there will be unending prosperity
 - ii. Instead of the turmoil and chaos of war – there will be unbroken peace
 - iii. Instead of exile – there will be permanent dwelling

We see Provision – V13

- 1) **The plowman who starts out at a certain season will have to wait for the reaper because the harvest is so great its not over yet**
- 2) **The one who treads the grapes will find the planter still sowing seeds in anticipation for more harvest**
- 3) **The grapes will be so plentiful that the mountains will appear to be filled with its juice**
 - a. A picture of great abundance

We see Prosperity – V14

- 1) **V14 declares God's restoration for His people**
- 2) **All the struggles of judgment will now be a thing of the past**
 - a. Notice the great picture of prosperity here emulates that of the entering into the promised land – Deut. 6:11

We see Permanence – V15

- 1) **Their land will be inhabited once again**
- 2) **They will be planted and not be “pulled up”**
- 3) **Tells us God's final purpose for His people is not exile but establishment**

Notice how all of this was gotten

- 1) **“I have given”**
- 2) **It is God's grace, mercy, and provision that brought this permanent restoration**

Do you see the picture here?

- 1) **The book has been about a people whom God has created – who has rebelled against Him, who have sinned and turned from God creating their own idolatrous worship**
- 2) **Because of that God has issued a judgment on their sin – total destruction**
- 3) **Yet in their fallenness – God had a plan of restoration**
 - a. He will raise up His people out of ruins
 - b. It will be accomplished by the Greater David
- 4) **This restoration will result in a permanent place of abundance that you can never be uprooted from**
- 5) **Gospel - Sin, Savior (Amos to Matt 1), resurrection, heaven**