

I. **Introduction**

A. Does God ever give up on people?

1. We would like to think that God never gives up on anyone.
 - a. I had a couple of friends at one time who both refused to be faithful to the church.
 - (1) They had grown up in the church.
 - (2) They knew what the Bible taught.
 - (3) Anytime you tried to talk to them, they would always answer, "God will never forgive me; so, why try?"
 - b. I tried arguing with both of them on more than one occasion that God would, indeed, forgive them.
 - (1) Paul told the Romans, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" (Romans 5:8 NKJV)
 - (a) Even while we were in our sins, God sacrificed Jesus to make atonement for those sins.
 - (b) That is the depth of His love for us - He loved us enough to die for us, so that He might forgive us!
 - (c) Even while He was on the cross, Jesus prayed to God asking Him to forgive the very ones who were in the process of crucifying Him.
 - (2) The New Testament is filled with evidence that God desires to forgive everyone!
 - (3) No matter how much I tried, neither one of these friends would ever repent or change.
 - (a) They just kept giving the same answer, "God will never forgive me; so, why try?"
 - (b) The problem is that they did not want to repent or change - so, they made excuses.
 2. The question is, "Does God ever give up on people?"
 - a. Is there ever a time when God reaches a point where He just surrenders us to our sins?

- b. Can we become so consumed in sin that God allows us to just go our own way, even if it leads to our eternal destruction?

- B. In **Amos 4**, Amos proclaims to the ten northern tribes of Israel that God has, in effect, given up on them.

II. **God Gives Up on Israel**

"¹ Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, 'Bring wine, let us drink!' ² The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: 'Behold, the days shall come upon you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with fishhooks. ³ You will go out through broken walls, Each one straight ahead of her, And you will be cast into Hamon,' Says the LORD. ⁴ 'Come to Bethel and transgress, At Gilgal multiply transgression; Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days. ⁵ Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, Proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; For this you love, You children of Israel!' Says the Lord GOD." (Amos 4:1-5 NKJV)

A. *The people have sinned against the Lord.*

1. Israel has become a nation that is corrupt and filled with sin.
2. Throughout the writings of the prophets, we see an abundance of evidence that Israel had become a very wicked and immoral nation.
3. Amos calls them "**cows of Bashan**," a reference to how lazy and fat they had become in their iniquities.
 - a. They oppress the poor.
 - b. They crush the needy.
 - c. They fill themselves with strong drink.
4. These people had given their lives over completely to pursuing their own fleshly desires - they had completely abandoned the law of God.

- B. *God has determined that He will destroy the people.*
1. Amos tells them that, because they have sinned, God has promised that He will lead them off into captivity.
 - a. Amos says that God has sworn, “Behold, the days shall come upon you when He will take you away with fishhooks.”
 - (1) Just as a fish is caught upon a hook and dragged away from its home, they would be pulled out of their homes and taken captive to a foreign land.
 - (2) In ancient cultures, it was customary to place a hook through the nose of a conquered people as a sign of their slavery.
 - b. He goes on to say that they would be led out of the city through the great holes in their city walls.
 - (1) These people would be conquered.
 - (2) Their city would be destroyed.
 - (3) They would be led away into captivity.
 2. According to **2 Kings 17** that is exactly what happens - God allows Assyria to conquer and destroy Samaria (the capital of Israel).
 - a. After a three year siege in Samaria, Assyria would conquer the city and lead Israel off into captivity, never to return.
 - b. Because the people have become completely consumed with their sins, God is prepared to destroy them.
- C. *God surrenders the people to their idolatry.*
1. God tells Israel to continue practicing their idol worship.
 - a. He tells them to go up to their idolatrous temples (Gilgal).
 - b. He tells them to bring their false sacrifices.
 - c. He tells them to engage in the false worship that they loved.
 2. God has surrendered them to their idolatry.

- a. Does this mean:
 - (1) God is giving them permission to worship idols? No.
 - (2) God does not want them to repent anymore? No.
- b. It means that God has recognized where their hearts truly lie - with idolatry.
 - (1) The key phrase is what God says at the end of **Amos 4:5**, when He says, “For this you love, you children of Israel!”
 - (2) God is saying:
 - (a) If this is what you truly want, then go and do it.
 - i) Go and serve your idols and live your immoral lives.
 - ii) “Follow your hearts” and go where you want to go - do what you want to do.
 - (b) But, know that rejecting God will lead to your destruction and captivity.
- c. God had given them a choice.
 - (1) They had a choice whether they would serve God or idols.
 - (a) If they served God, then He would bless them; if they served idols, then He would destroy them.
 - (b) God had given them a choice to their lives as they chose.
 - (c) They had chosen to do what they loved - which was to worship idols.
 - (d) So, God has surrendered them to their hearts’ desires.
 - (2) We have been given that same choice.
 - (a) We have the choice whether or not we will obey God.
 - (b) We have had that choice since the garden of Eden.

- i) God wants us to choose to serve Him faithfully, so that we might inherit eternal life.
 - ii) God still permits us to serve our own hearts' desires - to live lives of sin, wickedness, and immorality.
 - iii) We have that choice!
 - iv) God will allow us to continue in sin - and we will be destroyed for it!
- d. God had surrendered them to their sin.

