

The Lion Bites  
Amos 3:9-15

February 19, 2006

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction

1. Amos 3:13; this passage is applied to
2. Romans 15:4; it also can apply to
3. 1 Peter 4:17: it should serve as a

B. The Witnesses to God's Correction . . . . . Amos 3:9-10

1. Amos 3:9a; who does God summon as witnesses?
2. Amos 3:9b: what are they called upon to witness?
3. Matthew 5:11; what is the important consideration if we should be rebuked by an unbeliever?
4. Amos 3:10; God indicted Israel on two counts:
  - a. One:
  - b. Two:

(Numbers 14 describes how Moses pleaded for the people based on God's reputation; Leviticus 26 describes how God will keep on correcting .)

C. The "How" of God's Correction . . . . . Amos 3:11-12

1. Amos 3:11a; what will God use in His correction?
2. Amos 3:11b; against what centres will God direct His correction?
3. Amos 3:12a; what will God's correction be like (Exodus 22:13 gives some background information to this verse)?
4. Amos 3:12b: what will God's correction interrupt?
5. What are some ways God will correct us? Is it always pleasant (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)?

D. The Targets of God's Correction . . . . . Amos 3:13-15

1. Amos 3:13
  - a. who is spoken to in this verse (and those following)?
  - b. what is God's name in this verse to convey?
2. Amos 3:14; what is the first target of God's correction?
3. Amos 3:15; what is the second target of God's correction?
4. What will God target for correction in the Christian's life?
  - a. One?
  - b. 1 John 1:9, 7: what does God want us to do about sin?
  - c. Two?

A. Introduction

1. Last week we looked at the first eight verses of this chapter,
  - a. noted that in them the character of God is revealed:
    - (A) in love, He warns His people of coming judgement
    - (B) in holiness, He brings that judgement upon their sin
  - b. in those first eight verses,
    - (A) the Lion is introduced
      - (1) the Lion represents God and
      - (2) Lion's character is revealed:
    - (B) when the Lion's prey is inescapably cornered
    - (C) the Lion Roars;
      - (1) that roar is a declaration of war
      - (2) a declaration that is followed by his bite
  - c. the Lion, the LORD God, has roared against His people
    - (A) and now His bite will take hold of them
    - (B) which is the subject of our Scripture passage today;
    - (C) today, the Lion Bites

2. Read Amos 3:9–15

3. In this passage we read these words

- a. "Hear and testify against the house of Jacob" – NAS
- b. these words echo back to the first verse of the chapter
- c. "against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family" NAS
- d. which we noted were spoken, not just to the northern ten tribes, but to the southern kingdom, Judah, as well
- e. and similarly here, while the judgement will fall upon the northern kingdom, on Samaria

f. it is also to serve as a warning to complacent Judah

g. so, in like manner,

(A) let us note the apostle Paul's words of Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." (NAS)

(A) it should serve as a warning

(1) to a complacent church today

(2) to any complacent Christian today

(3) that God, as a Lion, not only roars in warning

(4) but, as a Lion, that roar signifies the bite follows

(5) and, as 1 Peter 4:17 warns, "For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and *if it begins with us first*, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (NAS)

(B) hence, we want to look at this passage today

(1) not simply as an interesting historical study

(2) but to alert us to fact that when sin enters, then God punishes, chastises, disciplines, corrects

2. So, let us look at the this passage in three parts

a. the Witnesses to God's Correction, verses 9–10

b. the How of God's Correction, verses 11–12

c. the Targets of God's Correction, verses 13–15

B. The Witnesses to God's Correction . . . . . verses 9–10

1. Who are called to witness?

a. God, through Amos, sends out a message; Amos 3:9a: *Proclaim to the fortresses of Ashdod and to the fortresses of Egypt:* (NIV).

b. you will, of course, know about Egypt

(A) where the children of Israel spent four generations

(B) first in honour, but then in slavery

- (C) making bricks and building for the Egyptian masters
- (D) being oppressed until God delivered them by Moses
- c. maybe Ashdod is a less familiar name
  - (A) it is one of the five principal cities of the Philistines
  - (B) a nation living to the south-west of Judah and Israel
  - (C) who warred against and oppressed the children of Israel throughout the time of the Judges and right down to David's day; close to 500 years
- d. these, then, two pagan nations, worshipping gods in the form of animals and stone, oppressors of God's people
- e. from these, from their fortresses or palaces, are called their rulers to witness ...

