

Amos 1-9

Sunday 12/5/2004

As you go through the Bible and put it all together, you get a picture of how the whole Bible lays itself out. This is going to be invaluable for us as we move into the next couple of years of really building on top of that foundation with all the different ministries that God will open up for us. Book by book, you are seeing basically how these books fit into the overall picture of what God is doing, not only with Israel but in your own individual lives and in relationship to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Coming of Christ.

Every week we have looked at this, and as you know, we are in the prophets right now, and the books of the prophets are some tremendous material. Last time we saw how the book of Joel was a picture of the Second Coming of Christ with all the keys that you need to really be able to put much of your Bible together. I showed you how the key phrases and the key words were so vital and laid out those books.

Today we are going to look at the book of Amos. The book of Amos, like the book of Joel, is a book that is written before the captivity. Again, it is written to the ten tribes of Israel that have been scattered to the north. There are nine chapters in it. Where Joel focuses on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amos focuses on one of the key concepts of the Bible, and that is the restoration of the nation of Israel.

There is no greater theme in the Bible, as we talked about when we started our study. There is no greater theme in the Bible than the Day of the Lord or the Second Coming of Christ. One of the things that takes place when Christ returns is He establishes the nation of Israel back in the land, which they never leave again, and they are never taken from again. All of that is covered, as we saw, in Ezekiel 40-48 and many other places as we come through the Bible. But Amos focuses on the restoration of the nation of Israel.

The breakdown of the book is very basic and very simple.

- Chapter 1 and chapter 2 deal with God's judgment to the Gentile nations at the Second Coming of Christ.
- Chapter 3 through chapter 6 deal with God's judgment to the nation of Israel during the Tribulation Period.
- Chapter 7 through chapter 9 are great chapters, some of the greatest material in the Bible, on how God restores the nation of Israel at the Second Coming of Christ after God's judgments.

With that in mind, let us ask God's blessing this morning as we look into His Word. Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much and thank You for all that You do for us. We thank You for this day, doubly being special, Father, with the marriage today of Jason and Kelly. We thank You for the young men and lady that are here this morning, Father. May they get a blessing from it. May our own people enjoy it, Lord, and learn as we grow to be more like You every day. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

I. Introduction to Amos and the Problem of Scholarship

In chapter 1, we have basically an intro to the Book of Amos. The Book of Amos talks about how Amos is just a shepherd. He is from a small town in Judea called Tekoa. That does not mean much to most people, and it is pretty insignificant in our study here, or so it would seem. But Tekoa is about 12 miles from Jerusalem, just a small town whose main trade at that time was with sheep and being shepherds. It is six miles southeast of Bethlehem. Amos is a contemporary of Hosea, and we find that during that period of time, they both are prophesying and going through and preaching to the nation of Israel.

The Book of Amos is quoted two times in your New Testament: once in Acts 7 and then again in Acts 15. All this seems insignificant, and you are probably saying to me in your mind, "Why is he taking so much time talking about a little place called Tekoa, the fact that Amos was just a shepherd, really a nobody?" There is a lot to this, and while this may seem insignificant, it is going to come back to play in our study a little bit later on. Just put in your mind what I just gave you as basically an intro of how insignificant it seems that Amos really is and the place that he comes from.

You remember last time we were together, I showed you a great truth. We talked about how it is really hard to find good material about the minor prophets because seemingly people, the scholars, the educated, the guys who write the material, the commentaries on the Bible, seemingly when it comes to these books, they draw a blank. We talked about the concept of how scholarship and the educated world always looked at the Bible as containing God's Word and containing truth, but never looks at it in a personal aspect of being the words for you in particular, where God really gives you a book with you in mind.

Higher education, and I have experienced it all my life in the ministry, I know that many, many men today look at the Bible as just a collection of good sayings. I know that many, many men teaching today around this country are talking about how the Bible contains the Word of God, but it really is not the Word of God in the aspect that it is really doing anything for you and changing your life in particular. Of course, we know that is not true if you believe the Bible is the absolute infallible Word of God. We know it from the aspect that God wrote it with a personal application for you and for me, and that is what we believe here, and that is what real Christians have believed all down through history.

So last time I showed you the concept between the Word and the words, the collective thought and the personal things that really make the Bible come alive. There lies the major problem with figuring out the minor prophets, because if you reject the individual words that God wrote in that Bible to you, if you reject those and you just think in an abstract concept way, you are never going to figure much out on the Word of God. The Bible is a personal book written by a personal God who wants to be your personal Savior. After you become His personal Savior, then you enter into a daily personal relationship where He reveals things to you as you go down through life, and that is what God does, and He substantiates those things with the Word of God.

II. The Doctrine of Israel's Restoration

I will show you another reason why men of higher education really have a problem with these books, and it comes down to another great issue that you need to understand, and that is the doctrine of the restoration of the nation of Israel. I know that we are living in the end times, and I know that we are getting closer to those times. I know that for a number of reasons. One of the ways I know it is because the Bible itself gives us the parameters that we may know what times and seasons we live in.

