

Passed By – With Judgment or Mercy?

Illustration –Off the wall

I. Yahweh –The Sovereign LORD

The title The LORD God is used 11 times in the next 3 chapters.

A. Who Passes by

1. Gracious and righteous

“And the LORD passed before [Moses] and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. (Ex 34:5-7)

B. Sets His love on a people

1. Small

“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you. (Deut. 7:7-8)

2. Redeemed – Salvation before law

“I Am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20:2)

3. Bound – Mosaic Covenant

“Behold, I make a covenant...I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth...Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Hittite...Take heed lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, lest it be a snare in your midst. But you shall destroy their altars; break their sacred pillars, (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD...is a jealous God.)” (Deut. 34:10-14)

4. Glorious law

Requirement - *Be holy for I am Holy.*

“The law is a reflection of His nature; the law must be what it is because He is what He is. The law is a verbal extension of the person and presence of God among His people; it expresses as precepts those things which exist as principle within His nature.”

(Motyer, 162)

Gracious provision – Sacrificial system

“The law was not just about rules to be obeyed- it included the sacrificial system to atone for the sins of the people – the blood of the innocent shed for the guilty.”

(Hamilton)

Preview of Heaven

“Israel was to be a picture of what heaven would be like – where God dwells in the midst of His people and God blesses them. The Old Testament is crystal clear – if they

obey they stay, if they don't they won't. They are ultimately exiled and suffer the loss of God's immediate presence, power and blessing." (Hamilton)

II. When God's People Rebel

A. Grace without law

God's people rejected His prescribed means of grace in worship and sacrificial system

1. Pagan worship

High places

Shrines – seeking grace in worldly prosperity and fertility of the land.

Sanctuaries

Instead of praying to receive God's blessing, they were performing ritual fornication
"a visual aid to prompt God" to provide fertility for the land.

2. Counterfeit religion

House of Jeroboam

God's promise to Jeroboam: *"If you will do what is right in my eyes by keeping my commandments...I will be with you, and will build you a sure house." (1 Kings 11:38)*

Jeroboam rejects the law and corrupts grace

He sets up golden calves in Dan and Bethel

Bethel, which means the *House of God*, is now a place of false worship.

"Bethel is the king's sanctuary, the temple of the kingdom [of Jeroboam]." (7:11)

B. Law without Grace

Man made laws designed to get rich at the expense of the poor.

1. Exploitation

Reducing the product, while increasing the price.

"We make the Ephah small and shekel great." (8:5)

Selling a person into slavery for owing a small debt.

"We may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals." (8:6)

III. God chases them down

Yahweh Jealous for His people – 'My people' repeated 5 times

"Amos depicts all falling in ruins around and upon them. He points them upward to a God who is as sovereign to save as to judge. This is, of course, their peril as well as their privilege...inevitable judgment to the complacent sinner, or eternal salvation" (Motyer, 150)

A. Sends His prophet – God's Man

1. Represents God to the people

"Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end...The LORD has sworn; 'surely I will never forget their deeds.'" (8:4,7)

"Are you not like the Cushites to me, O people of Israel? Did I not bring up Israel from of Egypt...Behold; the eyes of the Lord God are upon this sinful kingdom." (9:7-8)

2. Represents the people to God

Intercedes, pleads for people:

"O Lord God, please forgive!" (7: 2)

"O Lord God, please cease!" (7: 5)

3. Opposition

Amaziah - the false priest of Jeroboam is trying to silence the word of God.

"Go, flee to the land of Judah and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel."

The people *"Can't bear his words."* (7:10)

"Do not preach." Literally *"do not drop, trickle, drip your word."* (7:16)

"It speaks of that which is gentle, welcoming and refreshing. What a beautiful and wonderful description of the Word of God and the preacher's task." (Motyer, 174)

4. Divinely Appointed

Your argument is with God

"I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman...but the LORD took me... and said to me 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'" (7:14)

B. Sends warnings of certain judgment

Five visions show what the "Day of the Lord" will look like – symbols of judgment

1. Locusts -cut

Judgment

Locusts will consume second harvest, the one they depend on for survival.

They will be cut off from food, blessing and fertility of land.

2. Consuming fire

Symbolic

Fire devours the great deep and consumes the land.

Amos intercedes twice

"How will Jacob stand? He is so small."

He reminds God that He loved His people and chose them because they were small.

"Prayer, suggested by God moves God, the Ruler of all. Prayer is a means by which The Lord of all brings His determined purposes to pass." (Motyer, 155)

God Relents

How can a Holy God love a sinful people without compromising His righteous wrath?

"He represents Himself as hearing prayer and [relenting] in order that we may understand something of what is involved in His love for us when He beholds us in all our need. It has been revealed to us that it is the blood of Jesus, the great divine gift of love, which satisfies the divine wrath...when the Lord looks upon His people mercy triumphs over wrath." (Motyer)

3. Plumb-line test

Plumb-line built wall

Represents Israel - initially they were built true to plumb, shaped by God's law.

Plumb-line test

Measures true vertical according to law of gravity. Is Israel still as upright as they claim?

Fail the test

They cannot make a claim to have kept the law. Judgment will be executed.

4. Summer Fruit

No excuse

They are ripe for judgment.

God's presence gone

"I will never again pass by them." (8:2)

Refers to his mercy and forgiveness:

"Who is like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?" (Micah 7:18)

Without God's presence, it's hell - darkness, mourning and no feasting.

Silence

"A famine of hearing the words of the LORD." (8:11)

This came true for Israel in the four centuries preceding the coming of Christ - no prophets appeared; the word of the Lord ceased.

5. Lord by the Altar

No escape

"I will strike...shatter...and kill ...I will destroy [the sinful kingdom.]"

Exile

"If they go into captivity before their enemies, there I will command the sword, and it shall kill them."(9:4)

"The altar is the place where sacrifices are made for sin, where God through the sacrifice is reconciled to the repentant worshiper. But this is not a scene of mercy, on the contrary, it is a [terrible] scene of judgment as the [God] of judgment stands on the altar to strike." (Boice, 221)

C. Sends His Son

A. The Ultimate prophet

Jesus is the God Man – fully God and fully man, Emanuel, God with us in the flesh.

He is the perfect representative - God to us and us to God.

B. The Anointed One

1. Proclaims Grace

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon me; because He has anointed me preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives...to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD."(Luke 4:18, 19)

2. Proclaims judgment

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees...for you tithe mind and dill... and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness...you brood of vipers, how are you to escape hell?" (Matt23:23)

C. He Passes by

1. With Mercy

For those who believe: *"Your sins are forgiven."*

2. To free people enslaved to:

Grace without law

The Samaritan woman

"Jesus needed to pass through Samaria... true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."

Law without grace

Tax collector

"Jesus was going to pass that way... 'Zacchaeus, make haste... I must stay at your house.' And he made haste and received [Jesus] joyfully." (Luke 9:5-7)

D. The Plumb-line

"Be perfect as your father in heaven perfect." (Matt 5)

1. The Standard

Jesus is the only one who lived a life in perfect alignment to the wall of God's law.

2. The solution

His perfect record is given to us when we believe. Active obedience of Christ

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:25)

E. Jesus on the Altar

1. The priest and the sacrifice

Takes the strike of judgment

"He was crushed for our transgressions... by His scourging we are healed." (Is 53:5)

Atonement

"For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being made Holy." (Heb 10:14)

F. His Presence

"Having believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance." (Eph 1:13-14)

Bibliography

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