

Message #10

Amos 9:1-15

J. Edgar Hoover once said—“our greatest danger is not from invasion by foreign armies. Our dangers are that we may commit suicide from within by compliance with evil. Or by public tolerance of scandalous behavior. These evils have defeated nations many times in human history.”

Abraham Lincoln once said—“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven but we have forgotten God...intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God who made us.”

Abraham Lincoln made his statement back in the mid-1800's. J. Edgar Hoover made his statements in the mid-1900's. Now we are heading to the mid-2000's and their description of the condition of the United States is more accurate today than it was then.

We are in the process of committing moral suicide. The public today not only tolerates evil, it promotes it and flaunts it. These evils brought Rome down and it will bring America down and the people, as Mr. Lincoln said, are too proud to turn to God.

What is happening in our country today is a perfect description of what was happening in Israel back in the days of Amos and the end result was a ferocious judgment of God.

When we actually look at what has happened to Israel, it is tragic. Instead of God blessing Israel, God has dispersed her to foreign nations all over the world. Israel only has a fraction of the Promised Land God said she would have. When you look at Israel today, she does not in any way reflect that she is the glorious, blessed nation of God. Her land is not flowing with milk and honey. It is obvious that God has severely judged this nation and that judgment continues to this hour.

But in this final prophetic vision, Amos gives the nation some hope. There has been literal judgment, but there is also the future hope of grace.

THE FINAL PROPHETIC VISION OF AMOS REVEALS GOD'S COMPLETE PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL THAT INCLUDES A FEROCIOUS, JUDGMENTAL DESTRUCTION AND A FINAL GRACIOUS, NATIONAL RESTORATION.

Now here is what is scary for the United States. There is no doubt that we are heading to the judgment of God. The very same sins committed by Israel are being flaunted in the United States. Very few truly want to know the Word of God so they may apply it to their own lives. Now there are many promises of judgmental destruction for nations that mock God, but for a nation like the United States, there is no promise of national restoration. So these are perilous times for this country.

Now there are two main final prophetic visions in this ninth chapter:

PROPHECY #1 – The prophetic vision of judgmental destruction against Israel. **9:1-10**

James Montgomery Boice said this vision “is the most unsettling of all” (*The Minor Prophets*, p. 178). The reason is because of how it begins.

Verse 1 says that Amos “saw the Lord standing beside the altar.” The noun used for Lord is Adonai, which refers to the fact that He is the Sovereign Lord and Master over all things and powers. This name stresses everything falls under His sovereignty.

Now the Lord is standing beside an altar. We are not certain which altar is being referred to here. Some suggest this was the altar of Samaria or Bethel and some say the altar of Jerusalem. Still others think the altar was in heaven.

What we do know is that the altar is typically a place where sacrifices may be made in order to experience the grace and mercy of God. The altar is the place where people went to deal with sin issues.

However, in this vision, the Lord is not at this altar to offer grace and forgiveness; He is at this altar to judge. God’s patience had completely run out. Because His own people refused to deal with their own sin, the Lord was going to judge it. The very place that usually offers mercy was now a place that offered judgment. So we literally here do have a “holy war” in which God is pursuing and tracking down His own people and targeting them with His horrible judgments.

Amos warns that God would smite the capitals and destroy the people and no one would escape. The word “capital” refers to the key spots of political and religious worship. God will target these places for destruction. There would not be a fugitive or refugee, who would survive the devastating judgment of God.

We do know that in 722 B.C. both Samaria and Bethel were destroyed and we also know in 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell. But we think that a worse judgment than these is being predicted here.

There are four main realities that Amos brings out that he actually saw:

Reality #1 - Amos saw the Lord made sure that none of His people escape His judgment. **9:2-4**

No matter where God’s people went, they would not get away from the judgment of God:

(Hideout Spot #1) - None of God’s people could dig to a place of safety. **9:2a**

Sheol was a place where dead souls are in the inner earth. Truth is no man could actually physically get to this place.

This is exactly the point; it would not matter even if a person could descend into the depths of Sheol, he would not be able to escape the ferocious judgment of God.

