

The Lion Roars
Amos 3:1-8

February 12, 2006

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction

1. the lesson of these verses: character D_____ A_____
2. Character in a thing is its ...
3. Character in a person is his or her ...
4. Character in God is His ...

B. Amos' Audience Amos 3:1-2

1. Their Pedigree - verse 1
 - a. these words are spoken to ...
 - b. these people had received God's ...
2. Their Past - verse 1
 - a. was distinguished by their ancestor ...
 - b. was highlighted by God's ...
3. Their Position - verse 2
 - a. this people was distinctive because ...
 - b. and because (Hosea 11:1) God ...
4. Their Punishment - verse 2
 - a. was because of their ...

b. was because of God's ...

5. These words are relevant to the Christian because

- a. John 1:12, their pedigree is
- b. Romans 6:17, their past is
- c. 2 Thessalonians 2:13, their position is
- d. Hebrews 12:2, their punishment

C. Character D_____ A_____ Amos 3:3-6

1. of a Couple - verse 3
 - a. to walk together requires
 - b. Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5: Enoch could
2. of a Lion - verse 4
 - a. the lion's character is that of a ...
 - b. as a result, his actions are
3. of a Snare - verse 5 - the trap's character is to ...
4. of a Calamity signalled by a trumpet - verse 6 - the trumpet's character is ...

D. God will Act according to His Character Amos 3:7-8

1. verse 7: because of His Sovereign Love, God (check 2 Peter 3:9)
2. verse 8: because of His Sovereign Holiness, God (see Hebrews 12:6)
3. verse 9: because of His Majesty He should receive ...

Other references: Job 42:2-6, Isaiah 55:6-9, Hebrews 12:29, 1 John 1:9

A. Introduction

1. the lesson in this Scripture passage, Amos 3:1–8
 - a. let me attempt to put into three words the truth that underlies the verses that we have just read from Amos
 - (A) Character Determines Actions
 - (B) Character Determines Actions
 - b. this is true whether we are talking about things, about people or about God
 - (A) the character of a thing is usually referred to as its design, or function, or purpose
 - (1) what it is created for determines what it does
 - (2) when you use it for something other than that, it does not work at all well – my grandfather, who had lived and worked in several countries as an engineer, often referred to a hammer as a “Yankee screwdriver” – my apologies to any Yankees!
 - (B) the character of a person is usually referred to as his or her nature, their personality
 - (1) and, when push comes to shove
 - (2) when the pressure and the stress is on
 - (3) it is that internal nature or character which will determine how they react, what they do
 - (C) and the character of God is spoken of as His nature and is described in terms of His attributes
 - (1) but, unlike men and women, God is changeless
 - (2) and His attributes – though we may not be able to comprehend this fact – His attributes are always totally consistent with each other, and,
 - (3) His actions totally consistent with His nature, with His attributes, with His character
2. So, today, we are looking at
 - a. what Amos has to say about character
 - b. that Character Determines Actions
 - c. and particularly
 - d. that we should know what God’s actions are going to be

- e. because God has revealed to us His character
- f. or, vice-versa
- g. we know what God's character is like
- h. because we have seen His actions in history; in the Bible

3. Let us look at these 8 verses in Amos 3 after this fashion

- a. Amos' Audience – Amos 3:1–2
 - (A) their pedigree
 - (B) their past
 - (C) their position
 - (D) their punishment
- b. Character Determines Actions – Amos 3:3–6
 - (A) of a couple
 - (B) of a lion
 - (C) of a snare
 - (D) of a calamity
- c. God will act according to His Character – Amos 3:7–8
 - (A) in sovereign love He warns His people
 - (B) in holiness He chastises His people
 - (C) in majesty He expects our awed regard

B. Amos' Audience Amos 3:1–2

1. Their Pedigree – “sons of Israel ... entire family” – verse 1

- a. notice, first of all, that this is spoken not just to the ten tribes, the northern kingdom, commonly called “Israel”
 - (A) but it is to the sons of Israel
 - (B) to the “entire family” – to all Israelites
 - (C) be they those living in Judah or in Samaria
 - (D) which included, from what we can tell, many who had joined themselves to them, called ‘proselytes’

