

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

June 2014

Amos

Lesson #4: God's Judgments

INTRODUCTION

When you were growing up, did you normally have a defender or did that role fall to you?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Amos 7:1-6

Note: They normally had at least two crops. The first one went to the king (taxes) and they used the second one (a stronger one in March and April) to feed themselves. This was also the end of the rainy season so there would not be enough moisture for more hearty growth.

1. What title did Amos give God? How did Amos explain that this was not just a daydream?
2. What two disasters did God tell Amos were coming? Vv 1; 4
3. It seems like Judah was getting what they deserved. After all, Amos had warned them to repent. What is Amos response to their plight? Vv 2; 5. Was he asking God to overlook their sinfulness or mercy in spite of their disobedience? What's the difference? Heb 12:6; Prov 13:24
4. What is God's response? Vv 3; 6 Does that make God soft and wishy-washy? Hosea 11:8-9 Did He change His mind or just His course of action? 2 Pet 3:9
5. When we see someone getting the reward of their sinful behavior, are we like Amos, pleading for their salvation and repentance? James 5:16

Read 7:7-9

Note: The walls were there to keep out the enemy. They had to be well built – a good foundation and straight so that they would be sturdy over time. God's loving guidance was the law, a standard against which they could be measured. The standard also expressed God's character, making an obedient nation a witness to their heathen neighbors, giving God glory. The "high places" were shrines to commemorate the faith of their ancestors (Isaac). They could not rely on the faith of their ancestors, but they could rely on the one their ancestors had faith in.

6. What was the purpose of the plumb line? Why wasn't Israel "square."
7. Why did God call Israel "my people" even though they were sinning? Vs 8
8. Why doesn't God relent on the third judgment? Why doesn't Amos protest?

APPLICATION

How does your "wall" compare to God's plumb line? What would it take to get kudos?

The sequence of visions demonstrates the fundamental compassion of both God and his prophet. Neither wish for the judgment of Israel. Both have sought to avert it. But there comes a point of no return; it is Israel, in its dedicated pursuit of evil, that pushes Amos beyond the capacity to intercede and precipitates God into final commitment to judgment. It is a sobering picture, appropriately filling in the nuances of the general prophetic portrait of a God of judgment. Judgment only comes when the long line of compassion is finally exhausted. Judgment is never a capricious act, never a spontaneous occasion of wrath, but always the final result of mercy refused and compassion rejected. Judgment, in other words, is always invited by the persons judged. And if, when it is finally perceived, it brings terror to its recipients, it must not be forgotten that it is a source of final grief to God, its compassionate author, and Amos his prophet.¹

¹ Craigie, P. C. (1984). *Twelve prophets* (Vol. 1, p. 176). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.