

Amos 6

8-8-02

“At Ease in Zion!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Dennis Stripmatter sharing – A new missionary we support. Elder with David Pham.
- 1.2. Introduce Paul and Suzzanne Luciani – W/Latin Amer. Missions.
- 1.3. **Open:** Chad Walsh (*book: Early Christians of the Twenty-First Century*). "Millions of Christians live in a sentimental haze of vague piety, with soft organ music trembling in the lovely light from stained-glass windows. Their religion is a pleasant thing of emotional quiver, divorced from the intellect, divorced from the will, and demanding little except lip service to a few harmless platitudes. "I suspect that Satan has called off his attempt to convert people to agnosticism. After all, if a person travels far enough away from Christianity, he or she is always in danger of seeing it in perspective and deciding that it is true. It is much safer, from Satan's point of view, to **vaccinate a person with a mild case of Christianity** so as to protect him from the real disease."

2. FALSE CONFIDENCE! (1,2)

- 2.1. (1a) Complacency –
 - 2.1.1. “At ease in Zion” – what a description of some believers today!
 - 2.1.2. Zeph.1:12 “And it shall come to pass at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And punish the men Who are settled in **complacency**, Who say in their heart, 'The LORD will not do good, Nor will He do evil.’”
 - 2.1.2.1. **Complacency** – is based on **lies**; motivated by **pride**, & leads to **trusting** something other than God!
 - 2.1.3. The scripture talks about “Good rest & bad rest”!
 - 2.1.3.1. **Good rest** – Sabbath rest; “& you will find rest for your souls”
 - 2.1.3.2. **Bad rest** – Complacent, at ease.
 - 2.1.3.3. **Difference?** A commander after a long march tells his soldiers “**at ease**”, then “dismissed”. That rest is well deserved. – That is much different than the **ease** that characterized the military forces at Pearl Harbor. For many that **ease** proved fatal.
 - 2.1.4. Complacency is born out of false confidence.

2.2. (1b) False Confidence!

- 2.2.1. **In 2 things:** Theological conviction (Zion/hey, we are God's people!); & Their Military advantage (Mnt. Samaria/a natural military advantage; high on a hill, steep sides).
- 2.2.1.1. **We say it this way today** - "We are safe because we are evangelicals" - "Don't mess with us because we are the U.S."
- 2.2.2. **Trusting in Military Might & not the Lord's** - (or in, "your might"; or "others might")
- 2.2.3. **Q: How often** do you feel confident & secure in **your own** strength?
- 2.2.3.1. God so hates this... This is "**Pride's breeding ground!**"
- 2.2.3.2. **Self-confidence** is like the stagnant water across the street which only breeds mosquitoes.
- 2.2.4. **Q: What did Zechariah say?** "**Not by might nor by power, but by My _____, Says the LORD of hosts.**" (Zech.4:6)
- 2.2.4.1. **Illustration:** You're in a row boat, rowing as hard as you can against the wind, when a motorboat comes a long side, throws you a rope & says, "tie it on"!
- 2.2.4.1.1. **Your choice... your rowing power, or His motorboat power!**
- 2.2.4.1.2. Yield to the H.S.; Abide in me; "**Take My yoke upon you... For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**";
- 2.2.4.1.3. (1 Jn.5:3) "**His commandments are not burdensome**".
- 2.2.5. **Are you a take charge person? How do you try to get things done?**
 "Not by **thinking** nor by **planning**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD of hosts."
 "Not by **manipulation** nor by **intimidation**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD of...
 "Not by **being unbending** nor by **being harsh**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD...
 "Not by **flattery** nor by **good looks**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD of hosts."
 "Not by **personality** nor by **influence**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD of hosts."
 "Not by **wisdom** nor by **strength**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD of hosts."
 "Not by **preparation** nor by **research**, but by **My Spirit**,' Says the LORD of hosts."
- 2.2.6. **The Spirit of God** is the one who enables the believer to do the Father's work, & to overcome obstacles.
- 2.2.7. **True or false?** "It is ONLY through His Spirit that anything of lasting value is accomplished?" **[true]**
- 2.2.7.1. **Corrie Ten Boon** - A glove cannot do anything by itself, but when my hand is in it, it can do many things. - **We** are like **gloves**. It is the **Holy Spirit** in us who is **the hand**, who does the job. We have to make room for the hand so that every finger is filled.

