

January 17, 1977

Amos (burden, burden-bearer) was a shepherd and a dresser of fig trees. He lived in Tekoah, a small fortified town in Judea, about ten miles south of Jerusalem. The Lord called Amos to be His prophet in the northern kingdom. Amos went to Bethel, the chief center of calf-worship in the Kingdom of Israel. He prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah of Judah and Jereboam II of Israel, 760 B.C.

During this time Israel experienced great prosperity. Business was good, good crops, wealth abounded. But social conditions were appalling. Moral, political, social and spiritual evils were everywhere. There was oppression of the poor, corruption of justice and politics, the wealth belonged to a few, people were filled with luxuries, drunkenness, immorality and greed. They had forgotten God.

Called by the Lord Amos preached against these sins desiring to bring the people to repentance. Amos was educated by experience and observation. He shows great knowledge. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit Amos carries out God's plan and purpose. This was his moment in history. I am reminded of the words of Isaiah: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7

The prophecy of Amos is an example of the goodness of God to an unworthy nation. The Israelites of the north had rejected the Davidic covenant and any claim to the promises of God. At the same time they took comfort in the fact that they were God's chosen people so no harm could come to them. We have no word concerning the subsequent life of Amos or his death.

## An Outline of Amos:

- I. A prophecy of condemnation upon the nations, chapters 1-2
  1. Introduction: authorship and theme, 1;1-2
  2. The neighbors of Israel shall be punished for their sins, 1:3 to 2:5
  3. Israel shall suffer for her sins, 2:6-16
- II. A description of the coming judgment upon Israel. chapters 3-6
  1. Disgrace and destruction ch. 3
  2. Enslavement and judgment ch. 4
  3. Decimation and captivity ch. 5
  4. Affliction and overthrow ch. 6
- III. Five visions of the future of Israel ch. 7;1 to 9:10
  1. The vision of the grasshoppers devouring the land ch. 7:1-3
  2. The vision of the fire consuming the country, ch. 7:4-6
  3. The vision of a plumbline measuring the nation, ch 7:7-9
  4. An accusation by the priest Amaziah and a defense by Amos, ch. 7:10-17
  5. The vision of basket full of fruit showing Israel ripe for judgment, ch 8
  6. The vision of the Lord at the Altar of Bethel ordering its destruction ch. 9:1-10
- IV. A Messianic Promise chapter 9: 11-15
  1. In the fulness of time God will restore the House of David.
  2. This redemption is to be accomplished by the Lord.

The message of the Prophet Amos is very timely. In numerous ways our national scene today is similar to the national scene Amos faced. Amos preached sin and grace. Sometimes we are tempted to "dress up" our preaching with what we consider "something more." Amos again teaches us as preachers to proclaim in simple, clear words the message of God, the message of sin and grace. As we take a quick overview of the Book of the Prophet Amos let us keep in mind our preaching in times very similar to those of Amos.

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## A summary of each chapter:

- Chapter 1 : The Prophet Amos introduces himself, presents his credentials, and announces that the five nations surrounding Israel will be severely punished by the Lord for their sins  
 Main Thought: v2 "The Lord will roar from Zion"  
 Suggested Sermon Theme : How is the Lord making His voice Heard in our sinful day?
- Chapter 2 : After forecasting the destruction of two more nations near Israel, Amos comes to a dramatic climax in his condemnation of the nations by a severe denunciation of Israel herself for her sins, sins committed despite the gracious favors of the Lord toward her, and by a prediction of Israel's fall and ruin at the hands of the Lord.  
 Main thought: v14 "The flight shall perish from the swift"  
 Suggested sermon theme : Is the time coming when the Lord will withdraw His mercy from us because of our national and personal sins?
- Chapter 3 : To bring the people of Israel to a realization of their failure to meet their responsibilities and to a consciousness of their sins and their deserved punishment, Amos speaks the first of three prophetic addresses, in which he tells Israel of her coming disgrace in the eyes of other people and her approaching doom.  
 Main thought: v1 "Hear this word"  
 Suggested sermon theme : Fully meeting our responsibilities. . .  
 "Hear this Word."
- Chapter 4 : In his second prophetic address Amos really thunders at the Israelites for their sins of injustice and oppression and of idolatry and empty worship. He describes five severe penalties that the Lord has inflicted upon Israel in times past in an attempt to lead them to repentance. Amos declares that the Lord plans to resort to sterner measures against them.  
 Main thought: v 8 "Yet have ye not returned unto Me"  
 Suggested sermon theme: The signs of the times, reminders of God's return
- Chapter 5 : In a third prophetic address Amos declares that because of the refusal of the people of Israel to seek the Lord and to do good, the Lord despises their religious ceremonies and festivals, which are tainted with evil, and will send the people into exile.  
 Main thought: v4 "Seek ye me, and ye shall live"  
 Suggested sermon theme: Another opportunity to seek God's Word and to walk in His steps
- Chapter 6 : Amos concludes his series of three addresses with a sharp denunciation of Israel for her carnal security and carnal sins, with a description of the coming punishment of Israel, and with a statement of the coming overthrow of the nations.  
 Main thought: v1 "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion"  
 suggested sermon theme: Uncertain and unreliable safety and security

Chapter 7 : After concluding his three prophetic addresses, Amos makes a final effort to lead Israel to repent. By means of three word-pictures he portrays the reality of the Lord's coming judgment upon Israel. When accused by the priest of Bethel of a conspiracy against Israel, Amos defends himself and again states the certainty of Israel's doom.

