

Date: 18 Dec 2022

Scripture Passage: Amos 5:1-6:14

Title: A Time To Mourn

Introduction

- Ecclesiastes 3:4 “A time to weep, and a time to laugh, time to mourn, and a time to dance.” There are times when the people of God and the church should mourn. God is revealing what will happen to Israel through Amos.
- Last week we considered two charges against Israel (Ch 3-4): (i) Israel sinned against light. “Relative Accountability”. (ii) Israel’s Social & religious sins. “Cause and Effect”.
- This week we see the same in the form of lamentations that Israel’s doom is certain. They will be destroyed by Assyria (6:14). It is as though Amos is lamenting the destruction of Israel because he knows that God will judge and His will will be done.
- This message teaches that we need to hear and have discernment. We need to be like “the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times” (1 Chron. 12:32). We need understanding of our time. Not to jump to conclusions or judgement too quickly, but to search our hearts and seek God’s will.

I. The certainty of doom (5:1-3; 6:11-14)

- Certainty of Israel’s destruction is found at the beginning and end of this passage. Israel was very blessed. But destruction was certain, with “no one to raise her up”. They will be attacked by Assyria, taken and lose their identity (16:14). Only a small remnant will be left (5:3). If doom is certain, then why did Amos preach this message? It is so the individuals of this nation will hear and repent. This applies to us today. It is certain that Christ will return to judgement on the last day. Doom is pronounced for the benefit of individuals.
- Principles of “cause and effect” & “relative accountability” (6:11). Houses great or little to be broken to pieces (6:11). Affliction will happen from north to south of Jeroboam II’s kingdom (2 Kings 14:25). They had a perverse sense of justice & pride (6:12, 13). Their form of justice caused bitterness, and those who were truly righteous were caused to suffer. They rejoiced over “nothing”, and they pride themselves in taking Karnaim by their own strength. Just like Nebuchadnezzar boasted of his own accomplishments (Daniel 4:29-30). When things are going well, we often think it is our own accomplishments. It is good to enjoy the fruit of your labor. But remain humble and acknowledge God. Remember to be thankful to God and return glory to Him.

II. Israel sinned against light (5:4- 27).

- Israel was trusting in outward religion instead of seeking the Lord (5-15). Bethel & Gilgal were centers of worship (5-9). Those committing sin were hiding behind the veneer of religion. But it is useless because the all-powerful LORD knows all things (8-9). Who are you fooling? You put on such a show of religion, but your life is not transformed. Where is the submission to God’s word? God has seen through you. Perversion of justice & oppression of the weak were taking place in the law courts (10, 12). The prudent keep silent because it is an evil time (13). The appeal is for repentance to individuals in power (14). Even if there is one that will repent, Amos will still prophesy.
- The LORD looks for true faith, not external show of religion (16-27). Judgement is certain and there will be wailing everywhere (16-17). Israel professes to desire the day of the LORD, but of what use (18-20)? Like a fleeing lion, only to meet with a bear, leaning on a wall for support, but bitten by a serpent (19). The day of the LORD will be darkness, i.e. judgement (18, 20). Israel had an external show of religion (21-22), singing spiritual songs but failing to live righteously (23-24). Are you Christian only in name? Show it with a true change in your life. Otherwise, all the religion is just a show.

III. Only a remnant from Israel will be spared (6:1-10).

- The leaders of the nation were proud of economic prosperity, compared with surrounding nations (6:1-2). Woe pronounced upon them (1, 3). They lived in ease (4), put on a show of religion (5), but were not concerned over the poor & oppressed (6). Woe to them, for they are the ones to be taken captive first (7).
- What of the nation as a whole? The LORD hates the pride of Jacob, with show of prosperity & power (“palaces”, 8). They will be destroyed. Even the remnant of war (9 cf. 5:3) will suffer. Many will die in Israel, although not taken away

as war prisoners. Relatives who come to dispose of dead bodies will be asking “Anymore dead?” (10). Fear of the LORD, not of men, will be upon the people (10c cf. 5:13).

IV. Application

- Every time you hear the Bible speaking of judgement, it is a reminder that Christ will return to judge the world. Are you ready for judgement? Today’s passage shows us that there are so many that have an external show of religion, but your heart is far from Him. This passage is about hypocrisy. Matt 7:21-23. On the last day, many will say ‘Lord lord have we not cast out demons in your name, have we not done good deeds, have we not attended church, taught Sunday school...etc’ But God will say depart from me for I never knew you.
- This point has been repeated several times, but this is what the passage is saying to us. Where is that heart of submission? Where is that heart of obedience? Only those who worship Him in spirit and in truth will be able to take comfort that the Lord will return. We are small in numbers, we are often oppressed, but we will still cling on in faith, knowing that the Lord will return to put things right. Let this be a final call to you. To trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness.
- Final day judgement cannot be averted. Are you discerning enough to know the state of your sin? “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise” Eph. 5:15