

Let Justice Roll (4)- I Abhor Jacob's Pride

(Amos 6)

I. Introduction

- A. My favorite part of *Tonight Show* (when I stay up that late) is goofy headlines
1. You know the routine; Leno collects headlines written a bit too hastily
 - a. They end up saying something totally different from what they intended
 - *Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told*
 - *Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers*
 - *Iraqi Head Seeks Arms*
 - *President Wins on Budget, But More Lies Ahead*
 - *Miners Refuse to Work After Death*
 - *Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant*
 - *2 Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter*
 - *Cold Wave Linked to Temperature*
 - b. It's all too easy to get things all scrambled up from how they are intended
 - c. These reporters all had stories to tell, but the words got a bit twisted up.
 2. Priorities can be twisted to the point where our lives don't make sense.
 - a. For Christianity to work, God must be on throne... and we can't be
 - b. But pride constantly gets the story twisted—we want to sit in God's seat
 - 1) Before Galileo, people thought the universe revolved around Earth
 - 2) It is all too easy for us to believe the universe revolves around us.
- B. The Bible has a lot to say warning us against the dangers of human pride
1. Solomon says God hates 6 things— he begins list with pride (**Prov 6:17**)
 - a. Literally he says “*high eyes.*” Most versions translate “*haughty look*”
 - 1) Word is used in **Num 15:30** for “*sin defiantly*” or “*with high hand*”
 - 2) We lift our eyes to see God (**Psa 121:1-2**). *Not to see ourselves*
 - b. Many Proverbs warn us about pride (**Prov 8:13, 11:2, 16:18, 29:23**)
 2. As we continue in the book of Amos, we see Israel's real problem
 - a. This problem causes others—like selling the needy for a pair of shoes
 - b. The real problem of God's people was their arrogance, conceit— pride
 3. Amos puts the problem plainly enough for all to understand (**Amos 6:8**)
 4. The problem is that pride is always the hardest thing to see in oneself!

II. I Abhor Jacob's Pride

- A. The problem as Amos presents it is one of a basic complacency ([Amos 6:1](#))
1. Amos attacks a rich, privileged class who are totally “*at ease in Zion*” (KJV)
 - a. This was a time of great prosperity, a Golden Age not unlike Solomon
 - b. Israel did what you do in boom time/bull markets—*assume it will last!*
 - c. Recession: Caused by lending/borrowing like boom time would last
 - 1) *60 Minutes* told of bank in Iceland that thrives; it is run by women
 - 2) It seems women tend to act based on what's best for whole group
 - 3) They didn't make bold, risky moves to rich quick (*Lehman Sisters*)
 - d. Israel act like they thought the good times would roll on forever? Pride!
 2. Amos uses the example of city-states Israel had captured ([Amos 6:2-3](#))
 - a. These captured cities were proof of Israel's power, influence, expansion
 - b. **Point:** If these cities fell to enemies, why did Israel think they couldn't
 - 1) Calneh and Hamath would soon fall to Tigleth-Piliazer III & Assyria
 - 2) Israel would fall too; her pride blinded her to her own vulnerability
- B. Pride led Israel to be unconcerned about anything or anyone ([Amos 6:4-7](#))
1. What a picture of a pride-filled, self-absorbed and self-centered people!
 - a. They lounged on fancy beds, used fancy lotions and drank fancy wines
 - 1) The “*cows of Bashan*” oppressed poor for more wine ([Amos 4:1](#))
 - 2) These were rich and important people into rich and important things
 - b. But they weren't into God and didn't care about the ruin of God's people
 - c. They saw THINGS but didn't see PEOPLE. *That's far too easy to do*
 2. Wednesday night, our projector all but blew up; it died a horrible death
 - a. We must replace it, so Roger and I were researching models of projector
 - b. In middle of all that, a couple came in asking for money to get to Indiana
 - 1) Out of work/money and trying to go home (maybe true, maybe not)
 - 2) So I'm listening to their story & my mind wanders back to projectors
 - c. I'm about to refer them to DUCO (which I know doesn't help with that)
 - 1) It hits me— I see projector as necessary and was dismissing people?
 - 2) I thought that Amos would not like that much... neither would God

