

**Date:** 15 Jan 2023

**Scripture Passage:** Amos 8:1-14

**Title:** A Time To Save Yourselves

## Introduction

- Judgement upon nation is certain and close. Conveyed by visions of locusts (7:1-3), fire and famine (7:4-6), plumbline (7:7-9). Now fourth vision, the vision of a basket of ripe summer fruits (Ch. 8).
- God knew the end from the beginning. He continued to send His prophets, but Israel refused to repent. God gave Amos the vision that judgement was certain.
- Judgement is certain. The fruit is ripe and already harvested. The purpose of the warning is for individuals to repent and believe. It is a time to save yourselves.
- This message is about the call of the gospel requires that one respond with urgency.

## I. What will happen (1-3)?

- What is the meaning of the vision? The ripe summer fruit basket that has already been plucked from the vine. It indicates that the sins of Israel have reached its limit. It is ripe for judgement. The end has come upon Israel.
- Echoing what we learnt in Chapter 3:1-8, (i) principle of relative accountability (1-3); (ii) Cause & effect (4-8).
  - (i) Luke 12:48 The nation of Israel was God's covenanted people. They were privileged. Much has been given to them, much is required of them. You have the opportunity to hear the gospel. You have had systematic expository preaching. Much that is given to you, much is required of you.
  - (ii) Gen 15:16 The promised land was to be enjoyed by Abraham's descendants. The Amorites' sin was full. For everything that happens, there is a good reason. God judges because they deserve it. God's long suffering on Israel can no longer be passed (v2).
- "In that day" (v3) means the last judgement, the day of the Lord. The Assyrian conquest will happen in 30 years. Temple songs turn into wailing. The dead will be disposed of in silence, with no proper burial. Judgement of Israel is a picture of the day of judgement to come. Don't think that it will not happen. God has already judged the world by water, the next judgement will be one of fire. (2 Pet. 3:5-9). What applies to Israel, applies to the church and to individual Christians. Israel was God's covenanted people. Matt. 7:21-23 to be kept in mind. Many who profess to be Christians will be rejected.

## II. Why will it happen (4- 8)?

- The reason for the vision. God had to judge because of the sins of Israel. The hearts of the people were depraved (4). The people carried out acts of (i) cruelty; (ii) religious hypocrisy; (iii) cheating (5). It may be in the heart, hidden. But it will manifest in action (6). Our actions to be examined more deeply.
- Judgement was so certain that the LORD swears (7). God is incapable of forgetting all the sins that we have committed. God swears by "the pride of Jacob". This is again the principle of relative accountability. Israel were the special people adopted by God. They were His covenant people. They were unworthy, but yet God entered into a covenant with them. You have received more blessings than others. You deserve greater damnation.
- Principle of cause & effect, for what has been described in v4-6. Israel was so perverse. Their works and sins will be punished. Judgement day is certain. There will be an upheaval like the River Nile (8b). The upheaval of the river illustrates the upheaval of the nation. The nation will be thrown upside down. It is a picture of judgment day when Jesus Christ returns to judge the world.
- What is the message to us? There will be a judgement day. Why is it constantly repeated? It is for individuals to repent and believe.

## III. When or how will it happen (9-17)?

- "In that day" v9, v13. Referring to the judgement day. Don't just look at the events, but the significance of the events. Brightness of noon will turn to the darkness of midnight. There will be an unexpected change of fortune. Rejoicing (feasting) will turn in to mourning (lamentation, sackcloth, shaving of head) (v10). Your mourning and sorrows will be so severe, like losing only son. Judgement for Israel then is a picture of judgement for us now. Note the similarities of judgement day described in Rev. 6:12-17.

- Look deeper at the spiritual significance (11-12). There will be a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. There will be spiritual dullness such that they cannot see, cannot understand, and cannot appreciate God's word. Before the last day, God will already begin judging Israel. They will search everywhere for the word of God, but they will not find it. The people will be deprived of good teaching, and spiritual understanding of God's word.
  - What does it mean to us? Are you one of those like the days of Israel, where you have no spiritual understanding? Are you in a famine of hearing the words of the Lord? That is a judgement from God. See that it has already happened. God is causing a famine of His word to you. Here is God's word being presented to you, but it is taking no effect of you.
- The strong and young will faint from thirst (13-14). This is the thirst due to the spiritual famine.
  - After so many years of hearing God's word, have you grown? Are you still feeding on milk but not solid food? Can you lift the word of God or are you going to faint. Can you share the gospel clearly to others? Are you weak spiritually? Spurgeon was preaching at age 16, pastor at 18. David Brainard, Robert Murray Mcshane both died at 29. They accomplished so much in serving the Lord despite their short time on earth. God blessed us with so much gifts, but we do not see the opportunities. You have no concern for the kingdom of God?
- There will be pious language used, an external show of religion, visiting places of worship where the false Gods are in Dan & Beersheba (14 cf. 5:5 SW of Jerusalem). Israel will fall and never to rise again. Their usefulness in service will be lost. It will be too late.
  - Should search your heart. Repent and come back to God. You have grieved the spirit. At any time the judgement of God can come down upon you. Like one who lost his only son. Why must you learn the hard way?
  - Does the sermon transform you, prepare you for life in heaven, for usefulness to God's kingdom? Have you grown spiritually? When judgement day comes, will you be numbered among those that can say the righteousness of Christ is upon me. May God bless us all.