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OT655

Lesson 9 Essay

For this assignment, I read **The Book of Amos: A commentary** by Jorg Jeremias, pages 173-223.

When discussing Amos 5:21-27, Jeremias discusses the manner in which Amos criticized the people's worship before God. "In Amos 5:21ff., then, it is not the significance of worship that is being weighed against the significance of the ethos such that worship activities, compared with that ethos, are devalued (as liberal theology imagines); rather, Israel in its sin is being told that its worship activities are no longer reaching God in the first place, and to that extent have become perverted into 'service to oneself'". (Jeremias, 180) This isn't the first time the book of Amos has discussed the state of worship being done by the people of Israel. Nor is it the first time in the Bible where the focus of worship has been placed more on the worshippers than the worship itself. In the story of Cain and Abel, both brothers decided to go before God and worship Him. However, the story makes clear that only one of the offerings was accepted before God. In the story of Job, the book discusses how Job continually made sacrifices on behalf of his family before God. God continues to show off Job in front of Satan, which shows God's acceptance of what Job was offering. In other words, God's focus is always on the one who is coming to worship God.

When looking at Amos' words, he was making it clear to the people that God wasn't upset at the worship activities. There are probably a number of customs, habits, obligations, and more that the people followed due to generational customs. Much of what people did probably became a habit as opposed to a voluntary decision. This then makes one wonder if generational customs are beneficial or not? What Abraham learned about God was through his own personal interactions with God. He had a firsthand experience that was undeniable for him. However, what others learned through words may not have the same effect as it would have if God spoke to them directly.

A question that I would love to dive deeper into is understanding why the essence of worship is being lost as time goes on? Why is it that God's relationship with His seems to be less and less direct as time goes on. Worship is so important to God, so understanding its essence and the root of it is crucial in understanding what makes God happy.