

AMOS



GOD'S INVITATION FOR LIFE

CONSIDER

COMPREHEND

CONNECT

A 3 C'S CONTEMPLATIVE STUDY™

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All Scriptures quoted, partially quoted, or adapted from the New American Standard Version of the Holy Bible with 1995 Update.

Introduction to the Book of Amos

Author: According to Amos 1:1, the author identifies himself as “Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa”. This description both tells us little and tells us a lot about who this prophet is. First, he identifies himself as Amos. This is a name that means “bearer of a burden”. When you consider the message that Amos delivers, you quickly see that God not only used this prophet in his day, but also set the stage for this man to be a prophet even at his naming, eight days after being born.

Next, he tells us that he was among the shepherders. The Hebrew word used for shepherd is not the normal word for shepherd we see in other parts of the Old Testament. The normal word used for shepherd is “ra’ah”, which means a pasturer of flocks. The word used here is the word “noqed”. This is the same word that is used in 2 Kings 3:4, “Now Meesha, king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and used to pay the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams.” This is obviously not a word that means just a watcher of sheep, but that of an owner and manager of flocks that would know how to breed sheep and would; thus, mean someone with intelligence and some training.

Amos also identifies himself as being from Tekoa. Tekoa was a small town six miles south of Bethlehem in Judah. This is interesting in that Tekoa is in Judah, but the bulk of Amos’ message is to Israel. Tekoa was the site of a military outpost from which Amos would have been able to observe and learn about war and fighting and we see this in his declaration of war oracles as he pronounces judgment on the nations.

In other parts of his book, Amos further identifies himself as a tender of sycamore fig trees. This could mean that he either owned them or that he oversaw their care or that he was the fruit picker. He also denies being trained as a prophet or of being the disciple or son of a prophet. Putting all this together, we see a portrait of a man with responsibility and incentives to remain in his southern home, but he is called out from what he knows to go to the Northern Kingdom of Israel with a message that God is sick of empty worship and meaningless sacrifice and is about to destroy Israel.

Date: Also in 1:1, Amos gives us a clue from which we can ascertain much. He mentioned, “he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel.” Jeroboam II ruled from approximately 803 BC to 763 BC and it is during this time that Amos received the visions from the Lord. Amos also mentions that Uzziah was the king of Judah. There are many years of overlap between these two kings, so it is somewhat difficult to nail down an exact date for Amos’ writing. One other hint that helps us to nail down the date of writing is Amos’ mention of the peace and ease of those living in Jerusalem. Jeroboam II was an evil king that engaged in the sins of his fathers (idolatry), but he was also used of God to greatly expand the kingdom of Israel. It was through this king that the boundaries of the kingdom were extended almost to their original places under David and Solomon. This was done through a series of wars. The ease would indicate that the wars were over. This would make the writing of Amos at the end of Jeroboam II’s reign. The best dates for this time frame would be between 765 and 760 BC.

