Ring of Truth daily devotion

Ring of Truth provides 366 daily 'proofs' that the Bible is consistent throughout from Genesis to Revelation and relevant for our lives today!

9 August

Amos 1:1

"The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa - what he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was King of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was King of Israel."

Amos was a carer of sheep - a shepherd.

He lived 12 miles south of Jerusalem on the edge of the Judean desert but he was to be a 'prophet' to Israel. Israel was enjoying a time of pleasure but at God's expense.

Amos came to bring a warning and an encouragement for the people to return to God whole-heartedly. Superficial Christianity is as abhorrent to God now as it was then - so we need to pay special attention to what Amos said.

It is appropriate that God takes a shepherd of sheep to be a shepherd voice for the people. Whilst much of what Amos was to say was for the people of God, he began by showing that Israel's neighbours were not without fault either. He started with Syria, whose capital was Damascus. They were guilty of unwarranted cruelty. They laid their captives down and dragged threshing sledges over their bodies. These sledges were wooden with metal studs in them, which were to separate chaff and grain but would rip skin wide open.

The Philistines sold their own people; Tyre and Edom disregarded their own blood-relatives; Ammon was purely land-hungry and Moab desecrated the king's tomb.

He then turned on Judah and denounced them for forsaking the Law of God and for following other gods. Because Israel had forsaken God, they despised the poor. Forgetting all that God had done for them, they became arrogant and callous. They had silenced the prophets God sent them and caused the teetotal Nazirites to drink, making a mockery of all God stood for.

In Chapter 3 (which you should read when you have a minute or two), God reminds Israel of His grace and favour to them even though it was totally undeserved.

Here in Chapter 1, God was repeating how much He had done to build and maintain a relationship with Israel, yet they had become independent and gone their own way. Whilst the Lord warned of what He was to do, He nevertheless did so with a 'cry' asking them to listen, to think, and to consider what they had done - all with a view to reconciliation.

God is not into religion. He is into relationship. Sacrifices and offerings mean nothing if they are not backed up by lifestyle and an intimate relationship with Him.

It's the same today. There is no such thing as a *'Sunday Only Christian'*. It is either a '7-day-a-week' lifestyle or it's hypocrisy and abhorrent to God. That's a 'Ring of Truth'!

What does God think of your 'Christianity'?

A religion or a relationship? A sham or a lifestyle? Off-hand or intimate? Vibrant or lukewarm?

Whatever level you are at, it can always be improved. Why not take a moment to ask God to help you develop an even greater intimacy with Him from today?