

Message #4

Amos 3:1-15

One of the theological reasons why some people do not like a pure grace message that does not include any works is because people believe if you present a pure grace message it will lead people to the conclusion that they can go out and sin up a storm.

In fact, when Paul revealed the Gospel of God in the book of Romans, he developed the doctrine of the grace of God that included the doctrine of election. He presented pure grace so forcefully that he actually expected people to say that very thing (Romans 6:1). He expected people to say, “shall we go on sinning so that grace may abound?”

So we would conclude that if we have an accurate understanding of the doctrine of election and if we have an accurate understanding of the grace of God, then one argument we may expect to hear from those who really don't know truth is that—well, if God, in pure grace, elects some to salvation, then those who are elected to salvation can just continue in sin so they will more and more reflect the grace of God. Paul's answer to that was simply “May it never be.”

He could have also said before you come to this conclusion, you better read the book of Amos and you had better see what happened to Israel. It is true that God, in pure grace, chooses and elects Israel as a nation to salvation and also He chooses and elects individuals to salvation.

However, if you are the elect of God, you are a privileged person or in Israel's case a privileged nation. **It is the expectation of God that we will develop into that which reflects we are the elect of God.**

Now please note the message God gives to His own people at the beginning of **verse 1**—“Hear this word.” In other words, God is admonishing His own people to go to their worship services to hear His Word. This is not why they were going to worship services, so Amos has to keep telling them you need to get back to the basics of listening to God's Word (**3:1**; 4:1; 5:1). These people were going to their worship services, but not to hear the Word of God.

Now when you read **verses 1-2**, it is clear that God wants the entire family of Israel to know that He has chosen Israel “among all the families of the earth” (**3:2a**). But it is also very clear from these verses that God is “against” Israel and “against the entire family” (**3:1**), which means both Israel in the north and Judah in the south. He also makes it very clear here that “he would punish” His own people for “all her iniquities.” He had kept a mathematical log of the evil sins of His own people and He would punish her for all of the perverse and depraved things she did as God's elect.

So let's use a practical illustration about the geography here. Let's say that a church in Michigan reaches a level in which God says my people have so turned away from Me and My Word and are in such horrible sin that I have had enough and I am going to punish the church. Now let's say that God decides to send His judgment in the winter time. Now we know in the winter time that some of the people from the church winter in the south.

Well, this text says they will not escape, because once God makes a determination to move against His family, He moves against all the family in both the north and the south; Israel and Judah.

The main theme of this chapter is very, very clear:

THE ELECT OF GOD HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY GOD AND REFLECT THEY ARE THE ELECT OF GOD BECAUSE IF THEY DO NOT, GOD WILL EVENTUALLY PUNISH HIS OWN PEOPLE BY CAUSING TERRIBLE THINGS TO HAPPEN AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE AS A JUDGMENT FROM HIM.

This book of Amos certainly is an illustrative argument against the false doctrine called “Lordship Salvation.” Obviously these people were the elect of God, but they were not acting or living like the elect of God, which is the whole reason why God raised up Amos. He went to God’s own people and warned them to start acting like God’s elect because He was going to send His judgments against His own people.

Now these judgments are aimed at everyone in God’s own family. He aims these judgments against His own people. God counts the sins and when the number reaches some complete level, He will send His ferocious judgment against everyone.

Now there are four main parts to this chapter:

PART #1 – Amos asks rhetorical questions to prove that ferocious judgment is on the way.
3:3-6

Now the first five rhetorical questions of **verses 3-5** expect a “no” answer. The last two rhetorical questions in **verse 6** expect a “yes” answer.

Question #1 - Do two men walk together unless they have agreed to walk together? **3:3**

Now this question seems relatively non-threatening. It is a simple principle designed to show that two men do not go for a walk together unless they have agreed to do it.

