

Wake up, Time is Running Out!
Amos 5:18, 21, 23, 26, 6:1, 3, 4,6

Intro: When I was in the Army – Reveille. We have been blessed these last three weeks with, what I believe to be, three of the best mission messengers we have ever had. At the end of September Brother Eric told us what it is going to take to reach the world in our generation; **A Right Foundation, A Right Focus and to Realize That the Results are up to God.** Then two weeks ago Brother Bender came in here and not only told us what it was going to But he demonstrated in his own life what real passion for the lost looked like. Then last Sunday Brother Brad demonstrated from God's Word just why we are here, why God didn't take us to heaven when we got saved but decided to leave us here. God left us here, according to Bro Jones, to **Stir the Flame of those around us, Share our Wealth, and to Spread the Gospel.**

In all three messages there was one common theme; the job of worldwide missions is far from complete and time is running out. That's right; time is running out for us to carry out the **Great Commission.** Brother Bob Bear, BBFI missions' director emeritus, once said that he believed that not only could be completed in our generation but that we just might be the last generation to try.

I tend to agree with him that we just might be the last generation able to carry out the **Great Commission** and the reason is that **Time is Running Out.** We need a wake up call today to that very fact **Time is running out** and we need to get serious about worldwide evangelism. God's final judgment is looming on the not to distant horizon and we, the believer of this generation, cannot

afford to set back and wait for someone else to take responsibility for the task.

In our text today we see a prophet who spoke during a time in Israel's history when God's judgment loomed on the horizon and he was called upon to sound the warning to them. What was the warning? **Wake up Israel you have placed your security in the wrong thing.** Time was literally running out for them and yet they believed they were safe and could not be touched by anything because they were in *Zion*.

Amos' warning, though given to the Jewish people, is just as appropriate for us today in four ways.

[Read Amos 5, 18 & 6:1, 3-4/Pray/dismiss Jr. church]

Amos in His Time

Amos was a herdsman and a cultivator of sycamore trees when the Lord called him to be a prophet. He lived in the village of Tekoa, about eleven miles from Jerusalem, during the reigns of Uzziah in Judah (790-740 b.c.) and Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (793-753). Amos was a "layman," a humble farmer and shepherd who was not an official member of the Jewish religious or political establishment.

At the time of Amos' ministry, both Judah and Israel were enjoying prosperity and security. Luxury abounded and "religion" was popular though not life changing. Israel flocked to the royal chapel at Bethel and Judah celebrated the feasts enthusiastically but the sins of both nations were eroding the religious and moral fiber of the people. Making money was more important than worshiping God (8:5); the rich exploited the poor, the judicial system was corrupt, and injustice flourished.

Amos warning to Israel was a call to repent of “ritual religion” and seek the Lord sincerely. He warned them that God would judge them for the way they were abusing their religious heritage. In spite of the nations’ peace and prosperity, Amos saw the end coming and warned the people to prepare to meet their God.

One of the key verses in Amos is 5:24—“...**let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream!**” a command the nations need to obey today but even more importantly churches. As God’s representatives in the age of grace we; like the Jew of Amos’ day are held to a higher standard than the world around us. Amos told the Jewish people that their time was running out. Today, if Amos were to redirect his message to the church; our Church, he would change his message little. We, those in this room today, need the same warnings the Jewish people did. So today we are going to be warned by Amos to **Wake up, New Hope Baptist Church, Time is Running Out.**

Amos’ warning to the Jew should cause Christ’s church, our Church to tremble in our sandals today.

Amos’ **First warning...**

- I. **Don’t Be Ignorant Of God’s Word** Vv. 5:18-27.
 - A. **‘The Day of the Lord’** is a period of time during which God judges His enemies and establishes His kingdom on earth.
 1. The people Amos was addressing saw *“the Day of the Lord”* as a time of great deliverance for the Jews and terrible punishment for their enemies
 2. The prophets, however, realized that “the Day of the Lord” was also a time of testing and purifying for

Israel when God’s people would go through tribulation before entering the kingdom of God