III. ***God Tried to Correct Israel***

⁶ 'Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me,' Says the LORD. ⁷ 'I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered. ⁸ So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,' Says the LORD. ⁹ 'I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet you have not returned to Me,' Says the LORD. ¹⁰ 'I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, Along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me,' Says the LORD. ¹¹ 'I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me,' Says the LORD.' (Amos 4:6-11 NKJV)

- A. One of the greatest problems in Israel was the fact that they had hardened their hearts against God to the point that there was nothing that would bring them back to God.
1. It was not that God did not want them to return to Him.
 - a. Repeatedly, God had pleaded with them to turn their

- hearts back to Him, so that they could find mercy.
 - b. Repeatedly, God had warned them that judgment would come against them if they did not repent and return.
 - c. Repeatedly, God had sent punishments against them, to try and turn their hearts back to God.
 2. These people had so hardened their hearts against God, that there was nothing that would turn them back to Him.
 - a. God had tried to bring them back.
 - b. They refused.
 - c. It was that hardheartedness that would ultimately lead to their destruction.
- B. Amos lists the numerous punishments that God had brought against Israel, in an attempt to turn their hearts back to Him.
1. He had sent famine to them, so that they lacked bread in all their cities.
 2. He had sent drought to them, so that two or three cities would journey to a single source of water, only to discover that there was not enough for everyone.
 3. He had sent blight, mildew, and locusts to destroy their crops.
 4. He had sent plague and war to kill their animals and men.
 5. He had even destroyed some of their cities, just as He had done to Sodom and to Gomorrah.
- C. It did not matter how much God threw their way, they still refused to repent of their sins and acknowledge Him as God.
1. That is the reason why God had surrendered them to their sins - it was because they had so hardened their hearts that they could not be brought to repent.
 2. God had not abandoned them; they had abandoned Him!
 3. Now, God finally has grown weary of their sins and idolatry, and He was going to completely destroy them for it.

IV. ***God Introduces Himself to Israel***

¹² Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel! ¹³ For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth - The LORD God of hosts is His name." (Amos 4:12-13 NKJV)

- A. The greatest sin of Israel is that they had forgotten God.
 - 1. They had forgotten the great power and authority of the Lord God of hosts that had created them.
 - 2. Because they had forgotten God, they had turned to idolatry and immorality.
 - 3. They had abandoned the laws of God.
- B. God tells them it is time for them to remember Him once again.
 - 1. To me, one of the most powerful statements in all of the prophets is the message of Amos here when he says, "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"
 - a. These people should have known the Lord God of heaven.
 - (1) He had delivered them out of the slavery of Egypt.
 - (2) He had protected them from their enemies, made a mighty nation from them, and given them the promised land of Canaan.
 - b. Rather than honor God, they had made two golden calves, set them up in their own temples, and said that these are the gods that brought them out of Egypt.
 - c. They should have known the righteousness and power of God, but they did not remember it.
 - d. God tells them that it time for them to become acquainted with the true God of heaven!
 - 2. They had failed to remember the power of the God who had delivered them; now they will be introduced to the power of the God that will destroy them!

- 3. It was time for them to remember, once and for all, that God is the God of creation - He created the world, and He has complete power over it.
 - a. It is God who forms the mountains.
 - b. It is God who creates the wind that circles the earth.
 - c. It is God who gives man the ability to think and is able to tell man what he is thinking.
 - d. It is God who makes the darkness in the early morning.
 - e. It is God who treads on the high places of the earth.
 - f. It is God who created the universe, and "the Lord God of hosts is His name"!
- C. There are times when we need to be reintroduced to the Lord God of heaven!
 - 1. There are times when we become so caught up in the affairs of the world and just living our own lives that we begin to forget about God.
 - a. We forget that it was God who delivered us from the bondage of our sins.
 - (1) We forget that it was God that sacrificed His only begotten Son upon the cross of Calvary to make atonement for our sins.
 - (2) We forget that our sins were washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ when we were baptized into Him for the remission of sins.
 - (3) We forget that it was God who saved us!
 - b. We forget, and we turn all of our focus towards living our lives for ourselves.
 - (1) We are consumed with making more money, rather than giving our lives to God's service.
 - (2) We are consumed with the pleasures of the flesh, rather than pleasing God.
 - c. Brethren, that path leads to destruction and ruin!

When God Gives Up

Amos 4:1-13

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2. In those times, we need to be reminded of the power and authority of the Lord God of creation!
 - a. Our God had the power to create the entire universe - and everything that is in it!
 - b. Our God has the power to completely destroy that same universe - and all that is in it!
 - c. We need to open our eyes to the glorious power of our God and to remember that we were placed here upon this earth to serve Him!
 - (1) He is God, and “The Lord God of hosts is His name.”
 - (2) Let all of creation fall down and worship before His great name!

V. **Conclusion**

- A. This evening, have you forgotten God in your life?
 1. Have you become so caught up in your own desires that you have failed to serve God as you ought?
 2. It is time for you to become reacquainted with the God of creation!
 - a. It is time for you to turn you heart and life back to Him.
 - b. Do not harden your heart against the word of God to the point that God surrenders you to your sin and destruction!
- B. Turn back to God before it is too late!