

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON JUDAH AND ISRAEL

TEXT: AMOS 2:4-16

Introduction:

1. Last week we looked at God's judgment against Moab (2:1). Before that we saw God's judgment upon Amon (1:13), and Edom (1:11), and Tyre (1:9), and Gaza (1:6), and Damascus (1:3).
2. The Lord saved His messages to Judah and Israel for last. God's judgment upon Judah was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean army destroyed Jerusalem (including the temple) and the people were taken into captivity for 70 years.
3. God's judgment upon Israel was fulfilled when the Assyrians conquered them. The Israelites from the northern kingdom never returned to their land and their dispersion continues to this day.
4. Second Kings 17:24 says, the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from some of the other pagan countries, "and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof."
5. These heathens intermarried with the Israelites and produced the Samaritans. The descendants of all these groups – Samaritans, Moabites, Edomites, et al, are now overwhelmingly Muslim.
6. If Israel's heathen neighbors, who were without the light and spiritual privileges enjoyed by Judah and Israel, were severely judged by God, how much more would Judah and Israel (cf. Luke 12:47, 48)?
7. By using the same repetitious expression, "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof..." (Amos 2:4; cf. 2:6), it is clear that Judah and Israel were no less guilty than the other nations.
8. Application for today: God has given the USA tremendous privileges, but with these privileges comes tremendous responsibility.

I. JUDGMENT UPON JUDAH (2:4, 5)

1. In His judgment upon Judah, the LORD does not cite any particularly heinous act of cruelty and treachery as He does with the other nations (cf. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1).
2. Instead the LORD rebukes Judah for despising the law of the LORD; i.e., rejecting the Word of God and not keeping His commandments (2:4, 5).
3. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).
4. Their lies "caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked" (Amos 2:4b).

5. Our Lord said to the Sadducees, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matt. 22:29; cf. Romans 2:17-29).
6. “Their lies caused them to err” (Amos 2:4). Lying is a habitual practice for many people, and unfortunately there are many liars in churches too.
7. God’s judgment on Judah would be the same as for the others: “But I will send a fire upon Judah...” (2:5; cf. 2:2; 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14).
8. In the Bible, fire represents the hot wrath of God. There are over 500 references to fire in the Bible. The very first reference is in Genesis 19:24, “Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.”
9. The last reference is Revelation 21:8, which warns of the lake of fire.
10. After this judgment upon Judah (where Amos was from), the remainder of the book of Amos is addressed to Israel (cf. 2:6; 3:1; 5:1; etc.).

II. JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL (2:6)

1. Amos delivered these messages up in Bethel, in the king’s chapel. After these messages, he probably wasn’t invited back (cf. 7:12, 13).
2. “If a minister shall speak straight out and boldly, fearless of man, and only fearful lest he should grieve his God, he will stir the kennels of hell, and make all the hounds of Satan howl at his heels. A sermon often does a man most good when it makes him most angry. Those people who walk down the aisles and say, ‘I will never hear that man again’ very often have an arrow rankling in their breast” (CH Spurgeon).
3. Israel’s sins are exposed:
 - A. Mistreatment of the poor (2:6b, 7; cf. 4:1; 5:11; 8:6). The Bible has much to say about the sin of oppressing the poor. “He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor” (Proverbs 14:31). “Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished” (Proverbs 17:5).
 - B. Corruption and bribery – “because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes” (2:6b). “Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous” (Deut. 16:19).
 - C. Immorality (2:7b).
 - D. “And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge...” (2:8a). A very poor man would have nothing to put up as collateral for a loan except the clothes on his back. These garments would keep him warm at night. God allowed the Israelites to use clothing for a

pledge, but the raiment was to be returned when the sun went down (cf. Exodus 22:25-27; Deut. 24:12, 13).

E. Idolatry and drinking – “by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god” (2:8b). There was only one altar prescribed by God and that altar was in Jerusalem.

III. ISRAEL FORGOT WHAT GOD HAD DONE FOR THEM

1. The Lord destroyed the Amorites (2:9).
2. Joshua 24:8 says, “And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.”
3. The Amorites were the most powerful of all the heathen nations that inhabited the land of Canaan.
4. They were also very wicked, and Genesis 15:16 says, “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”
5. Here in Amos’ prophecy the Amorites probably represent all the various Canaanites and Jebusites, etc.
6. The Lord reminded them yet again that He had brought them up out of Egypt and led them forty years through the wilderness (Amos 2:10).
7. The Lord raised up their sons to be prophets and Nazarites for the privilege of proclaiming God’s Word, and for maintaining purity and holiness (2:11).
8. But Israel ruined the Nazarites by giving them wine to drink (2:12a).
9. And backslidden Israelites commanded the prophets, “Prophecy not” (2:12b).
10. Isaiah 30:9, 10 says, “That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”
11. This is exactly what Amaziah the priest did (Amos 7:10-13).
12. The same thing happened to Jeremiah. The men of Anathoth sought to kill him and they said to him, “Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand.”
13. The Lord was fed up with their wickedness (Amos 2:13).

CONCLUSION:

1. God’s judgment was inevitable and inescapable (2:14-16).
2. “Flee away naked” (2:16) means to flee quickly and to leave behind their weapons and ammunition and anything that would hinder their retreat.

3. Amos' message was not a popular message, but it was one he had to deliver. Fifteen times in the book of Amos we read these words, "Thus saith the LORD."
4. G. Campbell Morgan once heard someone say, "The preacher must catch the spirit of the age." Morgan replied, "God forgive him if he does. The preacher's business is to correct the spirit of the age."
5. That is what Amos did.

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