
Day 173 - June 22

The Divided Kingdom (930-725 BCE)

The Prophecies of Amos

The Era of Uzziah and Jotham in Judah

Readings: *Amos 7:10-17; 2 Kings 14:28-29; 15:5, 8-18; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21*

Reflections:

- These final prophecies of Amos give the reader a good window into the reaction of the leaders. Amos was simply a shepherd and had no heritage of being a prophet or religious leader and yet he stood with courage and boldly declared God's heart. This is another good reminder that God loves to pick the least likely people to represent him. He delights to pick the weak and marginalized to be at the centre of his purposes and will. If a person feels completely inadequate for the task, then from God's perspective they are totally qualified.
- This period is again described and what a chamber of horrors it is. Leaders assassinated, wars and the greatest brutalities imaginable, including killing pregnant women. The reader must be left completely sickened. Is this God's people? Is this the Promised Land? How can something that began with such promise end up so terribly wrong.
- We turn our attention to Uzziah and again we see a key to the root problem of humanity. "But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall." After many years of excellent, God-honoring leadership, Uzziah's heart like David and Solomon's heart, returns to its natural self-centered state. He arrogantly goes into the temple where only priests should go and when confronted becomes angry in his self-righteousness. God afflicts him with leprosy and this is how he lives the remainder of his life. A terribly sad conclusion to a leader who at one time had done so much good. The lesson? Once again we hear the clear and unmistakable truth being shouted out. The human heart must be changed from the inside out. If not, no one has any true lasting hope! Nothing external can change us from the outside in. God needs to give us new hearts.
- It should be noted that Uzziah's sin and judgment are linked. Uzziah approached God's presence in the temple as a proud and self-righteous man. Leprosy ensured he could never enter the temple again. This is often God's approach in judgment that we reap a

consequence directly aligned with the sin. Praise God for Jesus who has taken all of the judgment onto himself so that we no longer need to experience this. As we will soon read in the prophet Isaiah, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:5,6) The coming of the Messiah will not only open up the way for God's Spirit to change our hearts but he will also take away all of the punishment that would be ours!