



Prosperity

Woe to those who are at ease in Zion and to those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria, the distinguished men of the foremost of nations, to whom the house of Israel comes.

Amos 6:1

There are so many parallels between the history of the nation of Israel and the history and current state of our own country. There are parallels between Israel's history and my own. I think that is why the history and the prophecy contained in the Old Testament resonates with me so much. I've been there, I've walked that walk and experienced God's discipline. I've allowed my heart to wander far from Him and came running back when things went horribly wrong. I still have much to learn, and felt the conviction and instruction of the Holy Spirit this morning as I studied the feature verse above. I had pulled up my favorite commentary to see if there would be a specific reference regarding the feature verse. Instead I found a personal conviction regarding prosperity.

"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion." It is the "at ease" that produced a great deal of Israel's problems. God had blessed them with prosperity, and they used that prosperity to indulge and pamper themselves. They set it up as an idol and worshiped at the altar of riches. They defrauded their own countrymen to increase their purses. They pursued "ease" at the cost of righteousness. It sounds a lot like America, doesn't it?

I had to look at my own life as well. I have gone from a time of prosperity to a time of need while following what God has laid on my heart to do. I have railed and fussed at that, worried and schemed, planned and begged God to improve my personal finances. I have mourned the loss of the comfort and security, the ease and indulgence I had been able to afford myself. But I found in the study of this verse the truth that I believe God was waiting for me to see. *"When God makes us prosperous, we have an absolute obligation to use what He gives us in a way that glorifies Him, not that pampers ourselves," (D.Guzik)*

As that realization settled into my heart, I had to take a hard look at the prayers I have prayed over the last six months, and a harder look at my conduct and activities over the history of my adult life. My true desire as I have asked God for my needs to be met was that He put me back into a place of comfort where I could buy what I wanted rather than scrutinize every purchase and pinch every penny. But, as I have discovered previously, comfort is the enemy of growth. And prosperity *can be* the enemy of righteousness.

The ease that we have as followers of Christ must come from our state before God. It must come from a heart that is humbled before Him, not from the balance in our accounts. I don't know if God will ever trust me with financial prosperity again, but I know that I long to have a heart that desires Him above all things. I pray that I learn what He has to teach me.

Father, we thank You for the truth of Your word. We thank You that You promise to meet our needs when we depend on You. Help us to see every penny You give us as an opportunity to glorify You and not to indulge ourselves.