

Exhortation for 23/11/03 - Reading Amos 3 - Bro Neville C 2003 年十一月三日讲道词 读经：阿摩司书第三章 纳维尔·克弟兄

亲爱的兄弟姐妹：

我们今天读经计划的其中一部分进行到了大家熟知的小先知书的一部分。这一部分包括 12 本小先知书，从何西阿书开始直到旧约的最后一本书玛拉基书。

在今天早上的劝勉词里，我们将要来看先知阿摩司的一章书，他是在 12 个先知里我们了解得比较少的一个先知。今天我们要来看阿摩司书第三章，我们将把它看成是纪念主耶稣基督的踏脚石。

阿摩司预言了以色列北方的王国-不是整个以色列民族，而是针对以色列国-耶路撒冷北面的十个支派。“阿摩司”这个名字的意思是“难以负荷的”，这的确是他的语言将要成的样子。他的信息将是严厉的指控。他的目的是为了唤醒以色列国，让他们改正自己不虔敬的生活。

阿摩司书 1：1 告诉我们阿莫斯是一个牧人，也就是一个牧羊人。他来自提哥亚（1：1），那是一个在耶路撒冷以南 10 英里的一个小镇-这一点很有意思因为他的语言针对的是以色列北方王国。提哥亚在南方王国犹大。所以阿摩司对北方国讲话时是以分裂的态度，并不是把所有以色列人的罪行都算在一起，而是带来了神单独的审判。

阿摩司书 1：1 还告诉我们阿摩司在“犹大王乌西雅，以色列王约阿施的儿子耶罗波安在位的时候”开始他的事工的。当时大概是公元前 760 年。在这所提到的耶罗波安实际上是耶罗波安二世，约阿施的儿子。他和与所罗门的儿子罗波安处在相同时代的耶罗波安不是同一个人。那时，南方犹大国和北方以色列国都非常强盛。在南方，历代志下 26 章告诉我们乌西雅攻击非利士人，坚固耶路撒冷城，在沙漠里修建防御工事，牧养牲畜，种植粮食，受到了神的祝福。在北方，列王纪下 14 章告诉我们耶罗波安的国界扩展得从叙利亚的哈马口直到四海。在北方和南方，从地理上，经济上，军事上，两个王国都达到了所罗门的黄金时代以后最强盛的时期。以色列整个民族的财富，繁荣不断的增长，但是他们的信仰却是相反的。南方的人缺乏热情，北方的人完全变节了。

不管事实上神是怎样慷慨地赐福给北方王国，人们一点回应都没有。王国的财富由一小群贵族享受，他们躺卧在从大马色运来的绣花毯上（3：12），建造奢华的房屋（3：15），彼此款待，喝酒宴乐（6：4-6）。普通人却被奴役（2：6），被压迫（5：11），受屈枉（5：12）。在此期间，出现了一大批不法的商人（8：5），人们舍不得奉献当献的祭，因为这大大妨碍了他们的买卖。

这样的情形在 5：13 里被很好地概括了，“所以通达人见这样的时势，必静默不言，因为时势真恶”。那时人们不敢讲出不公平的事情，没有人会听这样的控诉，人们满腔的怨愤只有以自身的痛苦而告终。阿摩司就是在讲这样的事情。

预言被整齐地分为几部分： * 八个审判，从 1： 3 开始 * 三个审判的信息，从 3： 1 开始 * 两次哀号，从 5： 18 开始 * 五个异象，从 7： 1 开始

每一个被记录下来的审判都说明如果以色列人不改正他们的行为，这样的惩罚就降临到北方国的头上。开始的两章记载了神要以人们的行为施行审判的民族：大马色，迦萨，推罗，以东，亚扪，摩押，犹太，以色列。犹太人一定被阿摩司的指责吓坏了，他们一直相信有史以来神都给他们优于世界其他民族的特权。这样的言辞是对他们非常激烈的谴责。神对以色列发怒的原因出现在第三章。

第一节：神介绍说北方王国是他从埃及地领上来的家庭中的一部分。这是一个父亲对他的孩子的个人的工作。摩西带领以色列民出埃及时，神告诉他以色列是他的长子（出埃及记 4： 22）。如果没有把他们领出埃及地，他们永远都不会成为一国。神同样以一种非常真实的方式出现在我们的生活中，把我们带出埃及地（这个世界）。我们也是神的大家庭中的一员。