Main thought: v 1 "Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me"

Suggested sermon theme: So great is God's love. . . repent!

Chapter 8 : Resuming his series of visions portraying the fall of Israel, Amos describes a vision of a basket of summer fruit, showing Israel to be ripe for the judgment of God, and he informs Israel of the coming removal of the Word of God and the resulting disaster.

Main thought: v 11 "A famine. . . of hearing the words of the Lord"

Suggested sermon theme: God removes His saving Word

Chapter 9 : The fifth and final vision that Amos saw shows the Lord standing at the altar of Bethel and ordering its destruction as well as the destruction of all sinners. The prophet ends with a wonderful Messianic promise of the future and final redemption of the people of God.

Main thought: v 14 "I will bring again the captivity of My people"

Suggested sermon theme: Sin means death. . . The gift of God is eternal life

Amos is long gone, but his inspired word lives on in the pages of God's open Book of salvation. Amos stands before our American nation and before the Christian Church of our nation and says: Americans you have a position of very great responsibility because of your Christian opportunity to hear and spread the Truth of God. Americans, your national fate will come as a natural result of the way you fill your spiritual responsibilities. In times of depression and in times of prosperity you must see that all depends upon God, worship Him. And you, the members of the Holy Christian Church, your purpose is much more than mere formal worship. Your worship must be directed to the true God and be centered on His Word, or it is useless. Americans, your security is more than economic abundance. Indifference to spiritual priorities destroys all safety and security. There is great need for prayer on the part of you American Christians for your nation. Remember the Lord's coming judgment. The greatest danger you face, the greatest disaster you face as Americans is that of losing the Word of God. Americans, see the Hope of Israel as your Hope. The peace of God is found only in Christ, whom you now know as Jesus, the Child of Bethlehem.

Looking a little closer:

- Chapter 1 : VV 3,5,6,8,9,11,13,15 all indicate that the words of Amos are the Word of God.  
 : The phrase "for three transgressions. . . and for four" used eight times means, for repeated transgressions.  
 : The "earthquake" v2 is spoken of in Zech. 14:5  
 : v9 "brotherly covenant" 1 Kings 5:1-12 between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre
- Chapter 2 : v8 "laid to pledge" given in security, pawned  
 v4 "transgressions of Judah" greatest is apostacy  
 v8 "drink the wine of the condemned" bought with the proceeds of fines  
 v9 "Amorite" Strongest race of the Canaanites  
 v13 "cart" is a threshing cart  
 v14 "Flight shall perish from the swift" no time to escape
- Chapter 3 : v3 Meet together at an appointed time and place  
 v5 "Where there is no gin for him" hook, noose, trap  
 v5 shall a snare go up from the earth  
 v12 "two legs" shin bones
- Chapter 4 : v3 "breaches" hole in the wall  
 v6 "Cleansness of teeth" lack of food  
 v9 "blasting" blight
- Chapter 5 : "Seven stars and Orion" are there any astrologers here?  
 : Job 38:31 uses the same picture "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion  
 : v11 "burdens" tax  
 v21 "smell in" accept  
 v22 "peace offerings" thank offerings  
 v26 "Moloch" and "Chiun" Sikkuth, your king and Chiun, your image.  
 Could be proper names for idols :hap. leg.
- Chapter 6 : v1 The notable people of Israel to whom the House of Israel came for counsel and direction  
 v2 "Calneh" was built by Nimrod in the land of Shinar, Gen. 10:10 and isn't mentioned again until here  
 "Hamath" a city north of Damascus  
 v5 "Chant" croon  
 v6 "bowls" sacrificial bowls  
 "affliction" ruin  
 v10 Don't attract Jehovah's attention  
 v11 "the great house, . . and the small house" every house  
 v14 "Hamath unto the river of the wilderness" from the northern boundary to the southern boundary
- Chapter 7 : v4 "great deep" ocean  
 v9 "high places" heights used for idol worship  
 v16 "drop" used in the sense of prophesying
- Chapter 8 : v3 "with silence" hush!  
 v4 "swallow up the needy" pant like a dog or wild animal after the poor  
 v8 -And it shall rise up, all of it, like the Nile, and shall heave and sink like the Nile of Egypt
- Chapter 9 : v6 "stories" chambers "His troop in the earth" His vault over the earth  
 v7 "children of the Ethiopians" as heathen people unto me  
 v7 "Caphtor" the original home of the Philistines  
 v9 "least grain" not even a little grain

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