

# Family Matters

## Amos 3

### Intro

When my sister and I were growing up, my sister really like a show called ***Family Matters***...

- Now, I didn't really like the show — and maybe that's because one of the main characters was ***a nerd named Steve*** — and that hit a little too close to home...

But as I look back I can see that there was good in the show because the show presented ***family as a good thing***...

*The title of the show — Family Matters — really meant two things...*

First of all, it meant ***family matters*** in the sense of ***matters*** or ***circumstances*** that families deal with...

- But secondly, it meant ***family matters*** in the sense that family is ***important***...

*And both of these truths are vital...*

***Families deal with unique circumstances and families are incredibly important...***

And I bring all of this up because I believe that the Bible itself could be titled ***“Family Matters”***...

God has revealed Himself to be a family — one God and yet three Persons in a familial relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

- And this familial God — the One true God — created the first two human beings to be a family of one husband and one wife...

From this original human family came all of the people who have ever lived...

- All human beings are part of one family — however distantly related...

But the *family matters* do not stop there because God is not merely interested in creating physical families...

*God wants those physical families to become spiritual families...*

And God does this by adopting sons and daughters into His spiritual family as they place their trust in Him...

- So, the story of mankind is really one long episode of ***Family Matters***...

It is the story of a good and loving God who seeks to bring fallen human beings into familial relationship ***with Himself*** and ***with one another***...

*That's the good news...*

But — as you know — family matters don't always turn out well...

If certain family members refuse to *participate* and *cooperate* then families can be torn apart...

*And this is what we will encounter as move through Amos 3 this morning...*

- God is trying to reach the people of the N Kingdom of Israel — to bring them back into fellowship with Himself...

But the people continue to defy Him and refuse to believe that ***family matters...***

*With this in mind, let's move into the first verse of Amos 3...*

### **Amos 3 (NKJV)**

**1 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt,**

Here we see that the Lord is speaking against both the ***N Kingdom of Israel*** and the ***S Kingdom of Judah...***

- Both of these kingdoms are walking in disobedience and both have issues that need to be *addressed* and *corrected...*

And please notice that the LORD refers to these two kingdoms as one **whole family...**

- [expand — descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...]

Now, through the OT you will see that there is continual conflict between the twelve tribes of Israel *even though they are all family members...*

*And this is a reminder that families will always have problems...*

- [expand — marriage is two sinners living together (dying to self) / kids enter the picture (more sinners / more dying to self)]...

*Thankfully, each family member can reduce familial conflict by making obedience to God the focus of their lives...*

- [ex. **wheel illustration** — God is the hub, we are on our individual spoke — as we draw closer to God as individuals, we will grow closer to one another...]

*Now, please look again at the end of Amos 3:1...*

**against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt,**

Once again, the LORD reminds the children of Israel that He brought them up out of the land of Egypt — He delivered them from the furnace of slavery and oppression...

- It was the LORD who saved them and He continually reminded them of this truth because it was ***the source of their identity...***

They were a ***people*** — they were a ***family*** — because God had ***rescued them...***

If the children of Israel lived with this truth continually in their minds — if they saw themselves as a rescued people — ***then their lives would be transformed...***

***And there is tremendous application here for us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ...***

You see, our primary identity is ***not*** that we have been *rescued from Egypt* but that ***we have been rescued from Hell...***

- As believers we have been saved from our sins — we have been given new life — and we have the promise of a heavenly future more glorious than we can possibly imagine...

***So this must be our primary identity...***

*The understanding that we were lost sinners, deserving of the punishment of Hell —*

*— But we were rescued — we were forgiven — we were adopted into the family of God...*

With that said, if our primary identity is ***something other*** than our being rescued sinners — who are called to be disciples — then we are going to go astray...

*And this is the problem that we are confronted with over and over again throughout the Old Testament...*

The people of God refuse their identity as *the rescued of God* and instead seek to forge their own identities and those false identities that they manufacture eventually lead to their destruction...

*Moving on in Amos 3 to vs 2...*

**saying:**

**2 “You only have I known of all the families of the earth;**

[explain — God had a special relationship with the Israelites...]

They were His chosen people — they were the family that He was working through to bring salvation to all of the world...

*To remind ourselves of this truth, please turn to...*

**Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV)**

**1 Now the LORD had said to Abram:**

**"Get out of your country,**

**From your family**

**And from your father's house,**

**To a land that I will show you.**

**2 I will make you a great nation;**

**I will bless you**

**And make your name great;**

**And you shall be a blessing.**

**3 I will bless those who bless you,**

**And I will curse him who curses you;**

**And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**

This promise is carried on through the line of Abraham to Isaac to Jacob and to the 12 tribes...

- The story of the OT is the story of the God of the Universe choosing to reveal Himself to a peculiar people with the goal of using that people as His witnesses to the rest of the world...

From our perspective, the plan did not go so well as the Israelites often failed to fulfill their mission...

