

Prayer

All praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
for the joy of love, and contentment in friendship,
for the wonder of creativity, and delight of achievement,
for the miracle of faith and the wonder of Your glory,
and for all that we have received in our salvation:
All praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ: AMEN

Prayer Suggestions

Prayer ideas

When you pray, remember that you are joining together with millions of people who are the Lord's own people in our generation. Give thanks for them all.

On-going prayers

- **Pray for Afghanistan.** *Pray for the people who are dying in the conflict within the country, and pray for an end to the fighting*
- *Pray for the people who are designing next year's new technology*
- *Give thanks to God for the blessing of love in all its forms*

Meditation

If my people would listen to me, says the Lord,
Then they would know how I answer their prayers.

If my people would turn to me says the Lord,
Then they would find through my touch that I love them.

If my people would read my Word, says the Lord,
Then they would not suffer through lack of knowledge.

If my people would love their neighbours, says the Lord,
Then they would find their own lives would be enriched.

If my people would do what I say, says the Lord,
Then they would discover that I am faithful to my word.

If my people would pursue the truth, says the Lord,
Then they would find themselves with me, in my Kingdom.

Life is a challenge for everyone, says the Lord,
And our souls find their peace when we rise to His call.

Bible passage - Amos 9:11-15

¹¹ 'On that day I will raise up the battered tent of David and repair its damage. I will raise up the ruins, and rebuild it as it used to be; ¹² in order that they may take possession of what is left of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name.' This is what the LORD says, the One who does this.

¹³ 'Look, the days are coming', says the LORD, 'when the one who ploughs will overtake the one who reaps, and the one who treads grapes will be ahead of the one who sows the seed; the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it. ¹⁴ I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they will plant out gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵

I will plant them upon their own land, and they will never again be pulled up out of the land that I have given them,' says the LORD your God.

Bible Study

Review

Amos finishes his prophecy with a powerful vision of hope, quite unlike anything else found in all his prophecies. It is a vision of God's restoration

This is a remarkable conclusion to the book of Amos. Having prophesied throughout about the destruction of Israel due to her rebellion against her God, Amos now writes warmly about a future in which God will restore Judah (9:11) and also Israel (9:14)! Indeed, his brief picture of hope is overflowing and generous, but it is also utterly contrary to everything else Amos has prophesied. It is entirely at odds with his devastating declarations about the downfall of Israel (2:6-16) and his earlier warnings of 'no escape' from God's judgement (8:1-4). This reading comes as a great surprise to us.

We will surely welcome this dramatic change in Amos' attitude towards Israel because it confirms Christian belief that God is ultimately generous, even to sinners. This last part of Amos certainly seems like an addition to the earlier prophecies, for not only is its theme unlike what goes before, its style and manner of speech is also quite different. But before we jump to conclusions about what this means, we must look carefully at the passage to find out more about what it has to say.

It begins with a forthright prophecy of restoration, and Amos declares that God will firstly '*raise up the battered tent of Judah*' (9:11) and restore that nation to its former glory. Amos confirms the historic bias of God towards Judah (because of David – see 2 Samuel 7), and says that Judah will become strong enough to achieve the aim for controlling the nation of Edom, the war-like nation of nomadic people descended from Esau, Jacob's brother (Gen 25:30 etc.).

Amos also anticipates that Judah will also control '*all the nations who are called by my name*' (9:12), but what does Amos mean by this? Other than Judah, the only other nation called by God is Israel! Altogether, this prophecy suggests that after the cataclysmic invasion of Israel already prophesied, remnants of Israel would one day come under the governance of Judah. Of course, we now know that this is exactly what happened in later history. Certainly, after Judah had herself been judged by God through exile in Babylon, strong attempts were made to bring all Israel together in unity (Ezra 2:70, Zech 1:19 etc.). God's intent to restore Israel under Judah is confirmed by Amos' brief comment, later on in verse 14, '*I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel*'.

The rest of today's passage (9:13-15) is a grand vision of God's restoration given to those of His people who survive His punishment. Though Israel and Judah were restored generations later, the individuals who heard Amos had to accept his harsh word of judgement and hold on to this hope, not for themselves, but for the people of later generations who would begin to see this restoration. Perhaps this is why Amos gave such a memorable and glowing picture of hope.

With marvellous breadth of insight, Amos describes a harvest so rich, crops are produced as they are sown, and the hillside slopes literally ooze the produce of a fertile land, including wine (9:13). It is a memorable picture! What is even more interesting is that this verse is remarkably similar to that found in Joel 3:18, which says; '*the mountains will drip sweet wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah will flow with water ...*' Now either Joel has influenced Amos, or Amos has developed Joel's prophecy! Still, this is a powerful picture of the blessings of God's provision, and as much as it helped Israel and Judah in Old Testament times, it is used today as a picture of God's provision and restoration both for now, and also for the time of God's Last Judgement', when He will restore His world in glory!

Amos concludes his work with a more intimate picture of a peaceful agricultural life blessed by the Lord (9:15). Now it may be that after all the controversy of his prophetic ministry, Amos went home to Tekoa and pondered over the extraordinary message God had given him. Surely, after all the judgement, he thought, what more could God do for His people than make them secure in His presence! We who read his words today will certainly agree!

Discipleship

Questions (for use in groups)

1. In your group, discuss verses 11 and 12, and consider what they might have meant for Amos as well as for us today.
2. Read the prophecy of Joel mentioned in this study (Joel 3:15 to the end) and see how many connections you can find with this passage. What do these connections mean?
3. What does this prophecy say about God and His intentions both for the world and for those who love Him?

Personal comments by author

The whole book of Amos challenges us to consider how and why God's own people sin against Him. Some stand back from Amos' work and treat it as something that had a meaning for ancient times and not for today, but this is surely to stand against what God does through his prophets. The dreadful things prophesied by Amos are indeed a reflection of God's wrath and they are as true today as they ever were. Personally, I feel that it is utterly essential that we take on board this message for those of God's people who sin and go their own way. If we assume that God's people do not do this then we are amazingly blind if not stupid.

Ideas for exploring discipleship

- *Reflect upon what the prophecies of Amos can say to the church today about the purity of its worship and service and the consequences of sin. Write down a list of those prophecies of Amos you think will be important for God's people today.?*
- *Pray for those who struggle with sin and know that it compromises them both as individuals and within the life of the church. There are many who feel convicted of sin, so pray that they will be blessed by God's people, and helped to deal with this guilt before God.*

Final Prayer

You have shown us glimpses of our future, Lord Jesus, and promised that we will have a place in Your Kingdom. Give us the grace to live by the light of this promise, with holiness and godliness all our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN
