

Amos – Sermon 4 – Heaven’s Alarm – 3:1-15

Intro:

1) Word picture – Alarm

- a. Most of us have had experiences with alarms before
 - i. Smoke alarm, police siren, alarm clock
- b. All alarms share something in common – they are designed to grab our attention
 - i. They draw our attending to something important

2) The alarm does not create the danger – it declares that the danger is present

- a. Alarms are not the problem – they simply announce a problem is present

3) For 2 chapters now, God has carefully laid out His indictment against the nations

- a. Addresses their religious hypocrisy, injustices, immorality, rebellion, and outright rejection of God’s Word

4) In chapter 3 – the tone changes

- a. Amos begins to deliver the 1st of 3 messages to Israel
 - i. Each marked by the phrase “Hear this word”
- b. These are not simply mini sermons – they are alarms from God sounding the warning of coming judgment

5) Important – the purpose of these alarms is not just to announce the coming judgment of God on the people’s sin

- a. It’s given to awaken repentance and renew a fresh pursuit of God
- b. Prophecies of judgment are given to evoke a response
 - i. Yes they are binding statements and accurate truths about the impending future – IF the people who receive the message do not repent
 - ii. Jerm. 18:7-10 – messages of judgment can be stayed by repentant faith
- c. The message of Amos is hard – but it is simultaneously grace-filled

6) Reality – people respond differently to alarms

- a. Hit the snooze button - Don’t pull over for an emergency vehicle -Take out the batteries- Continue on when the warning light turns on

7) Truth – ignoring the alarm does not negate the danger – it only guarantees the consequences of the danger become a reality

- a. God is warning Israel here by announcing a serious message of judgment
- b. The same God that is sounding the alarm for Israel in the passage is still sounding the alarm to us today
- c. The question is not – it the alarm sounding
 - i. The question is – will you listen before it’s too late

8) Sermon – Heaven’s alarm

- a. Text – Amos 3

A Warning to a Privileged People – V1,2

1) Chapter 3 opens with a statement of remembrance

- a. Reminding God's people of His great deliverance from slavery in Egypt
- b. All through the OT God used this event as the portrait of His providential deliverance and redemption
 - i. Ex. 20:1, Lev. 25:38, Numb. 15:41, Deut. 5:15, Josh 24:17, Ps. 114:1, Micah 6:4
 - ii. The exodus was God's central act of redemption throughout the OT

2) Starting the message off with this event was intentional

- a. It acted as a reminder to the reader of God's graciousness, kindness, goodness, and deliverance shown to His people
- b. In essence – putting the exodus on the backdrop of Israel's continual rebellion against God and His Word depicted the ugly truth that they were taking advantage of and trampling on God's gracious goodness shown to them
- c. Their current rebellion showed discontentment with the goodness of God

3) Reality – the Bible teaches us that the goodness of God is aimed at leading us to repentance

- a. Rom. 2:4
- b. Yet here – it was treated as a small thing that was to be ignored
- c. "Israel's rejection and disregard of God were all the more inexcusable in light of God's great deliverance." – David Guzik

4) In V2 – the message shifts to make the connection between the great privilege of Israel (You have I known) and the great responsibility that that privilege carries (Therefore I will)

- a. In V2 God refers to His unique relationship with Israel as a nation
 - i. Known – Yadah – to know relationally, to know intimately
- b. The statement is not given as a denial of God's omniscience – as if He didn't know what was going on with other nations
 - i. Chp 1-2 proves that He in fact knows what is going on
- c. This statement is a claim to God's special, covenantal relationship He established with Israel in the OT
 - i. Gen 12
 - ii. God has a unique relationship with Israel that sets them apart from the other nations mentioned
 - 1. He made covenant with them, He gave them law, He showed providential care, His presence was with them, He made promises to them
 - iii. No other nation had received the benefit of such unique revelation, manifestation, preservation, and consideration from God
- d. This special relationship revealed God's love toward these people – Deut. 4:37

5) The point being – God has shown special love, kindness, and care to the Hebrew people at this point in history

- a. Therefore – they carried a special responsibility to operate in that love and care in an obedient manner
 - i. Ex. 19:1-6 – Deut. 7:6-9
- b. Here was the problem – because Israel had such a special relationship with God, they were beginning to think that they were LESS responsible before God
 - i. They were tragically mistaken
- c. The unique relationship Israel had should have motivated Israel to faithfulness
 - i. Yet in their rebellion, confusion set in, and they were convinced of the opposite

