

Fifth after Trinity – Amos chapter 8, verses 1 – 14:-

This prophecy is a continuation from chapter 7, verse 9. The interruption by the false priest of Bethel does not stop the prophetic ministry of Amos!

Verses 1 – 3 - A Basket of Summer Fruit:- “*Ripe autumn fruit*” would be better. The word means late summer or autumn fruit. The last gathering of fruit, like figs, before winter. These would not keep but needed to be eaten. Israel was ripe in her sins and the end was now near.

Verses 4 – 6 - A Word from the Lord :- Another section beginning with a clear “*Hear this . . .*”. These verses speak of those who recognise the outward keeping of the Sabbath but find it a hindrance to their commercial ambitions. The oppression of their fellow countrymen by the rich traders was forbidden in the law – see Leviticus chapter 19, verses 35 – 37 and Deuteronomy chapter 25, verses 13 – 16.

Verses 7 – 8:- These verses recall the ‘curse’ foretold by the Lord God in the Book of Deuteronomy chapter 28, verses 15 – 68. Read especially verses 47 – 51. “*Because you did not serve the Lord your God . . . therefore you shall serve your enemies . . .*”.

Verses 9 - 10 - “On that day . . .”:- The day of judgement for Israel is revealed as a foretaste of the final ‘Day of the Lord’. The darkening of the sun and changes in the natural world are foretold in other prophecies. e.g. Joel 2, verses 30 -32; Matthew 24, verses 29 – 31 and Revelation 6, verses 12 – 14.

*** Verses 11 – 12 – A famine of “*hearing the words of the Lord.*”:-** A time is coming when there will be a desire to hear the word of the Lord; maybe a word of comfort and pardon but the prophetic voice will be stilled.

Verses 13 – 14:- Historically Israel, especially the wealthy ‘merchant class’ of Samaria, imported pagan worship alongside material goods. The “*Ashima*” appears to have been a Canaanite goddess worshipped particularly by the people of Hamath on the northern border with Israel. Those who have followed the ‘golden calves’ set up by Jeroboam at the local shrines of Bethel and Dan (see 1 Kings chapter 12, verses 25 – 33) will find them worthless.

*** At a time when there is a need for faithful preaching of scripture, the words of the prophet Isaiah will make a good ending to this weeks study! Read Isaiah chapter 55. Calling the nation to prayer at a time of crisis is just and right. However we must base our prayer on a sure and certain hope, not just woolly thinking!**

1) Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word,
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me?

3) Master, speak! and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow every word
I am listening, Lord, for Thee:
Master, speak, oh, speak to me!

2) Master, speak! though least and lowest,
Let me not unheard depart;
Master, speak! for oh, Thou knowest
All the yearning of my heart.
Knowest all its truest need;
Speak! and make me blest indeed.

4) Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free,
Where the Shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the Rock!

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