



Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 59:1-21
New Testament Reading: Romans 10:1-13

Return to Me ***“Prepare to Meet Thy God”*** **Amos 4:1-13**

The prophecy of Amos covers the period between 786-746 BC when Jeroboam II was king of Israel and Uzziah was the king of Judah; the same period that is covered by Hosea and Isaiah.

- It was a time of peace and prosperity for the people of Israel.
- However, it was also a time of spiritual decline, for while they continued their temple services and seasonal celebrations:
 - They had forsaken their relationship with God.
 - They were disobeying the laws of God.

- They were manifesting their spiritual immaturity in their actions and attitudes towards one another.

Amos said he was not from their school of prophets but rather a shepherd from Tekoa, a small, rural village near Bethlehem on the edge of the Judean Hills.

- But God had called him to warn his people to return to their trust in God or prepare to meet Him in judgment.

Amos prophesied the overthrow of the sanctuary at Bethel and the fall of the royal house in Jerusalem.

- Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, told King Jeroboam that Amos was plotting against him and that he should be silenced.
- Amos refused to stop preaching, and Amaziah had him killed.
- However, before Amos died, he told Amaziah his wife would become a prostitute, his children would be killed in war, his land would be given to others, he would die in a heathen land, and the Israelites would be taken captive.
- All that happened in 701 BC when Assyria besieged Israel, and in 587 BC when Judah was assailed by Nebuchadnezzar.

The only sin God cannot forgive is the continual rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord – the sin of unbelief!

- John 3:16 – ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!”***
- But if God’s love is refused by unbelief, God has no other way to redeem the sinner.

However, the one sin that breaks the heart of God more than any other is self-righteousness – the sin that says, **“I don’t need God!”**

- Romans 10:3– ***“going about to establish their own righteousness, [they] have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God!”***
- God desires His people to worship Him without hypocrisy or self-righteousness, and the first step in that true worship is to humble before Him as those who NEED Him and give Him the glory due to His holy name.
- Worshipping God in the desert was easy for the Israelites, for they had no one else to turn to.

- However, as they prospered in the Promised Land, they began to neglect their need for God.
- They continued their outward forms of worship, but it was worthless unto God because their hearts were not in it.
- God sent Amos, as well as other prophets, to warn them to return to Him or face His judgment, but the religious leaders were so self-righteous they could not see their sin or their need to return to God.

1. God's Word to the women – Vs. 1-3

Amos said the Israelite women had backslidden so far from their true worship of God they were leading others into immorality.

- Amos compared them to the “kine of Bashan,” which referred to the “cows” that were taken to the lush, green pastures of Bashan to be fatted for the slaughter.
- Amos said the Israelite women demanded a lot of attention – they were pampered, overfed, and self-indulgent.
 - They were too proud to bend their knees before a holy God or to humble themselves and truly worship God.
 - They brought their tithes to the temple every three days so they could be seen, in their new outfits, bringing their offerings to the Lord.
 - Rather than sharing some of their wealth with the poor, they turned their faces from them.
- Amos said God would judge their self-righteousness in a most horrible way.
 - Verse 2 – **“He will take you away with hooks and your posterity with fishhooks.”**
 - Either the women would be chained together as slaves, or their bodies would be “hooked” and dragged to the fire.

2. God's Word to the Worshipers – Vs. 4-13

Gilgal, Beersheba, and Bethel were the religious centers where Jews gathered each year for their annual pilgrimage.

- Even in their backslidden condition, the Israelites loved to go “up to Jerusalem” every year, but sadly, it was not to worship God, but to socialize with their family and friends.

- Amos shocked the people by saying: ***“Come to Bethel and transgress; at Gilgal multiply your transgressions!”***
- To “transgress” means to “violate God’s Law”!
 - Their service was conducted in an unauthorized place – Jerusalem was the place of worship.
 - The “god” they worshipped was not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but “Baal,” the god of the Canaanites.
 - Their worship was not in contrition and submission but of drunkenness and fornication.
- Since their worship was not in obedience to God, it was not accepted by God; it was just more sin He had against them.

Amos showed them how God had tried to warn them about their worthless worship, but they had not listened.

- Verse 6 – famine – ***“cleanness of teeth.”***
- Verse 7-8 – drought – ***“withholding the rain.”***
- Verse 9 – crop failure – ***“blasting and mildew.”***
- Verse 10 – sickness – ***“pestilence like Egypt.”***
- Verse 11 – war – ***“Overthrown some of you.”***

Amos said since these “warnings” did not turn their hearts back to God – Vs. 12 – ***“Prepare to meet thy God!”***

- If Israel would not meet God in repentance, and genuine worship, then God would meet with Israel in judgment!
- Verse 13 – God would prove Himself as the God who: ***“Forms mountains and creates the wind; who declares to man what his thought it and makes the morning darkness; who treads the high places of the earth – the Lord God of hosts is His name.***

God is using the evil things of the world to draw our attention away from the world and back to Him.

- God is “shaking the nations” to get our minds off the trivial and on to the eternal, for God will break our self-righteousness through the troubles of life or in His judgment to come.

- God is constantly calling us to worship Him, and true worship requires a broken and contrite heart.
- We know what it means to have true faith in a false god, but a false faith in the one true God has the same eternal results.
- The tragedy of today's generation of churchgoers is that they believe whatever acts of worship please them are acceptable unto God, but they aren't.
- Every facet of our lives is regulated by Holy Scripture, and that includes our times of personal and corporate worship.
- Man can either meet with God in genuine worship, or he will meet God in eternal judgment.

“The Church surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshiping men. This she has not done deliberately, but little by little and without her knowledge; and her very unawareness makes her situation all the more tragic.”

A.W. Tozer