

What On Earth Is Happening? Hopeful Insights From Amos

Rich Christians and Social Justice

Amos 5:1–27

Sunday Evening Bible Study

Attendance Watch for Amos:

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| 9.10.17 | 241 |
| 9.17.17 | 235 |
| 9.24.17 | 207 |
| 10.1.17 | 204 |
| 11.12.17 | Amos Conclusion-All Church Dinner-Orphan Sunday! |

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:

1. God’s heart is broken for his precious, but rebellious, Israel. (1–2).
2. Israel can expect a 90% casualty rate in the day of God’s judgment (3).
3. If Israel repents and seeks God, they may be shown mercy. What repentance looks like:
 - 3.1 Turning from idolatry and false doctrine to love God with all their heart (4–5).
 - 3.2 Restoring the sweetness of justice. Government protects innocent, punishes guilty, and promotes the weak and poor without demeaning them (6).
 - 3.3 Acknowledging they are accountable to sovereign God who created and controls nature (8–9).
 - 3.4. Loving the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—even hard truth (10).
 - 3.5 Reforming the tax code so that it does not favor the rich and powerful (11).
 - 3.6 Establish an impartial judicial system that is blind to the social status of the plaintiff or defendant (12–15).
4. In the absence of this repentance, God will be present to judge. He cannot be bribed, threatened, silenced, intimidated, manipulated, or corrupted (16–20).
5. God hates paganized, syncretized, ritualized, emotionalized worship from people who exploit the poor and ignore social justice issues (21–27).

Two Levels of Application: Personal/Individual Ethics and Social/Political Ethics

1. **Personal/Individual Ethics:** How you can be personally involved in bringing relief to the poor: Give to and volunteer with Neighborhood Christian Center, Sav-A-Life Pregnancy Resource Center, Tennessee Valley Outreach, Jail and Prison Ministry, Refuge of Grace, Mary Magdalene Ministry, Frances Nungester Elementary School, Habitat for Humanity, Go! Grants.
2. **Social/Political Ethics:** How you can be politically involved in bringing relief to the poor: Do the research and settle on policies and legislation that protect the poor. Then vote, work in campaigns, run for office, petition elected officials, and engage in constructive discussion and civil debate in a way that remembers the poor and persuades your fellow citizens to remember the poor.

| The Liberal Left | The Conservative Right |
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| <p>Favorite ex-NFL player: Colin Kaepernick</p> <p>America has never been greater!</p> <p>Expansive government is the best way to protect the poor.</p> <p>Raise taxes on the rich to provide goods and services for the poor.</p> <p>Redistribute wealth by legal coercion.</p> <p>People are poor because of systemic injustices in the social structure that help the privileged rich get richer and oppressed poor get poorer.</p> <p>Women are historically oppressed, so we should let them abort babies who would only keep women poor.</p> <p>Pride issue: I am entitled to the fruit of another person's labor because the system is not fair. I will blame everyone else for my problems.</p> <p>Political danger: The church is not allowed to influence the state (unless it agrees with my liberal policies).</p> <p>Intellectual Danger: I will remain safely in my echo chamber and avoid the intellectual effort required to listen to and understand conservatives (Pr. 18:17; Jas. 1:19).</p> | <p>Favorite ex-NFL player: Tim Tebow</p> <p>We need to make America great again!</p> <p>Limited government is the best way to protect the poor.</p> <p>Lower taxes (and cut the budget) to incentivize the work ethic, stimulate economy, and create jobs.</p> <p>Redistribute wealth by voluntary generosity.</p> <p>People are poor because they have made foolish, immoral, and irresponsible decisions.</p> <p>Children are historically oppressed, so we should protect them from their mothers by banning abortion.</p> <p>Pride Issue: I earned and deserve everything I have and nobody ever gave me anything. I will take credit for all of my accomplishments.</p> <p>Political danger: This is a Christian Nation and the church must influence the state to promote Christianity.</p> <p>Intellectual Danger: I will remain safely in my echo chamber and avoid the hard intellectual effort required to listen to and understand liberals (Pr. 18:17; Jas. 1:19).</p> |

Six “Don’ts” of Political Persuasion

- 1. Don’t insult people:** Insults are the weapons of the intellectually lazy. They divide groups and make people dig in. Attack the argument, not the person (ad hominem fallacy).(Mt. 5:22).
- 2. Don’t misrepresent your opponent:** Misrepresentation marks you as deceptive or ignorant (straw man fallacy). People who think they “tell it like it is” usually don’t.
- 3. Don’t act like you can’t learn anything.** Active listening and humility go a long way.
- 4. Don’t appeal to an authority they don’t recognize.** If they don’t love the Bible, appeal to the rule of law, the Constitution, and the common good. (Mt. 22:32; Dan. 1:12; Acts 22:25).
- 5. Don’t be a hypocrite.** Double standards decrease your credibility. Apply your moral judgments consistently, without fear or favor. If you criticized the conduct of a person who holds different political views, you must criticize the same conduct of a person who holds your political views. (Mt. 23:24; Jn. 8:7; Mt. 7:5).
- 6. Don’t be careless with your words.** People who lie, exaggerate, slander, flatter, brag, boast, accuse without evidence, break vows, breach contracts, betray friends, and make bold promises they can’t keep, may be flamboyant enough to excite people who already hold their political positions, but they fail at persuading their political opponents to switch sides or make reasonable compromises.

[Jas. 1:19; Prov. 18:17; Matt.15:19; Eccl. 5:2; Pr. 26:18,19; 27:2; Ps. 34:13; James 4:16; Matt. 12:36; Prov. 15:2; Prov. 12:18; Psa. 12:3; James 3:5,6; Titus 3:2:1Pet. 2:12; 3:15; Eph. 4:15]