But the context of this is very threatening; God has decided to send judgment to walk with Israel because she has sinned. **Israel decided to walk through life in agreement with transgression and sin, not righteousness.**

Her persistent sin is in agreement with God’s righteous judgment so she is walking right to judgment. What Israel forgot is that she is God’s elect nation and God is walking right with her and He has made an appointment for judgment because of her sin.

Question #2 - Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? **3:4a**

We may recall that the book began with the LORD roaring from Zion (1:2). The point here is that the LORD does not roar His judgment unless He has a target or prey for it and the target is His own elect nation.

God's roar was being announced by His prophet. He raised up Amos to go and thunder forth the message that His judgment was coming. He did not raise up Amos for the fun of it. His prey was in His sights. God would not do that if He had no target of judgment.

Question #3 - Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something? **3:4b**

The lion does not growl in his den unless he has taken his prey into it. God does not growl in judgment unless He has an appropriate prey for it and in this case it is Israel and all His own people.

Question #4 - Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground without bait? **3:5a**

God is about to trap His people with judgment and they will fall into it because they are pursuing the bait of evil transgressions.

Question #5 - Does a trap spring up from the earth unless something triggered it? **3:5**

There are some drawings of Egyptian bird traps which show how this works. Two half-circles of netting were put over two semicircular flaps and were laid on the ground with bait in the middle. When a bird would fly in to get the bait, the trap would fold up and the netting would capture the bird. So the point is the net would not fold up until the bird moved toward the bait.

God's judgment would not come against Israel if she weren't moving in an evil direction. God does not send His judgment until His people move themselves into the heart of the evil and then the judgment comes and once judgment is triggered, God's people will not escape.

God is about to send and spring forth His judgment and she will not escape; she has triggered the judgment herself.

Question #6 - Do not the people tremble when a war trumpet is blown in a city? **3:6a**

God would use ferocious military powers to pour out His judgment on His elect. The war trumpet was sounding through Amos. If the people wanted to escape judgment, they needed to change right now. They should tremble at the thought of an angry God, the trumpet would sound.

I think there is a distinct, prophetic connection to the Trumpet Judgments in the Great Tribulation that start in Revelation 8 just after the sealing of the 144,000 Jews in Revelation 7.

Question #7 - Does not God cause calamity to hit a city? **3:6b**

God is the One who sends disasters and destruction to a city. When a city or a people deserve the judgment of God, He does send it. He does bring disasters on specific people and specific cities. Now people do not like to hear this, but this is the truth.

Just this past week thirty tornadoes swept through seven states. On Sunday and Monday tornadoes swept through Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. Now no one wants to believe that God could send those storms. No one wants to think that God could be actually targeting places with calamity, but when we read the Scriptures, it is clear that He is the one who sovereignly controls the weather and storm patterns.

Although we may not know why a storm hits this state or that state, this city or that city, this house or that house, we may be sure God knows what He is doing, because just as this verse says, **“If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?”**

May I suggest based on the word of God, if in fact this is some judgment of God, in which God is targeting states, get ready state of Michigan, get ready District of Columbia, get ready California and New York, because your turn is coming. In fact, I would suggest that some of these states have mocked God and His Word far more than those hit by tornadoes.

When any people or any city or any nation reaches a point where God is growling in judgment, He will send His ferocious destructive calamities and no one will stop it.

PART #2 – Amos reveals that God always reveals His prophetic Word before He sends His judgments. **3:7-8**

Everything God will prophetically do in regard to Israel, will always be prefaced by prophets who will proclaim exactly what He will do. In other words, God will see to it that His Word is proclaimed by His servants before He does it. He will use one of His servants to warn His people. In fact, Amos reveals in **verse 8** that he was a prophet singled out by God to communicate to Israel about the roaring judgment of God that was about to pounce on His own people.

