

Let Justice Roll (6): I Will Restore

(Amos 8-9)

I. Introduction

- A. Masab Yousef's future pretty much seemed set in stone before he was born
1. His father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, was leader of the terrorist group Hamas
 - a. Like his father, Yousef was active in many of the activities of Hamas
 - b. Like his father, Yousef was arrested by Israelis (*his father was arrested 15x!*)
 - c. Yousef seemed destined to be another victim of escalating Mideast hatred
 2. But Yousef was introduced to some Christians, to Christianity and to Jesus
 - a. He resonated with Christ's love and teaching like "*Love your enemies*"
 - b. He read the Bible, studied with Christian friends, and converted to Jesus
 - c. He knew this would cost him his family and country... and maybe more
I know that I'm endangering my life and am even liable to lose my father, but I hope that he'll understand this and that God will give him and my family patience and willingness to open their eyes to Jesus and to Christianity. Maybe one day I'll be able to return to Palestine and to Ramallah with Jesus, in the Kingdom of God
- B. This improbable conversion story sounds like that of another Israeli "terrorist"
1. Early Christians must have seen Saul of Tarsus as their Osama bin Laden of
 - a. He was there when Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died (**Acts 8:1**)
 - b. He basically led the charge in persecuting the church in Jerusalem (**8:3**)
 - c. Saul ran out of victims in Jerusalem, so he went to Damascus (**Acts 9:2**)
 2. Well, a funny thing happened to Saul on Damascus Road... he saw Jesus
 - a. After a visit from a preacher named Ananias, Paul gave his life to Christ
 - b. He was changed from persecutor to preacher, Rabbi Saul to Apostle Paul
 - c. The great persecutor of church became the greatest proclaimer of gospel
 - 1) It was like Pope becoming Pentecostal or me becoming Cowboys fan
 - 2) Or it was like the son of the leader of Hamas becoming a Christian
 3. Saul's conversion was unbelievable; the church had a hard time believing
 - a. For some reason they hesitated when he placed membership (**Acts 9:26**)
 - b. Can terrorists and murderers really become followers of Jesus Christ?
 4. If we don't believe these conversion stories, we don't believe the gospel

II. Amos: The Prophet of Doom and Gloom

- A. Today we end long series on Amos (*6 sermons/9 chapters; 13 for 52 for Jeremiah*)
1. I said in an earlier lesson that it's hard to be very light hearted in Amos
 - a. Amos is a fire-breathing, rip-snorting, no-nonsense, let-the-chips-fall guy
 - b. Oh, Amos has a heart, and he feels deeply for the people of Israel ([7:2,4](#))
 2. But Amos has a word from God, and he delivers it just as God says
 - a. Amos says things like *"this is what the Lord says"* or *"says the Lord"* or *"declares the Sovereign Lord"* about 45 times in 9 chapters (*do the math*)
 - b. Amos' message isn't what he would have chosen, but it is what God said
 3. So this what Amos preached... and why he was unpopular at Bethel/Samaria
- B. Condemnation continues as God finds Israel rotten to the core ([Amos 8:1-3](#))
1. *"Ripe fruit"* (*"summer fruit"*) is word play— *"fruit"* and *"end"* sound alike
 - a. In English, God might show Amos some *"dye"* and say, *"They will die"*
 - b. The point is the same, and that point would have been clear to Israel
 2. God doesn't just judge Israel, but He reminds them WHY ([Amos 8:4-6](#))
 - a. **Image:** Pious Jew impatiently waiting for Sabbath to end to cheat poor
 - 1) They cheat customers by using dishonest scales and selling chaff
 - 2) They buy and sell the poor for the price of a pair of shoes
 - b. But they would never miss church; they would never violate Sabbath
 3. Amos assures Israel that God isn't fooled by religious show ([Amos 8:10](#))
- C. So Amos was cast in the role of a prophet of doom-n-gloom; that makes sense
1. God just doesn't call prophets to delivery easy messages or smooth words
 - a. We don't call the police to report *"Everything is just great at 456 Oak St"*
 - b. We don't call the elders, *"Just want you to know that you do a great job"*
 - c. God didn't call prophets to preach, *"Thus saith Lord, Everything is cool"*
 2. No, Amos was called to preach hard things to a rebellious people
 - a. And he does his prophetic job so well that we almost smell the brimstone
 - b. But Amos has one surprise left, and it seems to come out of left field
 3. But to really appreciate this final twist, you must hear it in its context