2. What are they called to witness?

- a. Amos 3:9b: "Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria; see the great unrest within her and the oppression among her people." (NIV)
- b. in type and picture, if not indeed in fact, these rulers of these oppressing nations are called to the mountains that surround Samaria
  - (A) Samaria itself was a city on a hill
  - (B) but around it were higher mountains
  - (C) down from which these rulers could see into the heart of the city of Samaria
- c. and what will they behold
  - (A) tumult and unrest: a city whose common people are troubled and in confusion
  - (B) oppression of this people
  - (C) the oppression by the rulers of Samaria of their own
- d. yes, the rulers of these nations who had themselves been oppressors, are their to witness an oppression far worse than they had committed; to stand in judgement against the rulers of Samaria who claim to be God's people but are involved in injustice contrary to God's character

3. Have you ever been rebuked as a Christian by an unbeliever

- a. not when they "... cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on

account of Me.” Matthew 5:11 (NAS)

- b. but when it is TRUE!
- c. I have; and it hurts – because
  - (A) there is no rebuttal that we can make
  - (B) no comfort we can take
- d. for sometimes God, to get our attention, uses unbelievers to reprove us who claim to be His people, to correct us
- e. and that is a lesson we can learn here

4. these oppressing nations are summoned to hear the LORD’s indictment against those claiming to be His people, Amos 3:10: “They do not know how to do right,” declares the LORD, “who hoard plunder and loot in their fortresses.” (NIV)

- a. and there is a two-fold indictment made against Israel
  - (A) the way they piled up unrighteous gain
  - (B) that they had become so used to doing wrong, that they no longer knew the difference between right and wrong; their conscience seared
  - (C) and this is disclosed to these pagan peoples, to the shame of God’s own people
- b. in Numbers 14 Israel so angered God that He threatened to destroy them, Moses pleaded with God, arguing that God would hurt His reputation if He were to do so
- c. but that argument does not apply now; for the reputation of God is secure; it has already been demonstrated
- d. do not, then, be surprised if God shames you in front of non-Christians; He will do whatever it takes to remove sin from our lives; to sanctify us for fellowship with Himself

C. The “How” of God’s Correction . . . . . verses 11–12

1. God will use an enemy nation to correct Israel, Amos 3:11a: **Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “An enemy will overrun the land; ...”** (NIV; or, perhaps more literally, “all around or surround the land;”)

- a. now this enemy would not be any of those which we have already mentioned in the past weeks, those

whose lands ranged in every direction from Israel

b. but Assyria, under King Pul and King Tiglathpileser

(A) not all at once so as to provide further warning

(B) came in three waves giving opportunity to repent

(C) God was very patient with Israel all these years just as He said that he would be in Leviticus 26 where God describes how he would correct again and again

(1) vv 14-17 "but if you will not obey Me ... I will" and lists the steps He will take to bring them back

(2) v 18 "If after all these things, you do not obey me, then I will punish you seven times more" (NAS)

(3) and this theme is repeated through that chapter

(4) yes, God is patient in His correction, and even in its final stages to Israel, He gave more chances

(D) first, taking the Trans-Jordan tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh into north Syria (1 Chronicles 5:26)

(E) then, taking Naphtali and the tribes around Galilee into Assyria (2 Kings 15:29)

(F) finally, taking Samaria and the remaining tribes into Assyria and Media (2 Kings 17:6)

c. God can use our enemies to correct us

2. God directs the correction by the enemy against the centres of Israel's oppression, Amos 3:11b: "... he will pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses." (NIV)

a. the very place in which they guarded all their ill-gotten gains, the riches derived from oppression

(A) perhaps for that reason becomes the target of the enemy from which they will seek booty and plunder

(B) but directed in correction by God as the centre of all those sins He sees in Israel

b. God's correction will zero in on those things in our lives which are breaking our fellowship with Himself

3. God's correction will be intensive, Amos 3:12a: This is what the LORD says: "As a shepherd saves from the lion's mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites be saved, ..." (NIV) – Amos the shepherd, presents a picture

a. for us, a bit of a gruesome picture, but one with which a shepherd such as himself would be familiar,

