

Amos: True Worship - Amos 3:1-8

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[0 : 0 0] If you're a guest with us, thank you. If you're a guest with us today, we are in the middle of a sermon series through the book of Amos. And I want to share that we're gonna be in chapter three today.

So if you have your Bible, you can turn to Amos chapter three. We will be looking at a text here shortly. But before we get to the text, I wanna share that there is a before and an after to everything in life.

And there is when the before and the after have passed, there is an opportunity to respond. But when that time to respond is gone, it's gone forever.

The I must and I can of now turns into a time where I cannot, I will illustrate. I earlier 20 something years ago purchased a home that was pretty much a gut job where we day one, we tore down walls, we ripped out the carpet, took down the popcorn ceiling, carpet pad, everything had to go.

And we totally got it, the thing. And it took 10 years of a remodel project to, we lived in a remodel for 10 years. What a joy that is for all who have participated in that.

[1 : 1 6] And at the end, my loving wife said, honey, I'm tired of living in a construction zone. Could we please finish this? So I was running out of time, so we hired a contractor to finish.

But all that to say, there was a time where now I could do it. But today, if you were to ask me, Scott, do you want to buy another house and gut it and do that again?

No. No, I do not. Now is the season where I cannot do that anymore. My physical body does not recuperate as quickly as it once did.

And I don't care to do that ever again. But assuming that you are married, there's a season for childbearing when it is possible. But when that season is over, you cannot.

There is a season when you're forming a habit, whether it's a good habit, a good practice or a bad, that your conscience is wanting to do something.

[2 : 2 0] You have strength and motivation like none other and now is the time. And then that season will pass and all of a sudden you will be bonded to another habit. And that season is over.

There is every day some now that is fading in your life and soon you will not or cannot. And I believe that is the tone that Amos is setting for the people of Israel.

I want you now to respond to the Lord because now is the opportune time because after this you cannot. The Lord's judgment is coming, repent now.

And all of us today are faced with that same situation. Today is the day. Now has occurred. Let's take the opportunity.

That is the tone of our text today. And to look at our text, I want us to read it together. And so if you would read verses one and two with me, Amos chapter three, verses one and two.

[3 : 34] Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O peoples of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt. You only have I known of all the families of the earth.

Therefore I will punish you for your iniquities. The first thing that we see that Amos is communicating is this.

Um, it is what part of your history do you not recall? Look at Israel's history.

Previously though, I want to go back to last week's message. Last week's message in chapter two, beginning in verse six through 16, Amos is saying to Israel, these are your sins that you have committed against God.

And it's because of these sins. And this is why it is so egregious. And here's your punishment. And your punishment is nobody's gonna be able to escape it. There's no escape.

[4 : 41] That was the message that Paul gave to the nation of Israel. Then beginning in chapter one begins the first of three messages that Amos is gonna preach to the nation of Israel.

We start in, look at with me in chapter one or chapter three, verse one, it begins with the word, the phrase, hear this word. Turn to chapter two with me, or chapter four with me real quick.

Chapter four begins the second message and says hear this word. That's the second sermon that Amos will preach to the nation of Israel. Then the fifth is in chapter five, verse one, hear this word.

That's the third and final sermon, so to speak, in this text of Amos. So we're now after this pronouncement of judgment that Amos has given, he steps into his first sermon.

And the first line of the first sermon is hear this word. What the Lord has spoken. And notice what Amos is appealing to. It's the history of Israel.

[5 : 43] What part of history do you not? Do you not recall? And notice what he says. And what are some truths that he is appealing to that they are to recall?

What is that part of their history they do not recall? Mainly that discipline is an act of love. It is their very status as a people of God that makes them liable for such judgment to a people steeped in spiritual complacency.

Because they have been bestowed privileges and Amos' urges them that they have misunderstood God's love. God chose you as a special people, not so that you could go live as you please, not so that you can do as you want, not that you can worship other false gods.

No, no, no, no. You have misunderstood God's love for you, Israel. And it's because of his act of love on you, you will be disciplined.

And that will come in the form of Assyria. So Israel, what is part of their history they did not understand. Israel is a people of election. He says, you only have I known.

[6 : 57] You only, I just, I chose you, Israel. Second, Israel is adopted. There are God's adopted people through the historic event of the Exodus.

