

Sermon Notes

**When God Turns Away
Amos 8:7-14**

13 August 2006

A. Introduction

1. substances are precious because of

2. (1 Samuel 3:1) when Samuel was a youngster, what was precious? ... why?

B. A Résumé of the Context (Amos 8); this is part the Lord's explanation of Amos' fourth vision of ...

C. God Will Shatter Israel's Complacency 8:7-10

1. why was Israel complacent (Amos 3:15, 6:4)?

2. what had Jeroboam II accomplished (2 Kings 14:25-26)? ... what did Israel ignore about this?

3. God's judgement will come like a flood (verse 8) - what flood does Amos use to illustrate this point? ... what was this flood like?
 - a. Matthew 24:44, what did Jesus warn His disciples?

4. God's judgement will come at the most unexpected time (verse 9)
 - a. how does Amos emphasize that in this verse?

 - b. why would they not expect judgement at this point?

5. God's judgement will turn them upside-down (verse 10) - what will change in their lives?

D. God Will Turn Away 8:11-14

1. verse 11: what will Israel then desire?

2. verse 12: where did they look for this? (The verse describes Israel's case, but conveys a much larger, universal scope.)

3. verses 13-14: in what state will this leave them?

E. How Do We (How Do I) Treat God's Word

1. what is the prevalent view of God's word?

2. what is the major concern for the Christian (check 1 Peter 4:17)?

3. what do people forget in the prosperity they enjoy (James 1:17)?

4. what is my need to stand against this situation (Psalm 119:11)?

A. Introduction

1. If I were to ask you to name a precious substance
 - a. some of you would mention a precious metal such as gold
 - (A) for, like, many precious substances, gold combines the qualities of beauty, utility and rarity
 - (B) beautiful for it can be shaped into beautiful objects, ones which will not tarnish or rust
 - (C) useful, for it is an excellent conductor of electricity and is used for the contacts of some electronic components
 - (D) in Revelation 21:21, perhaps as a commentary on our misplaced idea of value, gold is used to pave the streets – something of little worth in the presence of God
 - b. others among you might name a diamond as precious
 - (A) again something rare and so costly
 - (B) but also beautiful
 - (C) and useful as well – a little diamond has been known to capture a grown woman!
 - c. at one time, radium was considered the most precious of substances because of its extreme rarity and its usefulness to science and research as a radioactive material
2. but there are other, perhaps much more, precious substances
 - a. which we think of as very common and plentiful
 - b. there is for example the air we breathe
 - (A) how little we think of its freshness
 - (B) until the smell of some factory disturbs us
 - (C) my brother recently visited Kingston and was shocked by the amount of pollution there and wondered how much worse it must be in Toronto, concluding how glad he was to live in Thunder Bay, which despite my kidding him about the 'year 'round permafrost,' still has fresh air
 - c. or there is the water we drink
 - (A) which we take for granted, living as we do in one of the most plentiful areas of fresh water in the world
 - (B) until, one by one, we have polluted our creeks, our streams, our rivers, our lakes

- d. so it is only when we lose our fresh air and water that we begin to value them as we should
3. in the book of 1 Samuel we come across this statement: 'And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.' (1 Samuel 3: 1 AV), or, in the NAS: 'Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord before Eli. And word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.'
- a. God's word was precious in those days because it was rare
 - b. the spiritual level of the people of Israel had sunk so low
 - (A) the priests, the sons of Eli, had so corrupted the temple worship that it had become abominable to the people
 - (B) they had turned away from serving the Lord
 - (C) God had warned Eli but he did nothing about it
 - c. so since the people had abandoned God's word
 - (A) God in turn turned away, for a time, from His people
 - (B) and withheld from them that word, so that
 - (C) the word from the Lord was rare and precious
 - d. it was only when they lost the word of God that they began to value it as they ought
4. today, in this passage from Amos,
- a. I want particularly to focus on this same truth
 - b. because God's people, Israel, had turned from His Word
 - c. God was now turning away from Israel
 - d. and would deprive them of the benefits of His word
 - e. with the obvious application:
 - (A) in the last 100 years, the western world has turned away from God and from His word
 - (B) can we be surprised
 - (1) if God turns away from us?
 - (2) if the government, our schools, society, yes, even our churches, take God's word away from us?
 - f. it will only be when we have lost the word of God that we may begin to value it as we ought

