

GOD JUDGES IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH**Amos chapters 1 and 2****Facilitator: Rev. Tesfaye Tamrie****I. BIBLICAL CONTEXT AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND****A. Biblical Context****1. God is the Origin of Truth and Justice.****God's Justice is based on His Righteousness codified in His Commandments.**

- a) Exodus 23:1-8
- b) Leviticus 19:11-22
- c) Numbers 14:17-28
- d) Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 24:10-22

2. God's Justice is based on His Truth and Righteousness.**Jesus Christ is the Glorious Manifestation of God's Truth and Righteousness.**

- a) John 1:1-4
- b) John 3:21
- c) Romans 1:18
- d) Colossians 1:15-20
- e) 1 John 4:6

B. Historical Background

Not only God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt in **His Righteousness**, but the Lord also gave them **the Divine Law** by which they must live in the Promised Land. The **Divine Law** was given to **radically transform** the Israelites spiritually, intellectually, socially and economically. God gave the Divine Law to **eradicate Egypt out of** the Israelites for good! **But some resisted and paid the price! They never made it to the Promised Land because they perished in the wilderness!** During the life-time of Joshua, the Israelites who made it to the Promised Land **prospered** in every way because they lived according to **God's commandments**. However, as recorded in book of Judges, the Israelites suffered defeat, humiliation and oppression every time they **disobeyed** God's commandments and **rejected** His Truth. **God brought judgement against the Israelites according to their speech and deeds which were evil in His sight.** Every time the Israelites **disregarded** God's Word to go back to their old wicked ways, they lost their lands, homes and properties. **They were subjected to a life of destitution and oppression.** Every time the Israelites **rejected the Truth** and chose to embrace lies, spread falsehood and pervert justice, their lives were filled with hate, conflicts, sickness and death. **Instead of Love, Hate prevailed. Instead of Peace, Conflict raged. Instead of Justice, injustice became the norm. Instead of prosperity, poverty spread.**

II. The Lesson: God Judges in Righteousness and Truth (Amos 1 & 2)

During the time of **Amos**, once again, the Israelites faced God's Judgement because they rejected His Love, Truth and the Divine Law. We recall that the Divine Law was given so that the people of God (the Israelites) could be *distinguished* from idol worshipping nations. In Amos chapters 1, 2 and 3, God speaks through the prophet Amos as to **why** the Israelites deserve **His Righteous Judgement** along with idol worshipping Edomites, Amorites and the Moabites. God let Judah and Israel know about their *specific sins* for which they deserve His wrath. Let us now examine the verses in Amos chapter 1:1-15; 2:4-16 and 3:1-15.

A. Amos 1:1-15. God's Judgement is Righteous, True and Certain

In chapter 1, the Bible indicates that Amos prophesized ahead of time about **why**, **how** and **who** will be judged by God. The Righteous judgement of God was pronounced upon idol worshipping people in cities such as **Damascus** (Syria), **Gaza** (Philistines) and **Tyre** (Phoenician). **God judged these idol worshipping nations because of their wickedness, viciousness and complete disregard for others.** God told Amos to pronounce Judgment upon:

- a) **Damascus** "because she **threshed Gilead with sledges which has iron teeth**" (v. 3);
- b) **Gaza** "because she **took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom**" (v. 6);
- c) **Tyre** "because she **sold whole communities of captives to Edom disregarding a treaty of brotherhood**" (v. 9);
- d) **Edom** "because he **pursued his brother with a sword**, stifling all compassion – his **anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked**" (v. 11);
- e) **Ammon** "because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders" (v. 13).

B. Amos 2:4-16. God didn't spare the Israelites (both Judah and Israel).

In chapters 2 and 3, God instructed Amos to pronounce Judgement upon His people in Judah and Israel because of their wickedness, unfaithfulness and disobedience. In His Righteousness, God treated His people the same way that He judged the idol worshipping nations mentioned in Amos chapter 1. The Israelites worshipped the idols of the Moabites, Amorites and Hittites and completely disregarding their covenant with God! Let us know carefully examine their wicked deeds for which they received God's Righteous Judgement.

1. vv. 4-5: Judah Rejected God's Law in order to Worship Idols.

God Pronounced Judgement upon **Judah** because:

- a) "they have **rejected the Law** of the LORD and have not kept His decrees,"
- b) "they were **led astray worshipping false gods** – the gods their ancestors followed."