Yes, through Abraham, but also he says, a people of Israel, verse 1b, a people of Israel against the whole family, that I brought you up out of the land of Egypt. I did that.

I brought you out of the land of Egypt. This, you are, that is a statement of my love on you. This is your history. And then thirdly, Israel possessed special privileges and a unique covenantal intimacy.

Because they were the only ones known of all the families of the earth. God chose them. In 2a it says, you only have I known of all the families of the earth, Israel.

To appreciate the facets of the relationship with Israel that God has, it would require retelling the whole biblical narrative. And we don't have time for that this morning.

[8 : 10] But what we do know is this, there should be this deep sense of wonder and love and praise that should emanate from God's people instead of idolatry and sin.

One way I want to highlight this is perhaps to read Deuteronomy 7. We get, well, we won't go through Genesis all the way from Genesis. I just wanna pick a few verses to read God's love for Israel.

Look at their history. And we're gonna just pick one set of verses. Look with me in Deuteronomy 7, verse six through nine. For you are a people, holy to the Lord your God.

And the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession. Out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because that you were more in number than any other people that the Lord has set his love on you and chosen you, for you were the fewest of all the people.

But it was because of the Lord's love, Lord loves you and keeps his oath. And he swore to us, your fathers, that the Lord has brought you up out with his mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

[9 : 40] Know therefore the Lord your God is God, a faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

Do you see all of the statements of love in these few lines? Verse six, for you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

Of all the nations, don't you know your history? Don't you recall your history, Israel? You are a people holy to your God. He has chosen you, verse six.

Verse six, again, you are his treasured possession. Verse seven, he set his love on you. He chose you, Israel. Verse eight, because the Lord loves you, he keeps his oath that he swore to your fathers.

He brought you out with his mighty hand. He redeemed you from the house of slavery. He is a faithful God.

[10 : 51] He keeps covenant and steadfast love to a thousand generations. And just think what a thousand generations is. If we think 2023, if we were just to go back to the time of Christ, how many generations, if you calculate the generation being 20 years, is 101 generations.

To keep love for a thousand generations, just to go back to the time of Christ is only 101 generations? How long is a thousand? And the point isn't he only does a thousand generations.

It's just it goes on and on. That's the point. God was uncompelled by any external force exerted upon God except his own love for Israel.

He acted on Israel's behalf only because of himself did God do this. And God is saying, don't you recall Israel your history? This is why I'm doing this.

And notice in verse two, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities. Don't misunderstand my love. Don't you recall all that I have done for you, but know this, the reason why Assyria is coming, judgment is coming.

[12 : 10] It is because you've sinned against him, but he appeals to their history. Don't you recall your history? There should be a deep sense of wonder, of love, of praise.

That would be an appropriate response. But I don't think Israel are the only ones who forget their history. Look with me for the church.

What is our history? What has God done for us? Just some verses you're familiar with, Romans 5, 8 and 9. But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since therefore we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Consider with me our history. What has God done for us? That while we were still sinners, enemies of God, deserving of the very wrath of God, he shows his love toward us.

[13 : 35] And we know that because Christ died for us. Why do we turn to idolatry? Why do we turn to sin? Don't we know our history? Don't we know what God has done for us?

We're no different than Israel. And this is the first point that God is saying. What part of your history do you not recall Israel?

Perhaps it's a good time for us to reflect. And instead of a deep sense of wonder and praise, that would be the appropriate response. What did Israel do?

What does the church do? Fall into complacency. Complacency erodes spiritual vitality. This is what the church shares with Israel.

Complacency. Christ, we once cherished above all else, and now he's second or third among our affections at best. We used to be burdened for the nations without Christ, and now it seems we've all but forgotten from our minds.

[14 : 36] We used to give generously our resources after all. We cannot serve two masters, but now our budget is filled with distractions and priorities that if others knew about it, we might be slightly embarrassed.

Once we read the Bible and prayed and communed with the Lord and abided with him, and we couldn't think but dwelling in any other way, but now we have a hard time giving Bible reading or prayer much thought.

We once were faithful to a church and faithful members of the body, but now we excuse our absences. After all, the weather's nice and our children have activities.