B. A Résumé of the Context

1. a few weeks ago we began this 8th chapter of Amos
 - a. looking at Amos' fourth vision
 - b. where the Lord showed to him a basket of summer fruit
 - (A) fruit that was just cut off the vine
 - (B) ripe fruit
 - (C) fruit that would soon spoil
 - c. this ripe, summer fruit represented Israel
 - (A) they, too, were about to be cut off in judgement
 - (B) they, too, were spoiling for punishment
2. Amos 8:7–14, which we read just a few minutes ago,
 - a. is a continuation of the Lord's words of explanation of the judgement which is coming upon
 - b. and divides into two sections
 - (A) verses 7–10: their complacency will be shattered by God's judgement
 - (B) verses 11-14: God will turn away from them, taking away His word, leaving them faint and weak

C. God Will Shatter Israel's Complacency verses 7–10

1. Israel was complacent
 - a. they lived in comfort in their winter houses and their summer houses (Amos 3:15)
 - b. they were '[Those who recline on beds of ivory And sprawl on their couches, And eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall,](#)' (Amos 6:4, NAS)
 - c. they lived in their capital, Samaria, which was in many ways a natural fortress, walled about by mountains
 - d. Jeroboam II had delivered them the hands of the nations round about, restoring much of their original borders: 2 Kings 14:25a '[He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah,](#)' (NAS)
 - e. yet, they ignored how this had come about, for the record continues, 2 Kings 14:25b–26 '[... according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, which was very bitter;](#)

for there was neither bond nor free, nor was there any helper for Israel.' (NAS)

- f. God is going to shake them out of their complacency
2. God's judgement will come like a flood
 - a. 'Will not the land tremble for this, and all who live in it mourn? The whole land will rise like the Nile; it will be stirred up and then sink like the river of Egypt.' (Amos 8:8 NIV)
 - b. we are very aware about flooding due to the hurricanes that pass through the Caribbean every year, and most of you can recall the vivid pictures on television and in the newspapers of the devastation in New Orleans
 - c. well, although, the people of Israel did not have television or newspapers, they were aware of the floods of the Nile
 - (A) every year during the rainy season in the tropics
 - (B) the rain would fall on the headwaters of the Nile
 - (C) thousands of miles upstream from Egypt
 - (D) and surely, certainly, forcefully – every year
 - (E) the Nile would rise and inundate the land
 - (F) shaking the people from their normal occupation
 - (G) as the water stretched for miles across the fertile plains of Egypt, bringing rich nourishment to their crops
 - (H) and then subside to the way it was
 - d. that, says God, is how my judgement will come
 - (A) surely, certainly, forcefully
 - (B) covering the land
 - (C) subsiding after they are carried away
 - e. and you, O Israelites, are going to be shaken, tossed about along with your land
 - f. you will no longer be complacent in your luxury and mountain fastnesses, but you will mourn instead
 - g. God's judgement will come like a flood
 3. God's judgement will come at the most unexpected time
 - a. 'In that day,' declares the Sovereign Lord, 'I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth

in broad daylight.' (Amos 8:9 NIV)

- b. Note, if you will, the paradoxical juxtaposition of ideas
 - (A) the way we know that it is noon is that the sun is in its highest position in the skies; otherwise, it isn't noon
 - (B) but that is when the sun will set – at noon
 - (C) and what makes the earth dark is that there is no light
 - (D) but it is when the day is brightest, in broad daylight, that God will bring the darkness of judgement on them
 - c. so then, Israel, in the midst of your prosperity
 - (A) when your borders have been enlarged
 - (B) when you are most comfortable
 - (C) when things appear to be at their brightest
 - (D) then God will bring the darkness of judgement on them
 - d. Jesus warned His disciples in the same terms about future judgement, Matthew 24:44, 'For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.' (NAS)
 - e. God's judgement will come unexpectedly
4. God's judgement will turn them upside-down
- a. 'I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping. I will make all of you wear sackcloth and shave your heads. I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.' (verse10 NIV)
 - b. Israel will be going their own, merry way
 - (A) carrying on with their self-satisfying religiosity
 - (B) self-indulgent, making music, having fun, carrying on, enjoying themselves
 - c. when God will step in, bringing judgement
 - (A) changing laughter to tears
 - (B) changing singing to mourning
 - (C) changing the sweet to be bitter
 - d. Israel will be shaken upside-down out of their complacency

