

The Minor Profits

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 December 2018

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 0 0] Hello, we have actually finished Amos chapter 8. I want to return to it for just a few moments because I have something I want to share with you from the pen of Dr. James Montgomery Boyce, who is now at home with the Lord.

But it's a comment that he made. Actually, he didn't make it, but he is quoting someone else that I will identify later. But it is based on verse 11 of Amos chapter 8.

And I want to remind you that we are continuing in our exposition of the minor prophets. And next up, next up will be Hosea.

Now, the reason we are not taking them in the canonical order in which they are listed in the Bible is because we thought it would enable them to make more sense to you if we dealt with them in a chronological order.

So, chronologically speaking, we have already taken Jonah, and he was actually the first in so far as history was concerned. And then Amos is actually the second.

[1 : 0 6] They are the earliest of the minor prophets. And next up, which I intend to begin in our next session together, will be Hosea chapter 1.

And it is one of the most intriguing and, in some respects, difficult books to understand based on the request or the order, if you will, that God gave to Hosea.

And it is one that we have difficulty getting our brains around because our God is one who places an emphasis upon purity, upon sexual purity and moral purity.

And yet, it is God, this same God of heaven, who commands the prophet Hosea, I want you to go and take unto yourself and marry a woman who has been selling her body to other men.

Now, what do you think of that? And, of course, we look at something like that and we say, well, now that's an unreasonable request. How or why would God ever make such a demand of a human being, especially one who places such an emphasis upon moral purity and sexual fidelity and all the rest?

[2 : 2 0] And here he's telling a prophet to go and marry a prostitute and raise up children by her? Well, we'll examine the ethics of that and the sovereignty of that as we get into it.

It is an intriguing book. And I do not know, I do not know that there is any book in the Old Testament that so sets forth in bold relief the incredible love that God has for his people.

And that will surface time and again as we go through Hosea. So keep that in mind. We'll probably get there next week. But for now, we want to finish or at least add some comments from Amos chapter 8, beginning with verse 11.

And here is an expression that is used frequently by the prophets in connection with the prophecy. And it says, Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land.

Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. And people will stagger from sea to sea and from the north even to the east.

- [3 : 41] They will go to and fro and seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. In that day, the beautiful virgins and the young men will faint from thirst.
- As for those who swear by the guilt of Samaria, that of course was a pagan altar, that was a new capital of north Israel, who say, As your God lives, O Dan, and as the way of Beersheba lives, they will fail and not rise again.
- So it's in that day, and in that day, there will be a famine for the hearing of the word of the Lord. There is a verse that just comes to my mind now. I can't think of where it is.
- All I recall is in the Old Testament, where the Lord says, I have written unto them the things of my law, but they were accounted as a strange thing.
- And boy, are we ever there today. That was a dilemma that the prophets faced thousands of years ago, and it's one that we still face today. There is no book in the world that has been so printed, and so published, and so copied, in translations and versions, etc.
- [4 : 55] There is no book in all the world that has adorned so many coffee tables, and collected so much dust. And there is no book in the world that is so valuable and so important that it is earth's primary treasure, and it is so little known.
- Isn't that amazing? A famine for the hearing of the word of the Lord. And I was impressed with this as I read from this volume. This is Dr. James Montgomery Boyce's publication.
- He is with the Lord now, but this is his commentary, one of his commentaries on the minor prophets. And actually, they are not his comments, but he incorporated them because he took them from another.
- And I want to share it with you because it really got to me as a minister of the gospel. And he says, Dr. Boyce says, Do we have time for God's word?
- Do we study it as God's great gift to us in this age of his grace? Our attitude should be that of John Wesley. Now, most of you are familiar with John Wesley.
- [6 : 02] He was the circuit riding preacher in the 1700s, and he was, along with his brother Charles, who was a great hymn writer, John Wesley and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield.
- These were the principal parties who were responsible for the Great Awakening that took place in England in the 1700s, and eventually got transported to the United States and became part of our Great Awakening in New England under Jonathan Edwards and men like that.
- But John Wesley, John Wesley in the 1700s was a tremendously powerful preacher, circuit riding preacher, and it is said that when John Wesley passed away, the only thing he left behind was a bent spoon and a pewter mess plate and a well-worn saddle and the Methodist Church.
- And that's what Wesley left behind. Quite a guy. Who knows how many thousands of miles he put on that horse traveling all around preaching the gospel.
- And it was John Wesley who was quoted here by Dr. Boyce who said, quotes Wesley saying, I am a creature of a day passing through life as an arrow through the air.
- [7 : 28] I am a spirit come from God and returning to God just hovering over the great gulf till a few moments hence I am no more seen.
- I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing the way to heaven how to land safe on that happy shore.
- God himself has condescended to teach the way. For this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book.
- At any price give me the book of God. I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. I sit down alone. Only God is here.

