

GLO Mini Bible School – Amos 5 ‘Let Justice Roll Down’ (18/2/2021)

- I. Background to Amos
 - a. Amos is a southern shepherd called to Northern sophisticates
 - b. During days of Jeroboam/Uzziah
 - i. Stable government, prosperity
 - ii. Assyria threat lessened, but she's only 'taking a breath'
 - iii. Prosperity seen as God's blessing/looking forward to 'Day of the Lord.'
- II. Dramatic opening to chapter 5 – Funeral Dirge (5:1-17)
 - a. Israel seen as young virgin with so much potential (v.1-3)
 - b. But she is already dead ('Fallen, no more to rise')
 - i. Judgement is so certain, it's as though the funeral has happened
 - ii. Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba were religious sites
 - 1. Religious sites will be destroyed
 - 2. Our religious framework can't save us if we are acting unjustly
 - iii. 'Seek me and live' is the repeated call (v.4, 6)
 - 1. Is there still hope? No, the dirge is in full swing.
 - 2. But there would have been had she turned, despite her deep darkness ('Gentle and Lowly' – God's love for sinners)
 - iv. Their crime – complete disregard for poor, weak and needy
 - 1. Courts are so corrupt they 'hate those who speak the truth' (v.10)
 - 2. Rich have prospered at the expense of the poor
 - a. Vineyards sign of wealth, but also picture of Israel's fruitfulness or lack of
 - b. Accepting bribes, not listening to the cry of the poor

- III. God condemns Israel's formal worship, because of social injustice (v.18-24)
 - a. 'I despise your feasts' (v.21) (see also Isaiah 1:11-13 – 'I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly')
 - i. Not because the worship isn't reverent
 - ii. But because worshipping God while turning a blind eye to injustice
 - b. The plea 'let justice roll down like rivers, and righteousness like a never failing stream' (v.24)
- IV. What about us?
 - a. John Stott 'Cross of Christ vs 'Issues Facing Christians Today.'
 - i. UK church very middle class. Why?
 - ii. Do we send money to the poor overseas, and are careless about those under our feet? (the rich man and Lazarus')
 - b. Justice vs evangelical politics
 - i. Key opportunities for the church
 - 1. Not just 'anti abortion' but fostering and adopting
 - 2. Focusing on Special Needs and vulnerable adults
 - 3. Being good news to the LGBT community
 - ii. Being a voice for justice at work?
 - 1. Show an interest in the cleaner/the auxiliary/the marginalized
 - 2. Challenge workplace culture ('the only thing needed for evil to prosper is for good men to say nothing,' Edward Burke)
 - iii. The younger generation passionate about social justice
 - 1. What a difference we could make if we were too!
 - 2. Channel that passion, while maintaining sound doctrine
 - c. Remember 'the Sheep and the Goats'