- B. Amos tells them that it isn’t going to be a day of celebration it is going to be a **Day of darkness not a day of light**
 1. Their enemies would be judged but so were they going to be
 2. Amos is talking about Assyria’s conquest of Israel in 722 B.C.
 3. They failed to see what was coming because they ignorant of God’s Word – they wouldn’t listen to his messenger
- C. Amos **looked around** (Vv. 21-24) and pointed out the sins of the people and their **ignorance of the Word of God**
 1. **Hypocritical worship** Vv. 21-22;
 - a. They honored special days on the Jewish calendar, called sacred assemblies, offered sacrifices, brought offerings, and sang songs of worship
 - b. Their meetings looked beautiful and holy, yet God not only refused to accept their worship, He said He despised and hated it!
 2. **Lack of concern for others** Vv. 24;
 - a. This is a key verse in the Book of Amos, it reveals God’s concern that His people be righteous in their character and just in their conduct
 - b. No matter how much “religious activity” we participate in, if we don’t love our brother and our lost neighbor, we can’t honestly worship and serve the Lord

3. **Phony Religion** (Vv. 25-27) He looked back and reminded them of their relationship to Jehovah after He had delivered them from Egypt
 - a. He had wanted faith, obedience, and love; but at Mt Sinai, after vowing to serve God, the people worshiped a golden calf
 - b. Throughout their history they sacrificed to false gods even while Jehovah was leading the nation through the wilderness!
4. After arriving in the Promised Land, two generations of leaders guided them in the way of the Lord
 - a. But by the third generation, the people had turned to the idols of the nations around them (Judges 2:10-15).
 - b. God had to discipline them by allowing these nations to enslave Israel in their own land.
5. This time, Amos tells them, they would have to *leave their land* and go into exile wherever the Assyrians sent them
6. *"Where ignorance is bliss,"* wrote Thomas Gray, *"'tis folly to be wise."*
 - a. But the poet was writing about the naive innocence of childhood, not the fatal ignorance of adulthood
 - b. In the Christian life, ignorance of God's truth keeps us in darkness; so we must understand His "word of prophecy" that shines as a light in this world's darkness (2 Peter 1:19).
- D. Paul had a similar message for the church in Ephesus.
 1. Writing to the Church he gave them this warning ***"...walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,"***¹⁸***Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God***

2. ***through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart..."*** (Eph 4:17-18).
2. The church of today is woefully ignorant of much of God's word that is why so many false teachers are finding fame and fortune at their expense
3. My friends, every Christian should know their scripture so well that they literally view the nightly news through the lens of Scripture.
4. For example: Do you realize that for the first time in recorded history Russia and Iran are on the verge of forming an alliance? An alliance that was prophesied about at the end of the 5th century B.C.? Ezekiel 38-39 was written around 592-570 B.C. and speaks of this very thing happening sometime near or right prior to the period of time we refer to as the end times.
- E. Folks we need to be informed on what is going on around us in view of Scripture
- F. Jesus warned the people when He was asked for a sign, ***"...When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"*** (Matt. 16:2-3).
 1. The same message can be said of the Christian today
 2. They are more concerned with how much they have than they are for the lost and their church
 3. 10 churches close their doors every day in America because they can't afford to stay open
- G. The more churches that close make it just that much more difficult for missionaries to raise their support

- H. We are running out of time to reach the lost and there are fewer and fewer people in this country willing to give to missions to see lost people saved.

Amos' **First warning...Don't Be Ignorant Of God's Word, his second warning is...**

II. **Don't be Indifferent Regarding Your Responsibility** Vv.

6:1-3

- A. This "woe" or warning to both Judah ("Zion") and Israel ("Samaria") was that they had become indifferent toward God's Word and the judgment that was hanging over them
- B. They were calling themselves "chief of the nations" and enjoying an unwarranted false confidence
1. They were confident because of their geography.
 - a. Sitting on Mt. Zion, Jerusalem was considered impregnable and Samaria also had a seemingly secure position
 - b. But when God decided to deal with these cities, nothing could stop the enemy.
 2. Their prosperity
 3. Their government
 4. Their military strength
 5. The men in government said the nation was safe and secure, and the people believed them, just as people today believe the political "experts" and the polls
 6. False confidence that's based on expert advice, statistics, and material resources and that ignores the spiritual dimension of life is sure to lead to defeat.
- C. Amos mentioned areas in Syria and Philistia that had already fallen to the Assyrian army and then asked two