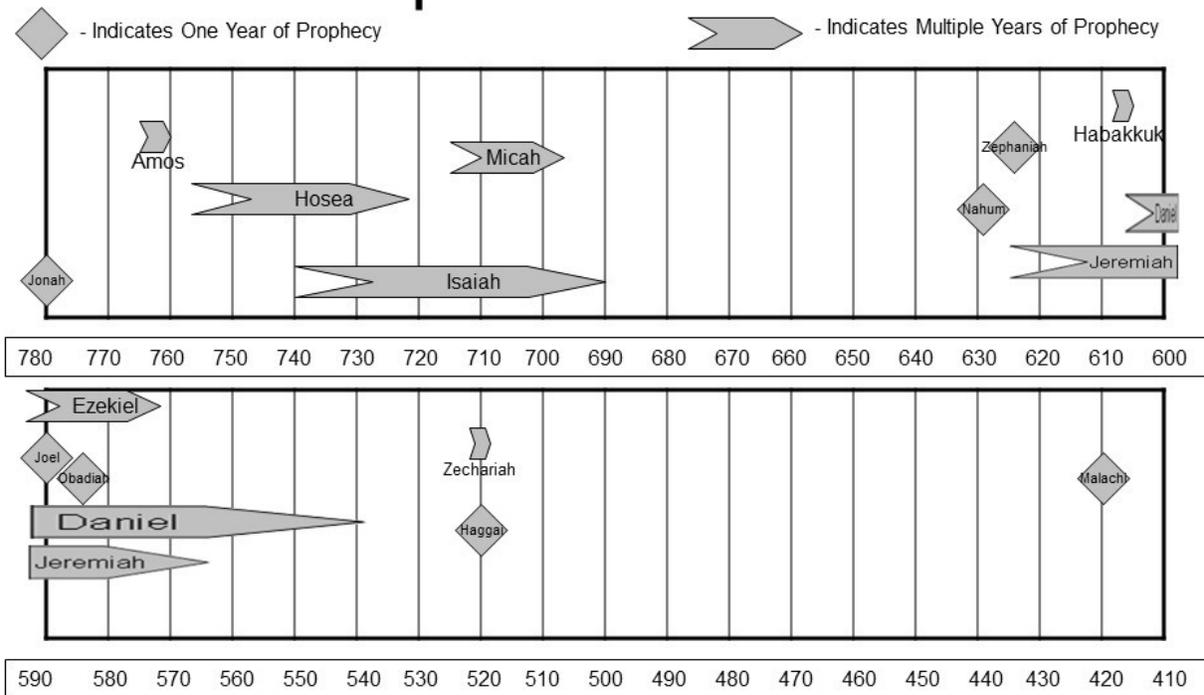
Contemporary Prophets: Assuming the arguments for dating Amos are correctly listed above, Amos would have been ministering during the life of Hosea. Amos came from Judah and was sent to Israel from 765 to 760 BC. Hosea prophesied in Judah from 755-722 BC. Hosea would

step into the same situation that was being faced by Amos. Amos would set the stage in Israel and Hosea would follow in Judah.

Another contemporary of Amos would be Isaiah, also in Judah. Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Uzziah and served through the reign of Manasseh. This would put the dates through the same period as Amos. Isaiah primarily spoke to Judah about its situation and Amos talked to Israel about its situation.

Micah would be another prophet that would prophesy during the same circumstances as Amos. While Isaiah and Hosea mainly prophesied to the Southern Kingdom and Amos prophesied to the Northern Kingdom, Micah would prophesy to both. All of these prophets would be instrumental in delivering a multi-faceted but unified message to the people of their days about God's coming wrath and of their need to repent.

Prophetic Timeline



Permission Granted to Duplicate

Historical Situation: The account of Jeroboam's life in 2 Kings 14:23-29 makes it clear that, although Jeroboam was an evil king, God used him to prosper the nation of Israel during his reign. This can be seen in references to paneled houses, large crops, etc. in the book of Amos. This was also a time of great conquest. With the Assyrians facing the Urartu of the north, Israel was free to expand its borders almost back to where they had been under David and Solomon. Amos warned not to trust in this peace because God was going to judge them and it would result in the total destruction of Israel as a nation. Unlike Judah, they would never come back to the Promised Land as a partial nation of Israel, but only with the remnants of Judah. Most of this decline would happen after the Syro-Ephraimite War of 734-732 BC when Assyria tired of King Hoshea's alliances with both them and Egypt and they joined with Judah to route the Israelites.

Main Focus of the Book of Amos: Trust in God and not in your ease, money, land, status, or religious history. God desires people that will obey Him and live for Him consistently. Obedience is a matter of the heart and not just outer activity. God will not take second place to anyone or anything. Return to the Lord and there is hope after destruction.

Outline:

