**Amos**

**Let Justice Roll Down**

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

The Lord’s love for His creation drove Him to establish a comprehensive plan to restore the earth to its original pristine state. The centerpiece of the plan involved the coming of a Promised Child who would do what was necessary to accomplish the task. God established a special nation to create the context in which the Child would be born, live and die. This nation was formed from the descendants of Abraham and became known as Israel.

The Lord’s expectations for God’s people were made abundantly clear. He gave them written and verbal instructions about how their society was to function. At the core of these instructions was the injunction to live with passion for God and compassion for others. Their nearly continual failure to do so resulted in divine interventions to get them back on track. These interventions happened through negative consequences that were designed to get them on their knees and back into alignment. The interventions were often accompanied by prophets who would speak words of warning, judgement, correction, understanding, encouragement, and hope. Amos is one of these prophets.

**What you need to KNOW:**

Amos was born into the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but was told by God to speak to the Northern kingdom of Israel. He operated during a time of heightened prophetic activity. It is likely that he lived and delivered his prophesies in the same general historical time zones as Jonah, Elisha, Joel, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.

Amos’ gave Israel clear warnings about the impending judgment that was coming on them because of their idolatry, mistreatment of the prophets, and for their mistreatment of their fellow man. He also reminds them about God’s sovereignty (***“Prepare to meet your God” 4:12***); their responsibility to live according to their status as God’s chosen people (***“Seek good, not evil, that you may live” 5:14***); and that their society was meant to function justly for everyone (***“maintain justice in the courts… let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” 5:15, 24***).

Throughout the book of Amos there are references to the inequities and injustices in their society. This points to the truth that the best indicator of our spiritual condition is not our religious observances, but the way we treat others. That those who exuberantly express passion for God, are discovered to be religious frauds if they fail to treat others with mercy, compassion and justice. This is especially true when it comes our treatment of the disadvantaged. When we, as a people, refuse to live with generosity toward the poor and fail to rightly treat the marginalized and dispossessed, we reveal the impoverished condition of our souls.

In this, there is a parallel between the message of Amos and what James wrote to the church centuries later: ***“What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, ‘Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well’—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?***

***So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.***

***Now someone may argue, ‘Some people have faith; others have good deeds.’ But I say, ‘How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.’” – James 2:14-18***

**GET GOING!**

**Take a stroll through the nine-chapter prophesy of Amos.**