III. Israel and the Dangers of Pride

- A. **First**, pride blinds us to **God**. More we focus on us, the less we focus on God
1. The more we trust in ourselves, the less that we can trust in God.
 - a. Do the math! There's **one** throne of our life; if we are on it, God isn't!
 - b. A great example is King Uzziah, a contemporary of Amos in Judah
 - 1) Uzziah presided over Golden Age in Judah during reign Jeroboam II
 - 2) He was great ruler blessed by God until his pride (**2 Chron 26:16**)
 - 3) The great king died a leper, cut off from the rest of people-- PRIDE
 2. I admit I just don't get the Prosperity Gospel or Health-n-Wealth theology
 - a. I understand why people want to believe that God wants us all to be rich
 - b. Biblically, I don't get it; God seems to think we prosper most in adversity
 - 1) Paul was thankful for his "*thorn in the flesh*" (**2 Cor 12:9-10**)
 - 2) James teaches us to count it as joy when we suffer trials (**Jam 1:2-4**)
 - 3) Peter seems to think we prosper through suffering trials (**1 Pet 1:6-7**)
 3. Pride and prosperity can declare independence from God (**Deut 8:12-14**)
- B. **Second**, pride can also make us independent of our responsibility to others
1. The Jews were to take care of poor —responsibility of being a community
 - a. They were not to deny justice to the poor in a lawsuits (**Exo 23:6**)
 - b. They were not to harvest a 2nd time but leave filed for poor (**Lev 23:22**)
 - c. The poor were to be given back coats taken in pledge at night (**Dt 24:12**)
 - d. The poor were to be paid at the end of each working day (**Deut 24:14**)
 2. But in Amos, the rich got richer on the backs of the poor (**Amos 2:7-8a**)
 - a. Israel was condemned because they abused the poor (**Amos 5:11**)
 - b. Why would people who claim to follow God intentionally abuse others?
 - c. Because pride makes you forget about needs or rights or others
 3. Paul makes it clear that we have responsibility to one another (**Phil 2:3-4**)
 - a. Paul points to two different motivation for how we treat others
 - 1) Selfishness and conceit (*pride*) leads us to always get what we want
 - 2) Humility (*opposite of pride*) leads us to help other get what they need
 - b. In the next verses, Paul points us to the cross as the ultimate humility

C. **Third**, pride ultimately blinds us to the reality of **ourselves**.

1. Pride gives us an unrealistic view of ourselves—status, desires, ideas
 - a. Contrast of how Laodicea's saw itself and what Jesus saw (**Rev 3:17**)
 - b. Pride leads to a twisted self-view that defies reality (**Hos 12:7-8**)
2. Pride is a carnival mirror that gives a distorted and unnatural view of self.
 - a. It magnifies our strength, hides our weakness, and denies a need for God
 - 1) James Quick Tillis was #1 contender when went to Chicago to fight
 - 2) Inspired by **Rocky**, he set down his suitcases, raised his arms
 - 3) He said, "*I will conquer Chicago!*" And his suitcases blew away!
 - b. Pride can lead us to overestimate ourselves; it distorts our view of self
3. Pride kept Israel from living as God wanted them to live—do same for us
 - a. "*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud...*" (**Rom 12:16**)
 - b. "*You are proud! Shouldn't you rather be filled with grief...*" (**1 Cor 5:2**)
 - c. "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*" (**James 4:6**)

IV. Conclusion

- A. Amos tries to get Israel to wake up and smell the brimstone (**Amos 6:11-12**)
 1. Amos gives his readers two rather ridiculous images to imagine
 - a. Horses climbing rocky cliffs? Oxen plowing those cliffs? Ridiculous!
 - b. So is chosen people who turn righteousness and justice to bitter poison
 2. Destruction was coming on God's people despite their pride (**Amos 6:14**)
- B. The song we sang earlier asks us to only imagine what we will do in heaven
 1. The song asks, "*Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel...*"

*Will I dance for you Jesus or in awe of you be still? Will I stand in your presence or to my knees will I fall?
Will I sing hallelujah, will I be able to speak at all?*

 - a. Well, we can only imagine—but we know can know what we won't do
 - b. We won't stand proudly as people who deserve all that heaven will be
 2. Awe? Joy? Overload? The one thing that won't be in heaven is PRIDE
 - a. If can keep you from going there—from seeing God, others and self
 - b. The secret is humbling ourselves NOW so we can bow for eternity
 3. If we have been too focused on ourselves, it is time for us to WAKE UP!