

## A Famine of Hearing the Word?

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by Wayne Goff

*“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, ‘That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD!’” - Amos 8:11.*

Amos was a lonely shepherd from Tekoa, 12 miles south of Jerusalem, called by God to speak to the northern kingdom of Israel a message condemning all social and political evils of the time. It was not a popular message, so God chose one who, as a shepherd, had dealt with young lions, bird snares and flooding seasons (Amos 3:4-5, 12; 5:19; 9:5). In other words, he was a rugged “farm boy” considered an “outsider” by Israel. But he was exactly what God needed.

Jeroboam was the king at the time (793-753 B.C.) and Israel was experiencing great wealth and luxury at the time. Amos condemned Israel for their “beds of ivory” (6:3), their “summer houses” (3:15), and called their women “cows of Bashan” (4:1-3) because they gained all these things at the expense of the poor and widowed. “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!””(4:1). The nation was corrupt and not only trampled the poor, afflicted the needy, and hoped for the poor to die, but they also despised that which was holy (2:6-8).

Because of this God promised through Amos that one day, when Israel wanted to call upon God and be heard, that He would not be present! The days are coming that Jehovah God would send a famine of “*hearing the words of the LORD*”! Indeed, by 721 B.C. the nation was destroyed by Assyria and no “*words of the Lord*” would save them.

The lesson, I suppose, is “Be careful what you ask for!” Even today there are some who come to church, and during the lesson think “Oh, what a weariness it is!” and on any given Sunday, may say, “Oh no, not another sermon!” Dear reader, if you do not have a *taste* for spiritual things, then I encourage you to *develop* one. If you do not, then the day may come when you wish to hear a sermon – a “*word of the Lord*” – and none will be there to save you. Today is the time to prepare for meeting the Lord one day in death and in judgment!

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