(Hideout Spot #2) - None of God's people could climb to a place of safety. **9:2b**

Heaven is the ultimate lofty place where God lives. So, on the one hand you have the lowest place—Sheol compared to the highest place—heaven. The point is when God sends His judgment people will want to escape it and won't be able to, no matter where they look to escape.

The Apostle Paul refers to this very point in saying that you cannot work your way to any salvation. Salvation comes only by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:6-10). People want to save themselves and they cannot do it.

(Hideout Spot #3) - None of God's people could hide anywhere in safety. **9:3**

People may go deep into the mountains and high into the mountains like the Summit of Mt. Carmel. Mt. Carmel has 60 square miles of summit and 30 square miles of it are good hiding spots. There is a lot of limestone which features many caves. In fact, one archeologist said there are at least 2000 caves up near the summit (S. R. Driver, *Joel and Amos*, p. 217).

Many considered this to be one of the great hiding spots in existence. God says when I send My judgment, you can go to these caves for safety but they will not find it. God will track them down and destroy them.

Some may try to find some underground place descending toward the bottom of the sea, but they will not escape. God will actually command beast and serpents to destroy people.

(Hideout Spot #4) - None of God's people could surrender to anyone for safety. **9:4**

Some of the people may think they can hide by surrendering to some foreign enemy, but God says I will command that they be executed.

At the end of **verse 4**, God says, "I will set My eyes against them for evil and not for good." When God's people anger God to the point that He sets His eyes against them for evil and not good, it is all over. God desires to bless His people; but when His people rebel and sin to the point that they anger Him, the people chosen for blessing can be chosen for cursing.

Any nation that claims to be a nation of God and any individual who claims to be a child of God better take serious notice of what God is saying here.

Reality #2 - Amos saw God use His sovereign power to judge His people. **9:5-6**

God wants His people to know that He has all power to do whatever He wants to do in judgment. The description of God's power is intimidating. There are four facts:

(Fact #1) - God is “the Lord GOD of Hosts.” **9:5a**

What this means is that God is the Sovereign God, the covenant God of Israel, who is in charge of all heavenly and earthly powers. The last thing you want to do is to get Almighty God angry with you.

(Fact #2) - God can melt the land. **9:5b**

God can cause volcanic eruptions and fires to literally destroy areas he targets. Just this past week there were dangerous temperatures in California and Texas. In fact, one weather reporter said heat is baking California.

(Fact #3) - God can flood the land. **9:5c**

God can cause water disasters to hit any area He targets. He can cause the water to rise and fall like He does the Nile River. It is interesting that when excavations were done of Samaria in 1931, they actually uncovered images of the Egyptian gods Isis and Horus. God’s own people had literally worshipped Nile River idols.

(Fact #4) - God designed the heavens and does what He wants on the face of the earth. **9:6**

God has chambers and vaults in the heavens filled with an arsenal of sovereign weapons. He can command from His vaults torrential downpours of rain and powerful storms to hit like they did this week from Texas to Alabama; from Colorado to Georgia.

Reality #3 - Amos saw God punish His own people like He did Gentile nations. **9:7-8a**

In **verse 7**, God compares His own people to the Ethiopians. Ethiopia was a Gentile nation far south of Israel and was generally considered to be a nation far removed from the knowledge and blessings of God. God says to His own people, that is the way you are to Me. You are like pagan heathens living in total darkness. Notice carefully; God identifies Israel as His sons. This was God’s own family and it was a spiritual mess.

God says, “I am the One who delivered you from these Gentile powers and punished them, now My eyes are on you My own people and you are nothing but a ‘sinful kingdom.’” God says, “I am about to destroy you,” contextually speaking, like I did them.

Reality #4 - Amos saw God destroy most of His people and leave only a remnant. **9:8b-10**

Notice God says, “I am commanding” (**v. 9**). What this means is that God is ordering the destruction of His own people. He is giving an order to demolish Israel, specifically in **verse 10**; all the sinners of His people who would not respond to Him or His Word. The order is let them die by the sword.

God's patience had run out. God was going to bring His people to almost a complete obliteration. But notice carefully **verse 8**, God says He would not "totally destroy the house of Judah." That is significant because this tells us that the judgment would be aimed at all Jews, north and south Jews, but also God would preserve a remnant of them. In other words, when God sends His judgment against His own people, He still takes note of individuals who are faithful to Him and He will protect them and preserve them.

