

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-27-17

Amos 6

Woe To The Complacent - Verses 1-7

¹Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come!² Go to Kalneh and look at it; go from there to great Hamath, and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours?³ You put off the day of disaster and bring near a reign of terror.⁴ You lie on beds adorned with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves.⁵ You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments.⁶ You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.⁷ Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

6:1-6 Amos leveled his attack at those living in complacency and luxury in both Israel and Judah. Great wealth and comfortable lifestyles may make people think they are secure, but God is not pleased if we isolate ourselves from others' needs. God wants us to care for others as he cares for us. His kingdom has no place for selfishness or indifference. We must learn to put the needs of others before our wants. Using our wealth to help others is one way to guard against pride and complacency.

6:2 Great cities to the east, north, and west had been destroyed because of their pride. What happened to them would happen to Israel because Israel's sin was just as great as theirs.

6:4 Ivory was an imported luxury, rare and extremely expensive. Even a small amount of ivory symbolized wealth. Something as extravagant as a bed inlaid with ivory shows the gross waste of resources that should have been used to help the poor.

The LORD Abhors the Pride of Israel - Verses 8-14

⁸ The Sovereign LORD has sworn by himself—the LORD God Almighty declares: "I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses; I will deliver up the city and everything in it."⁹ If ten people are left in one house, they too will die. ¹⁰ And if the relative who comes to carry the bodies out of the house to burn them asks anyone who might be hiding there, "Is anyone else with you?" and he says, "No," then he will go on to say, "Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD."¹¹ For the LORD has given the command, and he will smash the great house into pieces and the small house into bits. ¹² Do horses run on the rocky crags? Does one plow the sea with oxen? But

you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness—¹³ you who rejoice in the conquest of Lo Debar and say, “Did we not take Karnaim by our own strength?”¹⁴ For the LORD God Almighty declares, “I will stir up a nation against you, Israel, that will oppress you all the way from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah.”

6:8-11 The people had built luxurious homes to flaunt their achievements. While it is not wrong to live in comfortable houses, we must not let them become sources of inflated pride and self-glorification. God gave our homes to us, and they are to be used for service, not just for show.

6:10 Amos gives us a picture of God's fearful judgment: The people hesitated to speak God's name, even during a time of grief, for fear that they would attract his attention and be judged also.

6:13-14 Karnaim was a city northeast of Israel, an insignificant border town compared to Assyria, the nation they were about to face. Lebo Hamath was to the north, and the valley of the Arabah to the south. The entire nation would be destroyed by Assyria (2 Kings 17).

Amos 7

Locusts, Fire and a Plumb Line - Verses 1-9

¹This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king's share had been harvested and just as the late crops were coming up. ²When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, “Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!”³ So the LORD relented. “This will not happen,” the LORD said.⁴ This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: The Sovereign LORD was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. ⁵Then I cried out, “Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!”⁶ So the LORD relented. “This will not happen either,” the Sovereign LORD said.⁷ This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb,^[a] with a plumb line^[b] in his hand. ⁸And the LORD asked me, “What do you see, Amos?” “A plumb line,” I replied. Then the Lord said, “Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.”⁹ “The high places of Isaac will be destroyed and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined; with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam.”

7:1-5 The following series of visions conveyed God's message to the people, using images that were familiar to them—locusts, fire, and a plumb line.

7:1-6 Twice Amos was shown a vision of Israel's impending punishment, and his immediate response was to pray that God would spare Israel. Prayer is a powerful privilege. Amos's prayers should remind us to pray for our nation.

7:7-9 A plumb line is a device used to ensure the straightness of a wall. A wall that is not straight will eventually collapse. God wants people to be right with him; he wants the sin that makes us crooked removed immediately. God's Word is the plumb line that helps us be aware of our sin. How do you measure up to God's plumb line?

Amos and Amaziah - Verses 10-17

¹⁰ Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. ¹¹ For this is what Amos is saying: "Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land." ¹² Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. ¹³ Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom." ¹⁴ Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. ¹⁵ But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' ¹⁶ Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the descendants of Isaac." ¹⁷ "Therefore this is what the LORD says: "Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan^[c] country. And Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land."

7:10-17 Amaziah was the chief priest in Bethel, representing Israel's official religion. He was not concerned about hearing God's message; he was only worried about his own position. Maintaining his position was more important than listening to the truth. Don't let your desire for prestige, authority, or money keep you tied to a job or position you should leave. Don't let anything come between you and obeying God.

7:14-15 Without any special preparation, education, or upbringing, Amos obeyed God's call to "Go, prophesy to my people Israel." Obedience is the test of a faithful servant of God. Are you obeying God's call to you?