

3 - MINUTE SERMONS

"JUSTICE AT THE GATE"

To ancient Israel Amos charged, "You divert the poor from justice at the gate" (Amos 5: 12, NKJ). Justice between man and man is one of the divine principles of society. God had decreed that Israel have judges; to be more accessible to the people they were to be located "in the gates" (entrances) of each city. Here they were to see that justice was done. Moses recorded the instructions of the Lord in this matter, "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Deuteronomy 16: 18-20). Earlier Moses had said, "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice" (Exodus 23 :2). Near the end of his life Samuel declared that he had properly observed this law (1 Samuel 12:3). Now, let us go back to Amos.

The people were zealous in profiting through the courts. According to Amos 5: 10, they hated any righteous judge who would reprove their injustice, and they despised any righteous witness who told the truth in defense of the innocent. Their intimidation was so severe that the prudent would just keep quite, rather than to testify to the truth (verse 13). They sought out corrupt judges who would take bribes and deprive the innocent of justice. The rich found ways to trample on the poor, manipulate legal proceedings so as to get their land, and force grain taxes upon them. This was all in violation of the law. Amos 2:6-7; and Isaiah 10:1-2, both comment on this.

God reminds them, "For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins," (verse 12); and God would punish them. "Though you have built houses of hewn stone, Yet you shall not dwell in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine from them," (verse 11). Their failure to give "justice at the gate" brought them to this end.

Verses 14 and 15 is a call to repentance and reformation. They were to "seek good and not evil;" and they were to "hate evil, and love good." If they would do this, "It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious" to them.

Dear Reader, you and I shall, indeed, have "Justice at the gate." Jesus said, "I have the keys of hades and of death" (Revelation 1: 18); and, further, He said, "Enter by the narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13). He also said, "Not everyone shall enter in" (Matthew 7:21). The unfaithful or disobedient could not enter into His rest (Hebrews 3: 18-19). Shall we hear Him say, "Enter into the joys of thy Lord?" **JUSTICE AT THE GATE!**