In **verse 9**, God says I am commanding my judgment against Israel, who are dispersed to many nations. But My judgment will track them all down. God says in **verse 10** that all the sinners of His own people will die, including those who think judgment will not overtake them.

The Antichrist will go on a worldwide crusade that is authorized by God to destroy all Christ-rejecting, God-mocking Jews. But chronologically speaking, before that happens, the first six seal judgments of the Tribulation will hit the whole world.

PROPHECY #2 – The prophetic vision of national restoration of Israel. **9:11-15**

This is an absolutely amazing finale to the book of Amos. After Amos has blasted Israel, ever since the first chapter with the Lord "roaring from Zion," there is a hope that one day Israel again will be blessed of God. There is a day referred to in **verse 11** "that day," which refers to a day when Jesus Christ is reigning and things for Israel are dramatically different.

Reality #1 - Israel's Davidic temple will be rebuilt and restored. **9:11**

Now the booth of David referred to the place where David worshipped that eventually became the temple built by David's son Solomon. The point of the prophecy is that there will come a day when a Davidic King will reign from the Temple and the Temple will be completely rebuilt.

Now we know this is a specific reference to Israel and not the Church for this reason. The church is being built, not rebuilt. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 "I will build My Church," not "I will rebuild My Church." The Church will never be rebuilt and it is never called the booth or tabernacle of David. When the Church is raptured, the Church Age is done. After the time of chastisement is completed against Israel, however, God will once again rebuild Israel.

Reality #2 - Israel will eventually possess all the nations of the world. **9:12**

Now let's think about that for a moment. Today, Israel is probably the most demeaned nation in the world. One day she will own the world and all nations will bow to her.

Reality #3 - Israel will eventually be blessed in her land. **9:13**

Look at what is described here. There will be a reconfiguration of the mountains and hills and the entire land will be plush. This will be a time of unprecedented material blessings.

Reality #4 - Israel will eventually be completely restored to her land from every captivity. **9:14**

They will control the land. They will rebuild ruined cities. The land will produce good wine and plush vegetables and fruit. The totality of the land from the Nile to the Euphrates; from Turkey to the Mediterranean, will belong to Israel and she will thrive.

Reality #5 - Israel will never be uprooted ever again. **9:15**

Notice carefully that it is God who has given Israel her land and one day they will own every inch of it.

Now this very text has Grace Age significance because Amos 9:11-12 is quoted in Acts 15:16-18. Paul was at the Jerusalem council meeting and he was presenting the message of grace that he had been preaching (Acts 15:11). His message was we are not saved by the Law or by works, but by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. After Paul defended this point, James answered and quoted **Amos 9:11-12**. **Now notice how James differs from Amos. James begins by saying, “after these things” (Acts 15:16), Amos begins by saying, “in that day” (Amos 9:11).** The reason why James makes the change in prepositions is because he is saying after God has finished His program with Gentiles in the Church Age, and after God has finished punishing Israel and chastising Israel, which is what Amos predicted God would do, then God will “rebuild” Israel. The Davidic temple will be rebuilt and the nation will be saved. Again, we know this is a reference to Israel because God is presenting building the Church, not rebuilding it; but He will rebuild His relationship with Israel.

So this book of Amos that begins with a roar against Israel ends with the restoration of Israel. But before God will restore her, she will pay a deadly price. By the way, what happened to Amos? We really don't know. Many believe he went back to Judah and lived out his days as a rancher and farmer. What we do know is that God used this man to bring God's Word and God's truth to His own people.

Now hear this and hear this point well. God has never promised He will rebuild and restore America; but He will destroy her. If our political and religious leaders keep mocking Him and His Word, He will bring this country down.

This book of Amos teaches us that God gives people plenty of time to turn to Him and His Word; but He numbers the transgressions and when those transgressions reach a certain level, He will judge and He will cause a series of horrible things to hit His own people. But this book of Amos is a book that also teaches that God is a gracious God to those who seek Him. Seek the Lord; seek His Word that you may live.

Thank you for spending 2 ½ months of your life going with us on this journey through Amos. It has been hard-hitting and straight-shooting, but hopefully God has used it to be life-changing.