

Amos 3:1 Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

Amos 3:2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

These verses make it clear that this part of the prophet's message is to the whole of Israel (Northern and Southern Kingdoms), "the whole family" which He brought up from Egypt.

"You only have I known..." – God had chosen the people of Israel out from among all the other peoples on earth for special privilege before Him. The writings of Moses confirm this truth repeatedly.

Deut. 4:20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye are* this day.

Deut. 7:6 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

Deut. 14:2 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

The last half of verse two reminds me of the scripture that states, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48).

"Therefore"—Because you have been so blessed and chosen to reject Me in spite of your blessings...." God is righteous, and His righteousness demands that their iniquities/sins be punished.

This is a sobering truth for the Christian to consider. The more God blesses us, the more He expects us to honor Him by blessing others—be it with material wealth or spiritual understanding. God looks at our actions in light of what we possess. Jesus explained this truth when assessing the value of the gift of the poor widow's mites to the offerings of the wealthy.

Mark 12:41-44 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all *they* which have cast into the treasury: For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Amos 3:4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

Amos 3:5 Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is for him? shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

The prophet begins to drive his point home by asking some questions to which the obvious answer is, "No." You obviously can't walk *with* someone unless you are going in the same direction. An animal won't get caught in a trap unless it takes the bait.

Amos 3:6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

The blowing of the trumpet was done with specific sounds for specific purposes. The context dictates that this is a reference to a trumpet warning of approaching danger. Suddenly he poses another question with an obvious answer of, "Yes." Just as the answer to the previous questions are obvious, the answer to the last question should have been just as obvious to the people of Israel. Nothing evil could happen to any of the cities of Israel without the Lord's involvement.

I think in context the application is to the nation of Israel. Personally, however, I believe this truth is applicable to all events on planet earth. YHWH is Almighty God. Though He has chosen to allow man to exercise his free will and has allowed Satan the privilege of limited authority for a time, it is just that—a privilege He has granted according to His purposes. Nothing happens on planet earth that does not in some way have a part in accomplishing His purposes. I can't really explain it sufficiently, but I believe it. Many things are *allowed* to happen that are a natural consequence of man's choice to reject YHWH as God and Lord. Other things happen according to God's specific intervention on behalf of His people (both the Jew and the church). The culmination of events in this present creation will result in the acknowledgement of every created being that He is Holy GOD, the One and Only, to His praise and glory.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Amos 3:8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

Now the application of the previous verses becomes clearer. God always warns His people of coming judgment through His prophets. The problem is that the people refused to acknowledge the "trumpet call" of God's true prophets in preference for the lying messages of the false prophets. The lion is acknowledged as the king of beasts, and I believe represents God as the King of kings. He has roared out His warning through His chosen prophets, such as Amos, who have chosen to obey Him. They are faithfully declaring His message to the people, and the message should rightly cause the people to fear. Only the foolish will choose to ignore His message. Sadly, the people of Israel are predominantly foolish at this time. The prophet Jeremiah declared this truth from God about His people.

Jer. 4:22 For my people *is* foolish, they have not known me; they *are* sottish children, and they have none understanding: they *are* wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

I think the application to the church of today is sadly obvious.

Amos 3:9 Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and

behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof.

Amos 3:10 For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.

Ashdod = one of the main Philistine cities

In these verses Amos is issuing God's invitation for Israel's enemies, the Philistines and Egyptians, to get good seats in the mountains of Samaria. These mountains are designated as "watch tower" mountains in the heart of Israel. In other words, they will offer a good view of the action when God moves against His people in judgment. Their observations will prove that the people are deserving of judgment based on the indictments made, and He is very clear, to make specific indictment.

- They know not to do right. They have no discernment between what is right and wrong anymore.
- They are accumulating wealth through violence and robbery (which previous verses indicate are at the expense of those who are most vulnerable to them).

These are very sad verses. Heathen nations are invited to come enjoy the spectacle of God's judgment upon His people. The truth is inescapable that when God's truth is no longer recognized as the source for determining morality and identifying what is good and what is evil, there is no alternative. All other alternatives fall into the realm of flawed human logic/reasoning. There is no higher authority to determine whose logic/reasoning is correct. Every man will end up doing what is right in his own eyes.

Amos 3:11 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; An adversary *there shall be* even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled.

The prophet declares God's judgment based on the indictment. Since they have gotten their wealth through violence and robbery, they will lose that wealth to a violent enemy who will rob them of their ill-gotten gains.

Amos 3:12 Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch.

At this point the message again focuses on the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The point seems to be that the lion is far stronger than the shepherd. When a lion attacks, the likelihood is that he will only be able to retrieve a piece of the sheep. This will be the result of the enemy's attack on Israel. Very little will survive the attack. When I checked a couple of commentaries for help on this section, I found that the law required the shepherd to bring in proof that an animal had been killed to exonerate him from an accusation of theft.

Ex. 22:13 If it be torn in pieces, *then* let him bring it *for* witness, *and* he shall not make good that which was torn.

Amos 3:13 Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,

Amos 3:14 That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground.

Amos 3:15 And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

Bethel was one of the centers of idol worship in Israel. The Lord is stating His intent to destroy idol worship among His people. Verse 15 appears to make reference to the destruction of the buildings that reflected the wealth and affluence that probably contributed to their moral downfall.