



**Old Testament Reading: Psalm 100:1-5 – New Testament Reading: 2
Corinthians 9:6-15**

**Return to Me
“The Poverty of Pride”
Amos 6:1-14**

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The Book of Amos was one of the first prophetic books to be written and one of the twelve minor prophetic books ordained to be included in the canon of the Old Testament.

- We know that because the prophecy of Amos was among the scrolls found in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1946 by a Bedouin shepherd boy and verified for accuracy by biblical scholars.
- We know that because Amos was the first prophet to use the phrase the “*day of the Lord*,” i.e., the day the Lord would bring His judgment upon the Israelites.
- We know that because the events Amos prophesied can be verified historically.

“Whatever things were written before were written for our learning,

that we through the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

Romans 15:4

“A family, a church, or a nation can rise no higher, nor fall any lower than its spiritual leadership.”

- While God established the father to be the spiritual leader in the home, children will rise to the level of the spiritual leader, whether it is their father or mother.
- The people of a church will rise to spiritual greatness or sink to the level of spiritual depravity of their pastor.
- The people of a nation will rise to the level of moral excellence or sink to the level of ethical corruption of their leaders.

When Amos came into the major cities of Israel, he found the people of God living like the people of the world.

- Amos warned the people to repent of their sins and return to their true worship of the one true God.
- But when he saw the despicable things the religious leaders were doing, he saw the source of the people’s sinful behavior, and he cried out, *“Like priest – like people!”*
- The people were following the pattern of sin set before them by their priests, who had succumbed to the sin that is most like the devil – the sin of PRIDE.
- The religious leaders thought God needed them more than they needed Him, giving them a false sense of security.
- Amos told them, because of their foolish pride, God was going to allow them to *“lead their people”* – they would be the first in the line of captives walking to Babylon to serve as slaves.

1. The Fruit of Arrogance – Vs. 1-7 –

- Webster defines arrogance as a “sense of self-importance.”
- The term “Zion” refers to the Temple of God, which was, and will be, located on Mount Zion in Israel.
- The religious leaders were “at ease” in their positions of leadership within the Jewish Temple and within the Jewish government.
- Sadly, the people were following their example of pride, self-indulgence, self-satisfaction, and more degeneracy.
- *“Like priest – like people!”*

Amos urged them to look at how God allowed their neighboring nations to be destroyed, a warning of what was to come upon them unless they repented and turned back to Him.

- But their minds were so focused upon their own needs and their own pleasures, they refused to believe God would allow something like that to happen to Israel.

2. The Root of Pride – Vs. 8 –

- “Abhor” means to loathe, or to detest, or to despise.
- God detested the “high and mighty” attitudes of those in positions of spiritual leadership.
- Pride had so infected their souls they thought God was pleased with them, that they no longer needed Him.
- God said He “hated” their palaces (homes) for rather than being places where He was honored, and others welcomed, they had become “show places” – points of pride for those who owned them.
- Isaiah 14:13 says Lucifer, the angel that was in charge of the praise of heaven, was cast out of heaven because of his pride.
- Lucifer did not deny God or desire to be greater than God.
- Lucifer wanted to be “equal” with God – to be his own god!
- We become “just like Lucifer!”
 - When we set ourselves up as our own god and become our own judge of what is right or wrong.
 - When we dethrone God and enthrone ourselves, arranging the affairs of our life around our wants, our needs, our goals, our desires, and our
 - When we cease to measure our morality according to the standards of God’s Word and see nothing wrong with our actions if they help us achieve our goals.

Breaking the laws of the state is a crime but questioning the right of the state to establish laws is anarchy!

(Adapted from an online article by Carmen E. Pave, Cambridge University Press)

- Surely one can see the rise of anarchy in America.
- Surely one can see how far our nation has strayed from God; when evil is called good, good is called evil, and everyone is allowed to do what is right in their own eyes.

3. The Fall of Israel – Vs. 9-14 –

- Proverbs 16:18 says: *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*
- Amos told the people when God’s judgment began to fall; no one would be spared.
 - Those not killed in battle would die from a disease so deadly they would have to cremate the bodies.
 - The poor would suffer as well as the rich because they followed the pattern of pride set before them.
 - God was raising up a nation to come against them.

- In less than 30-years, the nation of Israel was attacked by the armies of Babylon.

Those who refuse to be tilled as fields and sowed to produce a harvest, shall forever be as barren as rocks; producing nothing.

Applications:

- God arranged for America to be discovered. He established it as a “city on a hill” – a “beacon of hope” for the rest of the world, and we can be thankful for the way He has blessed our nation to be a blessing to so many others in the past.
- However, like Israel, America has forgotten the God Who blessed us. Pride has replaced our gratitude to God and our devotion to God, and He is about to remind us of our sins.

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- God established His Church as the channel through which the gospel of Jesus Christ could be spread around the world, and for many years, world evangelism was the theme of every local church.
- However, like Israel, the evangelical church has forgotten the God Who blessed it. Today’s church is no longer a refuge for the lost, but rather it has become a religious organization with a variety of self-serving ministries to address the felt needs of its members and entertaining performances to glorify their talents.

The greatest need in our nation, our churches, and in our homes is for godly men to rise up and be the spiritual leaders God has called them to be and to set that pattern before our children.