

# What have you become?

## Study Questions | 01.21.24

### Brett McBride | Amos 2:6-16



## Consider

**Discuss:** What are some examples of “common decency” which people do everyday around us? What are some examples of indecency? injustice? How do people know how to act toward other people or from where do we get our ‘rules’ of behaviour?

## Let’s Examine

### Setting the stage: Amos 1: 1-2

- **Discuss:** Read 1:2. From the very beginning of what the Lord gave Amos to say, he creates a picture of Himself as YAHWEH. List some of the aspects of God according to this verse. Why is it important for them to remember this before Amos launches earnestly into the prophetic word?

### Israel and Judah at the time of Amos:

- **Discuss:** In chapters 1 and 2 the phrase *For three sins, even for four, I will not relent* is repeated many times. Count them and identify the place names associated with these repetitive statements.
  - These places surround the people of Judah and Israel. What is the significance of that?
  - The atrocities or sins which these people committed are vile, and they were also done against God’s people. Brett said in his sermon: ‘... *[God’s refusing to relent from judgment] reveals to the reader that: 1) He is the LORD of all creation! 2) He isn’t just a regional God ruling over Israel – but is in fact ruler of all the nations and peoples of the earth! 3) And that all of humanity is accountable before Him!... It’s like a surgeon, operating to amputate and contain the spread of an infection – while trying to preserve the patient!’* What are your thoughts about this?
  - In Amos 2: 4 ff. he moves on to Judah and Israel. Read through the comments he makes about the people of these two tribes. Describe how they are living and their hearts of worship.

***“They declare His name with their lips – but they deny Him by their lifestyles!” (Brett)***

- **Discuss:** How does this passage support this comment?
- **Read Amos 2:6-8. Amos takes them back to God’s Word. Compare** these verses with the rules and guidelines, -which God had given to his people, which reflect his holiness, righteousness and character - His laws found in Exodus 23:6, 8, Leviticus 25: 35-37, Leviticus 18 &20.

***True worship of God should always lead to justice, righteousness, and loving our neighbour!  
Their behaviour is demonstrating that they are no longer worshipping God!***

- **Discuss:** How is their behaviour demonstrating that they are no longer worshipping God?

## Church history: a very brief summary

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Remind yourselves of the following historical events and documents:

1. **“Unam Sanctum”**: the Pope claiming supremacy over secular leaders. Authority over Kings and Queens of Europe. Get in line – or you will be kicked out of the Church and end up in hell. Offers of shorter time in purgatory – if you go kill your enemies!
  2. The Crusades: Wartime theology
  3. Constantinople taken by the Muslims: The reason to send Columbus searching for a trade route.
  4. **“Inter Caetera”** or **Doctrine of Discovery**: If they discover land that is not controlled by a Christian King or Queen – they are to: Bring the inhabitants under their control and then to train them in good morals and into the Christian faith. And then, *“Should anyone presume to attempt this (to interfere with this process), be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul.”* – Pope Alexander VI
  5. **“Terra Nullius”**: ‘nobody’s land’ ‘nobody’s things’: if they didn’t discover an existing sovereign state – that was Christian – they could claim it for the expansion of their kingdom. Idea from Roman Law?
  6. **Spanish Inquisition**: forced conversions, seeking religious purity, combating heresy with torture and death.
  7. **“The Requirement”**: if they submitted, then everything was great, but if they didn’t... *“But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.* (last paragraph from The Requirement)
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**Discuss:** Discuss how these events and the attitudes behind these dictates would affect the common people of Europe (Spain, for example) or the people in the ‘found’ lands. Make a list of 10 ways that the inhabitants of either place would have been affected; Include what it might have stirred up in them.

**Discuss: How does the approach or impact of Jesus compare with the impact of the church at this point in history?** Choose and do one of the options below and then answer that question.

**OPTION #1:** Read Luke 4:16-21, 2 Corinthians 8:9 and Matthew 20:25-28. Compare Jesus’ calling and approach to ministry to the list you created above.

**OPTION #2:** Read Mark 5:1-5:13. Consider what the life and neighbourhood of this man must have been like before Jesus arrived. List some of the realities for the man, the people around him and his family. Now consider what differences must have been evident in the days and weeks after Jesus left for the same three. Then answer the bold question above.

# Let's Apply

Brett said repeatedly in his sermon :

***"They declare His name with their lips – but they deny Him by their lifestyles!" (Brett)***

And

***True worship of God should always lead to justice, righteousness, and loving our neighbour! (Brett)***

**Personal Reflection:** Spend some time considering one of these two statements. Ask in prayer, taking time to listen, about your own life and heart. Is there an attitude, a perspective, a superiority, a habit, a ... which you have about other people, which you have carried with you – even unknowingly – and which God would like to transform, so that your impact and worship in this world looks more like Jesus?  
*(This type of prayer takes time and may even take repeated conversations with God. It may also take time speaking with a trusted friend who can help you identify where God want to speak to you and bring about change. Give God the time to do his work in you.)*

# Let's Pray

- **Spend time praising God:** That he as sent Jesus into this World to show us HIS way and lead us into salvation.
- **Confess** (silently or out loud) when you have chosen power, oppression and greed over care, love and sacrifice.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit** to empower each person in your group to live in an attitude of seeking God's ways, His Righteousness and His Kingdom (Matthew 6:33)
- **Continue to pray** for the church around the world; That we will follow the ways of God – reflecting his Character and heart, rather than drifting into our own ways and oppression.

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## ***Do you feel the need to Lament?***

*Know that Lamenting is something that people of God have done for thousands of years – including David. If you want to know more, look at these Psalms. Psalm 13, 22, 80. Can you find others?*

*There are 4 parts to prayers of lament which might be helpful:*

- 1. As you take your heavy heart to God: acknowledge your heart's heaviness to Him.*
  - 2. Cry out your complaint to Him. Shake your fist, allow yourself to be grumpy or angry.*
  - 3. Ask God to hear you and respond.*
  - 4. Confess your Trust in Him and who He is.*
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