Once we enjoyed sweet fellowship with other believers caring for one another, holding each other accountable, declaring that which is true with one another, enjoying the sweetness of knowing the Lord with one another, but now we can barely tolerate each other.

Complacency erodes vitality. It's the cousin of apathy. And complacency is compounded and fuels by present distractions, and there are future implications of such.

[15 : 50] Unprecedented times that we live in require an unprecedented response. Repent and return to the Lord. It's the same message that Amos had for the people of Israel.

Next, we see that Israel, what part of your history do you not recall? Second, what part of your circumstances are without cause?

We're going to read a succession of seven rhetorical questions that in this next section that Amos has for Israel. And my grandmother was a queen of rhetorical questions.

I learned this at a quite young age. One time I asked my grandmother, I was staying with my grandma for the weekend or something, and I asked for a piece of candy before dinner, and sometimes my parents would allow me to do that.

And so I just simply asked my grandmother, Grandma, would you allow me to have a piece of candy? And she responded with this, does it look like I need another hole in my head?

[16 : 54] We're talking about candy here, and she's talking about the validity of the necessity of my grandmother needing a hole in her head.

And I could not put it together what she was saying, but that was my grandma. She would respond with rhetorical questions, and I did not know how to do that.

So this is what Amos is going to do. But as we read this, here's two things I want us to observe before I read the rhetorical questions.

The answer to all the rhetorical questions is no, just like, can I have a piece of candy before dinner? No, Grandma also doesn't need another hole in her head, right? So no, that's the answer to the rhetorical questions.

But what I also want you to realize or watch for is this cause and effect nature of the rhetorical question. There's a cause and there's an effect in every question that's given.

[17 : 50] So this is why my point reads, your circumstances are not without cause. There's a cause and there is an effect. So here it is. Let's read this together starting in verse 3.

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to meet? Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion cry out from the den if he has taken nothing?

Does a bird fall into a snare on the earth when there is no trap for it? Does a snare spring up from the ground when it has taken nothing? Is a trumpet blown in a city and the people are not afraid?

Does disaster come to a city unless the Lord has done it? So here's all these rhetorical questions. And you're supposed to obviously say, well no, none of these happen like that.

That's the rhetorical question. So let's look at these one by one starting in verse 3. Do two walk together unless they are agreed? Do two people walk together unless they are agreed to do so?

[18 : 58] The answer is simply no. They meet, they work out the travel plans, they agree upon a time of departure, they decree upon a destination, and they even agree upon the route. And so two are not going to walk together unless they agree.

Let's do this. And so the cause is they agree to meet together, and the effect is the two walk together. Verse 4.

Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? No. A lion is quiet when he is stalking and hunting. So of course he's not roaring around while he's doing that, otherwise there would be no prey.

And so the lion captures no prey is the cause, and the effect is the lion does not roar. The lion does not roar, therefore he captures no prey.

Verse 4b. Does a lion cry out from his den if he has taken nothing? The implied answer is no. The lion does not roar unless he has taken prey. The cause is the lion takes no prey.

[20 : 00] The effect is the lion cub remains quiet in the den. Verse 5. Now we're talking about birds. Lions now birds. Does a bird fall into a snare of the earth when there is no trap for it?

The answer is no. Does a snare spring up from the ground when it has taken nothing? No. And so imagine a snare jumping out of the ground when there's nothing that triggered it.

Of course that doesn't happen. Something has to trigger the trap for it to activate. And so action must have been adequate.

There must have been an adequate trigger for that response. In verse 6, now we're talking about a trumpet. Is a trumpet blown in a city?

And the people are not afraid. The implied answer is no. A trumpet blast would have signaled that there is an enemy causing the residents to tremble with fear. So the cause of the trumpet would have been blown.

[21 : 06] The effect would have been that people are afraid. This is a phenomena of people. You and I would be afraid if a trumpet were blown in the city and knowing that there is an enemy approaching.

All of us would have been now. No one in Amos's audience would have objected so far to what is being communicated. Okay, there is a cause and effect relationship to everything.

But now we're getting a little more closer to home. 6b, I'm sure Amos's audience, original audience, would have become a little more concerned.

Does disaster come to a city unless the Lord has done it? Now we're talking about a trumpet being blown and people being fearful. We know the enemy is coming. And now we're talking about a disaster coming to a city unless the Lord has done it.