questions: **"Are you better than they? Is your territory bigger than theirs?"**

1. If the enemy had already destroyed places bigger and stronger, what hope was there for the Jewish people, especially when the Jews were living like the Gentiles and were disobeying the Lord?
 2. God doesn't look at the talent of national leaders, the power of a nation's army, or the prosperity of its economy
 3. God looks at the heart, and the heart of the two Jewish kingdoms was far from the Lord.
- D. **"It can't happen here!"** was the motto of the complacent leaders
1. **"If a day of judgment is coming, it's surely a long way off"**
 2. Whenever anybody mentioned the possibility of national disaster, the leaders laughed at the idea and disregarded it
 3. But God saw things differently
 4. He said, **"All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us "** (9:10)
 5. Yet by their very indifference, they were bringing the day of judgment that much nearer
- E. Complacency and indifference are dangerous sins, they are based on lies, motivated by pride, and lead to trusting something other than God
1. Like the people in the church of Laodicea, complacent people consider themselves **"...rich, and increased with goods"** and in need of nothing (Rev. 3:17)
 2. In reality, however, they have lost everything that's important in the spiritual life

3. When the Lord sees His people becoming complacent and self-satisfied, He has to send trials to wake them up
- F. Are we guilty as a church of being indifferent toward our responsibility?
 1. Are we doing all we can for worldwide missions?
 2. Is everyone here today investing in this church and our missions program?
 3. My goal for this years' **Missions Emphasis Month** is that every person with an income make a financial commitment to mission through our **Faith Promise Commitment**.

Amos' First warning...Don't Be Ignorant Of God's Word, his second warning is... Don't' be Indifferent Regarding Your Responsibility, and His final warning is...

III. **Don't be so Self-Indulgent** Vv. 3-7

- A. Amos described their indulgent way of life—a way of life that left no place for the disciplines of the spiritual life
 1. They were living for pleasure not for the glory of God
 2. They enjoyed the luxury of beds of ivory and luxurious couches while the rest of the world slept on mats on the ground
- B. They enjoyed elegant feasts, eating lamb and veal, drinking wine in abundance, enjoying beautiful music, and wearing expensive perfumes
 1. The rest of the world couldn't afford to kill tender lambs and calves, but had to settle for occasional mutton and beef, perhaps from a sacrifice
 2. They would serve only cups of wine, not bowls; and their only "cosmetic" was olive oil
- C. There's nothing wrong with enjoying good food or good music, **provided the things of the Lord are uppermost in your heart**

1. David designed and made musical instruments, but he used them to praise the Lord
2. Abraham was able to prepare an elegant feast for his guests (Gen. 18:1-6), and the Lord didn't rebuke him
3. But the sin in Amos' day was that these luxuries distracted the people from the real problems of the nation, and their responsibilities toward the Lord
4. The sins of the nation and their own sinful life no longer grieved them, **"they [were] not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph [Samaria]"** (Amos 6:6)
- D. They had become so self-indulgent that they ate choice food, sang joyful songs, drank to much, covered themselves with the best ointment, "and {were] not grieved" for any sufferings of those around them even their own flesh and blood
 1. Luxury shuts out suffering, because any vivid knowledge of or dwelling upon sufferings disturbs our indulgence and makes us ill at ease
 2. **Albert Barnes**, Theologiest of the early 19th century says of this passage, **"Selfish wealth persuades itself that there is no suffering, lest it should be forced to think of it; it "will" think distress either too little, so that it can relieve itself, or so great that it cannot be relieved; or it will philosophize upon distress and misery, as though it were best relieved by its own luxuries"**
- E. When cultures get pleasure-mad, it's a sign that the end is near
 1. Belshazzar and his leaders were enjoying a sumptuous feast when the city of Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians (Dan. 7)

