

Amos 9:11-14

May 26, 2019

"It only takes a spark to get a fire going..."
...and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing"

Unless that spark happens to flash within a forest of ancient oak perched high above the river Seine in the capital city of France. For rather than experiencing warm cozy feelings about a campfire as the lyrics of that familiar song suggest...

this particular spark set a fire that spread rapidly and totally destroyed the roof top and central spire of the famed Cathedral Notre Dame as locals watched in horror.

But it wasn't just the French who stood aghast that day gasping in shock. The Notre Dame Cathedral belonged to the world. For this 850-year-old medieval edifice had become one of mankind's most iconic structures, a symbol of Paris, of France and of religion, for it was once built for and dedicated to the glory of God. Yet within the span of a single hour, it had suddenly, unexpectedly become a ruin.

And so it is with much in life...one moment all is well...
our health, our family, our friends, our jobs, our

accomplishments, all seem sturdy and strong. But the next moment a spark ignites, a fire erupts and it all comes tumbling down.

Ruins. It all comes to ruins. And it is often a ruin of our own making, one that we have brought on ourselves.

Proposition:

But from out of such ruins God does his greatest work. When all is lost, God raises up what has fallen, and restores the fortunes of his people.

And we shall turn to a little known prophet of the Old Testament to see that this is so. Please open your Bibles to the book of Amos. It's about two thirds of the way through the Bible, It goes Ezekiel...Daniel...Hosea...Joel...Amos. If you get to Revelation you've gone to far.

Our text is from the 9th chapter of Amos, verses 11-15.

In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that has fallen
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins
and rebuild it as in the days of old,
that they may possess the remnant of Edom

and all the nations who are called by my name,
declares the LORD who does this.
“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD,
when the plowman shall overtake the reaper
and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.
I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and
inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.
I will plant them on their land,
and they shall never again be uprooted
out of the land that I have given them,”
says the LORD your God.

PRAY

Before we can appreciate our glorious text this morning, it is important to get a feel for the context from which it arises. The last five verses of the book of Amos do not come out of nowhere. They, actually, quite literally arise out of ruins. Ruins that were not yet visible to the original readers, but ruins that nevertheless would become imminently visible to everyone watching! Which brings us to our first point from the book of Amos:

1) Ruined by God

Amos wrote to the nation of Israel back during a time of great peace and prosperity. The kings mentioned in the opening verse of the book were generally considered effective leaders. They were among the best rulers Israel and Judah had experienced since the glory days of David and Solomon. People were feeling secure in Samaria. They were at ease in Zion.

But as per the oracle of Amos, God saw it differently. God saw a disobedient people, a people so blind to Him that they had to be punished for it. They had to be brought to ruin.

Let's take a quick peak at some verses from the chapters that precede Amos 9:11 to see the people "who are at ease in Zion" from God's perspective and to hear what He is going to do for them!

The LORD roars from Zion
and utters his voice from Jerusalem;
the pastures of the shepherds mourn,
and the top of Carmel withers

Amos 1:2

For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not revoke the punishment,
Because they sell the righteous for silver,

And the needy for a pair of sandals

Amos 2:6

Is a trumpet blown in a city,
And the people are not afraid?
Does disaster come to a city,
Unless the LORD has done it?

Amos 3:6

I overthrew some of you,
As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
And you were as a brand plucked out of the burning;
Yet you did not return to me,
Declares the LORD

Amos 4:11

Seek the LORD and live,
Lest he break out like fire in the house of Jacob
And devour, with none to quench it for Bethel.
O you who turn justice to wormwood
And cast down righteousness to the earth!

Amos 5:6-7

For behold, the LORD commands,
And the great house shall be struck down into
fragments,
And the little house into bits.

Amos 6:11

The high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the
sword. Amos 7:9

The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of your deeds
Shall not the land tremble on this account,
And everyone mourn who dwells in it.
Amos 8:7-8a

Behold, the eyes of the LORD God are upon the sinful
kingdom,
And I will destroy it from the surface of the ground,
Except that I will not utterly destroy the house of
Jacob, declares the LORD. Amos 9:8

So there you have it.

For 127 verses, Amos persistently warned the people of Israel that ruin was coming...ruin that God himself would bring upon them...yet ruin that they deserved!

But surprisingly, inexplicably the prophesy of Amos did not end there. After Amos penned verse 9:10, there was still a little bit of papyrus left to write upon... and God had some unexpected things to say in that wee little space.

So out of ruins comes our second point.

2) Raised by God

Listen to the surprising change in God's tone beginning at verse 9:11:

In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that has fallen
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins
and rebuild it as in the days of old,

Did you hear that? The same God who promised to bring the house of Israel to ruin earlier has suddenly changed course. Rather than demolish and destroy, God suddenly wants to raise up and rebuild!