- I. Identification and Setting of the Prophet (1:1)
- II. God Promises to Judge Sin (1:2 through 2:16)
 - a. Judgment on Damascus (1:2-5)
 - b. Judgment on Philistia (1:6-8)
 - c. Judgment on Tyre (1:9-10)
 - d. Judgment on Edom (1:11-12)
 - e. Judgment on Ammon (1:13-15)
 - f. Judgment on Moab (2:1-3)
 - g. Judgment on Judah (2:4-5)
 - h. Judgment on Israel (2:6-16)
- III. Reasons for God's Judgment (3:1 through 4:13)
 - a. God has a reason for your judgment (3:1-15)
 - b. Your Sins (4:1-13)
 - i. Oppression of the poor (4:1-3)
 - ii. Offering sacrifices to false gods (4:4-6)
 - iii. You did not respond to my calling (4:7-13)
- IV. How to Respond to God's Judgment (5:1 through 7:17)
 - a. Recognize your situation (5:1-3)
 - b. Seek the true God (5:3-9)
 - c. Don't follow the example of others (5:10-15)
 - d. Don't trust in your position (5:16-20)
 - e. Don't trust in your religiosity (5:21-27)
 - f. Don't trust in your comfort (6:1-14)
 - g. Repent and seek God's mercy (7:1-9)
 - h. Don't try to avoid God's judgment (7:10-17)
- V. The Horror and Hope of God's Judgment (8:1 through 9:15)
 - a. The Horror (8:1 through 9:10)
 - i. The end is declared (8:1-3)
 - ii. Human life will mean nothing (8:4-6)
 - iii. An earthquake will rock your world (8:7-8)¹
 - iv. The sun will darken (8:9-10)
 - v. You will seek God's word, but you don't find it (8:11-14)
 - vi. You will not be able to hide from God (9:1-6)
 - vii. Sinners will be destroyed, but saints will be saved (9:7-10)
 - b. The Hope (9:11-15)
 - i. Jerusalem will be restored (9:11-12)
 - ii. Crops will be restored (9:13)
 - iii. Exiles will be returned (9:14-15)

¹ This earthquake is mentioned in Zechariah 14:5.

Personal Word: As you study the book of Amos, you may be tempted to sit in judgment on the people of his day. After all, the people had a prophet that could tell them exactly what God expected and they still did not get it. You may wonder how they could have ruined lives by worshiping idols or why they did not listen to God when He called to them. Before we jump on the bandwagon of condemning them, we need to ask ourselves some difficult questions:

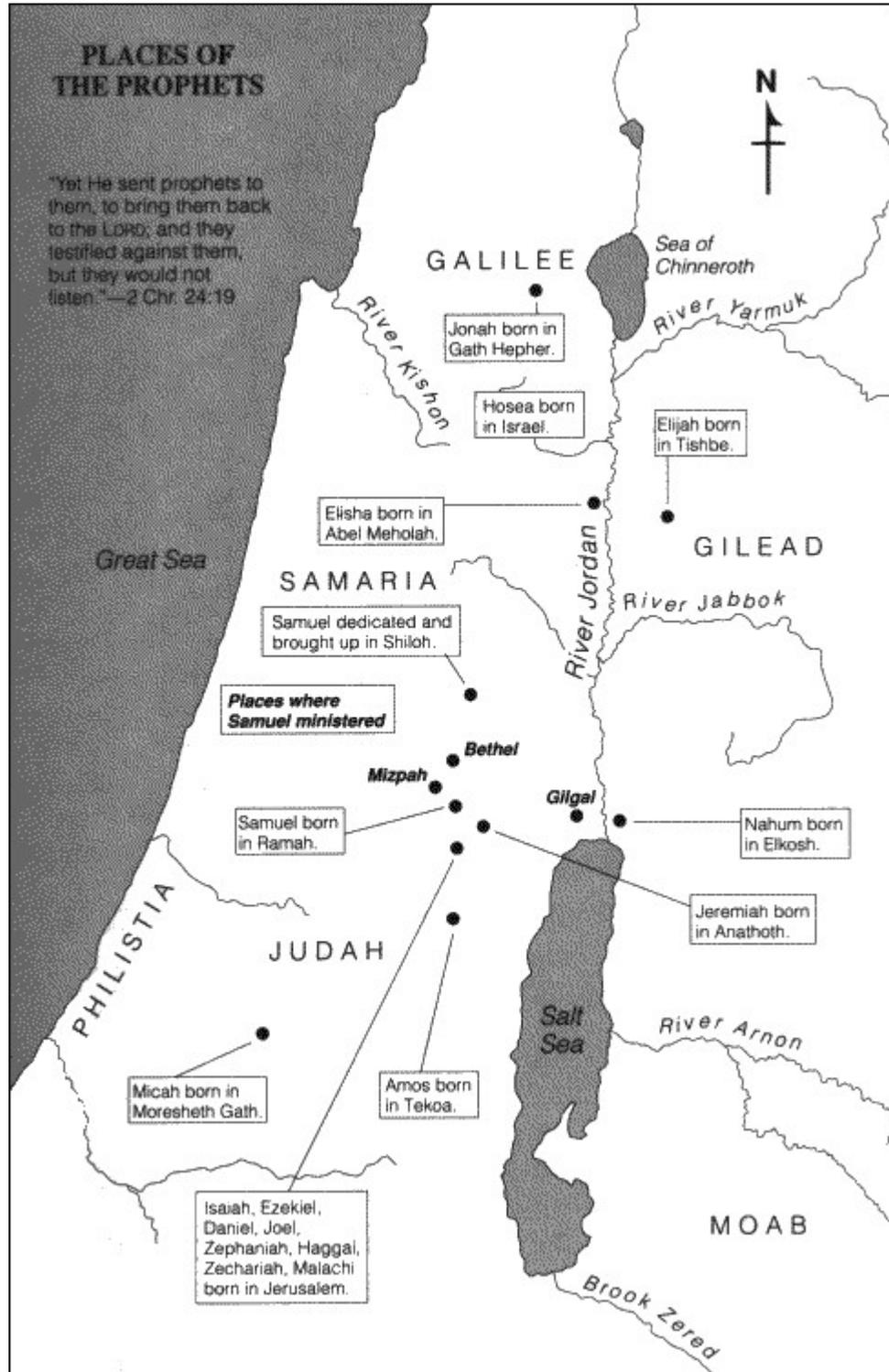
- (1) Do you always obey God's word when you hear it from a preacher or read it for yourself?
- (2) What are some activities that keep you from spending as much time in God's word as you would like?
- (3) In a typical week, besides church attendance, how else do you devote yourself to God?
- (4) Besides church attendance, how much time do you spend developing your relationship with God?
- (5) How much time do you spend working? Sleeping? Eating? TV? Hobbies?
- (6) How does the time in 4 and 5 above compare?

