

Amos 5:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

Analysis

Amos intensifies the command: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph." The Hebrew sin'u-ra ve'ehevu tov vehatzzigu vasha'ar mishpat ulay yechanan YHWH Elohei-tzeva'ot she'erit Yosef moves from internal disposition (hate/love) to public action (establish justice) to hopeful possibility (maybe mercy).

"Hate the evil" (sin'u-ra) uses sane' (שָׁנֵא), strong revulsion and rejection. "Love the good" (ve'ehevu tov) uses ahav (אֶחָד), covenant love and devotion. God demands not mere external compliance but transformed affections—hating what He hates, loving what He loves. Romans 12:9 commands: "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

"Establish judgment in the gate" (vehatzzigu vasha'ar mishpat) addresses Israel's corrupt judicial system. The "gate" (sha'ar) was where elders held court, deciding disputes and rendering verdicts (Ruth 4:1-11, Proverbs 31:23). Israel's judges took bribes (5:12), twisted justice, and oppressed the poor. Amos demands restoration of righteous judgment—fair courts, honest verdicts, protection for the vulnerable.

The phrase "it may be" (ulay, עַלְיוֹן) introduces uncertainty—not about God's character but about Israel's response and the lateness of the hour. Will they actually repent? Is it too late? The hope extended to "the remnant of Joseph"

(she'erit Yosef) indicates that even if judgment comes, a faithful remnant might survive. Throughout Scripture, God preserves a remnant (Isaiah 10:20-22, Romans 9:27, 11:5). This demonstrates that while corporate judgment may be inevitable, individual repentance always matters. Those who turn to God, even at the eleventh hour, find mercy.

Historical Context

Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa in Judah, prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel during the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 BC). This was a time of territorial expansion and economic boom, creating massive wealth inequality. The wealthy elite oppressed the poor through debt slavery, corrupt courts, and economic exploitation. Despite maintaining elaborate worship at Bethel and Dan, Israel had abandoned covenant faithfulness for social injustice and religious syncretism. Amos condemned their exploitation of the vulnerable while predicting imminent judgment through Assyrian conquest. His prophecies were fulfilled when Assyria destroyed Israel in 722 BC, about 30 years after his ministry.

Amos was contemporary with Hosea and ministered during Israel's last period of prosperity before destruction. As a southerner from Judah called to prophesy in northern Israel, he was an unwelcome outsider delivering an unwanted message. His emphasis on social justice and his declaration that religious ritual cannot substitute for righteousness make his message perpetually relevant.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Amos 5:15 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

שָׁ�ָא	בַּעַד	וְאֶחָבוּ	וְבַעַד	וְכָבֹד	וְבַעַד	בְּשֵׁעָר	מִשְׁפָּט	מִשְׁפָּט
Hate	the evil	and love	the good	and establish	in the gate	judgment		
H8130	H7451	H157	H2896	H3322	H8179		H4941	
אֹלֵל	יְחִינֵּן	יְהִי הָ	אָלֹהִים	אָלֹהִים				
H194	will be gracious	it may be that the LORD	God	of hosts				
	H2603	H3068	H430	H6635				
וְיַעֲשֶׂה	שָׁאָר יְהֹ							
unto the remnant	of Joseph							
H7611	H3130							

Additional Cross-References

Romans 12:9 (Love): Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Psalms 97:10 (Love): Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

Joel 2:14 (References God): Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

3 John 1:11 (Love): Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

Romans 8:7 (References God): Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Exodus 32:30 (References Lord): And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

Micah 5:3 (Parallel theme): Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

Psalms 36:4 (Evil): He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.

Jonah 3:9 (References God): Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

Amos 5:24 (Judgment): But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.