第二节：现在，以色列民和他们神的关系变得更有针对性。他不仅仅是把以色列民带出埃及，除了以色列人，他没有带任何人出埃及地。在地球上所有的民族里，他们是唯一被从埃及救出来的人。实际上，就像我们在阿摩司书 2： 9 里看到的一样，神还因为以色列的利益除掉了其他的民族：“从以色列人面前除灭亚摩利人....”。同样的，神也在我们的生活中作不可能在其他人身上作的事情-并且，因着对我们有益的事，甚至对付其他的人！

但是这种赐福也带来了责任。因为以色列民与他们的创造者之间的关系，神也期待他们作一些不期待其他民族作的事情。以色列民以为他们与神的关系会让他们免于审判。实际上，就像阿摩司给他们解释的一样，审判会显给他们看。这同样也适用于我们。我们与天父有一种特别的关系。在地上的万民中，我们独自（至今为止，据我们所知）拥有真理。像以色列一样，在软弱的时候，我们有时会相信我们和神之间的关系可以使自己免于审判。不幸的是，这样的是不会发生。主耶稣基督告诉他的门徒：“因为多给谁，就向谁多取；多托谁，就向谁多要（路加福音 12： 48）。

第三节：这时，阿摩司把以色列民带回到早期时候。这里提示了我们利未记 26： 12 里神说他要到以色列民中间行走，他要做他们的神的话。在利未记 26 章里，神两次（第 13， 45 节）提到把以色列民从埃及地带出来的事实，所以把这作为利未记 26 章的特征肯定没错。但是针对以色列近期的行为，神问人们二人若不同心，岂能同行呢？答案是不能。这句话的含意是如果以色列人不改变他们的行为，神不会再继续与他们同行。为了阐述这一观点，阿摩司表明了如今以色列民族是如何的接近这严重的惩罚的。

第四节：这是第一组带有修辞手法的事情和问题，每一个问题都有一个明显相同的答案。我们可以把第四节到第六节总结成这样：

狮子若非抓食，会在林中咆哮吗？不，否则就会吓跑猎物！ 少壮狮子若无所得，会从洞中发声吗？不，它只在征服猎物以后吼叫！ 若没有机关，雀鸟会陷在网罗里吗？当然不会！ 网罗若无所得，会从地上翻起吗？不会！ 城中若吹角，百

姓会不惊恐吗？不，那意味着战争！灾祸若临到一城，会不会耶和华所降的吗？不，灾祸是审判的表现（比邪恶更加严重）。神将施行审判！

第七节：问题在这中断了。阿莫斯在此申明神将他的奥秘指示给他的仆人众先知。为什么有必要说明这一点呢？答案在下一节：

第八节：狮子吼叫！这就意味着猎物已经在狮子的爪下，没有机会逃脱了。谁是狮子？就是神自己。在何西阿书 11：10 里，神说他必如狮子吼叫。阿摩司书 1：2 告诉我们：“耶和华必从锡安吼叫”。我们在 3：8 里看到耶和华吼叫了。阿摩司写给北方王国的话是对迫在眉睫的审判的警告。这是狮子的吼叫！已经没有什么时间了。他们已经被逼到了绝路。除非他们马上采取措施，才能度过这一难关。就像神所说的一样，先知除了预言，其他都无能为力。

第九节：这里有一幅非比寻常的画面，阿摩司叫周围所有的异教徒站在撒玛利亚山上，往下看撒玛利亚有何等大的灾祸。埃及和非利士是以色列早期的主要敌人。以色列人认为自己在任何一方面都优于其他民族。非利士人以他们的不虔敬而闻名。他们被称作是“未受割礼的非利士人”（撒母耳记上 17：26）。在出埃及之前，埃及人以多年对以色列人的压迫而闻名。

现在，请设身处地地想一下。这是一个让全世界的人关注基督弟兄会生活的邀请。在那有许多非利士人和埃及人，就是那些不虔敬，压迫我们的人，来审判我们的行为。但是如果这事确实发生的话，我们怎么做才能符合标准呢？这是一个有趣的问题，因为如果我们在一场战争中禁止地持反对意见的话，我们会发现自己正处于这种境况当中，我们在灾祸和世俗中受到考验。

第十节：这里得出了结论。以国际化的标准来看，以色列是一个邪恶，不虔敬，不道德的民族。他们不知道什么是对的。暴力和压迫在他们的本性中占了大部分，罪行象他们聚敛的财富一样堆积成山。即使是异教徒都被这样的行为震惊了。