In his presence I open. I read this book for this end to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read?

[8 : 27] Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord, is it not in thy word? If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God.

Thou givest liberally and upbraidest not. Thou hast said if any be willing to do thy will he shall know. I am willing to do. Let me know thy will.

I then search after and consider parallel passages of scripture comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable.

If any doubt still remains I consult those who are experienced in the things of God and then the writings whereby being dead yet they speak.

And what I thus learn that I teach. James I. Packer says even more precisely let us then take our Bibles afresh and resolve by God's grace henceforth to make full use of them.

[9 : 34] Let us read them with reverence and humility seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Let us meditate on them till our sight is clear and our souls are fed.

Let us live in obedience to God's will as we find it revealed to us in Scripture and the Bible will prove itself both a lamp to our feet and a light upon our path.

Well words well written that we all need to take to heart. So let us get now to Amos chapter nine as we engage this last chapter and I want to remind you Amos was a layman.

He was not a polished preacher. He was a layman and he delivered charges against Israel in the north like divine thunderbolts.

He was a man who did not mince words. He spoke in plain language. He told it like it was and the people chafed under his preaching. And do you know where sin abounds grace must must more abound and we're glad that it does.

[10 : 45] But there has to be a recognition of the sin and of the evil and a repentance of it before grace is infused. And the thing that we all need to keep in mind and this is true for America this great nation as well God is ever ready to dispense his grace his love and his forgiveness but he will not save you in your sin he will only save you from it and he will not save you in your pride he will save you from it.

So first there has to be an acknowledgement a recognition of wrongdoing of sin committed of being on the wrong side of the issue that's called repentance admission of your sin admission of your guilt and then you may stand ready to receive God's grace in full measure but first there has to be the recognition this is why I say when we preach the gospel when we preach the gospel you have to give people the bad news because the good news makes absolutely no sense without the bad news and the bad news is woe is us we are undone we are people of unclean lips we are on the wrong side of the issue that's the bad news we will be judged for our sin we will be condemned for our sin we will be accountable for our sin that's the bad news and when we come into realization of that embrace it believe it accept it and repent of it then God stands ready for a full measure of grace because where sin abounded grace did much more abound in chapter 9

Amos says I saw the Lord standing beside the altar and he said smite the capitals that's the thresholds the or the the doorposts that the thresholds will shake and break them on the heads of them all then I will slay the rest of them with the sword they will not have a fugitive who will flee or a refugee who will escape now bear in mind that Amos is delivering this message of doom and judgment against the inhabitants of Israel these are the northern ten tribes that have seceded from the union and they have established a new capital they have established a renegade priesthood that has no legitimacy they have established a renegade king and put him upon the throne established a renegade city called Samaria and there they are continuing with a hodgepodge of worship of the true God mingled with generous portions of idolatry and everything else that God would disapprove of it is a wreck and a ruin and Amos is calling them out and one of the things that I think makes his calling difficult is that Amos was not a northerner he was a southerner so when he went from Jerusalem and he's he's

Toccoa from the city of Toccoa not too far from Jerusalem down south when he went up north and began leveling these charges against the people in the north what did they say what are you doing here go back down home where you belong and preach down there we don't want to hear what you've got to say and they ridiculed him much the same way that the north and the south were divided here during the civil war so he's got a very unpopular way to begin because he's from the other side of the tracks if you will and yet he from the south is going north and is condemning them for their sin continuing on with verse 2 though they dig into Sheol from there shall my hand take them in other words they're not going to escape though they ascend to heaven this is a poetic way he's not talking about anybody ascending he's saying no matter what length or what extreme they go to to avoid judgment it's not going to work because the Lord God sees all and knows all and he will see to it that they are visited though they hide in the summit of Carmel that was the highest peak in the area trying to get away from judgment and wrath

I will search them out and take them from there though they conceal themselves from my sight on the floor of the sea from there I will command the serpent and it will bite them there's no escape this is why Amos said earlier prepare to meet thy God O Israel though they go into captivity before their enemies from there I will command the sword that it slay them and I will set my eyes against them for evil and not for good probably not a good translation here because the word evil always connotes the idea of morality and the word ought not to be evil but it ought to be translated calamity or adversity it is negative it is not good it is bad and he says I will set my eyes against them for calamity or for adversity and not for good that is for calamity and not prosperity and the lord god of hosts the one who touches the land so that it melts and all those who dwell in it mourn and all of it rises up like the

[16:16] Nile and subsides like the Nile of Egypt the one who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and has founded his vaulted dome over the earth he who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to me oh sons of Israel declares the lord now what does that mean well who were the Ethiopians and what were they well they were pagans they were a bunch of heathen and what God is saying to his chosen people Israel is that you're behaving just like them can't tell any difference between you and them have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt and of course that was hundreds and hundreds of years ago and from the Philistines from Kaptor and Assyrians from Kerr behold the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom and

