

What On Earth Is Happening? Hopeful Insights From Amos

The Church, The State, and Our Patient God

Amos 7:1–17

Sunday Evening Bible Study – October 22, 2017

Attendance Watch for Amos:

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Amos 1:1–2:3: Amos starts with good news that God will judge Israel's hostile, sinful neighbors.

Amos 2:4–16: But Israel is shocked to learn that God will judge them as well.

Amos 3:1–15: By failing to love God and neighbor, especially exploiting the poor and neglecting justice, Israel has earned God's severe punishment.

Amos 4:1–13: Even Israel's wealthy, self-indulgent women will not escape, as they join their husband's stubborn resistance against God's tough love.

Amos 5:1–27: Though Israel was sending rivers of ritualized and manipulative worship to God, what God really wanted was for Israel to send rivers of justice to their fellow citizens.

Amos 6:1–14: Boastful leaders of Israel, living self-indulgent lifestyles at the expense of people they should be protecting, and trusting in their own exaggerated achievements, incite God to raise up another nation to oppress and humble Israel.

Amos 7:1–17:

Three Visions Of Israel's Future (1–9)

1. The Locusts (1–3)

- 1.1 God states his intention to destroy Israel's crops with locusts
- 1.2 Amos intercedes on behalf of Israel.
- 1.3 God relents and stays his judgment.

2. The Fire (4–6)

- 2.1 God states his intention to destroy Israel's land with fire.
- 2.2 Amos intercedes on behalf of Israel.
- 2.3 God relents and stays his judgment.
- 2.4 Theological issue: If God is sovereign, and nothing and no one can thwart his plan, how can he relent (change his plans) in response to our prayers? Answer: The God who ordains the ends, ordains the means by which he accomplishes the ends. He has ordained to move in response to the prayers of his people, so his plan includes our prayers, *and* his relenting in response to them, to ultimately bring about his good purposes which he has already ordained shall be.

3. The Plumb Line (7–9)

- 3.1 God measures Israel by the absolute standard of his Word.
- 3.2 Israel is a leaning wall that will be torn down.
- 3.3 God will destroy the religious apparatus of the "church" (High places and sanctuaries).
- 3.4 God will destroy the religious apparatus of the "state" (House of Jeroboam).

4. Principles To Live By:

- 4.1. God's sovereignty extends to every created thing (locusts and fire) and to the exact timing (the latter growth).
- 4.2. God does not delight in, but mourns, the execution of justice on the guilty (Ez. 18:32; Gen. 18:32).
- 4.3. The godly do not delight in, but mourn, the execution of justice on the guilty.
- 4.4. The prayers of one person might spare an entire nation.
- 4.5. God may be waiting for our prayers for our nation (1 Tim. 2:1-6).
- 4.6. Never mistake the patience of God for apathy or approval (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:15).
- 4.7. If Amos can pray for the people of Israel, I can pray for _____ (Mt. 5:44).
- 4.8. God's Word is the absolute standard of truth, therefore my feelings, biases, prejudice, politics, opinions, traditions, experience, appetites, tastes, preferences, and desires must submit to that standard (Jer. 17:9; Pr. 14:12; 2 Tim. 4:3).

A Courageous Prophet vs. A Cowardly Priest and a Corrupt King (10–17)

A1: Amaziah's False Accusation: Amos is personally attacking the king and conspiring to destroy Israel(10–11).

A2: Amaziah's Sentence On Amos: Go back to Judah now and never prophesy in Israel again (12–13).

A3: Amos' Defense: I am not "profit prophet" who serves at the pleasure of King Jeroboam. I am a chosen prophet who serves at the pleasure of the King of kings (14–15).

B1: Amos' True Accusation: As a "priest" you should be guiding people to the truth, but you have denied and distorted the truth (16).

B2: Amos' Sentence on Amaziah: You will lose your wife, children, property, career, freedom, and home (17).

B3: Amaziah's Defense: (18?)

Principles to Live By:

1. The leaders God uses can expect to be misquoted, falsely accused, and rejected (Mt. 26:60).
2. Political leaders are prone to surround themselves with religious leaders who flatter them.
3. One man's sin can adversely affect his entire family.
4. Religious leaders charged with teaching the Word are liable to a stricter judgment (Jas. 3:1).
5. Religious leaders who are *careless* with the Bible despise religious leaders who are *careful* with the Bible (Gal. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:15).
6. If a leader in the church doesn't do his job, God can replace him with someone who will.
7. If whole denominations don't do their job, God can replace them with those who will.
8. False teachers always use enough Bible to deceive the spiritually naïve (Gen. 3:1; Eph. 4:14).
9. There is only one who can perfectly and eternally function as prophet, priest, and king, and all of us need him (Heb. 7:17).