- D. God Will Turn Away verses 11–14
1. and when He does so,
 - a. this people will at last long for Him, long for His word
 - b. and He will not be there, it will not be found
 - c. they will be in the midst of a famine – not for food, not for drink – but a famine of the presence and word of God
 - d. *'The days are coming,' declares the Sovereign Lord, 'when I will send a famine through the land — not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.'* (Amos 8:11 NIV)
 2. so they scurry, from place to place, searching and not finding
 - a. *'Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.'* (Amos 8:12 NIV)
 - b. as the flood has covered the whole land, so it has swept away the word of the Lord:
 - (A) they go from sea to sea – from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea – from the north to the east – from the border of Syria to the borders of Ammon and Arabia
 - (B) and the word of God is not to be found
 3. and they are left faint, weak, confused, hungering, thirsting
 - a. *'In that day the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.'* (Amos 8:13 NIV)
 - b. those who according to all natural rules
 - (A) the young men and women
 - (B) who should be strong and vital
 - (C) will be among the weakest
 4. all this arising, from their continue refusal to listen to God's word and their turning away to Jeroboam I's golden calves at Dan and Bethel
 - a. these will, says verse 14, *'... fall and not rise again.'* (NAS)
 - b. all because they had turned away from God
 - c. so God turned away from them

E. How Do We Treat God's Word?

1. In the 19th century, an infectious plague swept across Europe
 - a. it started in the universities, in the theological faculties
 - b. where one by one the inerrancy, truth, and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures were called into question, then doubted and finally denied
 - c. piece by piece this infection went from country to country
 - d. first in the universities, then in seminaries, then in pulpits and finally among the people in the pew
 - e. page by page, book by book, the Bible was reduced to a collection of the best thoughts of men, of ideas, of myths
 - f. and God was denied and His word neglected

2. the movement was slow, gradual, insidious
 - a. even in the mid-20th century
 - (A) authors of that time who made no pretence of being devout Christians, and yet who made easily and accurately Biblical allusions in their novels
 - (B) but its onslaught proceeded, as many formerly sound seminaries began to turn out unbelieving preachers, preaching a gospel of unbelief to an unbelieving people
 - (C) and today, God's word is scarcely treated with any respect in any secular novel
 - b. yet there were denominations, churches and godly men who stood and fought against this disease
 - (A) our own Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches was formed about 1950 in the face of this
 - (B) Billy Graham, for 50 years, has preached the gospel with his battle cry, 'The Bible says ...'

3. Yet, even so, where do we as Christians stand today
 - a. I will not attempt to quote statistics on how little time those who profess themselves to being evangelical, born again, Bible believing Christians spend in reading God's word
 - b. nor will I adduce the various surveys that have been done which show how woefully ignorant many Christians are of some of the most basic Christian truths and Bible stories
 - c. but I will remind you of what Peter warns us in his first letter, '[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?](#)' (1 Peter 4:17 NAS)

- d. God's word is now disdained by our public officials, by the courts (although, perhaps, retained as a 'symbol of truth'), by our schools, by the media
 - e. God has greatly blessed our western lands, but like the people of Israel who were complacent in their prosperity, no longer is it generally recognized that 'Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.' (James 1:17 NAS)
 - f. if we who proclaim the name of Christ, who claim to be 'people of the Book' should continue to neglect God's word, how long will it be before it is taken away from us?
 - g. then, perhaps, we will treasure it as we ought, just as we now treasure clean air, clean water in these polluted days
4. John Chrysostom, a great preacher, born in the fourth century, said 'The lack of Scriptural knowledge is the source of all evils in the church.' ^{-(2)}} – it is still true today
- a. how equipped are you to fight against these evils?
 - b. 'Thy word,' says the psalmist, 'I have treasured up in my heart that I may not sin against Thee.' (Psalm 119:11 NAS)
 - c. are you hungry for God's word?
 - d. cars cannot go on an empty tank; is it time you filled up?

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. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. From Leadership magazine, Spring 1995, page 67; Kerux illustration #3258