

# FAMINE FOR THE WORD OF GOD

*AMOS 8:11-13*

## *INTRODUCTION*

- Amos was an untrained man...he was essentially a layman.
- He was unique among the Hebrew prophets and employed unique style to get his message across.
- He first spoke to: Damascus, then Gaza, then Tyre, then Edom, then Moab, and finally Judah and at last he came to Israel.

### **The message of Amos for the people of his time had a two-fold significance:**

1. It revealed that God maintained His government over all the nations, not just Judah and Israel.
2. Privilege creates responsibility. The mildest things were said to Damascus, yet the fiercest things were said to Israel.
  - The words of the text constitute the final statement of the judgment that is falling upon Israel...there is to be a famine--but not of bread and water. This famine will be for the word of God.
  - This is a new image in the prophetic word. We are familiar with judgment by the sword; through a plague; from locusts and fire, but not of a lack of the word of God!
  - But this is, according to Amos, the final act in God's judgment upon a guilty people.

We'll break this down into three points:

1. The famine itself
2. The ensuing restlessness
3. The fainting of the strong.

### ***1. The Famine***

- Amos does not say that God withholding His word from the people caused the famine. It is not because God has stopped speaking.
- His description of the famine indicates rather a condition of man in which he is incapable of discerning. In other words, God is speaking but man has lost his ability to hear Him.
- What is the condition of being without the word of God? >> It is as if the unseen God has stopped talking. There is no authority in man's life, no still small voice convicting him of sin.

- There may be people here today who no longer hear that quiet voice in their hearts, and it may seem like God has moved away from you. The question is not where is God now, but rather, why did I move away from Him?
- In the case of Amos, what was the cause of the famine? >> It was the worship of the calf! Idolatry...the people had substituted something in place of God.
- If people put anything in front of God, then though God speaks in a thousand voices, He won't be heard.
- It may be like that for some of you here now...God's Word is being silenced in your mind and heart because you are worried about something...you family, your business, your health...etc. If that is the case, you will leave here saying, "God didn't speak to me".
- If you are experiencing a famine for the Word of God, rid yourself of your idols and the famine would be over.

## ***2. The Restless Search***

- Notice how Amos describes a people who are searching for the Word of God.
- Whenever a man ceases to hear God, he begins a search to fill the void, and at first it may be a search for God, but it will turn out to be an ignorant search because he will not recognize the voice of God.
- Ask these searchers what they want, and they will tell you: A new sensation, some new "thing", and some new thrill.
- But what they really want is the Word of God! They want God Himself, communicating to them through the Word.
- But in an ignorant search, God is not recognized, sin is not admitted and God is not talked of.
- Man today is in that state. He is searching for God in all the wrong places...education, science, entertainment, and religion...
- Man prefers a sickly sweet imitation of God, a religion that does not convict of sin, a church that does not preach salvation by faith through Jesus Christ!
- But a church that leaves that out is a lost church...and substitutes good works and false theology for the living, vibrant Word of God.

## ***3. The Fainting of the Strong***

- Amos speaks of the "fair virgins" and the young men.

- He chooses the one group who are the strongest and best, the most hopeful, those who are most able to endure. He says that his group will thirst and faint!
- The best without God will fail.
- Where the Word of God fails, what happens?
- We are in danger of being disinterested...careless...bored...then in a state of restlessness.
- We search after something we do not understand in ways that are displeasing to God.

## ***CONCLUSION***

- The prophet stresses privilege and responsibility...God's people are judged more harshly than anyone else because they have had the privilege of hearing Him.
- I believe America is there today.
- If we have lost our confidence in...our love of...our sense of...and our appreciation of the Word of God, why is it? Perhaps it is God's judgment.
- To turn from the cause of the famine would be to disannul the effect. How do we turn from the cause? By turning from our idolatries to the living God.
- Don't turn to the Word of God first. You must turn away from that which comes between you and God, and turn to God Himself.
- The Word of God will be a sealed book as long as your life is full of idols.
- Just as God cannot hear you if your life is full of sin, you cannot hear God.