

30 – Amos: “Seek Me and Live!” (Before it is too late!)

**"The end has come
upon my people
Israel."**

Amos 8:2

- Amos' name means "burden." He was a **shepherd and farmer** from Tekoa, about 10 miles south of Jerusalem in the south kingdom of Judah. He prophesied chiefly, however, against the northern kingdom of Israel. God called him from his herds in the south to go to the north to preach against their sins. Amos did. That shows a **remarkable relationship with God**.
- Amos prophesied during the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel (north) and Uzziah of Judah (south). He mentions a very large earthquake that archeologists think occurred around 760 BC. ("Two years before the earthquake..." THE earthquake. Must have been a big one!)
- Amos was a **contemporary of Jonah and Hosea** (other prophets to the north), and **Isaiah and Micah**, prophets to the southern kingdom.
- Amos seemed an unlikely prophet. He was not a priest or other learned man. He was a "herdsman" or a shepherd, and farmer, who came from the wilderness in the south to preach to Bethel (capital of northern kingdom) in the north. He seemed a bit out of place. Bethel is where the cultural and religious center was, including a school for "prophets" though the northern kingdom was completely apostate. God took a shepherd from the country and sent him north to the center of idolatry. Amos' clothing, speech, manners and customs did not match in this place, and he stood out like a sore thumb. This was probably God's idea from the beginning. In today's terms, Bethel was a far left liberal place, the center of academia and man's idolatrous religion. Amos was a far right conservative in the enemy camp.
- During this time, the **northern kingdom was completely idolatrous, in total apostasy**, immoral given over to sin. Amos' prophecies concerning her judgment were just a few years ahead of her actual destruction by Assyria in 722 BC. In every way, the condition of the northern kingdom of Israel was the same as any nation that has strayed from God's ways into man's pursuit of "knowledge" religion, and sin.
- God reveals through Amos that He always provides warning before acting, and always tells us what we need to know. There can be no excuse, as God amply warns and informs first: **"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."** (3:7)

Highlights

Judgment Prophecies Against Surrounding Gentile Nations 1:2-2:3	Judgment Prophecies Against Judah and Israel 2:4-6:14	Visions of the Future Ch 7-9
Judgment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syria for Cruelty, 1:3-5 Philistia for Making Slaves, 1:6-8 Phoenicia for Breaking Treaty, 1:9-10 Edom for Revengeful Spirit, 1:11-12 Ammon for Violent Crimes, 1:13-15 Moab for Injustice, 2:1-3 	Judgment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judah for Despising the Law, 2:4-5 Israel for Immorality and Blasphemy, 2:6-16 Whole House of Israel (12 Tribes), Ch 3 (for idolatry, violence, greater the blessing, greater the punishment.) Israel Punished in past for sin, Chapter 4 Israel will be punished in the future for sin, Ch 5 Israel admonished to leave sin, Ch 6 Opposition to Amos and his message 	3 short visions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grasshoppers, 7:1-3 Fire, 7:4-6 Plumbline, 7:7-9 Historic Interlude, 7:10-17 (Amos' personal experience, opposition) More visions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basket of summer fruit, Ch 8 God's Avenging, 9:1-10 Worldwide regathering and restoration of Kingdom, 9:11-15 (end time fulfillment)

- The first 6 chapters of this book are messages from God and verbal judgments (sometimes called “word based”). The last 2 chapters are messages through visions (sometimes called “vision based” prophecy).
- Amos portrays **God as the ruler of the entire world, and all nations are responsible and accountable to Him**. The level of responsibility of any nation is based on its “light” (amount of truth given to it). Amos said that God’s judgment awaited nations that lived in luxury, and were content in their immorality.
- Amos begins his message with this reminder: *“The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers.”* (1:2). Amos reminds that they are not dealing with a myth, or a wimp. God is Almighty, and He is roaring mad!
- Amos’ message was not well received. The “religious leaders” of the area got together and plotted to remove him, send him back to Judah. Amaziah was the spokesman of this group, went to the king and poisoned him against Amos. They told him to leave Israel and go back to the wilderness of Judah. Amos refused to budge, however. He cites his only credential as a prophet: **“God called me.”**
- Israel was being “religious on the surface” offering sacrifices and celebrating the feasts. But this did not translate into their hearts. The word of God through Amos: *“I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.”* (5:21-23)

VISIONS OF AMOS		
1		The swarming locusts (7:1-3): In this first of five visions Amos sees a swarm of locusts (reminiscent of Joel) at the most vulnerable time of the harvest, which would have left Israel with no food. Locust swarms were one of the most dreaded and devastating plagues of the Middle East then. Amos interceded, and God relented and did not send the swarm. The people should have repented, but they did not.
2		The devouring fire (7:4-6): In this second vision Amos sees another terror, judgment by fire. Some think this is not literal fire, but a drought. But we have seen wildfires usually go with droughts, so it could be very literal. Once again, Amos prayed and God relented and did not send the fire or drought.
3		The plumb line (7:7-17): In the third vision Amos sees a plumb line. Plumb lines are mentioned throughout scripture, as a standard for things that were straight, and true. (A plumb line is cord with a weight at the end to show builders when a wall is straight, or plumb.) When we see a plumb line (or measuring rod, etc.) God is getting ready to judge. God spoke before Amos could plead for them again. He said He would “spare them no longer.” Israel is not in “alignment,” the wall is crooked, and needs to be torn down. The judgment cannot be averted.
4		The Basket of Fruit (8:1-14): A basket of fruit represents the summer (end of year) harvest. When Amos identified it, God used this picture to make His point, “the time is ripe” for the judgment of His people. There will be no more pardons for Israel. No more harvests, no more fruit. Summer fruit is also subject to rapid spoiling, and the rapid ruin of Israel was near.
5		The Avenging Lord (9:1-10): In the fifth and final vision Amos sees something terrifying – the God of the universe wielding a sword against all sinners among His people. God goes on to describe the terrible destruction coming upon Israel. Nothing and no one would escape. This is a prophecy of the coming Assyrians who would destroy the northern kingdom of Israel.

- As all judgment prophecies against Israel (north and south), Amos also brings the word of God regarding **ultimate restoration**. Like most of the prophecies in scripture, the book of Amos sees a local (or near) fulfillment as well as a far fulfillment. The soon destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel (722 BC, about 40 years from the time of Amos’ prophecies) was the near fulfillment. There are many scriptures in Amos that will have their ultimate fulfillment in the end times. As Joel, Amos also refers to the terrible **“Day of the Lord.”** The final verses 9:11-15 will find their fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom.
- The book of Amos **still stands as a warning, and a promise, to all nations who turn from God**, satisfying every lust and desire, and put other gods before Yahweh. God’s message remains the same today.