

Date: 7 Jan 2023

Scripture Passage: Amos 7:1-17

Title: A Time To Intercede

Introduction

- In this message we see that it is now a time to intercede. Intercession is a form of prayer. In prayer there must be praise, thanksgiving. 1689 Confession 22:3 “Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship (*praise*), is by God required of all men”. But there are other elements of prayers such as: petitions, confession, consecration (dedicating yourself to the service and worship of God), and intercession. We intercede in asking God for help on behalf of others. Where there is a need, we pray that God will act and intervene in the situation.
- Amos, as a preacher, knew the importance of prayer. He knew he had to intercede for God’s people. Although he was from Judah, he had brotherly feelings for Israel. God gave him the burden to preach what God had burdened him with, to the nation of Israel. He interceded for them.
- Preachers are not just to preach, but also to pray. “We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” Acts 6:4. No amount of prayer can change God’s plan to judge the world. So why pray? It is for individuals to respond and be saved.
- This message is about praying for the gospel to save people from the wrath of God which is sure to come.

The intercession of Amos (1-9)

- Three visions revealed to Amos, all very disturbing. First is the vision of the locusts. Second is the vision of the fire. Third is the vision of the plumb line.
- Judgement in the form of locust attack averted (1-3). Amos was alarmed and feared for Israel, unlike the majority in Israel who did not care for their brethren (6:6). The king took his share and left the balance for the people. The locusts have eaten up the grass and moved on to plants (v1-2). Amos cried up to God to forgive, for Jacob is small, i.e. weak. God does answer the prayers of His people. In Gen. 18:22, Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah, asking God to not destroy them if there are 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10 righteous men.
- Judgement in the form of severe famine averted (4-6). Another vision, devastating drought causing underground water to dry up, fire burning farms. Amos persisted in his prayer, and God answered the intercession of Amos. In Luke 18:2-7, the earthly judge avenged the widow. God is a loving judge. If we come to him repeatedly, will he not hear?
- Judgement in the form of captivity would certainly occur (7-9). What is a plumb line? It is used to establish a vertical datum. A vertical standard of reference. The plumb line is to indicate God’s standard of righteousness, i.e. His law (v8). Plumb line is the symbol of the standard by which God's people would need to live. It represents a standard by which the faithful need to live, and a measure from which divine judgment is gauged. God is unable to look past Israel’s sins, instead judgement will come. High places in v9 are where the idols are worshipped. There was no true spirituality in Israel despite many places of worship. The sword, i.e. war, will devastate Israel. A reference to attacks by Assyrians some 30 years later. The house of Jeroboam II would be destroyed by violence. Note the accuracy of fulfilled prophecy in 2 Kings 15:8-10.

The vain protest of Amaziah (10- 17)

- Amaziah should have known better than to protest (10-13). He was the Priest of Bethel. He lodged a complaint with king Jeroboam claiming that “The land is not able to bear...” Amos’ message. It was a message that God had made known to Amos (11b cf. 9). It is obvious that Amos’s preaching is strong and cutting deep. He then rebuked & threatened Amos. Oh, for such preachers! Some principles that we can learn:
 - (i) Preaching inseparable from prayer. If you pray but take no action, it shows forth your inconsistency. Pray for people to be saved, but also take the gospel to them. “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore **pray** the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Matt 9:37-38 . Do you think the apostles just prayed for preachers?
 - (ii) Faithfulness to God. He preached as it was (v9 & v11). We ought to do God’s will faithfully, just as Amos did.
 - (iii) Fear God more than men. He was from the South and was not on home ground. He trusted in God. What can men do to him? Fear God who can destroy both body and soul. Do we not believe that the gates of Hades will not prevail against the church of Jesus Christ?

- Amos could not but preach (14-16). He was called by God. He was not trained in the School of Prophets, but a sheep breeder & tender of sycamore fruit. God who called, and here is response from God to your threat (16). Fear men and be silenced, or fear God and speak out His word. Not my will Lord, but your will be done. We may not have a seminary trained preacher, but we serve the Lord faithfully knowing that this is His will.
- Judgement is as certain as God's word (17). Amaziah will personally suffer for opposing God. His wife will be ravaged in the war, sons & daughters killed. Israel will be taken captive and die in foreign land. Judgement came when Assyria attacked in 722 BC finally ending Israel (2 Kings 17:5, 13-18). Judgement of Israel is a picture of the judgement that is to come. We preach and pray in order that individuals might be saved, not for God to stop judging the world. God has to judge if He is a just God.

= Amos was preaching to Israel, God's covenant people. Numbered among them are many who call themselves Christians (cf. Matt. 7:21-23). Do you have the imputed righteousness of Christ, or are you only in name a Christian? Time is not on our side. If this truth really means something to us, it should burden us. Pray that all God's people will have some degree of such burden. May God use us in our days.