As we consider our responses to these questions, we just might realize we don't have any room to accuse anyone else because we are just as guilty. Let us hear God's voice together as He calls for us to return to Him with our hearts and live out of a conviction that He is Who He says He is.

May God bless you as you read His word and His word shines His light on your soul.

Jack Jacob

Map of Geography of Amos



² Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1993.

Reading Record for the Book of Amos

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5

- Chapter 6
- Chapter 7
- Chapter 8
- Chapter 9

Record Observations Below



Lesson One:
**Finally, They Are Going to Get What's Coming
to Them!**
Amos 1:1 through 2:16

Have you ever known someone who just got under your skin? Have you ever known anyone who really got your goat or fried your cookies? You get the point. We have all had those people in our lives who we wished would get what was coming to them! Whether it is someone like Son of Sam, Jeffrey Daumer, or Adolph Hitler, chances are good you have encountered someone that engendered these kinds of feelings for you. I had an experience with just that kind of person when I was in High School.

I played football all four years of high school. We played in Central and Northern Oklahoma where many of the small towns live for Friday Nights in the fall. Our small town was no exception. My junior year, we played a team from a nearby town and they had a player that was not all-state in many sports. The problem with this particular individual was that he was extremely rude and cocky. He was also a very dirty player, but that comes later in the story. Just prior to playing their team my junior year, a number of us had to go to their place to take pictures for and be interviewed by the newspaper. While there, this particular athlete starting talking about how our team did not even deserve to be on the same field with them. He talked about how weak and slow we were and how much more talent they had than we had. Needless to say, we were fired up and fights almost broke out over it.

The night came for us to play and the tension was still high. As the game progressed, it was clear that both teams came to play. At the half, we were tied 6-6. In the middle of the third quarter, I had the opportunity to pull around the end, turn up the field and lay a serious block on this great linebacker. He got up off the ground, shared some choice words with me and promised he would return the favor. Later in the game, we were in a pile near the other team's goal line and my nemesis decided to dive headfirst into the pile in an effort to spear me. It just happened that he missed and his head become lodged in the pile. As gravity took over, his body went from horizontal to vertical and we all heard his neck snap.

