

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

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The Sixth Angel (Part 1)

When the prophet Amos came to the northern kingdom of Israel, he came to warn them of the judgment that Yahweh was about to bring upon them. In doing so, he reminded them that Yahweh always gives warnings and opportunities for repentance before bringing judgment:

- 6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and Yahweh has not done *it*?
- 7 Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing, but he reveals his secret to his servants the prophets. -Amos 3

Amos clearly and boldly called upon Israel to repent:

- 1 Hear you this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel.
- 2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there is* none to raise her up.
- 3 For thus says the Lord Yahweh; The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave a hundred, and that which went forth *by* a hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.
- 4 For thus says Yahweh to the house of Israel, Seek you me, and you shall live:
- 5 But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing. -Amos 4

Furthermore, Amos said that the sword (war) would come upon the house of Jeroboam, the king of Israel:

- 9 And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword. -Amos 7

Like many prophecies, however, that which Amos delivered to Israel was not welcome. In fact, the high priest told him to go back home and leave them alone. In other words, no matter what Amos said, they were going to continue the idolatrous worship practices that they were doing in the “King’s Chapel!”

- 10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

- 11 For thus Amos said, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

- 12 Also Amaziah said to Amos, O you seer, go, flee you away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

- 13 But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king’s chapel, and it is the king’s court. -Amos 7

Just what religion were they practicing in the “King’s Chapel” in Bethel? This Jeroboam the son of Joash had adopted the religion of his predecessor, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which Yahweh calls evil:

- 23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* for forty and one years.

- 24 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of Yahweh: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. -2 Kings 14

This religion was based upon the worship of images, especially those of golden calves, likely representing the Egyptian cow goddess Hathor. Their special feast days were celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth month (see 1 Kings 12). These people of Israel were diligent in their praise and worship, even though Yahweh said He hated it!

- 21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

- 22 Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

- 23 Take you away from me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your viols. -Amos 5

Rather than serving Yahweh, the people of Israel had made images of a star, which represented their god! Consequently, Yahweh said He would cause them to go into captivity!

- 26 But you have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which you made to yourselves.

- 27 Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, says Yahweh, whose name is The God of hosts. -Amos 5

Nevertheless, Israel was unable to see any connection between their religious practices and the prophecies that Yahweh gave to them through Amos. Therefore, they refused to believe those prophecies and repent.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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We would do well to remember that Yahweh knows the future just as well as He knows the past. He tells us to remember history, “the former things of old.” He uses these ancient things to show us the future. His historical prophecies and illustrations “declare the end from the beginning.”

- 9 Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: -Isaiah 46

Yahweh calls “a ravenous bird from the east,” which is not a bird at all. This is a symbolic description of a man that He uses to accomplish His purpose:

- 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executes my counsel from a far country: yes, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it. -Isaiah 46

Indeed, He used the king of Assyria to remove Israel “out of his sight:”

- 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;
23 Until Yahweh removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. -2 Kings 17

Then He delivered Judah into the hand of His “servant,” the king of Babylon:

- 9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, says Yahweh, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations. -Jeremiah 25

Both the kings of Assyria and Babylon were kings from the east, each of which might be called “a ravenous bird from the east.”

The location of the land of these kings, either literally or symbolically, is also the subject of two important end-time prophecies. Both are focused on the Euphrates River, which begins in modern Turkey and flows through Syria and Iraq. It then joins with the Tigris River, forming the Arvand River, which borders Iran and discharges into the Persian Gulf.

The first of these prophecies concerning the Euphrates River is part of an answer to “the prayers of the saints.” After receiving those prayers, God sends seven angels to sound trumpets of warning to the earth:

- 4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.
5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.
6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.-Revelation 8

One at a time, each of these angels sounds his trumpet preceding a great tragedy that comes upon the earth. After the first five angels sound their trumpets, the “Sixth Angel” sounds and God commands him to loose the four angels that are bound in the Euphrates River:

- 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. -Revelation 9

Angels are spiritual beings used by God as His messengers. While God often uses them to bring good news (see Luke 1:19), He also uses them in a manifestation of His anger. In such cases, God sends “evil angels” to bring wrath, indignation, and trouble upon unrepentant people:

- 49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*. -Psalms 78

This is exactly how the four angels that are loosed by the Sixth Angel are used. They are held back (bound) so that they cannot afflict the earth until after the first five angels sound their trumpets of warnings. Then, only after the people of the earth fail to repent, are these spirits loosed from the Euphrates River to bring great trouble upon the earth:

- 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. -Revelation 9

The purpose of this tragedy is to humble the world and bring us to sorrowful repentance from worshipping idols and continuing in other sins. However, the rebellious survivors will not listen to these warnings and will refuse to repent:

- 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:
21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. -Revelation 9

(To be continued in part 2)

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