

# **God Is Not Fooled!!!!**

**June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Lesson 2**

**Devotional Reading:** Psalm 14

**Background Scripture:** Amos 5

**Printed Text:** Amos 5:14, 15, 18-27

**Key Verse:** Amos 5:24

## **Central Thought**

God cannot be fooled even once. The genuine follower of Christ pursues good for all, loves to do so, and actively seeks opportunities in that regard.

### **Amos 5:14-15**

14) Seek God, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15) Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

### **Amos 5:18-27**

18) Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.

19) As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.

20) Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?

21) I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

22) Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

23) Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

**24) But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.**

25) Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness for years, O house of Israel?

26) But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

27) Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts.

## Desires Of God

5:14) The Hebrew command translated as *seek* is used five times in this chapter. The objective of this command are both positive (vv. 4, 6, 14) and negative (vv. 5,14). The positive objective has the same goal each time: *to Live*. The Israelites already have the concept that the Lord is with them (*as ye have spoken*), but they tend to take for granted that God will always say, "I forgive."

15) Three imperatives regard what to *hate*, what to *love*, and what to *establish*. The third one is particularly confrontational, for it is the opposite of the current state of affairs in Israel. The people are guilty of taking advantage of the poor, receiving bribes, and becoming rich by doing so (Amos 5:11, 12). They have abandoned righteousness, and they hate anyone who rebukes them (Amos 5:10).

There is the possibility of hope that God *will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph*. The two tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim (Joseph's sons) are part of the 10 that constitute the northern nation, Israel; in context, *the remnant of Joseph* should be taken to refer to that nation broadly. But the competing (Idolatrous) center of worship in Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-30; Amos 3:14) is located within the territory of Manasseh.

## Day Of The Lord

18) "Hear this word" begins each of chapters 3, 4, and 5. Two messages that follow in Amos 5:18 and 6:1 are woe oracles.

In this particular woe oracle, Amos declares that people have a wrong understanding of *the day of the Lord*. They believe that it will be a glorious time of proverbial peace, prosperity, and progress. They believe that God will use His power to give other nations what they deserve. Amos shatters this delusion; the day of the Lord is a day of *darkness, and not light*.

19) Amos begins illustrating the nature of the day of the Lord by using animals: the lion and the bear. David used the same two when he described to Saul how the Lord had been with him (1 Samuel 17:34-37). The illustration this time is different, almost humorous. To be *running from a lion* only to meet *a bear* is not a desirable situation (compare Lamentations 3:10, 11; Hosea 13:8)!!

The second illustration draws on the supposed security that is found by entering a house, only to be bitten by a serpent. The intensity of the illustration indicates that the bite is of a poisonous kind.

20) Amos implies that it is only reasonable for a day of judgment to be darkness. One of the judgmental plagues in Egypt in the days of Moses was total darkness (Exodus 10:22). Other prophets also describe the day of the Lord as a day of darkness (Isaiah 13:6-10; Joel 2:1-2).

21) Amos has no hesitation about criticizing religious practices that are an abomination to God. Amos thunders that their rituals have become a sham. God despises what the people are doing, and He will have no regard for their observances of the feast days (Exodus 23:15-18; 34:22-25) and their solemn assemblies (Leviticus 23:36; Numbers 29:35; Deuteronomy 16:8).

Moses had frequently described the genuine sacrifices of Israel as being a "Sweet Savour" to God (Exodus 29:18; Leviticus 1:9, 13), but these have become malodorous to Him. Leviticus 26:31 names dire consequences: "I will make your cities waste,...and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours."

22) God is not fooled with what can be termed "Gifts of conscience"- Trying to buy His approval. The various offerings that the Lord has ordained for worship at the temple are being imitated in the northern nation of Israel, but "to do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Proverbs 21:3; compare Isaiah 1:11-14).

23) The book of Psalms establishes that singing and use of musical instruments may be included in ancient Israel's worship (Example: Psalm 150). The Lord authorized such instruments in the days of David (2 Chronicles 29:25). When the heart and conduct are not right however, God cannot bear to hear any musical expressions of worship.

### **Demand For Justice**

24) This verse is an example of Hebrew parallelism. *Judgment* (Justice) and *righteousness* are the same thing (see Job 29:14; Psalm 36:6; Isaiah 32:16) Religion without this is worthless.

The previous lesson shows how the rich in Israel are taking advantage of the poor. God had instructed His people to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt, and they are to have compassion for the under privileged.

Although the gospel is not to be twisted so that it is only a social gospel that meets physical needs, the gospel does include societal obligations.

### **Declaration of Penalties**

25) God now poses a rhetorical question through His prophet. One might initially expect a *yes* answer, given the fact that the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy list examples regarding *sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years*. But deeper probing reveals that the answer is actually *no*. Since of that worship was not to God, it was not genuine.

26) The Hebrew behind the verb *borne* may refer to a future event, as it is translated in Isaiah 14:4 ("Thou shalt take up"). A future reference here would make this verse part of the prophecy of what will happen when Israel goes into exile, never to return.

The identities of the gods are uncertain. The use of the word *star* may point to a fascination with worshipping the lights in the night sky (Compare Deuteronomy 4:19). Whether the reference is to a past or future trespass, Israel bears the guilt of worshipping other gods alongside the Lord, a violation of the first of the Ten Commandments. This is totally unacceptable.

27) Punishment is pronounced. Amos prophesies around 760 BC, and the northern nation of Israel is overthrown completely by the Assyrians in about 722 BC. The nation that is so prosperous will disappear in less than 40 years as the people go into captivity beyond Damascus. Details are given in 2 Kings 17.

Stephen quotes Amos 5:25-27 in Acts 7:42-43 to show that Israel has always been in rebellion against what God has ordained. The rebellion goes so far as to reject Jesus as the son of God.