

THE DAY OF THE LORD (AMOS 5)

TEXT: AMOS 5:16-20

Introduction:

1. “The day of the LORD” (5:18, 20) is a frequent theme of the prophets.
2. In Semitic thought it was customary to designate events of importance with the term “day.” For example, in John 8:56, our Lord said to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”
3. Among the OT prophets the term often took on an eschatological emphasis, describing a future climactic day of judgment (Amos 5:18-20; cf. Zeph. 1:14-18; Zech. 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:1, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20).
4. The day of the Lord was anticipated by Israel as a future day of God’s judgment and wrath, to be followed by the establishment of His Messianic kingdom (5:18-20; 9:11-15; cf. Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2; 3:17, 18).
5. This anticipation carries over into the NT (cf. I Thess. 5:1-11; II Thess. 2:1-12).
6. In the book of Revelation, John calls it “the great day of His (the Lord Jesus Christ) wrath” (Rev. 6:17).
7. The millennial kingdom will follow the great tribulation. Both are part of the day of the LORD.

I. THE DAY OF THE LORD CAN BE BOTH NEAR AND FAR

1. When we say that the day of the LORD can be both near and far, we are saying that it is both historical and eschatological.
2. Referring to our text in Amos 5, one commentator has written, “The day of the Lord’ refers to any period when the Lord enters into human affairs and judges. It is a supernatural or providential intervention, in which God usually uses secondary causes and means (men, kings, armies, and nature). Sometimes it refers to the end of the age and to those events connected with the second coming of Christ and its aftermath (I Thess. 5:1-3; II Peter 3:10-12). At other times, such as here in verse 18, ‘the day

of the Lord' refers to a limited, historical judgment of a sinful people" (Gary Cohen, *Amos*).

3. Dr. Cohen saw the different animals in Amos 5:19 as representative of the different armies that invaded Israel.
4. The "lamentation" (5:16; cf. 5:1) was for the near future, not the distant future, though the prophets often looked beyond their day to the days surrounding the first and second coming of Christ.
5. James quoted Amos 9:11, 12 and applied it to his day (Acts 15:16, 17). Peter quoted Joel 2:31 and applied it to the day of Pentecost.
6. The term "Day of the LORD" is basically an OT term. In the NT, we see several references to "the day of Christ." The Scofield Study Bible, on the bottom of page 1212, says, "The expression 'day of Christ,' occurs in the following passages: I Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; II Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16...The 'day of Christ' relates wholly to the reward and blessing of saints at his coming, as 'day of the Lord' is connected with judgment."
7. The term "day of the Lord" is found three times in the NT:
 - "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:20). Peter is quoting Joel 2:31. Joel's prophecy was partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, but will not be completely fulfilled until Christ returns.
 - "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2). In this passage, the apostle Paul is referring to the coming tribulation. The context shows that Christians will not enter into the tribulation. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:9).
 - "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works

that are therein shall be burned up” (II Peter 3:10). This refers to the coming tribulation. During this dispensation of grace, God is graciously giving sinners time to repent. The preceding verse says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9).

II. THE DAY OF THE LORD – NEAR

1. Amos’ prophecy in chapter 5 had an historical fulfillment.
2. God gave Israel time to repent (cf. 5:4, 6, 14, 15, etc.) but Israel would not repent. “Therefore...” (5:16) God’s judgment had to come. It was unalterable because God is a holy God and He must judge sin.
3. These prophecies were literally fulfilled when the Assyrians invaded Israel in 722 BC (Amos 5:16, 17).

III. THE DAY OF THE LORD – FAR

1. Amos, like the other OT prophets, looks beyond the near fulfillment and sees down through the corridors of time to a far fulfillment.
2. Amos pronounced “woe” upon those that desired the day of the LORD (5:18). The Israelites were so blinded by their sin that they thought the day of the LORD would mean God would punish their enemies and bless them.
3. They thought the day of the LORD meant deliverance for them despite the fact they were not right with God. They forgot that in order for God to deliver them they would first have to repent.
4. Israel was religious but they were not right with God, and God hated their hypocrisy (5:21-27).

CONCLUSION:

1. The darkness and terror vividly described by Amos will soon be upon the whole world.
2. The storm clouds of God’s judgment are gathering.
3. We do not know how much time we have left so we must do our best to get the Gospel out to a lost world that is teetering on the brink of judgment.