III. The Surprise Ending (Read [Amos 9:1-4](#))

- A. Cheery stuff, isn't it? If you're depressed, just read Amos and it cheer you up!
1. Amos point here is— "*Not one will get away, none will escape*" ([9:1](#))
 - a. Amos goes through a series of ways people will try to escape ([9:2-4](#))
 - b. God will find them; His eye is fixed on them, and not for the good! ([v. 4](#))
 2. Amos sums up this section and the whole book pretty well in [Amos 9:10](#)
 - a. Amos singles out those who think that everything is going great
 - b. *Is there a warning for us?* How many today deny there will be judgment?
- B. But just when God's justice bears down—grace breaks out ([Amos 9:11-12](#))
1. The TV show *Law and Order* always has the "*Law and Order Twist*" at end
 - a. You've got it figured out, and then the bad guy turns out the good guy
 - b. Well, this final twist in Amos is too just too much for some scholars
 - 1) Achtemeier suggests that some later scribe wrote this and added it
 - 2) Someone else wrote it because it sounds out of character for Amos!
 - c. *Well, not out of character for God!* God both judges and also restores!
 2. So Amos promises a day of restoration and forgiveness for God's people
 - a. Earlier in Amos, the "*Day of the Lord*" is a time inevitable judgment.
 - b. He says, "*That day will be darkness, not light*" ([5:18](#)). Lion, bear, snake
 - c. But as the book of Amos ends, he points to a day of restoration and repair
 - 1) God will restore his people and rebuild nation "*as it used to be*" ([11](#))
 - 2) Israel will come to possess "*all the nations that bear my name*" ([9:12](#))
 - d. So in essence, this would be a restoration of more than just Israel itself!
 3. There was a time of justice, but also a time of restoration ([Amos 9:13-15](#))
 - a. Most of Amos' book was a promise of the reaper—as in the grim reaper
 - b. God promises to re-plow, re-plant and re-harvest his people after reaping
 - 1) God had once promised them a land of vineyards and fruit ([Dt 8:7-8](#))
 - 2) Now he promises to bring things back to what they were—*restored*
 - c. Israel would again be God's promised people in God's Promised Land
 - d. This time it would happen in the days of God's promised Messiah

IV. Conclusion

- A. OK Amos, you are confusing me— granted, that is pretty easy to do.
1. But is it gloom or grace? Is your point one of judgment or reconciliation?
 - a. Amos relaxes his scowl (he must have had one) and smiles, “*Exactly!*”
 - b. *That’s point!* God is God of judgment & grace. Two side, same message
 2. Do you think that people might have been confused by Jesus in **Matt 11**?
 - a. Here are two sermons back to back... or the continuation of same sermon
 - 1) First, there were words of harsh condemnation (**Matt 11:21**)
 - 2) Then, there were tender invitation of restoration (**Matt 11:28-30**)
 - b. Jesus message depended on what people needed—warning or comfort
 - c. Jesus BOTH comforts the afflicted AND He afflicts the comfortable!
 3. Amos book pointing out sins of Israel; he has to because they refuse to see
 - a. They don’t see that a radical success that ignores the poor is sin. *Do we?*
 - 1) Don’t see dishonesty and selfishness toward others as sin. *Do we?*
 - 2) Don’t see a pagan life with a once-a-week religion as sin. *Do we?*
 - b. Amos has to get them to see sin—won’t be saved until you know lost!
 4. But they also needed a word of forgiveness & restoration; he gives that too
- B. There’s a guy in OT named Manasseh (*there were 2, this one was king of Judah*)
1. Manasseh was 12 when he became king, and he ruled Judah for 55 years
 - a. Hezekiah was father; Josiah was grandson— both of those we “Good”
 - b. But Manasseh was totally and brutally evil— he was Judah’s worst king
 - 1) He restored Baal/Ashtoreth and introduced Molech (*own son sacrificed*)
 - 2) He persecuted prophets (killed Isaiah) and set up idols in the Temple
 - c. Here’s a summary of how rotten to the core was Manasseh (**2 Ki 21:16**)
 2. Why bring Manasseh up? Most amazing story in OT (**2 Chron 33:12-13**)
 - a. Manasseh humbled himself, and God was moved by his repentance
 - b. Manasseh repented; he tried to undo the damage (**1 Chron 33:15-16**)
 - c. He repents and God forgives! Why? That’s what God does, what God is
 3. I don’t care who you are, if you come back to God, He will forgive/restore
 4. But if you refuse to repent, then God will judge... I don’t care who you are