

AMOS: GOD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENT

III: God's Sure Punishment Regardless Of His Close Ties With Israel

(Amos 3:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. When God needed a messenger to the wicked Northern Kingdom of Israel when it was at the height of its spiritual rebellion against Him, the Lord sent a layman from Judah named Amos who was not a professional prophet to travel north into Israel to pronounce sharp judgment as a great warning to that nation.
- B. Israel's people may have thought that God's close ties with them meant they would not face His severe discipline, but God's perfectly balanced character allows His people no escape for either His discipline or His blessing. This is the lesson of Amos 3:1-15, and we view it for our insight, application and edification:

II. God's Sure Punishment Regardless Of His Close Ties With Israel, Amos 3:1-15 ESV, NIV.

- A. The message of Amos 3:1-15 was directed not only to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, but also to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, to all twelve tribes that God brought up out of Egypt in the Exodus, Amos 3:1.
- B. Though these twelve tribes comprised the only people group God had personally known in covenant relationship out of all the families of the earth, He would still punish them for their many sins, Amos 3:2. "The special privileges God bestowed on Israel by choosing them increased their ethical responsibilities and did not exempt them from judgment as some thought," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Amos 3:2.
- C. As a result, Amos 3:3-8 explains that Israel's punishment was unavoidable, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1433:
 - 1. First, Amos noted that two could not walk together unless they had agreed to do so, Amos 3:3.
 - 2. Second, Amos stated that a lion does not roar in the thicket unless he has spotted his prey and begun his charge to capture and to kill his prey, Amos 3:4a.
 - 3. Third, Amos observed that a lion's growl in his den surely signals that he has captured his prey, Am. 3:4b.
 - 4. Fourth, Amos claimed that a bird does not fall into a trap unless a snare was baited and set, Amos 3:5a.
 - 5. Fifth, Amos wrote that a trap does not spring up from the ground unless something has triggered it, v. 5b.
 - 6. Sixth, Amos asserted that people do not tremble unless a war trumpet is sounded in the city, Amos 3:6a.
 - 7. Seventh, Amos reported that disaster does not come upon a city unless the Lord determines it, Am. 3:6b.
 - 8. Accordingly, just as each of these events surely occur because they have been caused to occur by former event, so the sovereign Lord does nothing in Israel's history without first revealing His plan to His servants the prophets, Amos 3:7. However, once a lion has roared, who can but fear, so once the Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy, Amos 3:8.
- D. Applying these statements about certain cause-effect relationships between specific events, God had Amos call for the imaginary heralds of Ashdod of Philistia and of Egypt to gather on the mountains above Samaria to see what the city was like, to observe the great tumults within her and the oppression in her midst, Amos 3:9.
- E. God declared that His people of Israel did not know how to do what was right, for they stored up plunder and loot in their homes that they took from the vulnerable in their midst, Amos 3:10. For this reason, God said that an adversary would surround the land, bring down its defenses and plunder its fortresses, Amos 3:11.
- F. Indeed, just as a shepherd rescues from the mouth of a lion only two legs, or a piece of an ear, so will the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed, Amos 3:12.
- G. God testified against His people that on the day He punished them for their sins, He would punish the altars of the false golden calf idol at Bethel, the horns of that altar being cut off and falling in disgrace, Amos 3:13-14.
- H. God also announced that He would strike the winter house and the summer house of the wealthy who had abused the poor to acquire these homes, that the houses that had been luxuriously decorated with ivory would perish, that the wealthy houses built at the cost of robbing the vulnerable would come to an end, Amos 3:15.

Lesson: *Though only the twelve tribes of Israel of all the peoples of the world had known God in special covenant relationship, a relationship that should have evoked loving devotion to the Lord, those tribes had violated that covenant to where they had abused the vulnerable in their midst, infuriating the Lord. Accordingly, God said that regardless of His special loving relationship with His people, He would surely severely punish them, causing them to face an invasion, be slain and plundered, punishing their sin of idolatry and abuses against one another.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that belonging to the Lord as part of His flock, though a blessed position, brings with it a great responsibility to love and obey the Lord or suffer His severe discipline for sin. (2) Accordingly, may we view our great position in Christ with reverence to God and humbly live for Him.*