**A Famine in the Land**

**Introduction:**

More than 700 years before the birth of Christ, a “herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs” was entrusted by God to warn Israel of consequences if they did not repent. His name was Amos. He made a prophecy in Amos 8:11-14 from which all of us need to learn. (Amos 8:11) “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord God, That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord.” He said that because the nation had rejected the Word of the Lord, they would have no word from Him at all. They would come to realize that the revelation from God was their most prized possession. Today we have a famine in the land as well; it us a famine for the Word of God. It is different in some ways but similar in others.

**Body:**

1. **Differences**

* Unlike those of Amos’ day, we enjoy an abundance of Bibles. Countless versions exist: KJV, ASV, NAS, NIV, NKJV, ESV, NCSB, and NET Bible. . . A large number of study Bibles exist as well as ones geared to several types of readers. Countless resources for Bible study exist on the Internet with language helps, dictionaries, commentaries. . .
* Read: “Diary of the Bible”

1. January: A busy time for me. Most of the family decided to read me through this year. They kept me busy for the first two weeks. I’m now forgotten.
2. February: My owner used me for a few minutes last week. He had an argument and was checking references.
3. March: Grandpa visited us. He kept me on his lap for an hour, reading I Corinthians 13.
4. April: I had a busy day. My owner was appointed a leader of something and used me. I got to go to church the first time this year, Easter Sunday.
5. May: I have a few grass stains on my pages. I had some early spring flowers pressed in me.
6. June: I look like a scrap book. They have stuffed me full of clippings. One of the girls got married.
7. July: They put me in a suitcase today. I guess we’re off on a vacation. I wish I could stay at home, as I will have to stay in this thing for a month.
8. August: Still in the suitcase.
9. September: Back home again, and in by old place. I have lots of company, two “True Stories” and four “Funny Books” are on top of me. I wish I could be read as much as they are.
10. October: They used me a little today. One of them is sick. Right now I’m all shined up and in the center of the table. I think the preacher is coming.
11. November: Back in my old place.
12. December: They are getting ready for Christmas. I’ll be covered under wrapping papers and packages. SOURCE UNKNOWN
13. **Similarities**

Both famines had similar causes.

* Material Wealth and Luxury (Amos 6:1-8) They had all these possessions so they were complacent and unconcerned about any “day of disaster.” Note Isaiah 32:9-14 and Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17) Calneh, Hamath, and Goth were stronger cities than Jerusalem and had already fallen to Assyria. These people were primarily concerned with pampering themselves and treating themselves to the very best life has to offer. They were not concerned about others at all. (James 5:1-5)
* Immoral Behavior (Amos 2:6-8, Amos 5:12) They were oppressing the poor instead of helping them. (Leviticus 25:39-43) Today the moral standards of the world are becoming the church’s standards. The world is influencing us instead of us influencing the world. (II Peter 3:17) They do not want to spend time in the Book because it reveals their sins. (Hebrews 4:12-13)
* Insincere Religion (Amos 8:4-10) Israel thought going through the motions of worship would excuse their sinful behavior. They were wrong! They also couldn’t wait for the worship service to be over so they could go and do what they wanted.

This sounds so much like many churches today. So how do we end this famine?

1. **Ending the Famine**

Appreciate the power of the Word.

* To produce life (John 6:63, James 1:18)
* To sanctify (John 17:17)
* To preserve (Acts 20:32)
* To save (James 1:21)

Feed on God’s Word daily. (I Peter 2:2)

**Conclusion:**

Famines are tragic things. Newscasts show people young and old, so thin you can see the outline of their bones. Does God see our spiritual bones because we have not been feeding on God’s Word?

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