The same God who promises destruction, promises to build something new upon those ruins. And it is something he will do...he will initiate.

But just what is this booth or tent of David that God wants to rebuild? What tent is he talking about?

At the time of the writing of Amos, a temple was still standing in Jerusalem, a temple built by David's son Solomon, where animal sacrifices were still happening. But the northern kingdom of Israel, to

whom Amos was speaking, no longer worshiped there. Instead, the Israelites of the North had exchanged the proper worship of God for the worship of idols in other places. And it's no wonder God was planning to judge them for it.

But for the Northern tribes, it was not always so. If we look back to the time of David, prior to the construction of the temple we find in 2 Samuel 6:17 that **the people brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside a tent that David had pitched for it.** This tent was located on Mt Zion in Jerusalem, essentially in David's back yard. It was during this brief shining moment in Israel's history that worship of God was at its purist. It was from this time period that most of the Psalms were composed and genuine heartfelt worship of the LORD was at an all time high.

It is to this tent that Amos refers. This is the one ruined place in all of Israel that God wants to rebuild in a startling way. He wants to raise up a place of true worship amongst his people.

And that's not all. God not only wants to rebuild it, he wants to rebuild it on a grander scale.

During David's time, only the people of Israel worshiped God. But according to Amos 9:12 **all the nations that are called by my name** will be taken

possession of by this rebuilt tent. This new booth of David will reach out and touch people from every tribe and tongue, not just Israel.

But God's promise to build on a grander scale goes even further, as the next few verses in Amos show.

Pay attention to the imagery described in Amos 9:13, where the text shifts from a metaphor of construction and building to a metaphor of planting and harvesting.

Behold days are coming...when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed. Amos 9:13

In other words, those working God's harvest will not be able to keep up with God's work. No sooner will they have reaped than there will be another crop to harvest. And no sooner will they have harvested than there will be another crop to sow. People will clamor for the presence of the Lord from all corners of the globe. God's harvest of souls will explode. **It will be as if the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.**

(Luke 10:2)

And that's not all.

Amos 9:13 goes on to paint another picture for us

Note the last phrase of verse 13. "The mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will flow with it." What begins as a drip becomes a steady flow and even grows into a mighty torrent as it races down hill. That last phrase "will flow with it" can also be translated "dissolves" or "melts" as in the NASB... so that the hills in the path of this flow literally dissolve in its wake.

This is highly unusual imagery. It is not often that wine is depicted in such flood like proportions. In scripture, a flood is usually depicted as consisting of water not wine. And when it is a flood of water it almost always refers to judgment not blessing.

This is the way Amos speaks in 5:24 where God declares,

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5:24

But wine, on the other hand, "gladdens life" (Eccl 10:19). It refreshes. It revives. So rather than a picture of justice, the idea in verse 9:13 is one of blessing.

But the imagery of soaking in a bath of wine may not appeal to you. It may seem a bit strange to those of us who do not consider wine either sweet or good.

So think of it this way. When you step into a shower and start to turn the hot water on, the showerhead begins to drip. With each turn of the knob, the hot water flows more and more until it becomes a steady stream of goodness that washes us clean and refreshes our senses.

So that is what Amos 9:13 is trying to describe for us. It's the picture is of a refreshing flow of sweetness, not destruction. It is a welcome shower of the goodness of God that flows from his presence and soaks everyone in its wake with its sweetness ...a presence that God himself has provided...a presence that emanates from the reconstructed ruins of this once fallen booth of David.

And that is not all.

Verse 14 of Amos chapter 9 extends the work of God's rebuilding and planting to his people.

Notice what it says:

After the Lord restores the fortunes of his people they will respond in like manner...in three ways. (9:14)

1. They too shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them.
2. They too shall plant vineyards and drink from them.

3. They too shall plant gardens and eat from them.

And all of this is God's doing. Verse 12 declares this emphatically: it is "the LORD who does this"(9:12). We do not cause it. But we do get to participate!

But this sounds almost too good to be true. How could an ever increasing harvest and never ending supply of sustenance happen in this life?

Such a place must be heaven. It sounds so much like the new heavens and the new earth described in the last couple chapters of Revelation...and it is! On your own time take a look at the last chapter of the Bible (Revelation 22) and note the similar imagery with today's text. There will come a day when Amos 9:11-15 will be fulfilled in full.

But according to the New Testament writers, Amos chapter 9 is already being fulfilled. It is already in play. Let me show you what I mean.

Let's eavesdrop upon a speech in the middle of the book of the New Testament book of Acts. In Acts chapter 15 we find the Apostle James addressing a gathering of early church leaders about what to do with all the Gentiles (or non-Israelites) pouring into the church. Listen to what he says:

After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. Simeon (Peter) has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for his name. And the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

After this I will return and I will rebuild
the tent of David that has fallen
I will rebuild its ruins,
and I will restore it
that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,
says the LORD who makes these things.