6) What Amos is doing here is laying the foundation for WHY Israel was on the receiving end of God's terrestrial judgment

- a. He was pointing out that the coming judgment was BECAUSE of their relationship with God
- b. Shouldn't surprise them – God already told them so – Deut. 28:15-68

7) Believe it or not – the last phrase of V2 is given as a proclamation and an invitation

- a. Proclamation – they will be judged if they don't repent
- b. Invitation – to repent
- c. The judgment is to act as a deterrent

Application

1) These words should be a sobering reality to us believers

- a. How much goodness have you received from the hand of God?
- b. How much truth has God given you?
- c. What did He deliver you from?
- d. How many times did His providential care show up in your life?
- e. Sobering follow up – How has that prompted obedience?

2) Reality – every good gift you have in life is given to you by God – James 1:17

- a. Realizing this should prompt humility, gratitude, and fervent obedience
- b. Clarity – we don't obey for deliverance – we obey from deliverance

3) This little set of verses present before us the great responsibility of faithful stewardship

- a. God has given you – intellect, a voice, a platform, time talent, treasures, abilities, health, career, and much more
- b. How are you obeying Him in those areas of life?
- c. How are you using those good gifts to glorify Him?

A Warning with a Predictable Principle – V3-8

1) Beginning in V3, Amos gives a series of rhetorical questions aimed at showing Israel the cause and effect of the judgment they are facing

- a. IOW – This judgment shouldn't surprise you – look at how you've been living

2) Breakdown of the questions

- a. V3 – people walk together in the same direction together is not coincidence
 - i. It happens because they made a plan first
 - ii. They agreed to go in the same direction together
- b. V4 – the lion roars with a purpose to communicate
 - i. The lion does not roar arbitrarily – it expends the energy to roar for a reason
 - ii. Communicates, claiming territory, warning, announce success
- c. V5 – the bird does not fly into a snare and get caught without reason
 - i. The bird is lured in by feed and captured by a trap
 - 1. "Gin" the lure/hook
 - ii. V5b – the trap doesn't just go off – something sets it off
- d. V6a – shifts from the answers stated in negative to stated in the affirmative
 - i. One purpose for the horn was to signal a warning/coming danger
 - ii. Naturally the people would be fearful
- e. V6b – if calamity comes to a city, if judgment befalls them, isn't it done with a purpose?
 - i. God would have allowed it
 - ii. Danger befalling the city was not considered accidental, coincidental, or bad luck
 - 1. It must have been allowed by God
 - 2. Deut. 20:4 – Ps. 4:8 – Ps. 121:4

3) Fascinating – each of these questions bears a resemblance to the relationship between God and His people

- a. Agreement – V3 – they agreed to go together and for God to be their God
- b. Admonition – V4 – the lion roar is a reminder of God's warnings to Israel – communication with a purpose
 - i. He gave prophets to sound the alarm – Jer. 7:25,26
- c. Accountability – V5 – captivity is not accidental, it's a result of continued disobedience
- d. Alarm – V6 – trumpet – warning before the destruction
 - i. God is giving yet another warning to repent

4) V7,8 is the capstone statement declaring that God is not silent regarding His plans

- a. At this point – there is a long history of God's Word being continually given to His people
- b. The outcome of judgment is not due to ignorance
 - i. V8 – God has spoken
 - ii. God did not bring judgment in a "spur of the moment" arbitrary decision
 - 1. He has announced it through His Word – 2:11,12
- c. Amos anticipating their rebuttal essentially says – "don't blame me"
 - i. "Who can but prophecy"

Application**1) Here's where we go wrong – we tend to fear the wrong thing**

- a. All throughout Scripture we are taught to “fear not”
- b. Yet there are times we are edified to “fear” – Prov. 9:10
- c. It comes down to “fearing” the right things

2) Here's the tension – Prov. 29:25

- a. We fear the wrong things
- b. We fear the opinions of others rather than the thoughts of God

3) Run down the questions list

- a. Am I heading the same direction as God's path of righteousness?
- b. Am I heeding His warnings?
- c. Am I ensnared by my flesh?
- d. Am I under the protection of being in God's will?

