

(Amos 5:1-3) - Amos was a shepherd and farmer whom the Lord called to be a prophet (7:14). He was from the southern kingdom of Judah, but the Lord called him to prophesy in the northern kingdom of Israel. Like all prophets of God, he proclaimed God's judgment of wrath against the people for their sins, while proclaiming the hope of sinners who seek the Lord's grace in the future promise of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The false prophets in Israel saw him as their enemy and tried to get him to leave their country and go back to his own (7:12). These verses show the sad and sinful state of Israel and the judgment she would face for her sins. This is a graphic picture of the fallen state of all of us in our natural sin and depravity. By nature, we have no goodness, no power, no desire to seek the Lord and His salvation (*Rom. 3:10-12*). Human works and free-will religion, no matter how dedicated and sincere we are, cannot help us to be cleansed from our sins or to be righteousness in God's eyes.

(Amos 5:4-6) - God commands them, "Seek ye ME, and ye shall live." Their only hope of salvation, and this is true of any sinner, is to seek the Lord and turn from their idols and their dead works in repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Whom God revealed then as the promised Messiah Who would save His people from their sins. All other ways, no matter how religious or moral in the eyes of man, are death and destruction. God's word commands us to seek the Lord for salvation (*Isa. 55:6*). It tells that all who seek Him shall find Him (which is to find salvation) when they seek Him with all their heart (*Jer. 29:13*). Christ said, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (*John 6:37*). We learn from God's Word that to seek the Lord truly and rightly is to seek Him IN HIS WORD as He reveals and identifies Himself as opposed to idols that we create with our own natural thoughts and imaginations. To seek Him in His Word always leads us to Christ Who is the only way of salvation (*John 14:6*). Salvation is by grace through the righteousness that Christ worked out for His people on the cross in the glory of His Person (God manifest in the flesh) and the power and success of His finished work of redemption (*Rom. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-10*). To seek the Lord is to seek Christ, and to seek Christ is to seek righteousness by faith in Him (*Rom. 9:31-10:4*).

But does not God's Word tell us that man by nature, of our own wills and desires, WILL NOT seek the Lord? YES! Consider the following verses that describe the spiritually dead and depraved of all people by nature and the fact that if left to ourselves we will not seek the true Lord according to His Word of truth --

Jeremiah 13 - (23) Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

John 6 - (44) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Romans 3 - (10) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (11) There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

1 Corinthians 2 - (14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

All of these verses, along with many others in the Bible, show us the total depravity of all people as fallen in Adam (*Rom. 5:12*) and as born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (*Eph. 2:1-3*). If left to ourselves, our own power and wills, we will not seek the Lord for salvation. Why, then, does God command us to do what we cannot and will not do? It is because it is God's purpose to glorify Himself in bringing all whom He chose to save before the foundation of the world, all whom He sent Christ to redeem, to seek and to find Him. All whom God chose to save before the foundation of the world, His elect, WILL, by His power and grace, seek Him and find Him by the power of the Holy Spirit under the preaching of the Gospel. Remember that Christ said, *"and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."* But who are they who will come to Him? He said, *"All that the Father giveth me SHALL COME TO ME."* When were these seekers given to Him? They were given to Him before the world began in sovereign, electing grace (*John 17:1-3; Rom. 9:13-16; 10:13-17; Eph. 1:3-13; 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:8-10*). All who do seek Him find out that He has already given them spiritual life by the Spirit (a new heart, new will and desire, new knowledge) else they would never have sought Him (*Jer. 31:31-34; John 3:3-7; 16:8-11*). So, God's command is, "Seek Christ and live," for there is life only in Christ. Seek righteousness by God-given faith in Him (*Rom. 10:4-10*).

(Amos 5:7-9) - To *"turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth"* is to pervert justice. It was common in Israel then, as it is common today in our time, for there to be crooked judges and magistrates who judge civil matters unrighteously for their own selfish gain. In our Lord's earthly ministry, the Pharisees were known for this. But all sinners who seek salvation conditioned on themselves and who seek righteousness by their works for justification before God turn judgment into wormwood and leave off righteousness in the earth. To seek Christ is to seek Him as the Lord our Righteousness. It is to seek the forgiveness of our sins and the perfection of God's law and justice that can only be found in Christ (*Rom. 10:4-10*). We can be justified before God on in Christ's righteousness imputed to us and which we receive by God-given faith in Him (*Rom. 4:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:19-21*).

(Amos 5:10-13) - Both wicked judges and self-righteous religionists hate prophets and preachers who tell them the truth (*John 3:19-20; 15:18-16:3; Gal. 4:16*). This state of things had become such *"an evil time,"* as it was so prevalent in the land, that those who are smart *"keep silent."* God's prophets and witnesses do not keep silence, but most of the people who want to stay safe keep quiet.

(Amos 5:14-17) - This is another statement of warning that if they refuse to *"to seek good, and not evil,"* they will die under the judgment of God for their sins. Notice the phrase, *"it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph"* - Throughout the Old Testament, even in the worst of time for Israel, God always had a *"remnant"* of people whom He chose according to the election of grace (*Isa. 1:9; Rom. 9:29; 11:1-7*). Who are these people? Am I one of them? Consider - Do you desire to seek the Lord and find Him, not as you think Him to be, but as He is in His Word? Do you see that if salvation comes to you, it is totally by God's free and sovereign grace, power, and will, all conditioned on Christ and His work of righteousness alone? Do you desire THIS great salvation and repent of all the idols of false religion, even false "Christianity," and reject all your works aimed at the ground of attaining and maintaining salvation? This is where the Lord God brings His people in their new birth when He reveals Himself to them in the glorious Person and finished work of Christ.