I will destroy it from the face of the earth wow and did this come to pass you better believe it just exactly as he said but I want you to look at the next word nevertheless what does that mean that means in spite of everything that has been said in spite of all of the negatives that have been enjoyed nevertheless I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob declares the Lord for behold I am commanding and I will shake the house of Jacob among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve but not a kernel will fall to the ground what does that mean well it means that the kernel the grain are put into the sieve along with the soil the dirt from which it was taken and you shake the sieve and the dirt falls through but the grain the kernels do not the kernels are saved they are preserved this is the analogy that is being used what the dirt the soil represents is the sin that will be gone and the good the kernels that will remain and he's talking about the miraculous preservation of

Israel without the dirt that's what it's going to take and that's what's coming but that is prophesied and it was not what was being realized in northern Israel not at all but a kernel not a kernel will fall to the ground and the thinking of course is the kernel will be spared and the kernel will be the remnant of Israel all the sinners of my people will die by the sword that is all the sinners of my people will die by the but they're not all sinners there are the righteous and the righteous will be preserved by the way speaking prophetically and looking far ahead the righteous is going to consist of that small remnant of Jews who survived during this tribulation period we'll see when we get to Obadiah that will be holed up in Edom and there they will be preserved and miraculously provided for those who say the calamity will not overtake or confront us well yes it will too and then in that day and that's a common expression that the prophets use and it is always indicating a time in the future in that day in that day it's found time and time again all the prophets use it in that day and it's always referring in that day

I will raise up the fallen booth of David now this booth is nothing more than like a lean to and it is well it is one of the feasts of Israel called the feasts of booths and it is reminiscent of the time when the children of Israel came out of Egypt and they had to construct makeshift lean to in the desert for shelter and protection and they were called booths and they celebrate that later in Israel and it's called the feast of booths it's a memorial type thing and he says I will raise up the fallen booth of David this is talking about restoration raising up rebuilding and wall up its breaches a breach is a hole in the wall where the enemy can get through the wall is compromised and the city is at risk because of the holes in the wall and here he is saying

I will wall up its breaches that is re-support and rebuild the breaches I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old that they may possess the remnant of Eden and all the nations who are called by my name declares the Lord who does this what we've got here beginning with verse 11 in that day is a radical switch a radical departure from the thundering words of judgment that is sure to come and this is all about blessing and restoration and this fellow is speaking of the final state of the nation of Israel they are not there now some may think that they are on the way and what is taking place in Israel now since 1948 is a huge improvement over what they had experienced for hundreds and hundreds of years prior to that but this of which the prophet is speaking is a time of millennial blessing of the rule and reign of

[22 : 39] Christ upon the earth when these things are going to be realized and it will be a time of unparalleled prosperity and plenty righteousness is going to cover the land like the waters cover the sea and no one will be saying know the Lord for they shall all know me and what a radical time that is do you realize that in modern day Israel which in many ways has just been miraculously established the vast majority of the inhabitants of Israel now the Jewish people are not at all practicing their Judaism but we pointed out that Judaism is a defunct faith but most of the Jews now are Jewish primarily by tradition and by genealogy and not by conviction but that's all going to change and this time of blessing and prosperity is going to come primarily because

God had made a promise a long time ago to Abraham Isaac and Jacob through you and your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed and he promised a king a throne and a land and all of that's going to be fulfilled days are coming declares the Lord when the plowman will overtake the reaper that is there's going to be such an abundance of crops and such a harvest that is incredible the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved also I will restore the captivity of my people Israel what captivity is he speaking of to this day there are Jewish people scattered all over the earth you cannot find a nation anywhere that there are not the sons of Abraham to be found and many have already returned to Israel this is referred to as as the regathering and many

Jews from all over the world in fact tens of thousands of Jews over the last twenty years have come to Israel from Russia alone and the old iron curtain the countries that were on the other side of the iron curtain for years and years Jews were not allowed to leave they were forbidden to leave but with the with the glasnos and the the breakthrough that was responsible from actually three people three people were responsible for the breakthrough that took place in the Soviet Union and the collapse of it and them giving up all of those satellite nations and the three principles were Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and Pope John Paul VI all three of those were strategic in what ended up being the breakup of the old

Soviet Union and in case you're not aware of it it is no longer the USSR United Soviet Socialist Republic that's gone by the wayside that came down when the wall came down when Reagan was in Germany and now you do not have the USSR anymore now you have Russia and it's different it is Russia alone and the time is coming when this is going to be a time of national restoration for Israel this is speaking of millennial blessing it is speaking of the Messiah has by this time has returned established his kingdom and all nations will flow into Jerusalem and ten men will take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew and say we will go with you for we have heard that God is with you and the Jew now where is he now well he's in the land of Israel and he is reestablished there but the time is coming when

