

What Is And What Ought to Be Amos 7:7-9

Introduction:

1. After my second year of preaching, Phyllis and I moved to a small town just west of Cincinnati called Harrison.
2. The meeting place was near the downtown businesses and among those was a print shop where we did frequent business.
3. The owner was an older small bald headed man who said he could not believe in a God that allowed all the evil that is in the world.
4. If God is both good and powerful why doesn't He do something to change the circumstances that we observe?
5. Indeed, what is is not what ought to be! It is evident everywhere in Scripture. The print shop owner is not the first to observe this.
6. God used a plumb line to represent what ought to be, but He says, Judah rejected the law of the Lord (2:4) and Israel sold the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trampled on the head of the helpless and a man and his father resorted to the same girl (2:6-7).
7. There seems to be a contradiction between what we observe and what faith calls on us to believe.

Discussion:

I. What is is a necessary stage in the realization of what ought to be. God, as King, is a God of justice and righteousness and will not allow evil to continue unchecked. The Bible describes all of history as moving in the direction of God making things right. Whether you begin in Genesis, Amos, the prophets, or the N.T. the message is the same.

- A. This is the message of Amos (1:2).
 1. God will bring judgment on the nations.
 - a. Damascus (1:3-5).
 - b. Gaza (1:6-8).
 - c. Tyre (1:9-10).
 - d. Edom (1:11-12).
 - e. Amon (1:13-15).
 - f. Moab (2:1-3).
 2. And on His people.
 - a. Judah (2:4-5).
 - b. Israel (2:6-8).
- B. While Isaiah sees a coming day of judgment he goes beyond judgment to God's establishment of His own kingdom (2:2ff).
 1. He sees a Messianic King (11:1ff).
 2. Zion the seat of God's sovereign reign (2:3).
 3. A righteous remnant of repentant ones (10:20-23; 11:11ff).
 4. It is not group election, but repentant individuals that are citizens in this kingdom.

- C. Jeremiah also sees God's coming judgment upon Judah's sin (ex. 4:22).
 - 1. He sees God producing a new Israel governed by the house of David (Jer. 23:5ff).
 - 2. They will be united together by a New Covenant (31:31ff).
 - 3. It will be a covenant written on their hearts.
 - 4. It will not be a nationalistic relationship, but an individual relationship (31:34) involving forgiveness (cf. Ezek. 16:60ff; 18:1ff).
- D. In Ezekiel stress is laid on the ideal of the restoration of Israel as the permanent dwelling place of Jehovah (40-48).
 - 1. A Messianic king is in the background (37:24ff).
 - 2. Jerusalem will bear a new name "The Lord is there" (Ezek. 48:35).
 - 3. The city will be rebuilt.
 - 4. The temple will be perfectly symmetrical (40:1ff).
 - 5. A new Jerusalem will be established.
 - 6. The purified land is the dwelling place of Jehovah.
- E. The N.T. presents the movement of history toward what ought to be.
 - 1. A very direct statement is found in 2 Thess. 1:4-10.
 - 2. The sufferings of this present time are moving toward the glory to be revealed (Rom. 8:18ff).
 - 3. We are involved in a spiritual war whose end will be the complete subjection of every power hostile to God (Psa. 8:6; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Phil. 2:8-11). Even the gates of Hades (death) cannot overpower the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:18).
 - 4. "God will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).
 - 5. The Book of Revelation closes with the judgment (20:11-15), a new heaven and a new earth (21:1ff) and the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:10ff).

Conclusion:

- 1. This is a three-part lesson.
 - a. In this part we have established that what is is a necessary stage in the realization of what ought to be. Scripture calls on us to believe that God is moving in history to make things right. Thus, He is both good and powerful and actively involved in rectifying the situation that characterizes this world. The question is "Are we on board with it?"
 - b. The second part of this lesson (to be presented next week) asks and answers the question, "What role does suffering play in God's plan to make things what they ought to be?" If what is is a necessary stage in the realization of what ought to be then the suffering that we witness today must play some role in God's redemptive work. What is it?
 - c. The third part of this lesson (to be presented in 2 weeks) asks and answers the question, "How do we become what we ought to be?" (And act as a force in making things right?)
- 2. Are you like the print shop owner? Do you refuse to believe in a God who allows evil?
- 3. Or do you accept the God of Scripture who is in the business of redeeming the situation?
- 4. You need to understand that if He acts immediately you will be destroyed for your sins! However, if you can allow for His graciousness He allows you time to repent and live.

5. There is a day coming when all will be made right. "God is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).