And now this question would have made us a little more uncomfortable. The popular belief was, hey, we're God's chosen people. What misfortune could ever befall us?

[22 : 11] That was the prevailing thought. And if you dare answer no in that day, then you would have asserted that there must be some other deity if you would respond yes, so you would have to answer no because that assertion would have been unconscionable.

So the implied answer is no. So calamity does not come to a city unless the Lord has done it. And we know that he's just prophesied that you'll be crushed down in chapter 2, verse 13.

I will press you down in your place as a cart full of sheaves pressed down. A loaded cart rolling over you is the imagery.

And the Lord would have done it. The Lord is the causal agent behind this calamity that befalls a city. There's some three things that we want to observe and learn from this.

These cause and effect statements. First, the cause are not idle. There is a cause behind every single one of these. And God is not idle.

[23 : 28] He is alive. He is active. He is vigilant. And secondly, judgment comes uninvited. The bird caught in the snare, that's an uninvited happening to the bird.

The prey being caught by the lion, that's not invited. The trumpet being blown in the city, that comes uninvited. You don't welcome the enemy to surround your city just so you can blow a trumpet.

They come uninvited. And the demise of a city that the Lord causes, that's no one wishes that upon yourself.

So judgment is not invited. And the weakening and the weakening and the weakening of the church, God's judgment must begin with the house of God.

As go a man, so goes the family. As go a man, so goes the family, so goes the church. As goes the man, so goes the family, so goes the church, so goes the nation.

[24 : 33] And families, men help lead your families to Christ. And the third observation we make, so first, the cause is not idle.

Judgment is uninvited. And thirdly, God is not mocked. He says, I will punish you for your iniquities. I am going to be the causal agent because I love you, your history.

I'm the causal agent of your demise, of judgment coming to Israel. God will not be mocked. Thirdly, we get to our final point.

What a part of prophetic terror do you not dread? And look with me the two final verses in 7 and 8. For the Lord your God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

And the line has roared, who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy.

[25 : 40] What part of prophetic terror do you not dread? I want to point out a few things. First, let's take verse 7.

For the Lord does nothing without revealing his secrets to his servant the prophets. I'm sure that Amos did not enjoy delivering this message of judgment upon the nation of Israel.

And so perhaps this verse, he's telling them, listen, this is not a pleasurable thing for me, but let me tell you what I'm compelled in verse 7.

I'm sorry, the bottom of verse 8. The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy. I need to say this, the Lord has given this to me.

The Lord has revealed this, he has spoken to me, so I must speak on his behalf. This is what's going to befall you. Back to verse 7 though.

[26 : 50] Well, I'm going to hop down to verse 8. Verse 7, for the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secrets to his servants. So this is Israel's history.

God revealed himself and people spoke. In Noah's day, God said, build an ark. He revealed himself and his people did, it took action.

All throughout Israel's history, especially with regard to Israel, God revealed himself and people acted. And so the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secrets to his prophets.

So he reveals to a prophet, they take action, God does something is what he said. Verse 8, the lion has roared. I want to contrast that with chapter 1 verse 2, our first message in this series with Pastor Eric.

Look with me in chapter 1 verse 2. God is personified as a roaring lion. He says in verse 2 of chapter 1 and he said, the Lord roars from Zion.

[27 : 54] So God is this roaring lion and he's from Zion. He's doing this act and it should strike fear in people and pronouncing judgment.

But if we were to read this in Hebrew, it is a future tense. The Lord will roar from Zion. In chapter 1 verse 2, it is a future tense, looking forward.

In chapter 3 verse 8 in our text today, look now, the lion has roared. It is no longer future tense, it is present tense. Judgment is imminent for Israel.

He will roar, today he has roared. And it says, in who will not fear? The implied answer is, everyone will fear.

When the Lord who roars from Zion, everyone fears. So then everyone now is the answer to these rhetorical questions.

[28 : 57] That's a rhetorical question. The lion has roared, who will not fear? Everyone will fear. So then that everyone is the answer to the next rhetorical question. The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy?

Everyone should speak, if the Lord, when the Lord is spoken, everyone should speak. So, but before we get into the everyone should speak, look with me in how this lion roaring is part of our text.

