

## Prayer

All praise to You, Lord God,  
for the joy of love and happiness of friendship,  
for the wonder of creativity and delight of achievement,  
for the miracle of our faith and the wonder of glory,  
and all we have in You, our Lord and God:  
AMEN

## Other Prayer Suggestions

### Weekly Theme: Retailing

*Pray for Christians who are doing their best to trade in small businesses in a godly manner. Some find it very hard, and they deserve our earnest and regular prayers.*

### On-going prayers

- *Pray for world leaders and the consequences of their meetings*
- *Give thanks for the life God has given you, and for His love*
- *Pray that God's people will show good morality to the world*

## Meditation

Memory; this precious gift, which, yielded to the love of God  
Can work within your soul for spiritual strength and succour.

Give it time and space, and let it bring you precious peace  
For all within your past which needs God's touch of healing.

Give it time and space, and let it search you for the truth  
About how your life was held by sin, but Jesus set you free.

Give it time and space, and let it tell again the story  
Of how you turned from self to faith and hope and love.

Give it time and space, and let it bring to mind the fact  
Of your salvation found within the eternal Word of God.

Give it time and space, and it will always serve you  
Until that time when all your life is held by God in glory.

Memory, this precious gift; yield it to the Lord, Your God.  
And it will work within your soul for good and not for ill.

---

## Bible Study - Amos 9:11-15

<sup>11</sup> 'On that day I will raise up the battered tent of David and repair its damage. I will raise up the ruins, and rebuild it as it used to be; <sup>12</sup> in order that they may take possession of what is left of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name.' This is what the LORD says, the one who does this.

<sup>13</sup> 'Look, the days are coming', says the LORD, 'when the one who ploughs will overtake the one who reaps, and the one who treads grapes will be ahead of the one who sows the seed; the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it. <sup>14</sup> I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they will plant out gardens and eat their fruit. <sup>15</sup> I will plant them upon their own land, and they will never again be pulled up out of the land that I have given them,' says the LORD your God.

## Review

The devastating prophecies of Amos have now come to their conclusion and we read the strange final verses of this book, but they appear to turn everything Amos said on its head! The entire book of Amos has spoken of God's unmitigated censure of Israel and judgement of destruction, but here at the end, we read something completely different! You may recall that at the end of the previous passage (9:1-10), verse 10 indicates that although God did indeed intend to destroy the northern tribes of Israel, He planned to raise up Judah (the southern kingdom – 9:11).

The last few verses of Amos says more about this, and indicates the possibility of Israel's renewal through Judah. It is a surprising but welcome development, but we must recall the real history of what happened in the years following Amos' prophecies. Within thirty years of his prophecy the northern Kingdom of Israel was indeed completely destroyed by the Assyrian King Shalmanesar, and the record of this tumultuous event is found in 2 King 17. However, when the Assyrian army attempted to invade Jerusalem a few years later, their invasion failed, and Isaiah records the amazing events which led to the miraculous survival of Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 37:32-38).

Returning to Amos' prophecies, it is clear that Amos foresaw that God intended to work through 'the battered tent of David' to restore His people (9:11). By this, he meant the southern Kingdom of Judah and more specifically the line of David, the ancestor of its kings. He went on to say that this restoration would include 'what is left of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name' (9:12). This is an extraordinary prophecy and one unlike anything found elsewhere in Amos. Firstly, it is the first direct prophecy of hope in Amos, and secondly, he prophesies that God's love is so inclusive it will include Israel's contentious brother nation Edom, who were the relatives of Esau, the brother of Jacob.

Amos continues with these words; 'the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it', which are remarkably similar to the prophecy of Joel (Joel 3:18). This raises some big questions; did Joel get this from Amos, or Amos from Joel? Was this a common expression of hope amongst God's people in the eighth century BC? We cannot know the answer for sure, but we do know that Peter used the similar prophecy of Joel in His Pentecost Sermon (Acts 2:16f.) even if he did not use these actual words. However, Amos went on to speak of the overtaking of springtime by harvest, which is a theme echoed in Jesus' teaching (John 4:36) where he speaks of the 'sower and reaper who rejoice together'. This is the Biblical theme of restoration, which is an essential part of the books of Nehemiah and Ezra, the official and priest who returned to Jerusalem after the Exile to restore the worship of God at the Temple in Jerusalem.

This is a particularly fascinating part of Amos' prophecies; certainly, no other part of Amos has as many connections with the 'salvation history' of God's people throughout the centuries. Amos' prophecies were mostly about Israel in the middle of the eighth century, but these last few verses are about God's general work of restoration and salvation. Moreover, they read like a mature reflection on what has happened, and many commentators reckon that they were penned some time after the rather torrid and tempestuous circumstance under which Amos first prophesied. Some suggest that Amos wrote all this after he returned home to Tekoa, when he had time to think about what had happened to him and form a conclusion to the terrible words he had prophesied against Israel, in the north.

However this all came about, the influence of Amos' words have been enormous. Other prophets of later generations realised that despite God's wrath, He was always seeking restoration; the consequences of sin could not be avoided, but God always intended to save. Isaiah, speaking within fifty years of Amos, developed these ideas in his own way, and his book is a masterpiece of analysis of God's master plan for salvation through one called 'God with us' (Isaiah 7:14), who was also a 'suffering servant' (Isaiah 53).

You may have found it hard to follow the book of Amos, but there is no doubt that his words are an essential part of the prophetic traditions by which God has revealed his plan of salvation.

---

## Questions (for use in groups)

1. In your group, discuss verses 11 and 12, and what they mean both for Amos and the people of Israel, and also for us.
2. Read the prophecy of Joel (Joel 3:15 to the end) and see how many connections you can find with this passage. What do these connections mean?
3. How is the prophecy of Amos helpful to your understanding of the love of God?

## Discipleship

### Personal comment:

*The whole book of Amos challenges us to consider how and why God's own people sin against Him. Some say that this happened in Old Testament times, but not to today. Surely, we have to deal with sin amongst God's people even to this day, and it compromises salvation no less?*

### **Ideas for exploring discipleship**

- *Reflect upon what the prophecies of Amos can say to the church today about the purity of its worship and service and the consequences of sin. How should sin be dealt with in the life of the church today?*
- *Pray for those who struggle with sin and know that it compromises them both as individuals and within the life of the church. There are many who feel convicted of sin, so pray that they will be blessed by God's people, the church.*

## **Final Prayer**

You have shown us glimpses of our future, Lord Jesus, and promised that we will have a place in Your Kingdom. Give us the grace to live by the light of this promise, with holiness and godliness all our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

---