2. The Roman citizens enjoyed free “*bread and circuses*” as the empire decayed morally and politically and eventually fell to the enemy
 3. One of the marks of the last days is the fact that people become “***lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God***” (2 Tim. 3:4)
 4. No wonder Jesus warned His followers, “***And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares***” (Luke 21:34).
- F. It’s hard today to find people who are truly burdened about the sins of the nations and the sins of the church
1. Too many are like the rulers of Samaria or the members of the church of Laodicea, closing their eyes to reality and living on fantasy Island based on false theology
 2. How many believers can honestly say, “***Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law***”? (Ps. 119:53) Or, “***Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law***”? (v. 136)
 3. Too many Christians are laughing when they should be weeping (James 4:8-10)
 4. Tolerating sin when they should be opposing it (1 Cor. 5:2)
 5. Dr. Vance Havner (1901-1986), told of having dinner in an expensive restaurant with some friends and discovering that the dining room was dimly lighted. At first, he could scarcely read the menu, but then he found he could see fairly well. He said to his friends, “*Isn’t it strange how easy it is to become accustomed to the dark?*”

6. That’s one of the problems in the church today: We’ve gotten accustomed to the darkness, and our lights aren’t shining bright enough.
- G. These self-indulgent people who considered themselves to be the first in the land, God said they would be the first to go into captivity (Amos 6:7); for theirs was the greater responsibility
- H. I am afraid that the Lord’s Church has fallen in to the same state
1. We have allowed the world to establish our priorities for us at the expense of the Great Commission
 2. Churches are closing because employed Christians set in service week after week and never make a financial investment in the work
 3. Lying to themselves with the thought, “*Its my money and God would have me take care of my family first, the church will just have to make do without my money.*”
 4. The truth is that God doesn’t need your money, in fact he says “***...I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings***” (Hosea 6:6)
 5. He doesn’t need your money he wants obedience
 6. When we disobey the Lord in our tithes and offerings we are stealing from the Lord (Mal 3:8-9)
 7. Just as importantly you have financial struggles because you have robbed him rather than honored him.

Conclusion: The church of today – and this includes us – has taken the Lord’s blessings for granted and hoarded them to be used on our own sinful lusts rather than to be used to rescue a lost and dying world. But Amos’ warning to us is this, ***Don’t Be Ignorant***

Of God's Word, Don't be Indifferent Regarding Your Responsibility, and Don't be so Self-Indulgent.

In our world today for every person, \$2,094.00 is spent annually on entertainment. \$90.00 per year per pet (this is all kinds of pets, not just dogs and cats but fish, horse, etc) is spent on pet food. \$412.00 per year per person is spent in America on fast food. Now here is the shocking fact, **in America \$15.00 per year for every Baptist is spent on missions.** No statistics are kept on how much we Baptist spend on entertainment, pet food and fast food but it would be my guess that we spend the national average on all three.

As a Church, we spend about \$300.00 per year per adult with an income on missions. That means that if we are average Americans – and I believe we are – we spend more than \$1,700 per year more on entertainment than on missions, \$112.00 per year more on fast food than on missions, the only thing we spend less on is pet food and that is only because not all of us own pets.

You know what the worst thing is? That by Jan 1st, 2008 there will be an estimated 6.6 Billion souls on earth and more than 2 Billion have not been evangelized; have never heard the gospel. What is even more concerning is that 91% of our mission's resources go to evangelize the 2.2 Billion who live in what we call Christian nations (North, Central and South America and Europe).

God calls his church – New Hope Baptist Church – you, me us together – to simply and wholeheartedly and obediently do with these needs what Jesus did with them. He wept and prayed over them. He took action to go and deliver them. He carried to them the message of hope, and He transformed death into life. We are called to go and take the message of the gospel to all people

groups of the world, (there are about 27,000 people groups on earth) 13,000 of whom have not been reached. If you won't answer the call to go then God expects you to answer the call to send. You send by your ***Faith Promise Missions Commitment***

The challenge is going to be a bit different today:

We will pray and then I am going to have everyone stand and each of you who have an income I am going to ask you to come forward and take one of the ***Faith Promise Missions Commitment Cards*** from one of the deacons standing here. Then I want you to take it to the alter and kneel and pray and ask the Lord to reveal to you what amount he wants you to commit for the next year to missions, then write it down on the card and then take it home and pray over it all week, next week we will have you turn it in.