

AMOS: GOD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENT
XII: Israel's Inescapable Accountability To God
(Amos 9:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. When God needed a messenger to the Kingdom of Israel as it was at the height of its rebellion against Him, the Lord sent Amos, a layman from Judah, to go north to Israel to voice severe judgment against that nation.
- B. Israel's people thought that since they were God's people, they would be saved from dire punishment, but Amos 9:1-10 teaches Israel's inescapable accountability to God. We study it for our insight and application:

II. Israel's Inescapable Accountability To God, Amos 9:1-10.

- A. God announced that He would not allow any of Israel's idolaters to escape His punishment, Amos 9:1-4:
 - 1. Since Amos addressed the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the altar in Amos 9:1a was **not** the altar of the Jerusalem temple, but the syncretistic altar at Bethel where Israel worshiped the Lord and the golden calf. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1449; cf. 1 Kings 12:25-33) The people had met there to worship, and the Lord showed Amos how He stood by the altar at "the autumn festival, when a large congregation had assembled . . . and the Northern monarch had approached the altar with his sacrifice," Ibid.
 - 2. God commanded that the tops of the pillars holding up the roof be smashed so the roof might crash down, causing the foundation stones to shake, killing most of the gathered worshipers, Amos 9:1b; Ibid.
 - 3. A second order came for the heads of the survivors of the roof collapse to be cut off that none might escape, and those who fled from this event would God pursue and kill with the sword, Amos 9:1c; Ibid.
 - 4. Escape from God's punishment was impossible, for God had determined to destroy the people, Am. 9:2-4:
 - a. If they dug down into Sheol, the grave, God would take them from there to slay them, Amos 9:2a ESV.
 - b. If they climbed up to heaven, from there God would bring them down to slay them, Amos 9:2b ESV.
 - c. If they hid in the top of Mount Carmel amid its "dense forests" or "many limestone caves," from there God would search them out and take them out to be slain, Amos 9:3a ESV; Ibid.
 - d. If they hid in the bottom of the sea, God would order the sea serpent to bite and kill them, Am. 9:3b ESV.
 - e. If they went into captivity before their enemies, there God would command the sword to kill them, for God would fix His eyes upon them for destruction and not for good, Amos 9:4 ESV.
- B. God could support His claim to punish all of Israel's idolaters by the fact that He was Sovereign over the entire universe so that no man could escape His punishment by going anywhere in the universe, Amos 9:5-6:
 - 1. The Lord God of Host (armies) could merely touch the earth and make it melt, making all who dwell in the earth mourn since there was no escaping His punishment, Amos 9:5a.
 - 2. The whole land like the Nile rises and sinks when God touches it in judgment, leaving complete devastation as in the case of the perennial flooding and receding of the Nile on Egypt's land, Amos 9:5b.
 - 3. God built His palace in the heavens and controls the waters of the sea, so trying to flee from His judgment by climbing up to heaven or fleeing to the depths of the sea was futile, Amos 9:6; Ibid., p. 1449-1450.
- C. God would indeed fulfill His claim to punish Israel because He was also perfectly impartial, Amos 9:7:
 - 1. Though the Cushites in southern Egypt, all Sudan and northern Ethiopia seemed to be an insignificant people to Israel, God implied He would deal with Israel as He would with them, Amos 9:7a; Ibid., p. 1450.
 - 2. God declared that just as He had brought up Israel out of Egyptian bondage, He had brought the Philistines from Caphtor (probably Crete) and the Arameans from Kir (somewhere in Mesopotamia), Amos 9:7b; Ibid. God had determined to reverse the fortunes of those Gentile nations, so He would likewise impartially reverse the fortunes of Israel, sending even her into exile, Ibid.
- D. Nevertheless, due to the Abrahamic Covenant, God would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, but destroy the sinners of His people who persisted in practicing idolatry, Amos 9:8-10:
 - 1. God declared that He would destroy any sinful kingdom, but He would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, implying He intended to keep the Abrahamic Covenant that was also made to Jacob, Amos 9:8.
 - 2. God would command and sift Israel so that the idolaters in her would inescapably die by the sword, those who claimed that disaster would not overtake them because they were the people of Israel, Amos 9:9-10.

Lesson: *Though God had chosen Abraham's seed to be His people, God's righteousness would not let Him tolerate idolatry, so He would impartially severely punish His own people who were inescapably accountable to Him.*

Application: *Though we belong to Christ, may we revere God and depart from sin or face His certain punishment.*