Now during the Church Age the gift of prophecy has ceased (I Cor. 13:8). But as God’s servants accurately preach the Word of God, there are warnings that are given pertaining to the judgment of God against His own people. For example, Paul warned the Corinthian church (I Cor. 11) that if they partook of the communion service in a light way, for this reason some were weak, sick and dead. Jesus warned the seven churches in Revelation that if they did not keep their focus on Him and the Word of God, He would move in negative ways against them (Rev. 2-3). So even though the gift of prophecy is no longer operative, servants who teach the Word still warn of what God will do.

However, once the Church Age is over and the program swings back to Israel, there will be some prophets who will surface who will communicate the truth about God's judgment.

During the Tribulation, for example, there are 144,000 Jewish men (Revelation 7) who will make judgmental announcements to people all over the world. There will be two prophets (Revelation 11) specifically in Jerusalem, who will be predicting exactly what God will do.

We may observe from this that God's Word is revealed through His servants. They are the ones who have the ability to unravel the deep, mysterious things of God. True servants of God have the privilege and the responsibility to preach the Word of God.

PART #3 – Amos reveals the horrible evil condition of Israel. **3:9-10**

God calls heathen nations to testify of the evil of His own people. He singles out one of the key cities of Israel, Samaria. God calls heathen nations to see whether or not the sins of His own people in Samaria merit His judgment. God warns His own people that He would call those who do not even know how to do what is right to not only witness His judgment, but to actually see why He will judge.

Ashdod was a city in Philistia to the west of Israel; Egypt was a power to the south of Israel and the mountains of Samaria were in the northern part of Israel.

So God invites these neighboring country/states to come and witness the horrible evil and oppression that was in Israel. God actually calls the world to look at His own people and see how godless they are. Israel was actually outdoing these godless powers in godlessness. In fact, according to **verse 10**, "they do not know how to do what is right."

Every now and then the world gets a good laugh at the people of God who are making mockery of Him and His Word. Actually as a judgment of God, He permits heathens to take a good look at the pathetic condition of His own people.

PART #4 – Amos reveals the horrible judgment to come. **3:11-15**

God says, "I have seen enough"; "I have had enough."

Judgment #1 - An enemy will loot your citadels. **3:11**

All of the savings and all of the stock pilings of anything, including weapons, would be looted as a direct judgment of God.

Judgment #2 - An enemy will totally devour the people and their pleasures. **3:12**

Their ease and their luxury were about to go away. The language here describes the fact that God would permit His own people to be ripped to shreds. They thought they were so at ease and so successful and they are about to be torn to pieces.

Judgment #3 - God Himself will punish Israel for her transgressions. **3:13-14**

The transgressions of Israel were many. Notice this was not just a judgment against Samaria, but also Bethel. These were the two key cities of Israel in the north. God says I will rip My own people to shreds and wipe out her false places of worship.

The “altars” of Bethel were located about 10 miles north of Jerusalem. It was a popular place of worship. God says that He would bring that altar right down to the ground.

Judgment #4 - God will put an end to their affluence and wealth. **3:15**

God says I will target your winter house and summer house. So it would not matter where you were, God’s judgment would come against both places. God would target the “ivory” mansions and all of the great houses. Their life of ease was about over. God said I have had enough. My people have not wanted My Word so I am bringing them down.

One thing is very clear from this chapter. When you are God’s elect, you do not want to push Him to the point where He roars like a lion against you.

It becomes very clear from this passage that the doctrine of election is not a doctrine that promotes licentiousness or indifference. It is a doctrine that is precious and we should reflect the fact that we are the elect of God.

If God would judge Israel, His chosen elect nation and the apple of His eye, He will most certainly judge America.

If God would judge Jerusalem, His chosen city, He will most certainly send judgment to American cities like Ann Arbor, Detroit, Kalamazoo and Washington D.C. when He gets fed up with them.

If God would judge Israel, His chosen nation, He will also judge the church comprised of His chosen individuals.

So this should prompt each of us to ask this question—am I walking through life hand in hand with the righteousness of God or with transgressions?

Those are messages that are loud and clear to us from this third chapter of Amos.