God also pronounced Judgment upon **Israel** because:

2. vv. 6-8: Israel Denied Justice in order to Exploit and Oppress the Poor

- a) "they **sell the righteous** for silver and **the needy** for a pair of sandals;"

- b) “they **trample on the heads of the poor** as upon the dust of the ground;”
- c) “they **deny justice to the oppressed;**”
- d) “**father and son** lie down with **the same girl** and so profane My Holy Name;”
- e) “they **lie down** beside every altar **on garments taken as a pledge;**”
- f) “in the house of their god they **drink wine taken as fines.**”

3. vv. 9-16: They corrupted the Nazirites and oppressed the Prophets

God spoke through Amos saying,

- a) “**I brought you out of Egypt;**
- b) **raised up prophets and Nazirites among you;**
- c) but “**you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy**” (vv. 10-11).

C. Amos 3:1-15. God’s Righteous Judgement Will be Swift and Complete

- a) **God reveals His Judgement ahead of Time (v. 7)**
- b) **God will also destroy Prized Possessions (vv. 14-15)**

The LORD GOD ALMIGHTY DECLARED SAYING: “On the day I punish Israel for her sins,

- I will destroy the **altars of Bethel** – the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground;
- I will tear down the **winter house** – the houses adorned with ivory will be **destroyed**; and
- the **summer mansions** will be **demolished.**”

God is the Only Source of Truth and Justice; therefore, to administer Justice one has to depend on God’s Truth and commandments. For Justice to be Righteous, it must uphold the Truth which *exposes* lies, corruption and the guilty while *liberating* the falsely accused, the poor and the oppressed. **Justice must be served hand-in-hand with God’s Truth and Righteousness. We cannot speak of Justice separated from God’s Righteousness and Truth.** History reveals that people of all nations rejected God’s will for their lives and acted in their own wicked ways. Whether they be Israelites or any other people such as the Egyptians, Moabites, Romans or Americans, all have fallen short from the Glory of God. One specific area humans fall short is in **the administration of Justice** through their system of government. **The reason they fail to administer Justice is because they fail to judge in Truth according to God’s Righteousness.** The Bible says, **Justice** is perverted when those empowered to administer Justice, that is, judges, lawyers, government officials, etc.

- a) base their judgment on **lies** to *suppress the Truth*;
- b) *accept bribes* from **the guilty** in order to *condemn the innocent*;
- c) **favor** the wealthy in order to *oppress the poor*;
- d) *accept false witnesses* in order to *acquit the guilty*;
- e) *promote falsehood* in order to *spread wickedness*.

The cumulative effect of such perversion of the Truth and Justice is the proliferation of lies, deception and corruption in society. Consequently, evil doers dominate society. Ultimately, wickedness will work its way to the top of every aspect of society. Positions of power will be filled with *professionals without conscience, opportunistic individuals without morality and ethics* as well as **thieves and liars**. When that happens, Life becomes oppressive and intolerable! At such times, God intervenes in His Righteousness! God will hold leaders, judges, teachers and parents accountable! As the Bible makes it clear, God's people are not immune from sinfulness – falsifying the Truth, unfaithfulness and disobedience. From time to time, God acts in His Truth and Righteousness! There will be a day of accounting for false preachers and teachers as well! **There are moments in history when God judges in His Righteousness and Truth!** God will hold people in power accountable! God brought judgement upon people because the level of wickedness in society was so rampant! During the time of Noah, God wiped out humanity from the face of the earth! During the time of Moses, God destroyed Pharaoh for his wickedness while He rescued the Israelites out of Egypt. God also wiped out the whole **ungrateful generation of Israelites** in the wilderness who kept looking back to Egypt! What is tragic about the Israelites is that they died in the wilderness between **Egypt** and the **Promised Land** for refusing to accept God's Love, Truth and Law!

III. CONCLUSION

Everything that the Bible tells us about the Israelites is also true concerning us today. **The Truth and the divine commandments of the Bible apply to all generations! For people to prosper and enjoy the Love, Peace and Joy of God, they must live by the Truth.** It is a good thing when people or a nation declares that God is Sovereign over their lives. It is admirable when a nation aspires to live by the Word of God. **In a Christian nation, the formation, adjudication and administration of Justice must be based on God's Truth and obedience to His Commandments. There is no way around that.**

There are serious consequences flowing out of invoking God's Holy Name in vain! **To invoke God's Name while lying to people is deception!** That is what the devil does! Those who have been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ and born of the Holy Spirit don't do such evil things! **To speak of Truth while spreading falsehood is the work Satan!** *True Witnesses of Christ don't act in such a wicked way!* The Redeemed of the Lord know that when **the Truth** is suppressed, Falsehood ascends! Those who speak in the Spirit and Truth know that when **Justice** is corrupted, injustice pervades all aspects of society!