A Warning with a Public Portrait – V9,10

1) V9,10 contains an interesting invitation

- a. God invites some surrounding pagan, gentile nations to gather and behold Israel's rebellion
 - i. Fascinating that God called these nations
 - ii. Philistines – wicked people – 1:6-8
 - iii. Egypt – oppressors of Israel whom God just told them He had to deliver them from
 - 1. A portrait of sin and slavery in the OT

2) Essentially God is inviting these neighboring nations to witness how awful Israel had become

- a. If God was telling pagan, sinful people to look at Israel's rebellion – how bad must their rebellion have been
- b. IOW – Israel rebelled so bad that even the pagan nations would notice

3) What does this display for us?

- a. The fact that Israel was looked upon as rebellious indicated that they had failed at the mission God gave them
- b. Missional purpose of Israel
 - i. Ex. 19:5,6
 - 1. Priest – interceding for people, assisting in right worship
 - 2. Holy nation – set apart, consecrated and dedicated
 - ii. Deut. 4:5-7
 - 1. Israel was called to represent God accurately in the land
 - 2. “God intended for other people groups to look at Israel's obedience to His commands and conclude that he is the One True God and living in a faithful relationship with Him is leading a successful live.” – Alan Moseley
- c. It's clear by their rebellion against God, Israel had failed at that purpose and was actually working against it
 - i. Their witness was not for God, it was a witness of rebellion against God
 - ii. Instead of witnessing holiness – the nations saw “oppression” and immorality
 - iii. Instead of peace, unity, and Godly love, the nations saw “violence and robbery”

Application

- 1) When the people of God cease from the commanded mission of God, it is easy to grow complacent and fleshly**
 - a. We are called to be salt and light – Matt. 5:13,14
 - b. We are called to live out spiritual fruit – Gal. 5:22
 - c. We are called to live holy – 1 Pet. 1:16
 - d. We are called to make disciples – Matt. 28:20
 - e. We are called to be ambassadors – 2 Cor. 5:20

- 2) Sin compromises the church's ability to fulfill all that God calls us to be doing**
 - a. Sin can create a negative witness to the onlooking world

A Warning with a Proclaimed Punishment – V11-15

1) This last section introduces the consequences of the sin and rebellion just mentioned in the verses above

- a. The theme of these ending verses of chp. 3: God's coming judgment
- b. Amos delivers God's 4-fold judgment on Israel

2) A judgment that involved military – V11

- a. This seem to be a literal statement rather than a figurative claim
 - i. One – they held a false sense of security do to their present perceived military superiority in the region
 - 1. So it fits that judgment would address that
 - ii. Two – a military invasion actually happened about 40-50 years after this message
 - 1. Assyria laid a 3-year siege on Samaria to overthrow it
- b. Clarity – it wasn't the military might of another nation that brought Israel down, it was the strength of their sin that defeated them

3) A judgment that would involve violence – V12

- a. The imagery used here was that of a lion dismembering a lamb
 - i. Only a leg and a piece of an ear if left
- b. Evidently the thought of the day was that *if* problems would arrive, God would simply deliver them – “taken out” (delivered)
- c. The imagery here suggests – Israel's deliverance would be like this lamb being delivered from the lion's mouth
 - i. Only a few pieces could be retrieved

4) A judgement that involved purging of idol – V13-14

- a. Israel had an idol problem
- b. Part of the judgment was a purging of idols which stole God's glory
- c. Horns cut off – rendering them powerless

5) A judgment that involved a humbling – V15

- a. The picture here addresses one of the areas of rebellion – pride-filled, self-sustainability
- b. Evidently some people grew so wealthy they had multiple houses and ivory-lined extravagance
- c. Q – how did they get wealthy?
 - i. 2:6,7 – exploiting the poor

6) The picture is an overwhelming portrait of judgement and an overthrowing of the rebellious lifestyle the people were living

Application**1) What should a NT believer take away from this?**

- a. A grace-filled, truth-centric balance in our walk with Jesus
 - i. It is true – Rom. 5:1, 8:1
 - ii. It is also true – 2 Cor. 5:10
- b. Believers do not need to worry about eternal judgment against sin – but we do need to consider God's judgment regarding stewardship

Closing**1) Repent**

- a. Heed the warning and run into the mercy of God
- b. Reminder that God is giving you a warning now – before it's too late
 - i. Be saved