Look with me back in verse 4. Does a lion roar in the forest when he has taken no prey? No. If now the lion has roared, guess the implication, the Lord has caught its prey and its prey is Israel.

The lion roared and signaled a kill, and who was its kill? Israel. Does a lion cry out from a den when it has taken nothing? No. So if the lion has roared, the implication is the lion has taken down its prey.

Who is its prey? Israel. Judgment has come to Israel, the Lord has roared. And when the lion roars, people fear.

[30 : 11] And then we get to that last line, who can but prophesy? When the Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy? Everyone. Everyone.

So I want to look at our outline and now apply application to our text.

What part of our history do you not recall? What is an appropriate response to that bullet point, if you will, part of our outline of the text? I would argue this.

It is to remember. What part of your history do you not recall? Remember. Remember the verses that we began with, but God has shown His love to us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

That, if you will, is all we need to remember. While we were sinners, deserving of God's wrath, Christ died for us. That's our history. And what should come out of that is but gratitude and faith in Christ.

[31 : 19] When was the last time you said, Lord, thank you? This is why communion is so important to the church, is to remember what God has done for us in observing the wafer of bread and the wine, the juice that we take.

This is why that's so important, is it gives us an opportunity to remember what God has done for us on our behalf. That's good for us. And remembrance ought to bring gratitude and a confession of sin.

Secondly, what part of your circumstances are without divine cause? Marvel at God's sovereignty. Marvel at God's sovereignty.

From time to time I'm asked what is my favorite doctrine that we find in God's Word. It is that God is sovereign. He divinely orchestrates all things.

He is, if you will, the divine causal agent. And he brings blessing. He brings judgment.

[32 : 28] And I can think of no better one to throw my arms into when adversity strikes. He is sovereign.

I may not understand, but I know he has purpose behind all that he does. Thirdly, what part of prophetic terror do you not dread?

A couple of points on that one is to share Christ, to share the gospel with others. If prophetic terror is going to happen, meaning there is an eternal lake of fire, people do spend eternity apart from God.

And that terror, divine terror, should motivate us to share the gospel with those without Christ. Today we may spend time with family. It's Father's Day. We may spend time with family and to proclaim His name among all we have those influence with, our family, our friends, our workplace.

I'm grateful for those who stood, but all of us should stand who are in Christ and say, we are all missionaries. Missionaries, we are all missionaries.

[33 : 40] In a very loose sense of the word, we all have this responsibility to make disciples of nations. And then secondly, the second part of application to what part of prophetic terror do you not dread?

Second application would be repentance. When was the last time you spent time before the Lord and said, Lord, you see all things.

Nothing is a secret from you. You know the sin in my life and I confess that. I confess these things specifically. Also, for those sins that you need help with, yes, you're going to put intention, intentional time and effort behind overcoming the sin, but do that in community to have others hold you accountable to it.

And you say, Scott, why is this so important? Let me begin with where I, let me close with where I began the sermon. There is a before and there is an after of every time in life.

And once that opportunity has closed, it is gone forever and the must and I must and I can season will be gone and then you cannot.

[35 : 09] And if the Lord is saying, Scott, whatever your name is inserted there, repent, come back to me, abide with me. I pray that all of us today would take that action for Israel.

That moment is all but gone. God has spoken. The lion has now roared. Judgment is coming. The Assyrian Empire will invade, will kill and take some into captivity.

That's what's happening here. But for us, judgment is coming. And so now is a time where we can repent, be reconciled to the Lord and let's take that opportunity today.

And would you pray with me? Father, your word says today, if you hear my voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. Later you say in Hebrews today, if you hear my voice, do not harden your hearts.

Lord, I pray that we would be invigorated today to be in a right relationship with you, to abide with you, to love you all the more.

[36 : 22] I pray that we would encourage one another with things that are true about you and true of you. May we have friends who come alongside of us and we do life in community to help one another overcome sin.

And I pray that we would take full advantage of today.

Thank you that you are the lamb slain before the foundation of the world and in you there is forgiveness of sin. Thank you that we can come to you and readily confess our sins and you are faithful and just to forgive sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Thank you Lord for knowing you and it's in your name Jesus we pray. Amen.