

“Woe to Those Who Are at Ease in Zion”



“Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, and trust in Mount Samaria, notable persons in the chief nation, to whom the house of Israel comes!” {Amos 6:1}

Introduction

- The prophet Amos was sent to Israel during a time of prosperity.
- It was during the reigns of King Uzziah (Judah) and King Jeroboam II (Israel).
- Around 780-740 BC, 20 – 60 years before Israel fell to Assyria.
- He strongly warned them to repent – or destruction was inevitable!

Introduction

- Text reads, *“Woe to you who are at ease in Zion ...”*
- Zion is a name used for Jerusalem.
 - Portion of Jerusalem that included the temple
 - Spiritual Jerusalem – the kingdom of God’s righteousness
- They rested on their physical laurels and dismissed the need for God in their lives.
- They were physically corrupt and spiritually bankrupt.

Introduction

- Amos pointed them to the cities that had already perished, suggesting that they consider their own fate.
- In verse 3, he issued another “woe,” postponing the day of doom – IT WAS COMING.
- Application for us today?
 - Are we at ease in Zion?
 - Are we developing as we should?
 - Have we become complacent about our service to God?

It Is Not Because ...

1. There is nothing to do.
 - There is plenty to do.
 - The Christian’s life is a busy one.
 - We must work to the best of our ability.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” {Ecclesiastes 9:10}

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“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” {Colossians 3:23-24}

It Is Not Because ...

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- We must work to the best of our ability.

“Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” {Romans 12:11}

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, ‘Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!’” {John 4:35}

It Is Not Because ...

2. We have too many workers.

- There's always plenty of work.
- Why are only a handful involved?
- When things go wrong, who is quick to complain?
- **WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THE PROBLEM?**
- If we're not growing, could it be that we're not as involved as we should be?

It Is Not Because ...

2. We have too many workers.

- Elders must keep people involved and productive.
- If people have ability and desire, allow them to participate.
- The congregation must be patient during the learning process.

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” {Matthew 9:37-38}

It Is Not Because ...

3. We have plenty of time.

- We are living on borrowed time – we don't know how much we have left.

“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.” {John 9:4}

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” {2 Peter 3:9}

It Is Not Because ...

4. There is no reward.

- Our rewards for service are many.
- There is reward in seeing souls obey and others being strengthened.
- Our brethren will lift us up and join hands with us in this great work.
- All we do as Christians will be remembered, and God is taking note.

It Is Not Because ...

4. There is no reward.

- If we remain faithful and work till the end, we have a sure reward.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” {1 Corinthians 15:58}

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.” {Hebrews 4:9}

It Is Not Because ...

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- If we remain faithful and work till the end, we have a sure reward.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” {1 Peter 1:3-4}

Why are so many “at ease”?

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

1. Worldliness – not willing to give up their sinful ways.

- Very true in Amos’ day. They were returning to their past idolatry.
- They had lived in corruption like the nations around them.
- What about us in our own day?

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

1. Worldliness – not willing to give up their sinful ways.

- Many don’t want to make difficult choices.
 - They would have to change the way they live.
- “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”*
{James 4:4, 1-3}

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

1. Worldliness – not willing to give up their sinful ways.

- Many don’t want to make difficult choices.
- They would have to change the way they live.

“That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”
{Ephesians 4:22}

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

2. Ignorance – many do not realize what they are expected to do as Christians.

- One reason is that they don’t take time to learn.
- They rely on what others tell them, assuming them to be correct.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” {Hosea 4:6}

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

2. Ignorance – many do not realize what they are expected to do as Christians.

- We must continue to study.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” {2 Timothy 2:15}

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

2. Ignorance – many do not realize what they are expected to do as Christians.

- We must continue to study.

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” {James 1:21}

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

3. Presumptions.

- Israel and Judah assumed God was with them, and He would always be there to *bail them out*, as He had done in the past.
- They were arrogant and over-confident, both physically and spiritually.
- They thought they were invincible and didn't need God.
- They turned to neighboring allies and their own physical resources.

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

3. Presumptions.

- Presumption is a dangerous thing.
- Many presume it doesn't matter what they do – that salvation is assured.
- “Once saved always saved.”
- We presume we are all right.
- Others are guilty – but not us.

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

3. Presumptions.

- Presumption is a dangerous thing.

“although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” {1 Timothy 1:13}

“And Paul said, ‘I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.’” {Acts 26:29}

Some Are at Ease Because ...

4. They don't want to do the work.

- This keeps many at ease.
- It's easier to sit back and allow others to do the work than to busy ourselves.
- The tasks may be unpleasant ones that we don't like.
- Could this be why we procrastinate?

Some Are at Ease Because ...

4. They don't want to do the work.

- God hates idleness.
 - *“Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.”* {Ecclesiastes 10:18}
 - *“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.’”* {Matthew 25:26}
 - *“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end.”* {Hebrews 6:11}

Some Are at Ease Because of ...

5. Indifference – they didn't care.

- Many are at ease because they really do not care about what is going on.
- They're comfortable where they are and don't want or plan to change.
- If a person cannot be moved to care, he will make little or no effort to please God.
- The church at Laodicea had this problem.
 - Revelation 3:15-17

Overcoming Our Ease

1. WAKE UP! The clock is ticking ...

- We should take inventory of our lives.
- “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified.”* {2 Corinthians 13:5}

Overcoming Our Ease

1. WAKE UP! The clock is ticking ...

- Today – not tomorrow – is the day to begin.
- “For He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.’”* {2 Corinthians 6:2}

Overcoming Our Ease

2. Repent – resolve to do better.

- Anytime we determine we are not what we ought to be, we must repent of our sin.
- True repentance leads to real change
- Forgiveness comes after true obedience.

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” {1 John 1:7}

Overcoming Our Ease

3. Return to the old paths – when you were what you needed to be.

- Get to work – don't lose heart – don't quit!
- “But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings.”* {Hebrews 10:32}

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” {Galatians 6:9}