第十一节：这是审判：“敌人必来围攻这地，使你的势力衰微，抢掠你的家宅”。阿摩司没有说是哪一个民族会来惩罚以色列，但是他在 5：27 里说他们会被掳到大马色以外。然而，每一个以色列人都知道当时世界上最大的军事力量是亚述，一个大马色以外的大族。在列王纪下 17 章里，亚述王撒幔以色列攻取了撒玛利亚。

第十二节：曾经繁荣昌盛的北方王国只会留下一小股势力。阿摩司用“两条羊腿”和“半个耳朵”来表示。狮子会把以色列完全吞吃。几乎没有剩余-耳朵和腿之间的每一样东西都被吞吃。那些躺在大马色昂贵的绣花毯上极尽奢华，对今天的一切一点都不担心的人，只能非常短暂地保住他们的性命。大多数人会朽坏，周围的民族将见证这样的审判。

第十三节：这是一个和第九节一样的召唤。当其他民族来观察以色列的邪恶时，神邀请他们听正式的惩罚。神在这自称“万军之神”，这是神充满武力的一种神性。

第十四节：以色列因为自己所犯的罪被惩罚。伯特利是背教者在以色列敬拜的一个主要的地方。阿摩司在伯特利发表这个预言（7：13）。祭坛的角象征怜悯。神对以色列非常忍耐，但是他不会再施怜悯给他们。伯特利祭坛的角的毁坏还因为另外一个原因变得很重要。罗波安在位的时候，尼八的儿子耶罗波安建立了北方王国，他造了一个埃及的金牛犊安放在伯特利，让所有的以色列民都去拜它（列王纪上 12 章）。我们开始在阿摩司书 1：1 里知道实际上是神把以色列民带出埃及，他们才得以服事神。而北方王国从一开始，就有意识地背离神，转向埃及。这个问题是可以补救的。

第十五节：所有构成上流社会主流的富人，将因为压迫百姓而被毁灭。今天我们生活当中占主要地位的物质生活，在审判的时候对我们来说毫无用处。

在我们将注意力转移到当前的饼和酒时，我们想到了主耶稣基督的榜样。他为我们显出了自己的生命，从而我们得以脱离罪和死的束缚，出埃及。像以色列人一样，他是被从埃及召出来的神的儿子（马太福音 2：15）。他的一生完美的顺服了神：“我与父原为一”（约翰福音 10：30）。在他的一生中，被邪恶和不虔敬的人审判，他们宣布“我查不出他有什么罪来”（约翰福音 19：4）。当他回来的时候，将会终止从一开始就搅乱世界的暴力，压迫，背教的行为和唯物主义。希望那天我们可以与他同在，成为听到预言的奥秘，以色列家剩余的敬虔的人。

Exhortation for 23/11/03 - Reading Amos 3 - Bro Neville Clark

Dear Brothers and Sisters

In the middle portion of our daily readings, we have just begun the section of Scripture known as the Minor Prophets. This section comprises the twelve minor prophecies, beginning with Hosea and concluding with Malachi at the end of the Old Testament. This morning, by way of exhortation, we shall consider a section of the prophecy of Amos, one of the lesser-known prophecies of the twelve. The reading for today is Amos chapter 3 and it is this chapter we will use as a stepping-stone to the emblems before us.

Amos prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel - not to the whole nation of Israel but to the kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes living north of Jerusalem. The name "Amos" means "burdensome" which is exactly what his words were going to be. His message would be a blunt, stern indictment. His object was to wake the kingdom up and to make them confront their unspiritual lives.

Chapter 1:1 tells us that Amos was a herdsman. That means he was a shepherd. He was from Tekoa (1:1), a little country town about 10 miles south of Jerusalem - which is interesting because his prophetic work was to the northern kingdom of Israel. Tekoa was in the southern kingdom of Judah. So Amos would speak to the northern kingdom in a somewhat detached manner,

not associated at all with the sins that were committed there, but bringing a distant judgement from God.