My first thought was, "That's what you get for trying to play dirty!" I would calm down later and feel bad for him because his injury could have been life threatening. It turned out that he had broken his neck and would miss the rest of the football, wrestling, and powerlifting seasons of his senior year. This was a harsh penalty for his antics on the field.

As I remember this story, I am still reminded of how it felt to think, "He got what was coming to him!" As I have matured, I realize I am glad that I do not get what I deserve from God. I deserve death for my sins, but God has given me eternal life as a gift. It challenges me to think about being glad when people get what's coming to them.

In this first lesson of Amos, Amos began to share God's message with God's people. He began by telling them that God judges sin. He listed several of Israel's enemies when promising God's judgment. This would have drawn them in to thinking that their enemies were getting justice, but then he used that same logic to begin to explain to them what was coming their way.

As we study this lesson, and this entire course on the book of Amos, let us consider whether or not we want what is coming to us or whether we are willing to humble ourselves, seek God and ask for His forgiveness and deliverance from getting what is coming to us.

Describe a time when someone got what was coming to them.

How did you feel? Have your feelings changed? Why or why not?

Consider It

1. Find Tekoa on the map on page 6 and circle it. (1:1-2)
2. Who was the king of Judah in Amos' day? (1:1-2)
3. Who was the king of Israel in Amos' day? (1:1-2)
4. What special event did Amos mention to help people understand when he delivered his prophecy? (1:1-2)
5. Fill out the following table.

Verses	Nation Judged	Their Offense	Their Punishment
1:3-5			

Verses	Nation Judged	Their Offense	Their Punishment
1:6-8			
1:9-10			
1:11-12			
1:13-15			
2:1-3			
2:4-5			
2:6-16			

6. Of what historic event did God remind the Israelites? (2:9-16)

7. How did Israel respond to God’s warnings? (2:9-16)

8. How did God say Israel would respond to His judgment? (2:9-16)

Comprehend It

1. What difference does it make that Amos be seen as a manager of shepherding instead of just a shepherd?

2. Go back in your Bible and read the following passages and answer the questions listed:
 - a. 2 Chronicles 26
 - i. What kind of King was Uzziah?

 - ii. How did God treat His people during Uzziah's reign?

 - b. 2 Kings 14:23-27
 - i. What kind of King was Jeroboam?

 - ii. How did God treat His people during Jeroboam's reign?

3. For the following peoples, answer the questions below:
 - a. Damascus
 - i. In what country is this city?

 - ii. What was the relationship between Israel and this country?

 - iii. How would the Israelites have felt about their judgment?

 - b. Gaza
 - i. In what country is this city?

- ii. What was the relationship between Israel and this country?
 - iii. How would the Israelites have felt about their judgment?
 - c. Tyre
 - i. What was the relationship between Israel and this country?
 - ii. How would the Israelites have felt about their judgment?
 - d. Edom
 - i. What was the relationship between Israel and this country?
 - ii. How would the Israelites have felt about their judgment?
 - e. Ammon
 - i. What was the relationship between Israel and this country?
 - ii. How would the Israelites have felt about their judgment?
 - f. Moab
 - i. What was the relationship between Israel and this country?
 - ii. How would the Israelites have felt about their judgment?

4. Why did Amos start with announcing judgment against all of these nations?
5. How would Amos' audience have felt when he started mentioning judgment against Judah?
6. What was God trying to communicate through the prophet?
7. Why did God seem to judge Israel more harshly than Judah?
8. Based on Israel's reaction to previous warnings, what would you expect them to do with Amos' warning?

Connect It

1. How would you react if God called you from everything you knew, and everything you had, and sent you to a land where people were hostile to the gospel?
2. Do you know any people whom God has called to this kind of life?
3. How can you support them?
4. If you were having a conversation with a non-Christian about the gospel, how could you use Amos' pattern in sharing your faith?

5. God judged the nations not for actions taken during war, but for actions taken during peace. How is killing someone or taking a captive different in peacetime than in wartime?