- b. because these by inheritance had received the promises and were benefactors of the covenant made by God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (also called Israel)
 - c. On this account, God through Amos reminds them of
2. Their Past – “brought up from the land of Egypt” – verse 1
- a. the first important fact of Israel’s past was that God had called their ancestor out of Ur of the Chaldees in order to bless his descendants
 - b. the second important fact of Israel’s past is how God had delivered them, with a mighty outstretched hand, from their life of slavery in Egypt under Pharaoh
 - c. this then Hosea 11:1 describes, saying, “When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.” (NAS)
 - d. it was this, God’s love, that gave to Israel
3. their position – “only you have Me” “I have chosen only You” v 2
- a. the second verse can be rendered equally well in either fashion, and the two are equivalent: because Jehovah God had chosen them, then they had Jehovah as their God
 - b. they alone of all of the families – tribes, nations – were accorded this great privilege: to have God in their midst
 - c. and all the more reason, therefore, that when this people turned away from God, He would not fail to mete out
4. their punishment – “punish you for all your iniquities” – verse 2
- a. God must act in accordance with His changeless character
 - b. yes, He has chosen this people and loved them
 - c. but, likewise, for their iniquities He must punish them
5. Let us take a moment to see how this description of Amos’ audience relates to the Christian; to make this relevant to us:
- a. Christians, by faith, have a new pedigree: they are the sons of God through Christ: “But as many as

received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even to those who believe in His name*" (John 1:12 NAS)

- b. Christians, too, have been rescued by God from slavery, by the obedience of faith, Romans 6:17 says "... though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed" (NAS)
- c. listen to the Christian's position, "you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you" 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)
- d. so when God has to reprove us, He does so not out of a malicious temper, but in love: "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Hebrews 12:6 (NIV); now observe how

C. Character Determines Actions Amos 3:3-6

- 1. of a couple - "do two men walk together?" - verse 3
 - a. it is agreement, a likeness of character that permits unity
 - b. this is why it is so important that in marriage a couple first ensure that they are united in their basis of faith
 - c. Jonathan and David could walk together because they were soul mates; King Saul could not walk together with David because his was an adverse spirit and character
 - d. Cain could not walk together with Abel without killing him
 - e. but God could walk with Enoch, walked so closely that we read "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." (Genesis 5:24 NAS) and "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and 'he was not found because God took him up'; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God." (Hebrews 11:5 NAS)
 - f. A well-know professional golfer was playing in a tournament with President Gerald Ford, fellow pro Jack Nicklaus, and Billy Graham. After the round was over one of the other pros on the tour asked, 'Hey, what was it like playing with the President and Billy Graham?' The pro said with disgust, 'I don't need Billy Graham stuffing religion down my throat!' With that he headed for the practice tee. His friend followed, and after the golfer had pounded out his fury on a bucket of golf balls, he asked, 'Was Billy a little rough on you out there?' The pro sighed and said with embarrassment, 'No, he didn't even mention religion.'

The evangelist, without a word, had so reflected Christ that his lack of agreement with Christ convicted that pro. –{2}.

2. of a lion – “does a lion roar ... growl?” – verse 4
 - a. the character of a lion is that he is a predator, one that lives by the hunt, the taking of another animal in the chase
 - b. so the lion’s actions are dictated by his character, by his nature, for if he wants to eat he will stalk silently until he has taken his prey, until he has captured his meal
 - c. there is a feral cat living in our area – it has adopted our garage as one of its overnight quarters (you may have seen its paw prints all over Maureen’s car) – and we do not greatly object to its catching the mice and voles that are all around, because even though they are very sweet looking little creatures, we really do not want to have them come into our house which they have a tendency to try and do each fall – but every so often we see it sitting very still and very quiet, stalking birds or even a chipmunk and then we raise the alarm and of it stalks very angrily – but that cat is acting according to its character, to its nature
3. of a snare – “bird fall into a trap ... a trap spring up?” – verse 5
 - a. now here is a ‘thing’ with character: a trap has a design or purpose, namely to catch something
 - b. and to that end it is baited and set; set, if done properly, so that it will not go off until its victim has entered
 - c. I mentioned about those mice that try to enter our house each fall; this is part of living in the country; these are very elegant little deer mice – but they do not belong in the house. Now this is terrible, I know, but the task falls each autumn to Maureen to set the traps for these and then to empty the traps outside. When a trap is old or faulty, it may go off on its own without catching a mouse.
 - d. so then, a trap or snare acts in accordance with its design, with its character
4. of a calamity – “trumpet is blown ... calamity occurs?” – verse 6
 - a. when Ryan or Peter are playing their trumpet (or, Ryan, his flugelhorn), their purpose is that of praising God
 - b. but the trumpets spoken of in this verse are those that are used by the watchman to sound out the alarm

