

# When God Calls The Common: Amos

## Amos 6:12-14

Well, where do we find God's children this week?

No surprise here—they are in a state of rebellion and spiritual blindness!

### **Amos 6:12**

*(KJV) Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:*

*(NIV) Do horses run on the rocky crags? Does one plow the sea with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness—*

God, through Amos, is using ridiculous rhetorical questions here to frame the ridiculous nature of Israel's behaviour. Amos, by his sarcasm here is saying *I will expose your ridiculous actions within the realm of the ridiculous so you can see your behaviour for what it really is—ridiculous!*

The first rhetorical question asks if we should run horses on rocky ground where they will surely stumble, fall, break their legs, and be rendered useless. *Ah, no?* Or should we run oxen and plough over the same rocky, rough, uneven mountainside where no soil or greenery exists to plough? *No again.* Then Amos follows up by applying the same anti-logic to the unrighteous actions of the Israelites. In the simplest of terms, Israel is opposing God and His very character—turning “justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness—“

### **Matthew 6:33**

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

The message of Amos in 6:12 is couched in rhetoric to help the corrupt Israelites understand their wrong-headed conclusions forged in the self-deceit of their sins.

### **Hebrews 3:12-13**

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

We can also assume that not only was the Word of God not being obeyed but that it was nothing more than a religious prop.

### **James 1:22**

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

The bottom line is that the violence and corruption of the Israelites did not fit their identity as God's own.

### ***Ephesians 5:3-5***

*But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Beloved, when you and I sin, we do not look like the saints God proclaims that we are—we are not “[being] holy as He is holy” (1 Peter 1:16). To project Christ, and be salt and light unto this world, we must remain in Christ, stay connected to Him through unbroken communion, prayer, and obedience to His Word. In this way, we will bear righteous fruit that glorifies God (John 15:8).

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: How has God made provision for our fallen tendency to stumble in sin?

\*STUDY POINT: Write down and memorize six New Testament Scriptures that could be cleansing agents for our minds and hearts when we stray from God's will.

### ***Amos 6:13***

*(KJV) Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?*

*(NIV) you who rejoice in the conquest of Lo Debar and say, "Did we not take Karnaim by our own strength?"*

We know—in sharp contrast to the boasting of Israel here—that God is the One Who facilitates victory for His children all through history. For the Israelites to claim that they alone achieved victory or when they exaggerate their wins is pure pride on their part. God hates pride:

### ***Proverbs 6:16-17***

*These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

When Israel is far from God in relationship, God is far from them in battle. He is nowhere to be found. In fact, because their cup of iniquity has overflowed, God will abandon saving Israel from the Assyrian army and will turn and exact His judgment on Israel.

In battle is where we all need to be still:

**Psalm 46:10**

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

And in battle is when we need to be especially attentive to obeying God's Word:

**Joshua 1:8**

*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

**Amos 6:14**

*(KJV) But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness.*

*(NIV) For the LORD God Almighty declares, "I will stir up a nation against you, Israel, that will oppress you all the way from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah."*

From north to south, not one acre of land, property, or people will be spared from God's consuming fire through the Assyrian invasion. The same God that brought such deliberate covenant blessing upon a land and people will now bring deliberate punishment through destruction to the extent of but a remnant.

In conclusion this week, remember that we are to endure hardship as discipline:

**Hebrews 12:3-17**

*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing,*

*he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Perhaps our hardships look nothing like what the Israelites were facing. It matters not—God knows how much discipline it will take to draw us back to Himself. The very best response we can offer is to be still and know, to be humble and bow low, and to seek His face and pray in genuine repentance:

***Psalm 139:23-23***

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

And then this:

***Psalm 51:10***

*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland