

# **An Exegesis and Sermon Study of Amos 5:11-15**

[Metro North Conference : September 17, 1984]

*by Allen Sorum*

The Christian preacher in urban America develops a strong feeling of comradeship and empathy for Amos when home turfs are compared. The similarities between city life in Israel and city life in the good old US of A are striking if not startling. At least this was my feeling as I prepared a sermon on Amos 5:11-15 for our congregation's special 4<sup>th</sup> of July worship service. In these verses, the Spirit provides the stinging law and the soothing gospel that every one of our members and every American citizen needs to hear and to heed. The future of our nation depends on it!

## **The Author and Date of Composition**

The inspired author of every word of this prophecy was Amos, "one of the shepherds of Tekoa" (1:1), which is located five miles south of Bethlehem Judah. The name Amos (עֲמוֹס) probably means Burden-bearer. His life as an indigent shepherd who lived off of the land must have been a heavy burden, a rugged life. Some commentators have suggested that Amos might have been the owner of the flocks he tended and a sycamore plantation baron of sorts. But his reply to Amaziah, the priest of Bethel seems to indicate otherwise: "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son (a student in the school of prophets), but I was a shepherd and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees" (7:14).

The Lord called a hard working, sun-baked, shepherd-layman out of the fields of Judah to be his prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel. What a contrast between this preacher and his new flock! Amos, the rugged country preacher versus the luxury softened urbanites of Bethel in Israel. The greed, materialism and ruthlessness of his first "congregation" surely disgusted Amos. But the power behind Amos' preaching was not his disgust, his simple vocabulary or his wiry frame. The power behind Amos' preaching was the Spirit who filled every word Amos spoke as God's true prophet. The Israelites in the north were not accustomed to this kind of power.

Amos spoke his prophecy under the Judean king, Uzziah, and the Israelite king, Jeroboam II. The actual dates of his ministry are difficult to nail down but G. Archer asserts, "There is general agreement among Old Testament scholars that Amos' ministry is to be dated between 760 and 755 B.C., toward the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II" (p.318 of OT Survey). The date is significant because during this time, both kingdoms were enjoying tremendous military and economic stability. Uzziah had completely crushed the military machinery of Edom, Philistia and Ammon. Jeroboam had defeated the Syrians and restored the original borders of the Northern Kingdom. This all meant, of course, tribute, wealth, power and the delusion of omnipotence. This wealth corrupted the upper classes in the north. They shared none of their new wealth with the poor. In fact, the rich had turned on their brothers, oppressed them and robbed them of what they did have. You can imagine why Amos' prophecy of doom and destruction fell on deaf ears. The possibility of ruin seemed far too remote. The rich of Israel had convinced themselves that they were invincible and free to carry on as they pleased.

## **Integrity of the Text**

The issue of textual reliability is not one which a preacher who believes in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures needs to discuss. Those who practice the art of historical-critical hermeneutics, however, believe that Amos is the earliest written portion of the Old Testament, with the single exception of “document J.” The liberal critics also reject a few verses of Amos’ prophecy that seem a bit too stylistic or cheerful for Amos. They reject the fact that Amos authored these verses not on the basis of sound textual criticism but on the basis of their theory on how the Old Testament religion developed (cf. Young’s OT Intro, p. 274.). What they are saying is that Amos wrote his prophecy before the Hebrews had “invented” the gospel. Anything that sounds like gospel in Amos had to have been added at a later date.

## **Amos’ Theme and Purpose**

The theme of Amos is a very familiar one among the minor prophets. God condemns the Israelites for their hypocritical observance of the external features of the law. God also destroys the false security that the Israelites have placed in their human ancestry as the chosen race of God. The irony of their concern for the outward observance of the ceremonial law was their total indifference to the moral law. Through Amos, God contrasts his faithfulness with his people’s unfaithfulness. The climax to God’s prophecy of judgment upon this covenant nation comes in the phrase, “Prepare to meet your God!”

The purpose of Amos’ message was to shake the Israelites out of their blatant hypocrisy and foolish self-confidence. The strong note of social ills and injustices characterize Amos’ message throughout. There was neither justice nor compassion in Israel yet the people had the nerve to bring their gifts to the altar and to carry on with their religion of externals. Amos’ message, called this abomination to their attention, warned them of God’s pending judgment, implored them to repent and invited them to trust in the Lord’s mercy and desire to restore them.

## **Where We’re at in the Book of Amos**

- I. Jehovah’s judgment hovers over the world (1:1-2:16)
  - A. over the heathen for their inhumanity
  - B. over the covenant nations for their faithlessness
  
- II. Israel’s sins and God’s warnings (3:1-6:14)
  - A. Israel doomed due to their total depravity
  - \*\*\* B. lamentation and final appeal
  
- III. The five visions of Israel’s fate (7:1-9:10)
  
- IV. Promises of restoration (9:11-15)

## **The Translation and Exegesis of Amos 5:11-15**

Verse 11 Therefore, because of your trampling upon the helpless, and your carrying off of grain that you keep taking from him, the houses of hews, stones which you have built, you will not live in them; delightful vineyards you have planted but you will not drink their wine.

- לְכֵן “therefore” The prophets often use this word after a statement of the grounds behind a divine declaration.
- בּוֹשְׁסֵיכֶם “your trampling” A shortened Poet infinitive with suffix. The sense is the participle: “your continual trampling.”
- וּמִשָּׂאת “carrying off” The participle form of נָשָׂא which highlights the continual robbing of the poor and helpless. Karl says that this taking of grain refers to unjust extortion on the part of the judge who will only execute “justice” for the man who pays for it.
- תִּקְחוּ “keep taking” The imperfect here denotes incomplete action or ongoing, continual taking of grain.
- גְּזִית “hewn stones” This is a noun meaning “hewing” but when used by itself like this, it assumes אֲבָן (stones). Therefore, translate “hewn stones.” These hewn stones were building materials that only the rich could afford. The rich Israelites took great pride in their beautiful, permanent homes but they would not be living in them much longer. God’s judgment was imminent.
- וְלֹא־תִשְׁבוּ “you will not live (dwell)” Another Qal imperfect but this time, the imperfect has the sense of a future.
- וְלֹא תִשְׁתּוּ: “you will not drink” Qal imperfect with a future sense. Despite their apparent power and wealth, they were not safe. No military strength or economic stability will protect a nation from an angry God. God’s anger was about to be unleashed!

Note the piling up of participles and imperfect tenses in the above verse. Through these continual sins against the poor and helpless, the Israelites of the upper classes were bringing God’s judgment down on themselves. One gets the idea that the rich Israelites have built their beautiful homes and planted their lovely vineyards with the money they have stolen from the poor. They will not enjoy either of them very long. God’s sword of judgment was hanging over them even as Amos spoke. The position of “homes and vineyards” in the original (before the verbs) highlights these prized positions and the danger they are in. These objects of wealth had become gods to the wealthy Israelites. They were about to be destroyed.

Verse 12 For I know your many transgressions and your countless sins: harassing the righteous, accepting a murder's ransom. Meanwhile, you axe thrusting aside the needy in the gate.

- כִּי for” This particle introduces the reasons why the rich will not be enjoying their wealth for much longer. It calls attention to what is coming.
- יָדַעְתִּי “I know” This is the Qal perfect of the familiar verb, “to know.” God knows the sins of Israel by personal, first hand observance. In other words, God is very familiar with everything that has been going on among his nation. There is no darkness that can hide sin from God’s eyes. He sees it all, he knows it all.
- פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם “your transgressions” This word for sin has a root meaning that denotes a revolt against or to refuse subjection to rightful authority. The rich oppressors of the poor had rejected God’s definition of right and wrong in order to establish their own more profitable moral code. Consider the transgressions of the secular humanists who reign supreme over our nation’s public education system. Consider the modern theologian. Whatever you do, don’t consider Walter Mondale!
- וְעֲצָמִים “countless” The literal translation of this word would be something like “mighty in terms of numbers” which then is less imaginatively translated with “countless.”
- חַטָּאתֵיכֶם “Your sins” The root meaning of this word for sin is “to miss the mark” (compare the Greek word ἀμαρτάνω). This word is really a definition of sin, for all sin is a falling short of the mark of perfection that God demands. This word also implies a worthiness of blame whether the sin was one of willfulness, negligence or ignorance. Unregenerate man, of course, does not know just how far short of the mark he has fallen. That sinfulness and guilt is a matter of the heart is revealed knowledge, not natural. The Israelites may have taken some comfort in their outward “piety.” After all, they hadn’t robbed the temple or murdered anybody! But Amos’ message was meant to pierce through that hardened conscience and fleshly security. Israel was rank with sin. If they wanted specifics, God would give them specifics.
- צָרְרִי “harassing” (Qal participle)

- לְקַחִי “accepting” (Qal participle) Again, note the frequent participles which indicate ongoing action. God’s threat of judgment comes in view of their constant, heartless, unrepentant oppression of the poor and helpless.
- צַדִּיק “the righteous” We usually think of this word in the theological sense: “those who are pronounced innocent by the righteousness imputed to them through faith in the Messiah.” Here, however, the meaning is a legal one: “one who is not guilty of breaking the law and innocent of a specific offense.”
- כֶּפֶר “a murderer’s ransom” The first meaning of this word is “the price of a life, a ransom.” But in this context, the word takes on an additional meaning. Apparently, the judges were allowing wealthy murderers to buy their way out of the death penalty which God had established. Numbers 35:31 specifically states, “Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. He must surely be put to death.” The NIV’s translation is correct but one might question whether it conveys the sense correctly. The NIV translates, “You oppress the righteous and take bribes ... ” (The LXX uses “ἀλλάγματα” “that which is given in exchange.”)
- בַּשַּׁעַר “in the gate” The word is gate but the idea is that space within the city gates which was the public meeting place or court where the elders met officially. In other words, the poor and helpless were denied justice in the courts.
- הִטָּה “thrust aside” The first meaning of נִטָּה (here, a Qal imperfect) is “to stretch out or bend.” You can decide, then, whether you want to translate it here “to thrust aside (preferred by BDB)” or “to bow down, to humble.”

Verse 12 gives all the reasons why God is threatening to destroy the houses and vineyards of the wealthy Israelites. The chief of their many sins seems to be their immoral administration of justice in the courts. The murderers who gave the cash can buy their way out of true justice. Those Israelites who had been truly wronged, on the other hand, but were too poor to prove it, so to speak, were simply thrown out on their ears.

Could it be that these wicked judges were ignorant of God’s explicit guide for the administration of justice? Could it be that these judges were aware of these guidelines but chose to disregard them? Were they discrete? Were they blatant as they re-wrote God’s law? Whatever their attitude, whatever their excuse, God had revealed their sin and condemned it as sin. The important question now is how would they respond? It probably would come as no surprise to learn that these wicked judges were regular tithers and faithfully kept the Sabbath. The hypocrite, Jesus said, honors God with his lips but keeps his heart far from God.

Verse 13 Therefore, the wise one during a time like this (in this time) keeps quiet, because this is an evil time.

לְכֵן	“therefore” This word introduces the result of everything described in the previous verses. The result of Israel’s blatant and even accepted wickedness is that whatever God-fearing citizens remain, keep silent. What good would it do to speak up? Nobody would listen anyway. Do you wonder what Amos thought as he spoke these words of warning?
הַמְשֻׁכִּיל	“the wise one.” Solomon uses this word a number of times in Proverbs. It can mean “common sense wisdom”: “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise” (Proverbs 10:19). Or it can also mean a spiritual wisdom or enlightenment that comes from the Holy Spirit: “The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the grave” (Proverbs 15:24). The sense in this verse is “the man who has any common sense at all will just keep quiet.”
בְּעֵת הַהִיא	“in this time” The demonstrative pronoun. gives a strong emphasis to “time” so a translation that reflects this emphasis is “such a time as this.”
יִדָּם	“is silent” The Qal imperfect indicates that the wise man will keep his mouth closed throughout this dangerous time.
כִּי	“because” This introduces the explanation as to why the wise man will keep silent.
רָעָה	“evil” This word for evil carries the broadest sense of evil as it is opposed to good. It includes the wicked deed and its consequences. This word does not always touch upon the moral aspect of evil because in Isaiah 45:7, God says, “I create evil.”
עֵת רָעָה הִיא	“this is an evil time” Again, the demonstrative adds emphasis to the evil time. Because this is the second use of the demonstrative with “time” in one verse, a more interpretive translation might be “the wise one during a time such as this keeps quiet, because an evil time is this one right now.” If Amos were called back to preach against the American nation, one might wonder which time he would judge to be more evil; his or ours?

Why would the wise man keep quiet in Amos’ time or in any time of evil? Isn’t silence the same as approval? Was the wise man also a coward? No, Amos makes it clear that wise words of warning would be wasted on Israel. Even the priests of Israel would tolerate no words of warning. Amaziah told Amos to go earn his bread back in Judah where he had come from.

Amaziah wanted none of the truth that Amos preached. Israel's subsequent destruction proved that anybody's words, even God's words of warning were just so much wasted breath. Yet, God still loved his stiff-necked people and sent Amos to preach these words anyway. God's desire is never in the death of a sinner. God's desire is that all repent, all believe, all be saved.

Verse 14 Seek good and not evil, in order that you may live. Then the LORD, the God of the hosts will be with you just as you say.

דָּרְשׁוּ      “seek” (Qal imperative) The full meaning is “seek with application.”

וְאַל־רָע      This negative introduces a clause that, demands a verb according to the normal Hebrew usage. The clause is shortened by leaving out the verb and connecting this negative with the noun. The previous verb is implied: “Seek good and don't seek evil.”

טוֹב ... רָע      Good and evil in the broadest sense again, assuming all the aspects of the two concepts.

לְמַעַן      “in order that” This word usually introduces a purpose clause. Seek good in order, that you may live. Is Amos preaching salvation by good works? We know that that can't be true. What Amos is doing, of course, is calling for fruits of repentance. The fruits of repentance are faith which embraces all of God's promises of deliverance and a life of holiness. In the New Testament, Paul said, “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction” (Galatians 6:8). The writer to the Hebrews insisted, “... without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). In his second letter, Peter encourages, “Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure” (1:10).

All these inspired writers are saying the same thing. They are saying that the child of God will turn away from evil and seek what is good, holy, noble and pure. The child of God's lifestyle will reflect this love for holiness. There will be fruits of repentance. These fruits are not necessary for salvation, but they are necessary. Back to the purpose clause just for a moment. What is God's purpose in demanding repentance or threatening punishment? The Lord answers that question himself in Ezekiel 18:23, “Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?” declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” God's purpose is never to destroy but always to save!

תַּחֲיוּ      “you may live” (Qal imperfect) The life that the prophet is referring to is the real life that is possible only through fellowship with God in Christ. Jesus explains this real life in John 10:10, “I have come that they (Jesus'

sheep) may have life, and have it to the full.” Life apart from God, without a living faith in the triune God is only a living death.

At this time in Israel’s history, the Israelites had based their life and membership in God’s family on the fact that they were the physical descendants of Abraham. Since they were the members of God’s chosen race by natural descent, they believed that this protected them from destruction at the hands of Gentile heathen and from the ultimate destruction of Sheol. In the next clause, Amos will inform them that God is not with them on that physical basis alone. God is with those who fear him and trust in his name.

וַיְהִי־כֵן אֲתֶכֶם  
בְּאֲשֶׁר  
אָמַרְתֶּם

“and so (the LORD) will be with you just as you say” and correspond to each other in this simple statement of a condition. If the Israelites seek good and put aside their sin, then God will be with them. God was not with them as Amos spoke this message in spite of their bloodlines. God would be with them when they repented and sought him through faith. God would be with them, regardless of what they said, only when they circumcised their hearts as well as their flesh. This clause was a judgment against their hypocritical worship, sacrifices and tithes. Such external things do not establish fellowship with God. God cannot be bribed. Mankind must approach God, may approach God only on God’s terms, namely, through faith in the Messiah.

יְהוָה

“the LORD” No matter how dismal God’s judgments and threats may sound, there is always hope when this name for God appears. The reader of Amos does not have to wait until the very end of this prophecy before he can find some message of hope. The message of hope and restoration is found fully here in this wonderful name for God.

The LORD, Jahweh, I AM describes the immutable God of love, patience, and forgiveness. The I AM God is in a continual, eternal present tense. He is totally independent. He has his life and being in himself. He never charges. Since God is himself immutable, what he says is also immutable. His will is always the same. We have already heard God speak his will but let us hear him speak it again: “Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” Or to paraphrase the Apostle Peter, God’s will is that no one perish, but everyone come to repentance and be saved.

“Jahweh” IS the gospel because it describes as well as names the God of changeless, free and faithful grace. Jahweh himself defines what his name means in Exodus 34:6-7:

The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to



thousands, anal forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generations.

When God uses this name for himself, he doesn't have to spell out the gospel message. It's all explicitly present and preached in his name, I AM.

Amos has told the Israelites that if they would seek good and turn away from evil, Jahweh would forgive them, restore them to true membership in his family and withhold all judgment, temporal and eternal. God's love would move him to forgive quickly a repentant Israel but God's justice would move him to punish completely a wicked, stiff-necked people no matter who their father was.

אֱלֹהֵי-צְבָאוֹת

“the God of the hosts” Very simply, one might translate this name for God with the words “the God of omnipotent strength.” Still, the question remains, who or what are the hosts? Are the hosts the stars in the sky, the angels in the heavens or the Israelite armies on the field? Pay your money and take your pick. Girdlestone (*Synonyms of the OT*, p. 40) states that this name for God would indicate to the Israelites that God “is a being who had many material and spiritual agencies at his command, and that the universe of matter and the world of the mind were not only created, but also ordered and marshalled by Him ... ” When this name for God is used in close connection with “Jahweh,” the idea is that God is eager to forgive but if his forgiveness is rejected, then he has the power to punish in an awesome way. (Army—Ex 12:41; Angel—I Kg 22:19, Ps 103:21, Ps 148:2; Stars—2 Kg 17:16, 2 Kg 21:3, Jer 19:13, Neh 9:6)

Verse 15 Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the gate. Perhaps the LORD, the God of the hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

שְׂנֵאוּ

“hate” (Qal imperative) To hate evil is to avoid evil, to uproot evil from one's life. At present, the Israelites were in love with evil.

וְאַהֲבֹוּ

“love” (Qal imperative) To love good, on the other hand, is to desire it, to incline towards it, to bring it into one's life. This word for love speaks of either divine or human affection. The Scriptures tell us that we cannot love good or lead a God-pleasing life until faith in the Messiah is present in our hearts (Romans 8:7). God was not interested in an outward good. He was interested in conversion. From this conversion and true faith in the triune God, goodness would flow from the new creation.

וְהָצִיגוּ בַשַּׁעַר

“establish justice in the gate” This is a further definition of seeking good.

מִשְׁפָּט

God commanded the Israelites to restore law and order and the proper administration of justice in the courts for all people, regardless of their social or economic standing. מִשְׁפָּט is used here in the legal sense, as it very often is in the minor prophets. It means the due administration of judgment, justice and that which is right. Notice how it is set off at the end of the sentence for emphasis.

The city gate was the place of meeting for the city council, the Israelite court system. The judges or elders would gather in the gate to hear cases and make judgments. The NIV translates with “maintain” but “establish” or “set up” would be better for two reasons. First, establish would be better because it is a more precise definition of the word. Secondly, there was no justice in the courts. They would have to establish justice before they could maintain it.

אוּלַי

“perhaps” Usually, this little word expresses at least a glimmer of hope. In view of the context, however, there seems to be much more doubt in Amos’ tone and mind than hope. It goes without saying that any degree of doubt in no way has its source in God. God has given his own name, Jahweh, as a sure promise of grace and forgiveness to all who repent. The doubt expressed is rooted entirely in the Israelites. Would the Israelites repent, and be saved? Amos seemed to doubt that very much.

יִחַן

“be gracious” The Qal imperfect of יִחַן is translated as a future. The Hebrew word יִחַן is the Old Testament equivalent to the New Testament’s “*χάρις*” The grace and favor that God offered was freedom from the judgment that hovered over Israel as a nation and the more terrible eternal damnation that was about to fall upon the individuals within that nation. This verb, according to TWOT (p. 302, vol. 1), “depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need ... (and) describes an action from a superior to an inferior who has no real claim for the gracious treatment.” When this verb appears in the Qal, God is the subject, the one granting the grace 41 out of the 56 times it is used!