- b. for there is a reference here back to Exodus 22:13, "If it is all torn to pieces, let him bring it as evidence; he shall not make restitution for what has been torn to pieces." (NAS)
  - c. in similar fashion, the Lion will tear the wicked of Israel, so that only an individual here or there will survive
  - d. God's correction can be intense to the extreme
4. God's correction will interrupt their comfort; Amos 3:12b: "... those who sit in Samaria on the edge of their beds and in Damascus on their couches." (NIV)
- a. those who had feasted and thrived on the fruit of the oppression of their poorer countrymen
  - b. will be taken from their comfort and riches
  - c. as they sit in ease and supposed security, God enters and they are torn away from it all
  - d. God's correction will shake us out of our complacency
5. God corrects in many ways
- a. He suits it to each individual
    - (A) with King David it was a parable that made David pronounce his own judgement
    - (B) with Peter it was a cock crowing and the Lord's look
    - (C) with Paul it was blinding light on the Damascus road
  - b. here we have four "hows" of God's correction
    - (A) using the enemy, the pagan, the unbeliever
    - (B) against the very centre of the sin
    - (C) intensive
    - (D) and interrupting the comfortable sin-centred life
  - c. so though God will correct us in love, be warned that it won't be lovely: Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10a was not talking about the punishment of pagans but correction of Christians: "I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading to* salvation; ..." (NAS)

- D. The Targets of God's Correction . . . . . verses 13–15
1. first, the reminder, this correction is coming from God, no matter by whom it is administered: Amos 3:13: "Hear {ye} and testify {ye} against the house of Jacob," Declares the Lord GOD, {or, Lord Yahweh} the God of hosts. (NAS)
    - a. I have added the word "ye" to show that these commands of "hear" and "testify" are addressed to more than one
      - (A) It is obvious that they are not addressed to the Jews
      - (B) they are addressed rather to Egypt and Philistia, those pagan nations whom God has called to witness against the sins of His chosen people
    - b. and He reminds these that the correction that is coming against His people, not matter what instruments He may use, if from Himself, the Lord, the covenant God of Israel, the God who is the God of a heavenly army, who has no shortage of resources to carry out His purposes
    - c. and this correction is directed at two principal targets
  2. their idolatrous transgression, Amos 3:14: "On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground." (NIV)
    - a. Jeroboam had put golden calves at Bethel and Dan, and at Bethel also an imitation temple, altar and priesthood, telling the people of the northern kingdom that these were their gods who had brought them out of Egypt
      - (A) and, very quickly, these were accepted as such
      - (B) these lifeless images being considered true God
      - (C) and the people trusted in them, prayed to them
      - (D) that worship which has replaced My worship, says God, I will utterly destroy
    - b. God will correct the people of the false confidence they had in these false gods by destroying their worship place
  3. and, secondly, their luxurious, self-complacency, purchased at the cost of oppressing the poor, Amos 3:15: "I will tear down the winter house along with the summer house; the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed and the mansions will be demolished," declares the LORD. (NIV)



- a. things, no matter how unjustly acquired, were of far more importance to these self-sufficient Israelites, than the God who had graciously given them one opportunity after another to repent and to return to Himself
- b. those things, says God, which have replaced Me, shall be utterly destroyed and demolished

4. God will target the same things in our lives for correction

a. Christians can have false confidences

- (A) a simple example: we know that we are saved by grace, through faith, and not by works
- (B) but sometimes Christians then attempt to keep a ledger account book with God
- (C) balancing our service and works against our sins
- (D) our good deeds against our bad deeds
- (E) but God wants sin dealt with, confessed, restoring us to fellowship: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ... but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.* (1 John 1:9, 7 NAS)

b. Christians can let things replace God

- (A) let the gifts we receive replace the Giver of the gifts
- (B) becoming complacent in material possessions
- (C) neglecting our spiritual possessions in Christ Jesus

c. and God will correct and chastise Christians who fall into such errors to bring them back to Himself

E. Conclusion: I have attempted this morning to apply these verses to ourselves as we have looked at this passage. May God's Holy Spirit apply these words to our hearts to keep us close to Him.

1. © 2006 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

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](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.