



## Study 9 : "A God Of Wrath And Judgement" (Amos 2:4-16) Sunday, November 1, 2009 BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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### Introducing the Study

Just the title of today's Study, much less the content, would be greatly disputed: For example:

*"I believe strongly in God ... I don't believe in guilt ... I don't think any negative is a part of God ... we're not supposed to feel sorry for something we've done ... I believe God adores me and wants me to have everything I want; success, love, a terrific apartment, a joyful marriage, friends, money, a great job, gorgeous clothes, fame.*

(Naura Hayden, "How to Satisfy a Women," 1981)

*"Now we all know that the Sun does not actually rise in the east and set in the west but it appears so (to us) ... God is a God of unconditional love ... Anger and punishment are totally inconsistent with unconditional love. There cannot be an angry God who is also a God of love ... What the Bible says about an angry God is just an 'appearance' of the truth. It 'appears' that God is angry with us and punishes us when we turn our back on his love. But the reality is that the anger is in us and we are punishing ourselves."*

([www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk/an-angry-god.htm](http://www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk/an-angry-god.htm))

*"The view of the cross as the sacrifice for the sins of the world is a barbarian idea based on primitive concepts of God and must be dismissed."*

(John Shelby Spong, Episcopalian Bishop of Newark, USA, 1976-2000)

Apparently God is our private, non-judgemental personal growth facilitator. If he has any standards of his own, he respects us too much to push them onto us.

Any other reading of the ancient text is either our MISUNDERSTANDING

or the author's ERROR that we, with our more enlightened understanding, can disregard.

The prophets of Israel had a far different perspective. For example, Jeremiah:

Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. **Jeremiah 20:8**

And from today's Reading, Amos 1:2, 2:6,10,13 -

The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers ... This is what the LORD says: "... I will not turn back my wrath ... I brought you up out of Egypt and I led you forty years in the desert ... Now then, I will crush you as a cart collapses when loaded with grain. Amos 1:2, 2:6,10,13

The fact is that God's wrath is an integral part of the prophet's message.

The Scriptures leave us in no doubt about the cause and consequences of God's wrath ... and that, in his grace, he always provides a way out for us.

## A. THE CAUSE OF GOD'S WRATH

### 1. THE CASE AGAINST THE NATIONS SURROUNDING ISRAEL

Amos begins by pronouncing judgment on nations that had never directly known what God required:

- DAMASCUS : Excessive BRUTALITY on a conquered people. (1:3-5)
- GAZA : Treating people as COMMODITIES for financial gain (1:6-9)
- TYRE : Disregarding treaty OBLIGATIONS. (1:9-10)
- EDOM : Unrelenting HATRED. (1:11-12)
- AMMON : Cold-hearted INHUMANITY ... directed toward the powerless. (1:13-15)
- MOAB : Senseless REVENGE. (2:1-3)

## 2. THE CASE AGAINST ISRAEL

Amos then sums up Israel's guilt ... the nation that knew what God required:

... they have rejected the law of the LORD and have not kept his decrees **Amos 2:4**

Then he gives representative examples (each being expressly prohibited by God's Law)

This is what the LORD says: " ... I will not turn back my wrath. They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. **Amos 2:6-8**

## B. THE BASIS OF GOD'S JUDGEMENT

... on Israel is clear. God, through "SPECIFIC Revelation" had made his Law known ... and his people had agreed to live by those requirements in a Covenant Relationship:

You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in his ways, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that you will obey him.

And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised ... that he will set you in praise, fame and honour high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God ... **Deut26:17-19**

As Paul sums the situation up: Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law. **(Romans 3:19a)**

But what was the basis of God's judgement on the surrounding nations who, unlike Israel, had never been informed of God's specific requirements?

The Bible teaches that what God requires is made plain to all (GENERAL Revelation) through:

### 1. CREATION

The wrath of God is being revealed ... against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth ... since what may be known about God is plain to them ... For since creation God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. **Rom1:18-20**

### 2. CONSCIENCE

You have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself because you do the same things ... The requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness. **Romans 2:1, 15**

So these nations are not judged by what they did NOT know .... but on what they did !

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. **Romans 2:12**

Since all are judged on what they do know, Paul concludes that:

every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. **(Romans 3:19b)**  
and that all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. **(Romans 3:23)**

## C. A WAY OUT

Even though God is PATIENT, judgement is INEVITABLE

you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love ...  
... delivering us time after time. **Nehemiah 9:17, 28**

... man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. **Hebrews 9:27**

It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. **Hebrews 10:31**

But "judgement" is not the last word, JESUS is! We are ...

... justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice ... so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. from Romans 3:24-26

*The wisdom of God has ordained a way for the love of God to deliver us from the wrath of God without compromising the justice of God.* (John Piper)

"there is no condemnation.. for those who are in Christ Jesus" Romans 8:1