Chapter 1:1 also tells us that Amos began his ministry during "the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash king of Israel". This was about the year 760BC. The Jeroboam mentioned here is actually Jeroboam II, the son of Joash, who is not the same Jeroboam who divided the nation in the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. At this time, both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah were extremely prosperous. In the South 2 Chronicles 26 tells us that Uzziah warred against the Philistines, fortified Jerusalem, built border fortresses in the desert, farmed cattle and crops and was blessed by God. In the North, 2 Kings 14 tells us that Jeroboam extended his borders from Hamath in Syria to the Dead Sea. In both North and South, geographically, economically and militarily the kingdoms rose to the greatest heights they had ever done since the golden days of Solomon. The entire nation of Israel was overflowing with wealth and prosperity. But their religion was the opposite. In the South, it was half-hearted and in the North was blatantly apostate!

Despite the fact that God had blessed the northern kingdom so bountifully, the people did not respond to Him at all. The wealth of the kingdom was enjoyed by a small elite class of nobles who adorned their beds with fabric from Damascus (3:12), built luxurious holiday houses (3:15) and entertained each other with much eating, drinking and music (6:4-6). The common people were enslaved (2:6), oppressed (5:11) and treated unjustly (5:12). And in the midst of this there was emerging a powerful merchant class who traded with dishonest weights (8:5) and begrudged the keeping of religious feasts, which interfered with their trading activities.

The situation is summed up well in the words of chapter 5:13; "Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time." People didn't dare speak against the injustices of the day. There was no one reliable to complain to, and the complaint would only end in misery. Into that scene steps Amos.

The prophecy breaks neatly into a number of well-defined sections: - 8 judgements, beginning in ch 1:3 - 3 summons, beginning in ch 3:1 - 2 woes, beginning in ch 5:18, and - 5 visions, beginning in ch 7:1

Each of these judgements records the punishment that would come upon the northern kingdom if they failed to amend their ways. The first two chapters give a list of nations that God will judge for their conduct: Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah and Israel. The Jews must have been stunned by Amos' rebuke. They had historically believed that God favoured

them above the worldly nations. This introduction proved to be a very rude awakening. The reasons for God's anger with Israel are revealed in detail in chapter 3.

Verse 1: God introduces the northern kingdom as part of the family that He brought up out of Egypt. These are personal works from a Father to His children. When Moses brought the nation out of Egypt, God told him that Israel was His firstborn son (Ex 4:22). If He hadn't personally delivered them from Egypt, they would never have been a nation. In a very real way, God has also acted in our lives, bringing us out of Egypt (the world). We are also part of the family of God.

Verse 2: And now, the relationship between Israel and their God grows even more personal. Not only did He deliver them from Egypt, He never delivered anyone else but them. Of all the families in the earth, they are the only family that was rescued from Egypt. In fact, as we find in 2:9, other families have even been sacrificed for their benefit: "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them...". In the same way, God has acted in our lives in a way He hasn't acted for other people - and, on our behalf, may even have acted against other people!

But this blessing brings responsibility. Because of the relationship Israel enjoyed with their Creator, certain things were expected of them that were not expected of the other families of the earth. Israel thought their relationship with God would exempt them from judgement. In fact, as Amos will explain to them, it will expose them to it. And the same applies to us. We have a special relationship with our Heavenly Father. Of all the families of the earth, we alone (as far as we know) have the Truth. Like Israel, in moments of weakness we also can sometimes believe that our relationship alone will save us from judgement. Sadly, it will not. The Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12:48).

Verse 3: Now Amos takes the nation back to their earliest days. This is an allusion to Lev 26:12 where God said He would walk among the nation and that they would be His people. Twice in Lev 26 (v13, 45), God refers to the fact that He brought them out of Egypt, so there is no mistaking the significance of Lev 26. But in the light of Israel's recent conduct, God now asks how two people can walk together except they be agreed. The answer is that they can't. The implication is that if Israel didn't change their behaviour, God would not continue to walk with them. To illustrate this point, Amos now shows how close the nation is to serious punishment.

Verse 4: These are the first of a number of rhetorical cause and effect questions, each of which has the same obvious answer. We might summarise the list from verse 4-6 like this:

Does a lion roar in the forest before he has overcome the prey? No, otherwise he would scare off the prey! Does a young lion roar before his victory? No, he only roars after the conquest! Will a bird be snared where no trap is laid? Of course not! Does a snare spring up from the ground when no animal has activated it? No! Is the warning-trumpet blown in the city and the people are not afraid? No, it may mean war! Is evil ever done in a city and it is not of Yahweh? No, evil is the effect of judgement (rather than an act of wickedness). God brings judgement!

