

# 5

## Failure to Be a Blessing

### Readings for the Week

Amos 5-6

Jonah 1-4

Matthew 23

Israel has no problem enjoying the land God had promised, but they fail to be the blessing God intends for his people to be. They see their relationship with God simply as a privilege and not also as a responsibility.

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*For what reasons does God bless his people?*

*What responsibility do you think the church has to share its blessing and serve those who are outside the church?*

**Israel has had times of great prosperity and growth. It's wealth and power have increased, but they have failed to use their blessing to bless others.**

### **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

*This passage from last week describes some of the reasoning for the Sabbath. What should keeping the Sabbath remind Israel of?*

*Israel had lived as slaves without rest and they are now to make sure to find rest for themselves and for all those in their borders. What would it say if they were to begin to act in oppressive ways like those they left behind in Egypt?*

**God has chosen this people to be a holy nation, representing God on the earth. He has blessed them and going back to Abraham, has said that all families of the earth will be blessed through them. But Israel has become like the other nations forgetting God's ways and neglecting justice. Read Amos 5:4-15 and discuss their situation.**

*Verse 10 speaks about those whose job is to uphold law and justice. How has Israel treated such people? What has resulted from their attitudes and actions toward justice?*

*Verses 11-12 represent a reversal of what we read in Deuteronomy 6:10-11. Israel will not prosper from their unrighteousness. What does God then call them to do?*

**Not only are Israel neglecting those in need within their borders, they are reluctant to bless other nations. When Jonah is called to a foreign city he runs in the opposite direction. Read Jonah 3:10-4:11 to see what happens once Jonah arrives.**

*In reading this last chapter we see some of Jonah's motivations. Why was he so opposed to going to Nineveh? What was he afraid would happen and why would he fear that?*

*How will we interact with the world if we, like Jonah, see those outside the church as enemies to be defeated? How else can and should we see them?*

**If God treated we who were spiritually poor the way Israel cared for its poor, we would never share in his riches. If God treated we who were his enemies the way Jonah would have, we would still be lost. Read Romans 5:6-11 to see the way that God acts toward us.**

*How has God treated those who were his enemies? Why would he do this?*

*Jesus teaches us the radical way we should live in regard to our enemies in Matthew 5:43-48.*

