

Amos

Restoration

9

23.07.2006

You are sitting in front of the specialist doctor, waiting with bated breath for any good news. Since being told the very bad news, you have been waiting for this day. No sleep, tossing every night, hoping against hope... wondering about second opinions... thinking through the "what ifs"... chatting with friends...

And then the doctor looks deep into your eyes and says there's a slight chance you may come through the radical surgery. Many do not. But you need the surgery, otherwise there is no hope.

And you blink and think "What did he say?" He did say that some get through the surgery. It may mean a lot of suffering... it will mean high costs... it may mean leaving your home...

That is the sort of news that the very last five verses of Amos bring. Up until then, it has been doom and gloom. Judgement is coming. There is no escape. Yet God will save some and there is hope.

And as Amos gives a tantalisingly small glimpse of what will happen, he weaves the strands of hope that have intertwined the Old Testament.

There are five strands in the five verses of Amos 9:11-15. They are the king, nations, nature's curse reversed, prosperity and the promised land.

1. The Promised King. God promises to bring back the line of David, so the Messiah, or King will be on the throne of David. "*On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old;*"

God will do it. He will do the raising up, because it is impossible for the king to limp and struggle to reassert himself.

The royal line is fallen, breached, in ruins and has lost the glory it had. Only God could set it up again.

2. The Nations. God promises that when the Messiah is installed, then the nations (that is, the

Gentiles) will be included. "*in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the LORD who does this.*"

Since the time God chose Abram to be the father of his special people, God intended to bless the people of the world thru Abram. In Genesis 12:3 God promised Abraham "*through you all the nations of the world will be blessed.*"

In Amos, God promised that the King would possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by his name.

Edom was a traditional enemy of the Israelites. The only time that Edom was subdued, was when King David conquered them and for his lifetime they were included in his reign. Most of the time they were thorns in the flesh.

But there would only be a remnant. They too would be decimated, as in the prophecy in Amos chapter 1. Yet even the old enemy would be included along with the nations who were called by God's name.

Would the Edomites and other nations be second rate, the slaves possessed by the new King? No, they would not be slaves or servants, instead they would be equal in inheritance, is that God says that they are called by his name. Their equal value with all God's people is found through the name of God which they are both called.

3. The Promised Reversal of Nature's Curse.

God promises a time when the earth will return to a paradise like the Garden of Eden. "*The time is surely coming, says the Lord, when the one who plows shall overtake the one who reaps, and the treader of grapes the one who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.*"

Genesis 3 says that after Adam and Eve fell, God cursed the ground, subjecting all creation to frustration. Farming was much harder, with less than abundant results. Work was tiresome and

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hard. To promise such abundant provisions means the curse on the ground will be reversed.

For that to happen, it means that the relationship between mankind and God must have been restored. Mankind's rebellion is over. God will have reconciled them to himself, and thus released the enormous frustration that God subjected on all of creation.

4. The Promised Prosperity. God promises that the riches of the bountiful earth won't simply occur without people enjoying the blessings. *"I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit."*

For that to occur, then not only is mankind restored to God, but also to each other. For in Amos 5:11b, in response to the shocking way they treated the poor and righteous, God said *"You have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you've planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine."*

So people will love God and each other.

5. The Promised Land. God promises to restore his people in the promised land. Never again will they be evicted. *"I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land that I have given them, says the Lord your God."*

They'll have the rest, security and blessings which God promised.

Yet we know that the northern state of Israel was wiped out, never to be returned. Babylon wiped out the southern state of Judah over 100 years later. When they returned, they hoped for the fulfillment of these promises, yet they were constantly disappointed with the failure of their kings, the aggressiveness of surrounding nations, the lack of abundance of the land, the poverty of most people, failure to love God and people and the small parcel of land which barely fitted into one tribal area of what they had

previously had.

They sought a physical fulfillment of the promises, although some sought more of seeing the answers in the spiritual realm.

When Jesus came, many expected him to be a king and restore Israel.

Yet to Pilate, Jesus said *"My Kingdom is not of this earth."* The King of the Jews was crucified. His fallen booth was raised and restored. and when the Gentiles were brought into the church, Peter quoted Amos 9:11-12 to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:16-17, to show that God promised to include Gentile as believers.

Yet we still have not seen the fulfilment of the reversal of nature's curse, nor the prosperity and lack of maltreatment of the poor and righteous, nor entry into the promised land.

In Romans 8:18-25 Paul says that that time will come when God's children are revealed, i.e. when Jesus returns.

I am looking forward to see all God's promises in the Bible fulfilled, including those he made 2750 yrs ago through Amos. In the meantime, I look to Jesus, the promised King, the redeemer, who repaired our relationship with the Father and enables loving fellowship with each other, who will restore all things in the new creation.

Come Lord Jesus. Amen.