*And we might wonder why God didn't choose another nation — why didn't He choose a nation that would be more faithful?...*

***Well, I would argue that the story of Israel is really the story of all of us...***

It is a story of the weakness and selfishness of fallen mankind...

- And from what I understand of human nature, I do not believe that any other group of people would have done better...

We should consider ourselves — we are born-again believers who have been given explicit instructions to make disciples wherever we go and how often to do we fail to fulfill that commission?...[expand]

*Now, as we turn back to Amos 3 and put the two pieces of vs 2 together we see the terrible consequences of disobedience...*

**"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."**

This verse highlights the reality that with ***greater privilege comes greater responsibility...***

- [ex. the privilege of driving a car entails the responsibility of driving that car safely — a failure to do so leads to negative consequences...]

### **Luke 12:48 (NKJV)**

**“...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”**

*Israel was given much and from them much was required...*

Unfortunately, they had failed to live in obedience to God and the punishment for that disobedience would fall on them...

*APPLICATION — As Christians we must also understand that the great privilege of being sons and daughters of God carries with it the responsibility of living obediently as the children of God...*

*Paul reminds us that we will give an account of how we lived our lives as believers in...*

### **2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)**

**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

*Moving on in Amos 3 we come to a series of questions in vs 3-5 that expect an answer of “no”...*



### **3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**

- [apply to situation between God and Israel...]

*This question is also a good reminder for us — if we are to walk with the Lord then we must do things the Lord's way...*

### **Luke 9:23 (NKJV)**

**“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”**

*Now to Amos 3:4-5...*

**4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?  
Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?**

- [explain imagery — lion and prey...]

**5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth,  
where there is no trap for it?  
Will a snare spring up from the earth,  
if it has caught nothing at all?**

- [explain imagery — bird and snare...]

*In this imagery there is an sense of foreboding...*

- [ex. nature show — when an animal is walking peacefully and then the music becomes ominous — you know that a predator is about to strike...]

*As we move into vs 6, the answer to the questions moves from **no** to **yes**...*

**6 If a trumpet is blown in a city,  
will not the people be afraid?**

- [ YES! — explain trumpet blast / ex. tornado sirens...]

**If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?**

*God would be the one to bring calamity on the people for their disobedience...*

**Isaiah 13:11 (NKJV)**

**“I will punish the world for its evil,  
And the wicked for their iniquity;  
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,  
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”**

*And we see this theme from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20 — we see the reality that God judges sin...*

The Bible teaches that every sin must be punished...

*But there is a choice...*

***Either we can take that punishment upon ourselves or we can flee to Christ and find refuge in Him...***

*The choice is clear...*

*Trust in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and find that He already took the punishment for them on the Cross —*

*— Or refuse Christ and take the punishment for your sins upon yourself...*

### **John 3:18 (NKJV)**

**“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

*Moving on in Amos 3 to vs...*

**7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,  
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.**

*In context, this is speaking about God not moving in judgment unless He first warns His people through the prophets...*

### **2 Chronicles 36:15-16 (NKJV)**

**15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.**

**16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.**

- [expand — God is not willing that any perish but that all should come to repentance / we should counsel people to flee the wrath to come...]

*Now, the different questions in the previous verses have been leading up to what we find in vs...*

## **8 A lion has roared!**

**Who will not fear?**

Here God is once again pictured as a **roaring lion** — and the people **should be afraid...**

- If you were walking in the wilderness and you came across the path of a roaring lion then you would be wise to be afraid...

*But you would be a fool if you simply pretended that the lion did not exist...*

Unfortunately, this is what most people do as they come across the roaring of God as revealed in His Word...

- Rather than responding in **repentance** and **obedience**, most people simply close the book and convince themselves that *there is no lion and no judgment will ever come...*

*But the Apostle Paul warns against this in...*

### **Galatians 6:7-8 (NKJV)**

**7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

**8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption...**

*Continuing on in Amos 3:8 we read...*

**The Lord GOD has spoken!  
Who can but prophesy?**

In other words, God has proclaimed His message to the prophet so the prophet must prophesy...

*We read of this sort of scenario in...*

**Jeremiah 20:9 (NKJV)**

**Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him,  
Nor speak anymore in His name."  
But His word was in my heart like a burning fire  
Shut up in my bones;  
I was weary of holding it back,  
And I could not.**

Unfortunately, as we see throughout OT history, the people of Israel generally hate the prophets and refuse to listen to their message...

*Stephen spoke of this reality shortly before he was martyred...*

**Acts 7:51-52 (NKJV)**

**51 "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears!  
You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do  
you.**

**52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?  
And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One,  
of whom you now have become the betrayers and  
murderers..."**

So, the sad reality is that most people do not want to hear what God has to say to them...

*And this difficult truth brings us to a place of decision...*

As believers, will we continue to ***speak the truth*** and ***suffer the consequences*** or will we choose to ***remain silent***...