שְׂאֵרֵית יוֹסֵף

“the remnant of Joseph” Just whom did Amos include when he spoke of the remnant of Joseph? Was the remnant all of the people of the northern tribes who lived in Israel during Amos’ ministry? Was the remnant, rather, the few who would survive the judgment which God brought down on Israel through the Assyrians because Israel did not heed Amos’ message? The TWOT (vol. 2, p. 894) asserts that the Hebrew word for remnant, “in every usage, carries forward the basic root idea (of surviving after an elimination process) and speaks of that which has survived after a previous elimination process or catastrophe.” If the TWOT is correct, then Amos is saying that all of Israel will fall, all Israelites will be

destroyed except for a very few who will survive the catastrophe and destruction that the Assyrians will bring upon Israel. But what about those very few? Amos indicates that he doubts whether even the few, even the remnant will repent and enjoy God's favor. At any rate, Amos' doubt in any portion of Israel was well taken. His doubt and his prophecy was fulfilled only 40 years later. In the year 722 B.C., Assyria destroyed Samaria, the capital of Israel which marked the end of the Northern Kingdom.

### **The Sermon Study and Outline**

Maybe if Amos would have written with the poetic flair of David or the apocalyptic imagination of Ezekiel, he would be more popular today. Even those whose ears are so fond of the social gospel must be a little disappointed with Amos in spite of his social injustice theme because Amos relentlessly directs them to the Lord—not to refugees. Amos' flair, however, was for the law. Luther said that no minor prophet could preach law like Amos could preach law. But for the very reason that Amos' blunt message is so unpopular, Amos must be preached. Amos' message is for the people in our pews but it is even more for the people in our nation's streets. Amos' message must be preached to our people in order that our people may preach it to our nation.

Our nation was established to the tune of "one nation under God." But our one nation under God has become a society beside Satan. Every fiery dart that Amos threw into Israel will readily find its mark in America too. Without waxing melodramatic, our nation is rife with greed, materialism, social injustice, De Lorean acquittals and poor, man death brows, racism, abortion, a 7 billion dollar a year pornography business, corruption in the highest places, etc., etc., etc.

Yet, in this very same nation, religion is big business. What some famous preacher says is big news. Over sixty percent of all Americans claim to be members of an organized church. Less than five percent of the remaining forty percent who are unchurched will deny that God, or a god, exists. If America is so well church and so many citizens who say they believe in God, how do you explain the spiritual state of our nation?

The conclusion Amos would draw if he were here, I believe, is that America's worship, church life, and belief in God is no more spiritual than Israel's was in his own day. True, we do not judge another man's faith and sincerity unless his lifestyle compels us to. Look at America's lifestyle. We Americans are a people who honor God with our lips but somehow manage to keep our heart's free from any religious contamination. Our nation must hear Amos' call to repentance. The people in our pews must (and of course the preacher in our pulpit) themselves repent and turn to God. Then they must assume the prophet's mantle. They must preach Amos' message to our nation. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on us.

I prepared the sermon outline below for the Sunday just before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. We had a special "God and Country" service. The theme for the sermon uses the word "sword" because I wanted to incorporate the sermon hymn early and often. The sermon hymn we used was "The Battle Hymn Of The Republic" which says, "He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword—His truth is marching on." This hymn works well after a sermon on Amos 5:11-15 because both speak of God's judgment on a nation. Besides, your people will love singing it!

## **God's Sword is Raised Against Our Nation!**

Introduction: Point out similarities between conditions in Israel and America. If we want to continue to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, we will want to hear and share Amos' message to an unfaithful nation.

### **I. God knows our many offenses. (Amos 5:11-13)**

- A. Our nation "under God" has become a society of devils.
  - 1. Freedom of religion now means freedom from religion.
  - 2. God looks down on our nation and sees a blatant denial of his right to be God.
  
- B. But, child of God, do you find yourself innocent?
  - 1. Which is worse: participation in evil or a silent approval of it?
  - 2. We have failed our community and our God because we have failed to live and to proclaim the true Christian faith.

### **II. But there is hope for God's mercy. (Amos 5:14-15)**

- A. Seek the LORD (grace and power) with a true heart.
  - 1. Repent and believe. (Jesus' active and passive obedience)
  - 2. Practice true religion. (versus an Israelite-like hypocrisy)
  
- B. Share the LORD with your neighbor.
  - 1. We can change our nation but we have to do it one soul at a time.
  - 2. We can still let the Christian voice be heard in our nation.
    - It's not prudent to be silent yet.
    - letters, voting, voicing concern to policy makers.
    - prayers for our nation.