6. Is there a concept of a just war? Why or why not?

7. List some of the people that you have been glad to see go to prison for their crimes:

8. Is sending someone to prison in keeping with Jesus' instructions to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39)? Why or why not?

9. Is sending someone to hell in keeping with God's word that says He is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)? Why or why not?

10. What attitudes and actions need to change in your life as a result of studying this lesson?



Lesson Two: And Here's Why! Amos 3:1 through 4:13

What is it about mothers that enables them to know everything? We laughingly joke about mothers having eyes in the back of their heads, but what is it really? I can remember sitting in the back of the car as a kid. My brother and sister and I would sit in the backseat (and they did not require seatbelts back then). We would pick on each other and argue until my stepmother would

say, "The next person that acts up, is going to get a beating when we get home!" Now, I don't know about you, but most of the time we took this as a challenge to see if we could do something she would not know about. Sadly, we never did.

On one particular trip, after our warning, I decided to test the theory of whether or not she could see everything we were doing while she was driving. I sat for a long time (okay, probably just a few seconds, but when you are itching to act up, any time spent acting right can seem like an eternity!) with my hands on each knee. My sister was sitting next to me and my brother was on her other side. Very nonchalantly, I simply pointed my index finger and touched my sister's leg ever so slightly and then started to cross my arms just to make sure it did not appear I had done anything wrong.

What happened next was a whirlwind of actions. My stepmother slammed on the brakes. She threw the car into park. She opened her car door. She came around to my car door. She opened the car door. She yelled at me about being warned not to do anything. She snatched me out of the car. She spanked me right there in the middle of the street. She threw me back in the car and slammed the door. She returned to her side of the car, got in, and continued down the street. Amidst the tears and shock, I can remember thinking, "How did she see that?!" It was almost just a twitch of a finger!

In our lesson today, the Israelites had heard that they were being judged for their sins. God went on to tell them not only all they had done wrong, but also how He had reached out to them to draw them back to Him and how they had responded. If you listen closely, you can almost hear them saying, "But how does He know? We thought we fooled him with all of our religiosity!" Having been challenged by this passage, we need to ask ourselves what secret sins we have been engaging in: lust, envy, pride, gluttony, anger, grudges, unforgiveness? The other question we must ask is, "If God really sees and knows all, what do I need to do differently?"

Describe a time when you thought you got away with something only to get caught later:

What did you learn from this experience?

Consider It

1. Why did God say He was judging Israel? (3:1-8)
2. What was God saying in His series of questions? (3:1-8)
3. How did God say He communicated with His people? (3:1-8)
4. Who did God call to witness His judgment of Israel? (3:9-15)
5. What accusation did God make against Israel? (3:9-15)
6. How was God going to punish Israel? (3:9-15)
7. What sin was God punishing? (3:9-15)
8. To what other sins did that sin lead? (4:1-3)
9. How was God going to punish the sons of Israel? (4:1-3)
10. How would the people know God was punishing them? (4:1-3)
11. How did God say the people would respond to His punishment? (4:4-5)

12. How had God tried to draw the people back to Him before this, according to the following verses:

a. 4:6

b. 4:7-8

c. 4:9

d. 4:10

e. 4:11

13. What final action was God going to use to draw them back? (4:12-13)

Comprehend It

1. What basis did God give for punishing the sons of Israel?
2. Does it seem fair that God was going to punish Israel and let other, more evil, nations continue? Why or why not?
3. For what purpose did God list the series of questions in 3:3-6?
4. Why did God call people to assemble from the citadels of Ashdod and Egypt?

5. How would the Israelites have felt about God calling two pagan, violent nations to serve as witnesses to Israel's judgment?
6. What did it mean for the sons of Israel to go from living in citadels in Samaria to being snatched away with the corner of a bed and the cover of a couch?
7. What was located at the temple at Bethel? (See 1 Kings 12:28-32)
8. What did it mean that the horns of the altar would be cut off? (See Leviticus 4:1-12, Exodus 21:12-14)
9. Why did God mention destroying their winter houses, summer houses and great houses?
10. What did God say would not help them to be forgiven? Why?
11. Why did God choose to send so much calamity on the sons of Israel?
12. From your previous knowledge of scripture, how did they respond when God sent calamity?
13. Was this the response God was seeking? Why or why not?
14. Why did God describe Himself as a God who declares His thoughts to man?