- Or will we do something ***even worse*** and ***alter the message*** that God gives?...

I believe that the only sane option is to speak the Word of God, no matter what people may think of it...

- We would be wise to fear the roaring Lion of the tribe of Judah and not fear the shouts of fallen men...

With that said, if we choose to continue to speak the words of God in a society that is against Him, there will be consequences...

- The Lord Jesus spoke of these consequences in the Sermon on the Mount...

*To see this, would you please turn to...*

**Matthew 5:10-12 (NKJV)**

**10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.**

**12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**”

From these words we are reminded that a willingness to *live out the Word of God* and *share the Word of God* will lead to some sort of persecution...

- But it will also put us in the company of the prophets — we will be sharing in what they shared in...[expand]

*Let's turn back to Amos 3 as we move on to vs...*

**9 “Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,  
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:  
‘Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;  
See great tumults in her midst,  
And the oppressed within her.**

*This is radical imagery that God is using...*

It is a picture of the people of **Ashdod** (Philistines) and **Egypt** — both enemies of God's people — to come and be witnesses of the great evil that is being committed in **Samaria** (N Kingdom of Israel)...

*Please notice the phrase...*

**See great tumults in her midst,  
And the oppressed within her.**

This is a description of the sin that is taking place within the N Kingdom of Israel — it speaks of the rich oppressing the poor...

*Now, this idea of Gentiles being witnesses against the people of God is something that goes all the way back to the father of the faith...*

[ex. Abraham twice rebuked by pagan kings for lying about his wife...]

***LESSON — Those who claim to be the people of God should obey God — or else they may find themselves rebuked by the world...***

We would be wise to guard our witness so that we might have a voice in the lives of unbelievers...

- Because when it comes to our witness, we should choose ***death*** before ***dishonor***...

And if we are choosing to ***die daily***, we will be ready to lay down our lives completely if that is what God calls us to...

*Continuing on in Amos 3 we come to vs...*

**10 For they do not know to do right,  
Says the LORD,  
'Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.'** ”

Because the Israelites had sinned so much, they no longer knew how to do the right thing...



- [expand — result of training — we can train to do right or we can train to do wrong — but at some point the training will simply take over without our conscious thought...]

**11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:  
“An adversary shall be all around the land;  
He shall sap your strength from you,  
And your palaces shall be plundered.”**

Tragically, this prophecy was fulfilled in 722BC as the forces of Assyria besieged and destroyed Samaria and conquered Israel...

***REMINDER — Unrepentant sin always leads to some form of judgment...[expand]***

*Continuing on to vs...*

**12 Thus says the LORD:  
“As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion  
Two legs or a piece of an ear,  
So shall the children of Israel be taken out  
Who dwell in Samaria—  
In the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!**

This imagery speaks of the fact that only a small remnant (**two legs or a piece of an ear**) would remain in the land...

- It also reveals that this remnant would only have a little place to call their own (**corner of a bed / edge of a couch**)...

This is a reminder that sin is a **reducer** — sin **diminishes us** — it results in **loss and bondage...**

*In contrast, a life of obedient discipleship is a life of abundance and freedom — the Lord Jesus made this clear in...*

**John 10:9-10 (NKJV)**

**9 “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

**10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”**

*Moving on in Amos 3 to vs...*

**13 Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,”**

This is a familial reminder — these people were descendants of Jacob but they had strayed from the God of their ancestor...

*As a result, charges were being brought against them by the Lord...*

**Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,”  
Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,**

**Lord GOD — Sovereign Yahweh...**

**the God of hosts — the Elohim of Armies...**

***The big idea is that God is an impossible adversary — there is no hope for those who oppose Him...[expand]***

**14 “That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions,  
I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel;**

The Israelites will suffer judgment for their sins and the altars of false gods that they trusted in will be destroyed...[expand]

**And the horns of the altar shall be cut off  
And fall to the ground.**

- [expand — horns of the altar were a place to seek mercy — no mercy will be found on that day...]

**15 I will destroy the winter house  
along with the summer house;  
The houses of ivory shall perish,  
And the great houses shall have an end,”  
Says the LORD.**

- [expand on God destroying the lavish lifestyle of the rich...]

*This is a tough place to stop but we are out of time...*

## Conclusion

Now, before we move into our time of communion we must remind ourselves that the bad news of what we are covering in the book of Amos is ***simply a result of sin...***

- If the people of Israel had chosen to believe that ***family matters*** and walked in ***familial obedience to God*** then they would not be in the situation that they were in...

*And the same is true for us as Christians...*

We can choose to do our own thing and cause problems for ourselves and for others...

- Or we can acknowledge the fact that ***family matters...***

We can choose to acknowledge that God desires that we live in familial relationship with Him and with other believers...

- And as we choose this path of obedient discipleship within the family of God we will experience increasing fellowship with God and with one another...

***Let's pray...***