

# **Amos**

## **“The Man God Uses”**

### **I. Introduction to Amos, the Book**

Amos is the thirtieth book in the Old Testament canon. Its author, Amos was among the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. prophets. His contemporaries include Johan, Hosea, Isaiah, Joel, Obadiah, and Micah. This has caused some to refer to this period in history as the “Golden Age of the Prophets”.

Spiritually and morally, this was one of the darkest periods for Israel. God responds by raising up men with a message. This is always the method of God. The darker things get, the more God is looking for men with a message. Amos wrote his message sometime around 750 B.C. He dates his writings with the reigns of Jeroboam II circa 790 – 745 B.C.).

He also makes reference to a great earthquake, of which geologists believe they have discovered evidence. Archeologists Yigael Yadin and Israel Finkelstein date this earthquake at 760 B.C. The ancient historian, Josephus, states the earthquake occurred when Uzziah, King of Judah, attempted to usurp the office of High Priest and enter the Temple. Scripture records, this resulted in his being struck with leprosy, and Josephus adds, the earthquake occurred. If Josephus is accurate; the earthquake would take place in 750 B.C.

Amos wrote during prosperous times in Israel. Assyria (modern day Iraq) under Adad-Nirari III defeated a Syrian led confederacy. This allowed Jeroboam II to occupy lands once controlled by Israel’s neighbors. These conditions paved the way for trade to increase, and Israel became part of an important trade route that brought great wealth to the nation.

Tragically, these were also times of spiritual confusion and moral depravity. Amos was the voice of God calling the people to return to the Lord. God is never without a voice. The question, are we willing to allow Him to use us?

### **Amos the Man**

Amos means “burden” and may be a shortened form of Amaziah, meaning “burden of the Lord”.

There is no mention of Amos outside of this book. He arrives on the scene suddenly, and then returns to obscurity. Amos does give personal information about himself.

*Chapter 1:1* – He refers to himself as a sheep breeder, or in Hebrew a “Noqdim”, meaning one who breeds sheep, as opposed to one who shepherds sheep.

*Chapter 7:14* – He describes himself with the Hebrew word, “Boqer”; a word very similar to the Hebrew word for cattle. This may imply he also raised cattle.

*Chapter 7:14* – He states he was one who cared for sycamore trees as a “fig picker”

*Chapter 1:1* – He also states he was from Tekoa, a town in the Judean hills. Although he was from Judah, he was sent to minister in Israel.

In short, Amos was not a man whose life had been spent in full time ministry. He does not appear to have come from a particularly religious family, or to have had formal training for ministry. Yet, he was chosen by God, and commissioned to leave his home and take the message of God on the mission field. Amos is the workingman’s minister.

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Amos received his message from the Lord. He writes that this was a record of that which he saw. Amos did not fabricate the message he delivered, but declared what he received from God. Seventy-three times he mentions the Lord. Thirteen times he declares, “Thus says the Lord”. Like Paul, he first received from the Lord, and then passed it on to others.

What our nation needs, perhaps more than anything else, are people who will faithfully share the Word of God from whatever platform is available. For some that platform may be their home, as they raise their children. For others, it is the workplace, or classroom. For all, it should include our places of recreation and targeted attempts to reach those who have yet to come to faith in Christ.

### **II. Outline of Amos**

Amos has nine chapters and divides neatly into three parts:

|           |                |                  |
|-----------|----------------|------------------|
| Section 1 | Chapter 1 – 2  | Seven Prophecies |
| Section 2 | Chapters 3 – 6 | Four Sermons     |
| Section 3 | Chapters 7 – 9 | Five Visions     |

#### **Section 1 Chapter 1 – 2 Seven Prophecies**

Amos begins by declaring what will come upon the nations surrounding Israel and Judah for their sins. Scripture clearly teaches that all will stand before God to give an account for this life. Disbelief, and religious charitable activities, is not enough to excuse us from judgment. The only way of escape is to allow Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin. Then Amos then turns his attention to the nations of Israel and Judah.

#### **Section 2 Chapters 3 – 6 Four Sermons**

Three of the four sermons begin with the phrase, “hear the word” and hinge upon a critical “therefore”.