Verse 7: Now the flow of questions is interrupted. Amos makes the statement that God reveals His purpose to His prophets before it comes to pass. Why is it necessary to say this? Because of the next verse:

Verse 8: The lion has roared! This means that the prey is within reach of the lion and has now got no chance of escape. Who is the lion? It is God Himself. In Hosea 11:10, God says He shall roar like a lion. In Amos 1:2 it tells us that "Yahweh will roar from Zion". We find in ch 3:8 that Yahweh has roared. The words of Amos to the northern kingdom are the warning of impending judgement. They are the lion's roar! There is no time left. They have been cornered. Unless urgent action is taken by the nation, they will be overcome. And as God spoke, the prophets couldn't do anything but prophesy.

Verse 9: And now, in a remarkable picture, Amos calls all the surrounding pagan nations to stand on the mountains which encircle Samaria, to look down into the bowl of Samaria and see all the wickedness that goes on there. Egypt and Ashdod (the Philistines) are some of Israel's most ancient enemies. Israel considered herself morally superior to these nations in every respect. The Philistines were renowned for their godlessness. They were called "the uncircumcised Philistines" (1Sam 17:26). Egypt was renowned for its oppression because of the years Israel spent there in slavery before the Exodus.

Now think of this in a personal context. This is an invitation to the world to look into the lives of individual Christadelphians. There are many Philistines and Egyptians out there; people who live unholy and oppressive lives who we would feel outraged at if they were called upon to judge our behaviour. But if it did happen, how would we measure up? This is an interesting question to think upon, because if there was a war in which we were conscientious objectors, we may find ourselves in exactly this position, having our consistency tested by wicked and worldly people.

Verse 10: And here is the verdict! By all standards of international decency, Israel are a wicked, ungodly and immoral nation. They do not know how to do what is right. Violence and oppression are now so much a part of their nature that they heap up sins in their palaces like treasure. Even the pagan nations would be shocked at this conduct.

Verse 11: This is the judgement: "An adversary shall surround the land and bring down your defences and your fortresses shall be plundered." Amos does not say which nation it is that will punish Israel, but he does comment in ch 5:27 that they will be taken into captivity beyond Damascus. However, every Israelite knew that the dominant military power in the world at this time was Assyria, a great nation from beyond Damascus. In 2 Kings 17, Shalmaneser the Assyrian attacked and destroyed Samaria.

Verse 12: Only a small remnant would remain of a once powerful and prosperous northern kingdom. Amos represents this as "two legs" or "a piece of an ear". The lion would substantially devour Israel. Almost nothing would be left - everything between the ears and the legs would be devoured. Those sitting in luxury upon their costly Damascus quilts, without the least anxiety today will only be able to save their lives to the very smallest extent. Most will perish, and the surrounding nations will witness that judgement.

Verse 13: This is a summons to the same nations as in v9. As they had been gathered to observe the wickedness of Israel, now God invites them to hear the official punishment. God addresses Himself here as "the God of hosts (armies)", the militant title of Deity.

Verse 14: Israel would be punished for her transgressions. Bethel was the chief place of apostate worship in Israel. Amos appears to have delivered this prophecy at Bethel (ch 7:13). The horns of the altar spoke of mercy (1Kings 1:51). God had been very patient with the kingdom but He would not extend mercy any more. The destruction of the altar at Bethel was also important for another reason. In the days of Rehoboam, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat established the northern kingdom, he built an Egyptian golden calf at Bethel and called upon all Israel to worship it (1Kings 12). In verse 1, we began by considering the fact that God had called the nation of Israel out of Egypt that they might serve Him. The northern kingdom, from its inception, had consciously turned away from God and back to Egypt. This problem would be remedied.

Verse 15: All the riches, which had formed such a major part of the lives of the upper class, and had been the result of oppression of the common people would be destroyed. Material possessions, which form so much a part of life today, will be of no use to us in the day of judgement.

As we turn our attention to the emblems before us now, we are reminded of the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us, that we might be saved from the bondage of sin and death, which is Egypt. Like Israel, he was a Son of God, called out of Egypt (Mt 2:15). Throughout his life, he walked with God in perfect agreement: "I and my father are one" (Jn 10:30) In his life, he was judged by wicked and ungodly men who declared "I find no fault in him" (Jn 19:4). And when he returns, he will bring an end to the violence, oppression, apostasy and materialism which have troubled the world from its beginning. May it be that we shall stand with him in that day, having hearkened to the secrets of the prophets, a faithful remnant of the family of Israel.