Connect It

1. God said in 3:2 that He had chosen Israel from among all the families of the earth and that was the basis for their being punished for their iniquities. In other words, they had a harsher punishment because they knew Him and knew how to act. Are there times when you feel God is harder on you than on others?

2. Why might this be?

3. God used examples from nature that showed nothing happens without a cause. What difficulties are you going through right now?

4. What might be some of the causes of these difficulties?

5. Is there anything from which you might need to repent concerning these causes?

6. Has God ever used someone to correct you that you would consider “less spiritual” than you? If so, how did it feel? If not, how would it feel?

7. In this passage, the people had grown wealthy and comfortable, and had forgotten God. How is your walk with God? Do you spend more time on your “things” than with Him?

8. The Israelites thought they could simply follow their religious rituals and God would turn away His judgment. Rate your spiritual life in the following areas on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being ritual and 10 being a consistent, real encounter with God.
 - a. Prayer: 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10

 - b. Bible Study: 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10

- c. Worship: 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
 - d. Working in Church: 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
 - e. Fellowship: 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
 - f. Helping Others: 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10
9. What needs to change in these areas to move more towards a 10?
- a. Prayer

 - b. Bible Study

 - c. Worship

 - d. Working in Church

 - e. Fellowship

 - f. Helping Others
10. Looking back, how has God tried to get your attention to let you know these areas need work?
11. How will you respond to God's prompting in this area?



Lesson Three: What Do I Do Now? Amos 5:1 through 7:17

Have you ever tried to put something together only to discover you were missing a part, piece or even page of instructions? It can be extremely frustrating and sometimes embarrassing.

This has happened to me numerous times. In Luke 14:28-30, Jesus said, when talking about considering the cost of discipleship, “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not

able to finish.’” It just makes sense to know you have all you need to finish the job.

Imagine what it would have been like to have built the entire transcontinental railroad and then to have forgotten to bring the last spike to tie them together. Imagine building a building and forgetting it needed a roof. Imagine building a sailboat and forgetting the sail. People would look at your lack of ability to finish the job and think, “What a joke! I’ll never have him do any work for me. He can’t finish.”

I had that experience when traveling to Turkey after the earthquakes of 1999. I was there on a mission trip to help feed those who had lost their houses to the earthquakes. As we traveled to the tent city in which the homeless were forced to live, I noticed everywhere one could see, there were houses still standing, but with no roof. I thought this quite strange. Our guide told us that the people do this because they do not have enough money to pay the taxes on a finished building and do not have to pay until it is finished. Ironically, it was this lack of a roof that had caused many of the houses to collapse!

So far, we have seen Amos tell the people judgment was coming and he told them why it was coming. What the people did not ask, and Amos had not told them, was how they were to respond to God. They had not responded to His gentle nudging described in chapter 4, so how were they to respond to judgment on the scale Amos was describing? We will see in Amos’ instructions how we also ought to respond to God’s working in our lives. Hopefully, we are not to the point of God’s judgment in our lives and we can use Amos’ instructions to avoid getting that far.

Describe a time when you were unable to finish a project due to a lack of some important part or piece or instruction:

How did it feel to have to quit before the project was finished?

Consider It

1. How did Amos describe Israel's condition? (5:1-3)
2. What would be the results when Israel tried to defend herself? (5:1-3)
3. How did God want Israel to respond? (5:4-9)
4. What did this not include? (5:4-9)
5. What would God do if they did not respond that way? (5:4-9)
6. What sins was God judging? (5:4-9)
7. How had others responded to God in the past? (5:10-15)
8. To what other sins had this led them? (5:10-15)
9. How should Israel have responded? (5:10-15)
10. For what was Israel asking? (5:16-20)

11. What result did they expect from the judgment of God? (5:16-20)
12. What did God say He hated? (5:21-27)
13. What did God want instead? (5:21-27)
14. How long had Israel been sinning against God? (5:21-27)
15. What was their main sin? (5:21-27)
16. What else did the people think would insulate them against God's judgment? (6:1-14)
17. Of what were they guilty? (6:1-14)
18. How was God going to punish Israel's sin? (6:1-14)
19. What was the attitude of Israel towards their prosperity? (6:1-14)
20. What punishments had God not brought on the sons of Israel in the past? (7:1-9)
21. What was the basis for His punishment now? (7:1-9)