- 2.3. (2) **Calneh**(in Syria), **Hamath**(170 m. north of Galilee) had fallen to Assyria; & **Gath**(Near med. Coast; Goliath was from here) had recently been overwhelmed. **And so are you Israel able to stand?**

3. **RESULTS OF A COMPLACENT LIFE! (3-8)**

- 3.1. (3) **Woe to you who put far off the day of doom!**
- 3.1.1. What a declaration for those “waiting” for a more apropos time!
- 3.1.2. Sounds like Felix, when Paul was speaking to him, "**Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.**"
- 3.1.3. Lk.12:34 "**But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.**"
- 3.2. (3-6a) **Self-Indulgence** –
- 3.2.1. It is no more a sin to lay on a **king size brass** bed as it is to sleep in a **sleeping bag**. Or to eat **lamb chops** over **grits!**
- 3.2.2. **But!...**Wealth tends to make us **more** self-indulgent. We say, "**I earned it, & I have a right to spend it on myself if I want to.**" That is true...**IF** the Lord **cuts us loose** with it; & **IF** we are **not indifferent** to the needs of others!
- 3.3. (6b) **The Sin of Omission!** – Sin is not only for what you’ve done, but what you’ve “**failed to do!**”
- 3.3.1. This is one of the results from living a **complacent Christian life.**
- 3.3.2. *They do not have thoughts for their soul!*
- 3.3.3. (Boice) “They will drift into hell strumming & humming the worthless songs of our culture!”

4. **THREE JUDGMENTS! (9-11)**

- 4.1. **3 Judgments:** Death(9,10), Destruction(11-13); & Defeat(14)!
- 4.2. **[1] Death!** (9,10)
- 4.3. (9,10) This little illustration describes the greatness of the judgment.
- 4.3.1. 10 out of 11 will die.
- 4.4. (10) **Burn the bodies** – not nec. a reference to cremation, but to **incense** that they burned to honor the dead.

- 4.4.1. **Jer.34:5** “You shall die in peace; as in the ceremonies of your fathers, the former kings who were before you,so they shall **burn incense** for you and lament for you”
- 4.4.2. **2 Chron.16:14** “They buried him(King Asa) in his own tomb, which he had made for himself in the City of David; and they laid him in the bed which was filled with **spices** and **various ingredients** prepared in a mixture of **ointments**. They made a very great **burning** for him.”
- 4.4.3. **Q:** But what about cremation? Is it right?
- 4.5. **Death** – diff. attitude concerning death in **East** from **West**.
- 4.5.1. **The shriek** - When death 1st occurs you hear “**A sharp, shrill, ear-piercing, shriek**”¹ - **This announces what has happened!**
- 4.5.2. **The wail** – This is followed by the shriek. Wailing takes place from the death to the burial.
- 4.5.2.1. Micah compares it to the cry of wild beasts or birds, “**I will make a wailing like the jackals** And a mourning like the **ostriches**,” (Micah 1:8) [coyote screams]
- 4.5.3. **Exclamations of sorrow** – (2 Sam.18:33 “**O my son Absalom; my son, my son Absalom; if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!**”)
- 4.5.4. **Professional Mourners were called in** – (Jer.9:17,18 “**Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come. Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water."**)
- 4.5.4.1. **See** Amos 5:16. They had even “skillful lamenters”.
- 4.5.4.2. **We** might think that odd...but many in the West **hire non-religious musicians & singers** to play at their loved one’s funerals to comfort them!
- 4.5.5. **Other Expressions of Grief** – Wearing of **sackcloth**; rending of **garments**; & **beating** of breast.
- 4.5.6. **Another is of course Tears** – (Jn.11:33-35 “**Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.**”)
- 4.5.7. **Wrapping the body** – Napkin over face, hands & feet were wrapped, rest of body wrapped in strips of cloth.
- 4.5.7.1. **Laz.** - Jn.11:44 “**And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.**”