Acts 15:13-17

Now what prophet is James quoting? He's quoting Amos, of course. He is quoting straight from our text.

And what does James say about our text? First he assumes that the fallen tent of David has already been rebuilt and restored!

And then he goes on to say that just as Amos had written centuries earlier, this restored tent of David would be more of a draw to the Gentiles than the Jews. In fact, from Acts 15 onward, the church would be considered a gathering of people from all nations, not just Israel. And this was God's doing... his plan all along.

So according to Acts the prophecy of Amos 9 is already in progress. The fallen tent of David has already been raised. How so? In short, it was raised in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

You see, Jesus was a direct descendent of David, who was the promised Messiah written about in all the Old Testament prophets, including our friend Amos. Let me show you where.

Turn back a page from our base text and take a look at Amos chapter 8, verses 9-10.

On that day, declares the Lord God,
I will make the sun go down at noon
And darken the earth in broad daylight.
I will turn your feasts into mourning
And all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on every waist
And baldness on every head;
I will make it like the mourning for an only son
And the end of it like a bitter day.

Amos 8:9-10

Now, this imagery should sound very familiar to those of you who know the gospels' description of that day

when Jesus Christ died. According to Mark chapter 15 there was darkness over the whole land from noon to three. Those gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast of that day were thrust into mourning. They were mourning for an only son...the one and only Son of God being reduced to ruins before their very eyes.

But what happened three days later. Our text from Amos 9 answers for us. **In that day God raised up the booth of David that had fallen, rebuilt a gathering of people as in the days of old and started drawing those called by his name from every nation.**

Yes, the prophecy of Amos 9:11-15 is in progress. It is not just a future event. God is raising, repairing, rebuilding, restoring and ever expanding his church, through Christ even to this day!

Even as the culture around us seems to be crumbling, God is at work reaping and harvesting and blessing us with Himself like a never-ending supply of wine...Oh taste and see just how good He is!

Which brings us to our final point.

3) Planted by God

This promise of restoration is not a temporary one. Notice the permanence expressed in the final verse of our text.

I will plant them on their land and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them (Amos 9:15).

What God has planted will never be uprooted. What God has caused to happen cannot be undone... for He has said so.

In essence this raised up tent of David will never be reduced to ruins again. And those who are apart of it are planted there. They shall not be moved!

But this begs a question. How can we know that we are apart of this raised up booth of David? How can we know that we are eternally planted on this land given to us by God?

Once again, let's turn to the book of Amos for guidance.

The book of Amos has very few commands from God. It is mostly a declaration of what God will do. He will ruin the disobedient, he will raise up a remnant, and according to the last verse he will permanently plant that remnant.

But in chapter 5 he does give two very clear commands and he reinforces each through repetition.

The first can be found in 5:4:

For thus say the LORD to the house of Israel:

Seek me and live...

Amos 5:4

And again in 5:6

Seek the LORD and live,

Lest he break out like fire in the house of Jacob

Amos 5:6

So there is one...the command **to seek the LORD wholeheartedly**. For if you don't you will most certainly come to ruin.

And the second command is very much like it. Check out verse 5:14.

Seek good and not evil that you may live,

And so the LORD the God of hosts will be with you.

Amos 5:14a

And he repeats it in the very next verse

Hate evil, and love good,

And establish justice in the gate;

Amos 5:15a

In context, this second command clearly refers to our relationships with other people. Seek their good and not their evil... for this is just. Those who don't will certainly come to ruin.

So there you have it...two commands

- Seek the LORD wholeheartedly and live.
- Seek your neighbor's good and live.

Don't these commands sound strikingly familiar to the two Jesus taught us in Mark chapter 12?

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
- And you shall love your neighbor as yourself

How do you love the Lord your God?

- By seeking Him with all your heart.
- By longing for Him with all your soul.
- And by bowing to Him with all your strength.

And how do you love your neighbor as yourself?

- By seeking their good and not their evil
- By not looking to trip them up or stumble
- By putting their interests ahead of your own.

Seek these two things and you will live.

Seek these two things and you will be planted forever in the land the LORD your God has given you.

Why because God has willed it so.

Why because God has made it so.

Notice the very last phrase in the book of Amos... the very last words of Amos 9:15

**I will plant them on their land...
...says the LORD your God.**

According to Amos the God who promises to raise up ruined souls and plant them eternally in his presence belongs to those who have sought him with their whole heart, to those who have made Him their own.

Throughout the book of Amos the LORD God is just that...the LORD God...dishing out judgment and bringing ruin

- upon those who do not seek him...
- to those who do not trust Him...
- to those who do not make Him their own.

And such were all of us.

But here at the very end...

...this LORD has become YOUR God.

By drawing you to his raised up tent of David

By uniting you to Christ and his church.

By planting you in such a way that you will never be uprooted again.

PRAY