

“PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD!”

By Keith Greer

"Therefore, thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel" {Amos 4:12}

Amos gives these words to the children of Israel in the book of Amos. God is going to deal with His children due to their continual disobedience and following after heathen gods. Amos sometimes is called the "**prophet of doom**." Yet, that depends on what God's children would do with Amos' message.

What had they done? "Thus says the LORD: 'For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed. "{Amos 2: 4} Judah had forsaken God.

Did Israel,(during the divided kingdom), fare any better? "Thus says the LORD: 'For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they sell the righteous for silver, And the poor for a pair of sandals. They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor, and pervert the way of the humble. A man and his father go in to the same girl, To defile My holy name. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge, and drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god." {Amos 2: 6-8} Israel too had forsaken God.

Surely the children of Israel would then hear the words of Amos, right? Seeing they were facing His fierce wrath and judgment, this would be the best course to pursue. What did they do?

"Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy. But never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence." {Amos 7:12,13} To put it in our language: "**Don't call us, we will call you!**" How could they be so stubborn?

What was Amos going to do with a people who did not want to hear his message? Might be a good time to just go back to his sycamore trees...

"Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, And the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel. Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac ... and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his hand.' {Amos 7:15-17} Hear or not, Amos was going to give them the words of the Lord!

We can learn many lessons from the prophecy of Amos. Let me just give you a couple to consider:

ALL PEOPLE ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD. While man is a free moral agent, to make his own choices, he will be held accountable for the ones he makes. Romans 2: 6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Acts 17:31.

GOD'S PATIENCE CAN RUN OUT. God is longsuffering, merciful, and full of compassion. Yet, God does have a limit. Sadly, Israel believed being the people of God would always grant them "special treatment". Not so. Sin is sin, no matter who commits the offense. God in His righteousness and justice cannot allow sin to go unchecked. In Noah's day man waited too long, and those being warned here would wait too long.

Yet, I fully understand Amos' frustration with God's people. I prepare lessons, pour my heart into them, try to make them simple, how they apply to the lives of God's people today and watch no change in those who hear and need them! What did I do wrong?

What about us? We can read and learn about our duties towards God. Will we heed His warnings? Could we wait too long? "**Prepare to meet thy God,**" are you prepared? ***