that there is danger: a fire, a storm, an enemy army

- c. and the action of using a trumpet to warn arises from their character, their design – if you stand in front of Peter or Ryan when they are playing, you know that character ... they can be very loud, being heard a great ways away
- d. a the character of a trumpet determines its action
- e. and with this example, Amos introduces the next thought: such a calamity is the Lord's doing, which brings us to our final heading ...

D. God will act according to His Character – Amos 3:7–8

1. in His sovereign love He warns His people

- a. "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7 (NIV)
- b. the Lord God who reveals Himself to man through the pages of this Bible, is not an arbitrary, capricious God who rules like the despots of ancient Egypt, Babylon, or Rome, governed purely by the whim of the moment
- c. there are religions who proclaim that sort of god, a cruel god who invokes his will upon mankind, whose actions must be accepted in a fatalistic way – such a god is false, a misrepresentation, a caricature of the One True God who reveals Himself through the prophets in the Bible, and ultimately in the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ His Son
- d. the interchange between the LORD and Abraham, where Abraham pleads for the people in Sodom, is one example which proves this point: Abraham argues with God!
- e. this sovereign LORD has a sovereign love – and I call it sovereign love because it is not determined by any good works which we perform, for there is not good works that we can do which can overcome the sinfulness of our fallen human nature, but purely and simply because the God of the Bible is a God of grace and mercy – as an integral part of His character, one of His attributes
- f. and God acts in accordance with His character of love
- g. "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9 (NAS)
- h. and God warns His people of their iniquity

2. in His sovereign holiness He chastises His people – “A Lion has roared ...” – verse 8
 - a. R. C. Sproul has said: “I have never in my life met a Christian who said that he did not believe that God is sovereign. But as soon as we probe the understanding of sovereignty, it takes about five minutes to realize that the way many Christians define sovereignty could be better described as non-sovereignty. a God who is like the king of England, who reigns but does not rule.” –{3}.
 - b. God is no mere benevolent despot who has good wishes for His people, but a holy, pure God, who in that character will act in order to remove sin from the midst of His people
 - c. you cannot read very far in the Bible without coming across an instance of this truth: God steps into this world to intervene and to expunge expunge sin; the incarnation of the Son of God and His destiny on the cross is the ultimate example of God’s character in this regard
 - d. God’s holy character determines His actions
 - e. as we have already noted, “For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” Hebrews 12:6 (NKJV)
 - f. so hear, the Lion – the Lion of Judah – Jehovah God – roars for He has discovered sin in the midst of His people and taken it prey so that He warns His people to repent

3. in His majesty He expects our awed regard
 - a. God is of infinite and ineffable majesty
 - b. Oh that we might in our worship and prayer to God get a glimpse of the vision that Job had of Him: ² “I know that Thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. ³ ... Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ... ⁵ I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee; ⁶ Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.” Job 42:2-6 (NAS)
 - c. or that of the Psalmist in 139:6: “*Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it.” (NAS)
 - d. or the words of the Lord himself as recorded by Isaiah 55:8–9: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.” (NAS)

- e. "The lion has roared – who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoke – who can but prophesy? " – verse 8, NIV
- f. God's character determines action; in this case, on our part, that we should regard Him with the reverence due unto Him; yes, even with fear, even with dread, for "our God is a consuming fire" Hebrews 12:29 (AV).

E. Conclusion – yet, praise the Lord, God is willing to deal with that sin which is so offensive to Him, which separates us from Him

1. in the verses preceding those we read before from Isaiah 55, we read "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." (verses 6-7, NAS)
2. and, to the Christian whose fellowship with God has been interrupted by sin, these words, "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 (NRSV)
3. God's Character determines His Actions: if you turn from sin to Him in simple faith He will keep His promise; He cannot lie!

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. “Golfing with Billy Graham” by R. C. Sproul – Kerux illustrations #29952
3. Quoted in Discipleship Journal, #89, ‘Cows and the Sovereignty of God’ by Curtis W. Anderson – Kerux illustrations #2940