*Amos 3:1* God declares, although Israel is His chosen people, He would visit them for punishment. A “visit” can be for good or bad; in this context it is for punishment.

*Amos 3:11* Assyria will come and attack Israel. Although some will be spared, the cost will be great.

*Amos 4:1* “Hear you cows. . .” Calling the women cows would serve as a strong attention grabber.

*Amos 4:6* This section begins a series which hinges upon the use of the word “yet”. God had done amazing things to get their attention, “yet” they refused to turn to God. Many thought the Second World War”. . . would bring people to their senses. Instead they became more infuriated. Revivals have never come about that way. How materialistic we have become, and how anti-spiritual in our thinking.” (Martin Lloyd-Jones)

*Amos 4:12* “. . . therefore prepare to meet your God, O Israel”. It is worth noting that it is possible to prepare to meet God. We prepare by receiving the forgiveness found in Christ and seeking to live for the furtherance of His kingdom. Heaven will be here sooner than we expect and we want to be certain to store as many treasures there as possible.

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*Amos 5:1* Amos speaks of the judgment day as though it has already come.

*Amos 5:4* Amos counsels the people  
To seek the Lord

*Amos 5:16* Therefore, the day of the Lord is coming. Many who are living lives that violate the ways of God still seem to have a fascination with the apocalyptic aspect of Scripture. Prophecy was not given to tickle our fancy or make sermons more interesting, it is designed to stir us to godly living.

*Amos 6:1* “Woe to you who are at ease. . .” Although judgment was looming (Israel would fall in less than thirty years), the people were living at ease, thinking everything was fine. Two things seem to fuel their false security:

They lived in a walled city.

They were very religious.

Buffet style religion, where we hand select the parts we like from Christianity, and from other systems of belief that strike our fancy, will often develop feelings of comfort, but are incapable of warding off true judgment.

*Amos 6:7* They were even known for their music, and considered themselves to be “little David’s”.

### **Section 3 Chapters 7 – 9      Five Visions**

*Amos 7:1* Locust swarm

*Amos 7:4* Fire

*Amos 7:7* Plumb line

*Amos 8:1* Summer fruit

*Amos 9:1* The Lord

### **III. Why Study Amos**

Amos is filled with great truths.

*Amos 3:3*      “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”

We must agree on where we are going. If you choose to no longer walk according to the Word of God, you begin walking away from God.

*Amos 4:12*      “. . . prepare to meet your God. . .”

*Amos 8:11*      The land was experiencing a famine of the Word. We want to do whatever possible to ensure that our communities are not in want of hearing the truth of God’s Word.

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### **Prayer**

Amos is in an elite class of men who prayed and saw the judgment of God spared. We can join this elite group when we take time to pray for our family and friends.

### **The man God uses.**

Amos was not a pastor or a priest. He was a sheep breeder and a fruit picker, who was called to be the voice of God to his generation. From his experience, we learn a few things about the call of God.

He had no formal training. God is not limited to those who have training. It is not seminary or university degrees that equip us for ministry but God's calling.

His calling was proven by his message. Amos did not go with a self-proclaimed message; he received the Word of the Lord. We must go out not with our opinions, but declaring the everlasting Gospel.

Amos was called while working. Like Peter, who was busy with his fish business, Amos was at work when he heard from the Lord.

His calling did not eliminate the need to study. It is clear from his teaching; Amos was a student of the Word, and the current events and conditions of his world. This made him a man who was relatable to those around him.

## **IV. Types of Christ**

Amos 9:11-12 is quoted in Acts 15 by Peter to validate the salvation of the gentiles. Amos spoke of a time when the gentiles would be grafted in with Israel as the people of God. He was speaking ultimately of the millennium, but this also found its fulfillment in the church. Paul stated, in the church of Christ there is no longer Jew or gentile but that we are one in Christ.

Upon hearing from Peter, the leaders of the church determined to send a letter to the gentile believers, telling them to stay away from sin and things that lead to sin. They then sent missionaries to start churches and the word of God to further instruct the people.