

Amos

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish

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Amos 5:10-27

Vss. 10-13

- Amos continues His assault on the wealthy ruling class of Israel, striking at how they have been made wealthy by controlling Israel's court of law.
- The gate is literally the entrance to the court. This was an open square in a fortified structure built into the city wall. Along each side of the archway were seats cut into wall where the powerful would dispense justice. They are the people of 5:7 who turn justice into wormwood and throw righteousness down into the dirt.
- These people hate the man who criticizes them and they "abhor", look upon as an abomination, anyone who speaks with integrity.
- By controlling the court, these people have used the law to unjustly enrich themselves. They have constructed houses with wealth heretofore reserved for palaces and temples and have planted great vineyards, in part by exacting steep rents on the poor, even taking grain from the poor when they had no money, leaving the poor both penniless and hungry.
- To keep the wheels turning, they use the law to enforce their rulings whereby the righteous are distressed/squeezed. They are not above taking bribes and refuse to hear the testimony of the poor. Because of this, their "transgressions", their rebellion and their sin are known to God.
- Vs. 13 suggests it was a dangerous time to speak the truth. If the ruling class had heard no complaints, it was because the poor and their advocates were afraid to speak out.

Vss. 14-15

- Three times in Ch. 5 (vss. 4, 6, 14) does Amos encourage his hearers to seek the Lord and His Way. He wants them to understand that he is pleading for their lives! They think that they are the court, but there is a higher court and a higher Judge! "Repent! Change your ways! Seek good and not evil and you MAY live! The Lord MAY be with you, 'cause he sure ain't with you now!" But the conditional participle used here suggests that Amos doesn't hold out much hope that they will change or that God will not punish them.
- So if they hate evil and love good and actually have a court where real justice for all exists, then maybe God will be gracious to the remnant, the survivors of the disaster that is coming as their punishment.

Vss. 16- 17

- The punishment to come will bring great sorrow to the nation. This is why Amos began the chapter with a funeral song. Everything in the city will stop. Even the farmer will come in from the fields. Black

will be the color of the day. The professional mourners will be called in and from the vineyards to the farms to the city plazas, the sounds of grief and pain will be heard as the Lord passes by. It will be the final plague of Egypt all over again, but this time the death angel will come for Israel.

Vss. 18-20

- Amos is the first of the prophets to use the phrase “the Day of the Lord”. In popular thought it was believed that when the Day of the Lord came, God would judge all of Israel’s enemies and establish Israel among the great nations of the earth. This is why the start of Amos’ preaching was so popular because he began by speaking of God’s judgement on Israel’s enemies.
- But this Day of the Lord was not going to be the day everyone thought. “It will be darkness and not light.” This had to come as great shock to Amos’ listeners. Instead of a day of national triumph it will be like when a man runs from a lion and runs right into a bear or if he makes it to the safety of his house, he is bitten by a snake. The justice God will bring will be inescapable and inevitable.

Vss. 21-24

- These verse resonate with Isaiah 10, Hosea 6 & 8, Jeremiah 6, and Malachi 1 & 2. God is rejecting Israel’s worship because it was filled with idolatry and was theologically and ritually incorrect. But primarily God was rejecting Israel’s worship because its practitioners did not worship with the right heart (Matt. 5:23-24) and as such were not people of righteousness and justice.
- Amos uses “hate” for the third time and you get the sense that he really cannot hit this hard enough. All of the traditional offerings are refused. Further, God demands that they take away the noise of their songs and harps (1 Cor. 13:1).
- Amos tells them what they need is a full baptism of justice and righteousness! And these are ever flowing waters, not just something that is done once and that’s it, but something that is to happen every day.

Vss. 25-27

- Here God asks a rhetorical question: did you make sacrifices when you were wandering in the desert? No they didn’t. Yet God still loved them and provided for them. Ritual sacrifices are not an absolute requirement for being in right relationship with God. Rather, its is having one’s heart right and practicing the Way of God that is key. Indeed, they snuck their pagan Egyptian gods out with them and carried them along for the journey. Never mind what they had seen of the God of Israel during the plagues.
- “If you love your pagan gods so much and are so determined to live more immoral than your pagan neighbors, then fine. I will send you into exile, out beyond Damascus,” says the Lord.