But I will tell you another way. Another way that you know that things are changing very quickly is because of the attitude that many Christians are having and many religious groups are having toward the nation of Israel. We are living in a day and age where the doctrine of God restoring Israel is becoming an extinct concept. Hardly anybody believes today that God is really going to restore the nation of Israel. We have come into what we call sometimes covenant theology, which has been around for a while, but I have seen in the last 10 or 15 years a rebirth of it as far as theologians and men who teach things about the Bible believing that God is all finished with the nation of Israel.

It takes an anti-Semitic concept that God, because the Jews killed Christ, because the Jews have rejected God all down through history, that God is finally finished with them. The church now is going to reap all the blessings that God once had for the nation of Israel. A while back we talked about the three viewpoints that men take when it comes to the Second Coming of Christ and the restoration of the nation of Israel. We talked about the Amillennial, we talked about the Postmillennial, and we talked about the Premillennial. We talked about how if you believe the Bible and you take the Bible as a Bible believer, then your position is going to be a Premillennial approach. You are going to believe that God is going to restore the nation of Israel.

In fact, it is really one of Paul's major issues as he comes through his writing. In Romans 11:25, he says this:

Romans 11:25

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Let me just say this: you want a good study sometime? If you have got a rainy afternoon and you cannot really do anything, you want a good study? I will give you a good study. That is Paul's favorite expression when he is dealing with God's people. Why? Because God's people are mostly ignorant of the things in the Bible that they really need to know. If you want a good study sometime, there are seven things in the New Testament that Paul says a child of God should not be ignorant of. It is those seven things that God's people are the most oblivious of when it comes to understanding the Bible today. Seven things in there, seven times Paul says to the body of Christ, you and me, "I would not have you to be ignorant of this." Then he tells you what you need to know to get along in life as a child of God. Unbelievable, those are the seven things that God's people have no clue on today of what God wants them to do. It is no wonder Bible Christianity is in such a mess today.

But one of those things is found as we are reading here in Romans 11:25-26. It says:

Romans 11:25-26

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved:

That is one of those things that Paul does not want us to be ignorant about: the fact that God is going to restore the nation of Israel, the fact that God is not finished with Israel. In fact, he goes on in that great chapter and says, "Hey, look, guys, you better understand that God has a special place for the nation of Israel, and you as the church, you as Christians, better realize that you better not take the position that you are going to be against the nation of Israel." Why? That is exactly what the majority of Bible Christianity has done today. We have taken the position that God is done with the nation of Israel. That is why when you reject that teaching, then you cannot figure out the minor prophets or the major prophets because they are all dealing with, in some form or the other, the day that God comes back, the theme of the Bible, the Second Coming of Christ, and the establishment, the re-establishment, I should say, of the nation of Israel. Of course, that is the whole key.

I said earlier that Amos deals with that book. Let me tell you something, and you will see this when we get down to the end of the message this morning: chapter 9 is one of the greatest chapters in all the Bible that deals with God restoring the nation of Israel. It plays a significant part in the history of the nation of Israel, and we will talk about that here in just a little bit.

III. Six Great Concepts in Amos

Doctrinally, we know that the book of Amos deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel. Historically, it is God giving the nation of Israel judgments and then God keeping His promises to take care of her. Inspirationally, for you and for me, we look at this book and want to get something for our life today and tomorrow. We see again a continuation of the great parallels between Israel and the church.

The book of Amos is built on six great concepts. This is where I want to go now that we have laid out an introduction and given you a baseline to build on. The book of Amos is built on six incredible concepts that really will change the nation of Israel and will change you and me if we see them in the right perspective. The book comes alive around these six concepts.

Remember a couple of weeks ago, I gave you a new word in your vocabulary: "salient." I talked about how there are salient verses in the Bible. The word "salient" means to jump up, to pop out. The word "salient" means to stick out, to leap out. When I say that there are salient verses in the Bible that every child of God needs to mark and know, I am saying this: there are certain verses, you will read along in the passage of Scripture, and all of a sudden, bang, some concept will jump out. That concept will just illuminate itself against everything else and stick out to you. That is a salient verse. The Bible is filled with them. I have over 400 and some marked in my

Bible over the years that just leap out. What may be a salient verse for me may not be for you, because sometimes they are based on your own personal experiences. Sometimes they are based on doctrinal issues, and they will jump up to everybody. But sometimes you find, when you went through a tough time in life, God gave you a promise, God gave you a verse, God gave you something, bang, those verses jump out and they mean something to you. So everybody should have them in your life.

This book is built on six concepts, which are salient verses that you need to see.

- The First Concept: Agreement for Walking Together
- The Second Concept: God Reveals His Secrets
- The Third Concept: Beware of False Religious Symbols
- The Fourth Concept: God Uses the "Nobodies"
- The Fifth Concept: A Famine of God's Word
- The Sixth Concept: The Restoration of Israel