



The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
As Christians, we must be among the first to work for justice in every area of society, not primarily for ourselves but for others. And we must banish prejudice and unfair attitudes from the inner citadel of our hearts.

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
How does my response to injustice strengthen or weaken my witness for Christ?

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
(Isa 59:4 NKJV)
(From "Our Daily Bread", Jan 20, 2003)

Series: GOD DEMANDS JUSTICE

**UNIT: Micah Calls for Justice
Among Unjust People**

NEXT WEEK

**No Rest for the Wicked
(Micah 2:4-11)**

God Will Not Delay Justice Amos 8:1-6, 9-10

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson reminds us that **God Will Not Delay Justice**. The **study's aim** is to point out that while God does not judge evil instantly, He will in due time. The **study's application** is to set our hearts on patiently waiting for God's judgment in His time and in His way.
(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

A suggested outline of the book of Amos is that of three major sections: chapters 1, 2; chapters 3-6; and chapters 7-9. The first section features eight messages to eight nations and cities. The second section has five sermons that announce God's pending judgments on Israel; these are marked by the phrases "Hear this word" (Amos 3:1; 4:1; 5:1) and "Woe" (5:18; 6:1). The third section contains five scenes of divine revelation to Amos (7:1-3; 7:4-6; 7:7-9; 8:1-3; 9:1-4); we might call these visions, although that specific word is not used. In addition, there is a dramatic, historical interlude in the last part of chapter 7. Each of the first three visions features a promise of destruction for Israel. The first vision is that of an invasion of locusts; Amos besought God that this would not happen, and God relented. The second vision was that of a ravaging fire; again Amos prayed that it might not come to pass, and the judgment was averted. The third vision was that of testing Israel against God's plumb line, and Amos was convinced: God's judgment was just. The destruction of Israel would reach to the palaces and the sanctuaries of Israel. It was at that point in Amos's prophesying that "Amaziah the priest of Bethel" told him to shut up and go home, back to Judah (Amos 7:10, 12, 13). In response, Amos protested that he was not a prophet in any professional way. He then listed the ways he made a living (see above). Amos also responded with prophecies about Amaziah: he would die in a foreign land, his children would die by the sword, and his wife would become a prostitute in order to survive (Amos 7:14-17). Whether staying in Israel or leaving for Judah, Amos had two visions yet to be received. Today's lesson takes us to the first of those remaining two.

Destruction! Desolation! Doom! These concepts dominate the book of Amos. Would his preaching have produced the desired result of repentance if he had toned down the harshness of his message? That is extremely doubtful, for nothing was going to change the people at that point. That, however, did not mean that there was no room for a positive aspect to the message. Most prophets blended messages of doom and hope. Amos, for his part, offered a very positive outcome in Amos 9:11-15. Two of these positive verses are cited by James at the famous conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15:16, 17). James made the point that God was concerned that Gentiles be included for honoring his name and that the prophets had foretold that that was to happen. God loves the world, and the prophets revealed that even Gentiles would be included in God's plan. God wants to forget sins! This is affirmed in Isaiah 43:25, a verse that has been termed the high point of grace in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 31:34 also affirms as much. That verse is a part of the promise of the new covenant; included in Hebrews 8:8-12, it forms part of the longest quotation of the Old Testament in the New. The outcomes of the current ungodly trends and megatrends are important to contemplate. But the Christian must not become so enamored with how bad things are (or can be) that he or she forgets the glorious blessings that God has planned for his people. Thus while we acknowledge the reality of sin, we also accentuate the positive of forgiveness that is available in Christ alone. The church must determine to do what it can to care for the needy, but the spiritual dimensions concerning sin, righteousness, and forgiveness must be shared as primary. May it be so until Christ returns!

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

GOD'S SEASON FOR JUDGMENT (AMOS 8:1-3)

A time of gathering (1-2)

A gathering of the elect (Matt 24:31)

A gathering that will bring all the scattered children of God together (John 11:51-52)

A gathering of the redeemed from all the earth (Ps 107:2-3)

A gathering so that we may give thanks, praise and worship to God (Ps 106:47)

A gathering together of the people God created and are called by His Name (Isa 43:6-9)

An end of time (2)

A time of judgment (Eccl 3:17)

A time that has been appointed by God (Dan 11:35)

A time when Jesus hands over His kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor 15:24-25)

A time that God controls (Isa 46:10)

A time that is nearer than we think (Rom 13:11-12)

A time of suffering, death and silence (3)

Suffering because of not returning to God (Amos 4:10)

Death accomplished by God's angels (Isa 37:36)

Silence because of the power and holiness of God (Lev 10:1-3)

GOD'S REASON FOR JUDGMENT (AMOS 8:4-6)

Judgment for mistreatment of the needy and poor (4)

Mistreatment by denying rights (Eccl 5:8)

Mistreatment by oppressing the poor (Luke 4:18)

Mistreatment by not defending the rights of the weak and poor (Ps 82:3)

Mistreatment by rejoicing in the misfortune of the poor (Job 31:29-30)

Judgment for dishonoring the time for rest (5)

A Sabbath time of rest (Exod 20:9-10)

A time of rest from work (Neh 13:15-18)

A time of rest that can be entered into (Heb 4:3-6)

Judgment for greed (6)

Greed that manifests itself through property gained using fraud (Mic 2:2)

Greed that manifests itself through illegal possession (1 Kings 21:16-19)

Greed that manifests itself through discontent with current possessions (Eccl 4:8)

GOD'S DAY FOR JUDGMENT (AMOS 8:9-10)

A day of darkness (9)

Darkness of the land (Isa 5:30)

Darkness of wrath (Zeph 1:14-15)

Darkness before the coming of the day of the Lord (Joel 2:31)

A day of mourning (10)

Mourning because of not being prepared (Matt 22:11-13)

Mourning over sin (2 Cor 7:10-11)

Mourning over acceptance of sin (1 Cor 5:2)