¹ “Manners & Customs”; pg.142-146

- 4.5.8. **Body placed on a Beir**(beer) – pole at each corner/coffin, put on shoulders to the tomb.
- 4.5.9. **Embalming Spices** – Used when they could be afforded.
- 4.5.10. **Burial follows quickly** – They held a primitive idea that “**the spirit of the one who dies, hovers near the body for 3 days after death.**”
- 4.5.10.1. Maybe this is why Martha thought that reviving her brother’s body was hopeless because he had been dead **4 days**.
- 4.5.11. **Following the Burial** – Often the sorrowing ones would **fast** up to the funeral. Then following the burial they would be offered **bread & wine** as a comforting refreshment.
- 4.5.11.1. Jer. 16:7 refers to this “**Nor shall men break bread in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother**”.
- 4.5.12. **Cremation?** – (*Publius Cornelius*)Tactitus[*Tasitus*] the historian wrote [concerning the period 14-96ad] said, “**The Jews were adverse to cremating the corpse, as was frequently the practice of the Greeks for inhumation.**”
- 4.5.12.1. The exception was Saul & his sons, “**Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.**” (1 Sam.31:11-13)
- 4.5.12.2. **Probably an emergency measure so the Philistines wouldn’t molest the bodies.** {they did bury their bones}
- 4.5.12.3. **Cremation for us?** – **Q:** Is it ok?
- 4.5.12.3.1. Pastor Chuck said, “**Ashes to ashes dust to dust, what does it matter if in 6 minutes or 60 years?**”
- 4.5.12.3.2. Cases of those who died in a house fires. Or lost at sea.
- 4.5.12.4. I like the symbolism regarding the resurrection of the body, “**plant me in the ground, 1 day I will sprout forth!**” (Jesus said of himself, “**unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.**”)
- 4.6. (10b) **We dare not mention the name of the Lord** –
- 4.6.1. **Note: someone will say**(not that it is right, but out of fear of the wrath of God returning, & realizing he “missed a few”...& come again w/judgment)

- 4.7. [2] **Destruction!** (11-13)
- 4.8. (12) There is **spiritual & moral order** in the universe that is just as impossible to ignore as the **natural order**.
- 4.8.1. To **pervert justice** is **like asking horses** to **run on rocks**, or for **oxen** to **plow through rocky terrain**.
- 4.8.2. God's dealings with his people had been as useless as "plowing rocks" would be.
- 4.8.3. **Q: Could God say the same about you?**
- 4.8.4. **Q: Is there an area where God has been whispering to you, & you are not listening? {Is there a relative you need to **forgive**? An old friend He wants you to **call**? A missionary that needs encouragement that you need to **write**? A situation at work you still need to **deal with**? A friend you need to **Confront**? A child that needs **correction**?}**
- 4.8.5. Israel wasn't being as smart as the animals here! They thought they were "**the exception to the rule!**"
- 4.8.5.1. **Back Pews for new families w/children**(people just move sign); **Handicap Parking spot**(my leg hurts a little); **Oh turn "MY" cell phone off?** - **My favorite, Seatbelts on plane**(please leave you seatbelts on unto the plane has taxied up to the gate..."click!")
- 4.9. (13) **Lo Debar**(E. of the Jordan River) – Lo Debar = "nothing".
- 4.9.1. RSV does a word play on the name: "**Your greatest achievements are great nothings**".
- 4.9.2. **Karnaim**(25 m. E. of Galilee) –
- 4.10. [3] **Defeat!** (14)
- 4.11. **Entrance of Hamath** – or, "**Lebo Hamath**". 100 m. N. of Galilee.
- 4.11.1. **Valley of Arbah** – extends 100 S. of the dead sea. [Next time we go to Israel we'll pass through the Arvah boarding crossing, near Elat]
- 4.11.2. These last 2 names then cover the entire length of Israel.
- 4.11.3. The destruction will be top to bottom! (like, San Diego to Shasta in Ca.)
- 4.12. **End: Read Poem** "Abandoned" (to the H.S.)