

Israel Reproved

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God outside of traditional or established places of worship and warns against making the sect, creed, or form the sacred thing.

Scripture: 2 Kings 18:4

Topics: "Idolatry", "Repentance"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the analysis of Amos 5:4-15, highlighting how God places Himself outside traditional places of blessing to draw corrupt Israel back to Him. The lesson emphasizes the danger of idolizing religious institutions over God Himself, using examples like the brazen serpent and Jerusalem. The sermon warns against placing loyalty in sects or creeds rather than in God, as this can lead to them becoming meaningless 'nehushtan.' Believers are encouraged to seek God in confession anytime, anywhere, as He is always ready to welcome them back with open arms.

Transcript

(Amos v:4-15.)

I. The Analysis.

1. God Outside the Former Means of Blessing (verses 1-6).--See below.
2. The Resource of An Apostate People (verses 7-10). --God always remains, no matter how deep the transgression, and the way back to Him is ever open.
3. The Sins of Israel (verses 11-15).--It is most striking that here we have enumerated the conspicuous sins of the present time.

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The significant thing here is that God puts Himself outside the accustomed, time-honored and even divinely instituted places of blessing. Corrupt and iniquitous Israel is exhorted to "seek the Lord," but not at Bethel, Gilgal, nor Beersheba.

This is no new thing in the ways of God, nor is this by any means an isolated instance. The brazen serpent which had been so wonderfully used of God, instrumentally, in the wilderness (Numbers xxi:8, 9), became,

at last, a fetich to the people, and then to God "nehustan," a piece of brass (2 Kings xviii:4). How solemnly and with what awful sanctions was Jerusalem set apart as the place where God had set His name, and where alone sacrifices and offerings might be made to Him. But, when the place rather than the God of the place became the sacred fact in the thought of the people, how easily was it said, "Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

With what mighty promises Israel was set apart as God's portion, and with what minuteness of inspired detail was its ritual established, and yet, how summarily was it all swept aside when, as an instrument, it broke in the divine hand. The very religion which He had ordained became, without the change of a single form or ceremony, a mere "Jew's religion" (Gal. i:i3) in His eyes. "Let us therefor go forth unto Him without the camp," becomes the call to the faithful.

The application of this tremendous principle is obvious. The one vital question in any age is, Where is God now? Much has been made, is being made of the question, Which is the true church? But even if it could be demonstrated that, historically, this or that was the original church, such demonstration would not go one step toward proving that God had not long ago spewed it out of His mouth as His representative. And if this be true of ancient churches having some claim to historic continuity from the apostles, how much more may it be true of our Protestant sects which are of yesterday?

The deeper truth is, of course, that whenever the sect, or the creed, or the form, becomes the sacred thing, the object of loyalty, so that we boast ourselves of being loyal to it, rather than to Him, it becomes "nehushtan."

It can scarcely be necessary to add that the reference to a search for the "true" church, is illustrative, merely. There never was a "true church," using that word in the modern sense of a church made up of a body of churches. The Bible knows nothing of such a "church." The Bible knows indeed of a church "which is His body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all"; and it knows, too, of local churches, but not of an aggregation of local churches which compose a church.

The believer who has wandered from God may return to Him in confession any time, anywhere, and believers who seek His fellowship find Him ever with outstretched arms.

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