

## Sermon for Oct 18, 2020

### “Yet you did not return to me”, Amos 4: 6–13

#### Introduction: Amos and his time

Amos was a prophet active in (760-750 BC) in the latter half of the reign of Jeroboam II.

At this time, northern Israel was in its prime. Because the surrounding powers were able to solve their problems during that period, northern Israel secured and flourished the territory it had in Solomon's time. As a result, urbanization was achieved, and decadent lifestyles and the luxury of the upper class reached extremes.

Amos is a native of Tekoa of southern Judah, and Tekoa is located about 12 miles south of Jerusalem. He was a shepherd, mulberry grower, and an agricultural expert. Although he did not receive training to become a prophet, he frequently traveled to and from northern Israel, saw the corruption of Israel, and was called by God to take on the role of a prophet while shepherding sheep like David.

Amos was active during the same era with Hosea. He was a native of South Judah and worked in the northern kingdom of Israel. However, his messages were not popular in the northern kingdom of Israel. First, let's look at the sins of northern Israel pointed out by the prophet Amos.

#### Body: Sins of Northern Israel and God's Call

##### 1. The sins of northern Israel

###### 1) Judicial corruption

**First, let's look at Amos 2:6, “Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes”**

This is a judicial injustice. A wicked person is said to be innocent after receiving a bribe, while the innocent person is said to be a sinner. If we have a lot of money and we hire a competent lawyer, we are not guilty, and if we don't have money and we cannot hire a competent lawyer, we are guilty. Unfortunately, this was the reality.

###### 2) Social injustice

The second sin is social injustice. **Amos 2:7 says, “they that trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and turn aside the way of the afflicted; a man and his father go in to the same maiden, so that my holy name is profaned;”**

Here **"turn aside the way of the afflicted"** is what makes it difficult for the faithful person to succeed, and the improvement of the lives of the poor is always hindered by wicked persons.

###### 3) Materialism and Hedonism

The third sin of Israelite is to use the money earned in this way for luxury. **Amos 6:4 says, “Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the midst of the stall”**

Also, the prophet Amos speaks of the crimes of northern Israel in **Amos 5:7 as follows: “O you who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth!”**

The people of Northern Israel turn public law and justice to something very painful such as bitter wormwood, and throw it to the ground.

In fact, justice is a consciousness and order derived from the character of God who loves us all and wants to bless us. Justice includes not only actual behavior but also attitudes and ways of dealing with each other. In other words, taking care of the poor, being fair and just to each other, and the behavior and attitude that everyone can thrive are the righteousness God desires.

We see that even now Israel in the Old Testament as well as ourselves do not meet God's justice. Northern Israel abandoned these demands and principles of God. Also, Northern Israel blocks the message of the prophets to point out these sins and restore them again.

In Amos Chapter 7, the priest Amazi'ah speaks to Amos; **“but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom”**(Amos 7:13)

This action is not to silence the prophet, but to silence God. This means that everyone doesn't want to grow up together, so this action makes all Israelites not grow up together. A prophet called by God like Amos is a person who teaches the way to live in God's judgment.

Therefore, it is the people of northern Israel who are victims of such a prophet's silence. But, Israelites tell the prophet Amos to be silent. This is the situation in which northern Israel is facing.

## **2. God's Call and Northern Israel's Rejection**

Even so, God calls them. This is today's text. However, all the northern Israelites rejected God's call. However, **if you look at Amos 4:6-11**, you can see that there is something that God has left behind to call the Israelites.

Let's look at **Amos 4:6**, **“I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me, says the Lord.”**

Here the passage **“I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities”** means that, Israelite have nothing to do. We haven't come to the Lord because we have been busy eating and living in the meantime. Now, we have nothing to do, so we do not make excuses and we have to return to the Lord.

Let's look at **Amos 4:11**, **“I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomor'rah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD.”**

To be like **“you were as a brand plucked out of the burning”** here means that we were saved in a special way. This salvation was granted to the Israelites by God, in order to return to God again. That is why the children of God should be able to use the goodness of God, who has done us well despite difficulties and suffering.

It is as if the blind Bartimaeus did what he did to be healed by Jesus. Bartimaeus was blind, but his ears could hear Jesus's preaching, and with his mouth he could say to Jesus, **“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”**(Luke 18:38)

But Israel, who heard Amos' cry, still did not return to Jehovah. **What will happen to the people of northern Israel now? Let's look at today's text 4:12**, **“Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”**

God's mercy and compassion are now withdrawn. Those who do not return to God must meet the Creator and God of Heaven's Armies. He is from the mountains, and creates the wind, and declares to man what is His thought and makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth.

## **Conclusion: Let's restore holiness**

Now, let's summarize today's sermon. We all want to have joy in life. However, real joy is not enjoyed by everyone, but by a humble person before God. Because joy is not in satisfying one's needs, but in changing one's needs and having the best one.

As children of God, there are many opportunities when we can live more joyful lives than we do now, but sometimes we can't.

In Exodus Chapter 3, there is a scene where God calls Moses. **In Exodus 3:5, God speaks to Moses. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”**

Let's live a holy life as children of God. As God told Moses to take off his sandals, for the place where they were standing as holy ground. Let's take off the sandals of injustice, heartlessness, materialism and Hedonism, and live as a child of God.

Five years after the prophet Amos, the prophet Hosea exclaims. Let's look at **Hosea 6:2-3**, “**After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.**”

Today's text shows us, God has left many things to bring the Israelites back. **Amos 4:6-11 shows in detail what it is.** But the Israelites did not use it well. I bless you not to make such mistakes and to live with good influences that restore holiness and change the world with the abundant grace of the Lord.