**THE LION ROARS**

**A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF AMOS**

**(Israel Continually Rejects God’s Plea to Repent)**

Main Idea: God will go to great lengths to bring His people back into a right relationship with Him

Amos 4:1 - 13 Lesson 7

Introduction:

Probably every year I read a news article about someone who had been attacked and mauled by an animal... *at a* *zoo!* How does that happen? At each of these zoos there are clear warning signs not to feed the animals or to "not climb the fences" or "keep your hands away from the animals." Yet in spite of glaring signs, people, every year, ignore the warnings and suffer the gravest consequences.

That's the message that God is trying to get across to these Israelites so they can wake up and avoid the catastrophe that is inescapable for them. Sadly, they disregard the message of the prophets and are taken into captivity.

It's interesting to note that the first words of chapters three, four and five all start with the wording, "*Hear this word,"* God is telling them, "I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU!" This is the second of those messages today in chapter 4. This message should have struck fear in the hearts of Israel. But instead they block God out. Look at how God describes their actions in this *second* message.

1. **AMOS’ MESSAGE TO *THE FEMININE*,** Verses 1 – 5
   1. Bashan was a very fertile land on the other side of Jordan where the cattle grew fat from its richness.
   2. The *kine* or cows mentioned here are a reference to the women who are wives of the princes or leaders of Israel and are living in luxury or... it is the leaders of Israel who are no longer leading as men but in their luxurious lifestyle have begun acting feminine in their lifestyle.
   3. He describes how their luxury is lived out on the backs of the poor... whether they realize it or not.
   4. Verse TWO illustrates how He will deal with them, and He puts His holiness on the line to prove that He without doubt will judge them this way.
   5. The “hooks” described can be a literal reference to the cruel way the Chaldeans would lead their captives to Babylon. When the Assyrians exiled a conquered community, they led the captives away on journeys of hundreds of miles, with the captives naked and attached together with a system of strings and fishhooks pierced through their lower lip. Like fish on a stringer they would be led away.
   6. God tells them in Verse 3, that they will try to escape through the breaches in the city wall only to be captured and cast into the palace of their enemy.
   7. In Verses 4, 5 God describes their hypocritical worship of Him. Bethel is where they had erected a calf to worship and Gilgal was another place where they would gather to worship other idols.
   8. A tithe of every 3rd year was certainly scriptural (Deut. 14:28). But it was just a show. Other offerings they gave were offered with leaven (a type of sin) ... totally unscriptural.
   9. They would *publish* their freewill offerings for all to see just how *special* their offerings were.
   10. “*for this liketh you*,...” or, it makes you feel good to do these hypocritical acts of worship.
   11. A lesson to be learned here... just because a form of worship makes you *feel* good is not necessarily a sign or proof that it is legitimate worship. John 4:23, 24
2. **AMOS NOW GIVES HIS MESSAGE TO *THE STUBBORN***, Verses 6 – 11

It is repeated five different times in these verses, “Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord;”  Over and again God has sent warnings to His people like a father who was trying with all his heart to get a backslidden child to come home. Notice how God tried in vain to get their attention:

* 1. In Verse 6 – He used FAMINE- The words, “*cleanness of teeth”* simply means they had been deprived of food in all their cities. Notice in 2 Kings 8:1 God used Elisha to warn of a seven-year famine. They would prepare their grain for Baal but not for Jehovah God. So, God took away their grain. But they wouldn’t return.
  2. In Verses 7, 8 – He used DROUGHT – At the most critical growth time for the grain, God withheld the rains. He would even show His Providence by allowing it to rain on one specific area but withhold it from a parallel parcel of ground. They would wander from city to city to get water and never get satisfied! If you’ve ever been *truly* thirsty you would know that one sip of water only leaves you crying for more! You would ache for more. And even with such thirst, they wouldn’t return to the true Fountain of Living Water.
  3. In Verse 9 – He used DISASTER – *Blasting* is what we would call a blight. This is generally caused by a burning east wind. Anybody living in El Paso would know what a burning wind feels like. These winds would cause the trees and plants to shrivel and wither. The *mildew* was like a clammy dew that caused a yellowing of the crops and total ruin. And when the crops were looking promising... the palmer worm would come and destroy them. This was a type of locust that would cut off the leaves and branches of the trees... but they wouldn’t return to the One who could open to them the windows of heaven.
  4. In Verse 10 – He used WAR – The Egyptians came in and decimated their young fighting men. They took away their horses and left the dead in such numbers that their stench was unbearable. It is heartbreaking today to watch a flag draped coffin coming off the military planes. It stirs my heart. But even with all the death of their young soldiers... they wouldn’t return to the God of all Armies.
  5. In Verse 11 – He used near ANNIHILATION – different nations came in and wiped out portions of Israel almost to the point of extinction in areas. If you’ll remember how Sodom and Gomorrah were all but annihilated except for Lot and his two daughters you can understand the wording God uses in this verse. Just the mention of 9/11 in America brings memories of horror. How Israel could not be shaken to their knees is hard to imagine... and yet, they would not turn to the Lord.
  6. We have to remember, the same sun that melts the butter hardens the clay. And these judgments have apparently hardened the hearts of men rather than softening them.

1. **FINALLY IN THIS CHAPTER AMOS GIVES HIS SECOND MESSAGE TO *THE UNPREPARED*,** vs. 12, 13
   1. The previous *five* warnings were acts of God. Since Israel was so drawn to the *physical,* God used physical things to attempt to draw their hearts to the Spiritual. He went from the least and now to the greatest way of speaking to them.
   2. Now, with their total rejection of God’s physical promptings... God is going to bring them face to face with Him! He tells them in very sober words to *prepare to meet their God!*
   3. Verse 13 is a description of the God who created the mountains and the wind and who can turn a bright morning into utter darkness; who rides on the mountains and the proudest of men!
   4. He is Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness, the God and Governor of the armies of heaven the hosts of angels, and to whom all creatures on earth are subject; all power in heaven and earth belongs unto him; this is Israel's God they are called upon to prepare to meet.

**Discuss:**

1. Describe how Israel’s luxurious lifestyle affected their consciences toward others. Can we see any similarities today?
2. How did it affect their attitude toward God. Give examples...
3. Name as many ways you can remember how God tried to get their attention... to get them to turn back to Him.
4. After God had exhausted every means to get them to turn back to Him, what was His final alternative? How would that relate to the Christian today. How would it relate to an unsaved man?