

**Emmanuel Service**  
**15.11.2020**

**Sermon Notes**

**Amos 8**

How would you feel if someone described you as being like a basket of ripe fruit?

- That is how God described the Israelites – and it wasn't a compliment.
- It was a serious warning for Israel and we need to heed that warning too.

**1. The Time is Ripe**

Read verses 1-3

- Israel are like ripe fruit – this is the moment, judgment is coming, there will be no more delay.

When we buy fruit it tends to be ripe and ready to eat

- But if you grow your own you know it takes time for it to be ready.
- But when it is ready, it is ready – you eat it!
- So too with Israel – they have had years and years of disobedience and have been warned by God, but have ignored Him and now the time is right.

We need to recognise, as we have before in Amos, that God's patience has a limit.

- We too are heading for judgment day and we don't know when it will be.
- But God does know – he has determined the time.

**2. Israel are Ripe**

- How are Israel ripe for judgment?
- We will come back to verse 3 later...
- Verses 4-6 describe the Israelites and how they are ripe for judgment.

Some of the charges against Israel are repeated from earlier in the book.

- We see that they are totally self-centred
- Self-centredness often results in 2 things...

The things of God become a drag – v5

- They go to church (New Moon and Sabbaths) but their hearts are still at work
- Some do the same today – arriving at church primarily thinking about leaving!
  - 'The service won't be long, will it?'
  - 'We have work to get back to, dinner to eat, games consoles to play on, sport to watch.'
  - Sadly this exposes where our hearts often are – on ourselves not God.

But also, when we become self-centred, we exploit others v5b-6

- We aren't honest in our dealings – giving less but charging more
  - Maybe not working the hours we should or charging too much
- Willing to treat others as simply a means to our own ends

Israel were ripe for judgment – but don't we see some of that self-centredness in ourselves?

- Putting my desires before worship of God?
- My needs before others'?

**3. The Devastating Judgment of God**

- God gives a preview of his judgment of Israel (repeated phrase 'In that day')
- It is horrible, but we must not look away.

- V3 – dead bodies strewn everywhere
- V7-8 – the land convulses at the immorality of God's people
- V9 – darkness when it should be light – a common Biblical sign of judgment
- V10 – mourning, weeping and grief

Then the climax of God's judgment v11-13 is a famine - of God's word.

- An appropriate punishment for those who reject God's word
- And the result is an unbearable hunger and thirst
  - We see this today in a culture that has rejected God's word – even thinking it has liberated itself from the restrictions of past generations who sought to obey the Bible – only to find we have a desperate lack of meaning and purpose.
- People will still be religious – v14
  - But this is syncretism – seeking to mix together lots of religions
  - This is something people try to do today
  - So the result is judgment

Maybe we struggle with passages like these in the Old Testament

- Isn't it a bit intolerant of God? Unloving?
- But wouldn't it be wrong and unloving for God to tolerate verses 4-6?
- The Bible shows us something better, not that God is tolerant (though he is patient!) but that God is forgiving – which is different.
- Whenever we wrong someone we incur a debt – forgiveness involves wiping out the debt, in other words the person offended pays it themselves.
- This, incredibly, is what God does.
- There is another time in the Bible when there is an earthquake and a darkness in the middle of the day – when Jesus died on the cross.
- God's judgment was being poured out on His son, Jesus – hence the cry 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'
- Jesus was taking our debt for us, taking the devastating judgment of God.
- So that day was a day of mourning for an only son – God mourning for His son.
- All so you and I could be forgiven our debt

Amos 8 should shock us:

- The time is ripe
- Israel is ripe
- And we have seen the devastating judgment of God
- All this takes us to the cross – to see God's devastating judgment poured out on Jesus for us.