**THE LION ROARS**

**A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF AMOS**

**(GOD’S PLUMBLINE)**

Main Idea: God is a merciful God and gives His people multiple chances to turn back to Him. But in the other hand of God is His justice and He will not be mocked. Christians need to be regularly in the Word of God to help maintain an upright walk with Him.

Amos 7:1 - 9 Lesson 11

Introduction –

* The book of Amos began with eight different prophecies of judgment on Israel and its surrounding nations. After that he went into a series of three *messages* that expounded on that judgment on Israel.
* Today, as we begin chapter seven we come to five *visions* that Amos sees. Three of them are lumped together in these first nine verses that we will look at today.

1. **VISION ONE – THE VISION OF LOCUSTS,** vs. 1 – 3
   1. You can see from Amos’ wording that God directly gave him a vision: “*Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me*;” He gave the prophet direct insight to His divine will for the nation. This gave Amos a deep burden for the people he ministered to.
   2. God no longer gives “visions” to His people as He once did. We have the completed Word of God and no longer need to have special messages given to us. God’s Word is our lamp and light for our path. Also, the Holy Spirit abides in us and will lead us in the way we should go. **John 16:13**  Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
   3. The vision Amos saw was that of grasshoppers being formed by God that came at *the beginning of the latter growth*??? What is that talking about?
   4. In Israel there were two crops per year. The *first* mowing belonged to the king. It was for the sustenance of the palace and his servants and no doubt the storehouses for potential famines. So… it stands to reason, the people of the land were very dependent on the *second* mowing! It was their bread and butter so to speak. In this vision, this second harvest was being threatened by this judgment of locusts.
   5. And don’t miss this, this was a judgment of God. His wording in verse one that says… *He formed grasshoppers…* is showing us that *it was of God*.
   6. Don’t think that natural disasters are never the judgment of God. We can’t know exactly the mind of God with each disaster that comes along. God never intends us to *know for certain* why tsunamis and tornadoes and droughts or even pandemics come to us. But I think it would be foolish not to understand that there *are* times that God judges nations with natural disasters… which would make them *super*natural disasters…
   7. So… in verses two and three Amos cries out to God and asks Him to have mercy on Israel. After all, he is a herdsman himself… His cry is on the basis that Israel was *small*. God loves Israel and is touched by the cry of Amos. God spared the judgment of *thousands* because of the prayer of *one*.
   8. So, God cancels the judgment. It would appear that the grasshoppers started eating the grass but God stopped them short of destroying the crops.
2. **VISION TWO – THE VISION OF THE FIRE,** vs. 4 – 6
   1. Amos doesn’t see just *one* vision… he sees a series of them.
   2. In this next vision…God showed him fire devouring land and sea. This is figurative language. It no doubt refers to some judgment of the surrounding enemies overtaking them or it could be fire from heaven or some drought or plague etc. It is evidently going to be very destructive.
   3. But Amos prays on the same terms, that Israel is small. And God again turns away His judgment.
   4. Putting these two visions together, the Lord is showing that His desire was to deliver Israel rather than judge them. Back to back cancellations of clear declarations of God’s judgments, are loud proof that God’s true desire is to forgive and see His people freed from destruction!
   5. Amos’ prayers are a convicting example that we should pray for the heathen. Amos, no doubt had a dislike for the Israelites in the Northern Kingdom. After all, he was from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. But when God opened his eyes with these visions, it opened his heart for these people.
   6. This is the result God longs for from His people today. God is not willing that any should perish and desires for all to come to know Him. **2 Peter 3:9**  The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
   7. We should regularly pray for the lost around us, whether our loved ones or our neighbors or the people of our city or the people who the missionaries are sent to. *“... God so loved the world...”*
3. **VISION THREE – THE VISION OF A PLUMBLINE,** vs. 7 – 9
   1. What is a plumbline? It is a weight attached to a string that is lowered from above. It forms a straight line and when held next to a wall it shows whether the wall is crooked or straight.
   2. It shows whether something is perfectly upright or if it is tilting in a direction it shouldn’t.
   3. Interestingly, the word righteous means “*upright.”* It’s how God wants His people to live... *straight up.* We even use the words with one another, “*Hey, be straight with me.”* Or similar words.
   4. God tells Amos in this vision that He is going to lower the plumbline of His judgment into Israel. This judgment comes from above.
   5. Verse 8 - He tells Amos He is done passing by Israel’s sins. Israel has been using their own standards to measure themselves by… But God makes Amos aware that **HE AND HE ALONE** is the standard for what is right and wrong. **2 Corinthians 10:12**  For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.
   6. No longer will He allow Israel to measure themselves by their own works. No longer would He allow them to worship their idols *and* give crooked respect to Him.
   7. Israel may have somehow justified their sinful actions and felt like they were as righteous as they could be. But they were sorely deceived. God was not going to judge them by *THEIR* standards. God was going to judge them by ***HIS*** standard!
   8. The *high places of Isaac,* in Beersheba was where Isaac had built an altar to the Lord and offered true worship to God. But Israel had set up shrines of idol worship there. Also, the *sanctuaries* were at Dan and Bethel, the northern and southern portions of Israel where Israel would worship the golden calves that Jeroboam had set up. Remember, these had been set up so that the Israelites wouldn’t go down to Jerusalem to worship and possibly defect from Jeroboam.
   9. Both the high places in Isaac and the two sanctuaries would be leveled and Israel would be destroyed by the sword.

**Discuss:**

1. What did the visions from God to Amos do to him? What can we learn from Amos’ prayers in verses two and five? Did Israel deserve God’s mercy humanly speaking?
2. What is God’s plumbline for the Christian today? What will it do for those who cherish it?
3. What standard do many people use today to judge themselves to the disgrace of God’s Word?
4. To what extent is God willing to go in order for His people to turn back to Him with all their hearts?