Jews from all over the world are going to flow into Israel by the way I don't know if you're aware of it or not but it just happened I think about I think it happened about ten years ago that there came to be more Jews living in the land of Israel than what lived in the United States of America that's how the population has increased and they have established the Jewish Knesset established the thing called the law of return and the law of return sends out a word to all Jews throughout the world that any Jew whoever they are and wherever they are if they want to return for many of them it's not a return because they were never there but if they want to go back to the land of Israel they will be welcomed and given Israeli citizenship they will be sustained financially and aided in finding employment so that they can establish themselves in the new land and millions of

[28 : 15] Jews have done that and I think I probably told you about this before but it bears repeating because we're talking about an incredible people an incredible land there there years years ago and by years ago I mean like the 1990s Israel began receiving applications for Aliyah Aliyah means the return in Hebrew means the return started receiving applications for Aliyah that is for permission to be granted to come to Israel from black Ethiopians and these people were really African black just like you see most American black I mean these were Ethiopians and they applied for Aliyah to come to Israel because they were

Jews and the authorities in Israel looked at these applications and says what is this these people are claiming to be Jews they're not Jews they're African Africans they're they're Negroid Africans they aren't Jews and rather than just turn them off they sent representatives down to Ethiopia to confer with these people and when they got there they discovered huge numbers of black Ethiopians had synagogues synagogues and copies of the Torah and they were observant Jews and they were keeping the Sabbath and they had kosher diets and they were as black as a proverbial ace of spades and they said well they still can't be Jews what is this going what's going on and do you know they subjected these people to DNA testing and they discovered

Jewish blood in those Ethiopians and the Ethiopians said well we knew that and Israel Israel took a 747 jumbo jet took all the seats out of it and sent that massive plane down to Ethiopia landed in Addis Ababa the capital and hundreds and hundreds of Jews got on that plane and sat on the floor and were transported a relatively short distance from Ethiopia to Israel and they are there to this day absorbed in Israel as full fledged Jews and it is remarkable because as you walk around Israel and you see these people and they look like they're from

Africa you scratch your head and say what is this these are Jews they are Ethiopian Jews now we don't know exactly how that all came about but there is at least one explanation I don't know how capable it is of being verified but do you remember anybody here remember Haile Selassie ok Haile Selassie was referred to and had the title of the emperor of Ethiopia and he called himself I don't know how authentic it was but his official title was the lion of the tribe of Judah well that is a term that the scripture uses in reference to Jesus Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah and here Haile Selassie was referring to himself as the lion of the tribe of

Judah I don't know to what extent he embraced Judaism himself but you remember as you go all the way back to Solomon the queen of Sheba where is Sheba it's in Ethiopia and the queen of Sheba made the trek up to Jerusalem because she had heard all of these incredible things about Solomon and what he had accomplished and the story goes and again this is not verifiable but the story goes that she was so impressed with him and we do not know whether they had some kind of relationship or not but we do know that something was established there regarding Judaism because let me put it this way you know when you get into Acts chapter 8 is it chapter 8 yes chapter 8 the Ethiopian eunuch remember him he's an Ethiopian ok and we are told that he had been to Jerusalem and why was he there the text says that he had been to

[33 : 27] Jerusalem to worship well why would anybody go to Jerusalem to worship unless you were Jewish and now we're talking about 2000 years ago this Ethiopian eunuch and we're told that he was the treasurer of the state of Ethiopia and Candace a lady by the name of Candace was the queen of Ethiopia at the time and this guy who isn't even given a name other than the name of just the Ethiopian he was a eunuch and he was from Ethiopia he had been to Jerusalem to worship and this was the guy that who was it Philip yeah Philip thank you Philip was led of the Lord to confront him and he went up to his chariot and this Ethiopian eunuch was sitting there and he probably had gotten the scroll from

Jerusalem when he was there and he was reading it and he was reading about actually he was reading from Isaiah 53 and Philip comes alongside him and climbs up in the chariot and says I see you've got a very interesting scroll there and you're reading Isaiah tell me do you understand what you're reading and this guy says well actually I I really don't I don't know how I can make any sense of this unless somebody gives me some direction and Philip sat down and he revealed to him who the subject was in Isaiah 53 and he became a believer and they went to the to the baptism and Ethiopian eunuch was baptized there by Philip incredible story so what is in store for Israel is a time of blessing and you know the prophets virtually all have the same kind of methodology they deliver the bad news and then they say but good news is coming you know

Friday in the time of crucifixion is coming but Sunday is coming and there's going to be a resurrection and as you go through the prophets you find this theme where they are denouncing the nation for their sin and their saying but there is a bright side ahead and God is going to restore Israel Israel will repent Israel will be blessed and all nations of the earth will be blessed through them ultimately so it's an incredible account that is given and is echoed all throughout scripture Old and New Testament hey guys