

THE LION HAS ROARED

We don't like to think of God judging us, but to read the Scriptures is to meet a God who judges. Nowhere is this more clear than in the prophets. Amos presents God as a lion roaring from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem - a terrifying image. But the Scriptures remind us that God is not just a judge. God is first and foremost a loving parent. God's judgment looks less like a courtroom than like discipline. God's judgment always points toward repentance, toward restoration.

In Amos 1-2, God proclaims oracles of judgment on the nations surrounding Israel. But then God turns to his own people. It turns out that while Israel's sins aren't as bad as the nations around them, that doesn't matter. The standard for God's people isn't the other peoples in the world, it's God. We must measure ourselves against Jesus, not the people around us.

Scripture for Further Reading

Exodus 19:5-6; Amos 1-3; Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 7:1-5; Hebrews 4:12-16; 1 John

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think when you hear God's judgment? Do you think of God more as a judge or a parent?
2. Parents judge their kids. How is this judgment different from a courtroom? How does this help us understand the nature and purpose of God's judgment?
3. Amos presents God as a roaring lion. Why use such scary imagery? Why is God so angry?
4. It's easy to hear Amos' words and think we're just not good enough. That we need to try harder, to be better. What's the real issue in Amos? Why is looking more like Jesus so important?
5. What aspects of your life have you considered to be "good enough" compared to everyone else, but honestly need more transformation if you are too look more like Jesus?
6. The Scripture above from Hebrews presents God's word as a 2-edge sword. What does that mean? How do you see God's Words in Amos cutting both ways?

