Bible Study Sixteen-twenty one

Wednesday October 27, 2021.

Amos continued

Please READ: AMOS Chapter 6.

“Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to your who feel secure in Samaria; you noblemen of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! God to Calneh and look at it; go from there to the great Hamath, and then go to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms?.” 6: 1---2.f.

In chapters five and six Amos begins his ‘Woe Oracles’; long speeches that decry the situation at hand. They castigate Israel for her sinful ways and compare her to other nations. They prophecy doom and destruction on the two kingdom that are now split apart. The Covenant of the Twelve Tribes lies shredded in ruins and Yahweh the loving God of the chosen People no longer has a place in the nations heart.

All that the Prophet Samuel said has come true. ‘There can be only one king and his name is Yahweh. There can be only one kingdom and it is the kingdom of God. Walk into battle with the Ark of the Covenant leading the way and you will never as a nation be defeated. Go your own way and become like the other nations with a king of your own and your will reap destruction.’

Affluence, riches, luxury, wealth have weakened the nation. The rich have grown soft and without a conscience for the poor. Israel has become secular and no longer religious. The Temple is empty and God has been abandoned.

“You strum away on your harps like David…you drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of joseph. Therefore, you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.” Amos 6: 5---7f.

A ‘Woe Oracle’ was meant to strike fear into the hearts of sinners. As Amos’ work in Samaria and Bethel continues, he becomes harsher in tone and the words he uses become angry and bitter.

“For the Lord has given the command, and he will smash the great house in pieces and the small house in bits…for you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness.” Amos 6: 11---12f.

In Amos’ words, it is God who will stir up Israel’s enemies and turn them as a force against his chosen people. And the wrath that is to come will reverse the whole of Israel’s great saga of salvation. For Israel believed God had chosen them and led hem out of slavery in Egypt. Now Amos tells them God will lead you back into slavery over many miles of desert into Exile.

It is a tough tough chapter with dire warnings.

For week 17 read chapters: 7 & 8.

Thank you, Fr. Bill.

Questions:

1)Do you think Amos has any lessons for us today?

2)Are we still God’s chosen people?

3)Have we deserted God as a nation for secular goals?

4)Some say that earthquakes, floods, fires, hurricanes are a sign of the ‘end times’ and God’s wrath. Do you agree?

5)Are we destroying the beauty of Creation?

6)If you wrote a ‘Woe Oracle’ who would you send it to?