22. How should Israel have responded to God not judging them previously? (7:1-9)

23. Who was Amaziah? (7:10-17)

24. Of what did Amaziah accuse Amos? (7:10-17)

25. How did Amaziah respond to Amos? (7:10-17)

26. What punishment did Amos predict for Amaziah's interference? (7:10-17)

Comprehend It

1. From your knowledge of scripture, did God carry out His threat against Israel?
2. How did it match the description of Israel given in 5:1-3?
3. What was God's desire in judging Israel? (See 5:4, 5:6, 5:14)
4. What were the people not to trust in for deliverance?
5. Why was God so interested in Israel being righteous and just?

6. How did Amaziah reflect the general response of the people to Amos?
7. List examples of the way the people were treating each other:
8. From where did these practices come?
9. What hope did God offer to the sons of Israel if they would heed his voice?
10. Why did God hate the religious practices of the sons of Israel?
11. How did the Israelites see themselves?
12. How did God see them?
13. Why did God reveal the times He had not judged the people in the past?
14. What is a plumb line and what does it represent in God's judgment?
15. How did Amaziah twist Amos' words?
16. How did Amaziah want the king to see Amos?

17. What did Amaziah NOT say about Amos' prophecy?

Connect It

1. In chapter 5, God wanted the sons of Israel to see their true circumstances so they would realize how far from God they had strayed. Have you ever strayed from God?

2. What brought you back?

3. The people of Amos' day responded to his prophecy by trying to ignore it, trying to tell him to be quiet and trying to tell him to go away. Why is it easier for us to silence the messenger than to listen to his message?

4. Have you ever done this? Why or why not?

5. Amos told the people they could not trust in their position (5:16-20), their religiosity (5:21-27), or their comfort and riches (6:1-14) to deliver them from God's judgment. How would this message apply to your country today?

6. What things have you, or are you, trusting in to keep you from God's judgment?

7. What would have kept the sons of Israel from God's judgment?

8. What will keep us from God's judgment?

9. Amos was opposed by Amaziah. Who is opposing you and your stance for and loyalty to God?

10. Why did Amaziah resist Amos?

11. Why are people resisting you?

12. How will you respond to their resistance?

13. What needs to change in how you walk with the Lord as a result of studying these verses?



Lesson Four: So, What! How Bad Could It Be? Amos 8:1 through 9:15

Have you ever heard something like this: “Just wait until your father gets home!”? I certainly have! I don’t think I have ever used that line (probably because I am the father in my house), but it has certainly been used on me. Whenever we would get into trouble, my stepmother would discipline us and then say, “And just wait until

your father gets home!” Why would she say this? It was a terrorism tactic (at least it sure terrified me!) Sadly, this was not always the case.

One day, when I was about 11 and my brother was 13, we had gotten into trouble. I am not even sure I can remember what we had done wrong, but it was enough for my stepmother to pull out the dreaded line: “Wait until your father gets home!” That particular day, my brother was feeling particularly brave, so he responded, “You tell him to come home! Tell him to come home right now! I ain’t scared of him!” Well, my stepmother took him up on his challenge. She called my father, who came home from work early. When he got home, he questioned my brother about why he would say such a thing. My brother said, “I didn’t think she would actually do it!” My father proved to my brother why this was not a wise course of action and one that should be avoided in the future.

In our lesson today, you can almost hear the people of Israel responding to the warnings of Amos, by saying, “So, what! How bad could God really treat His people?” God answers this by describing just how bad it was going to get before it got any better. He provided them with some hope as He closed out Amos’ prophecy with a prediction of renewing and restoring Israel in the future. It is my hope that you will study this lesson with an eye towards placing your trust in God and seeking His face. This is always a better alternative than challenging His right to do as He pleases with His world.

Describe a time when you thought you could challenge authority but found out otherwise.

Is there anything about that experience you regret going through?

What advice would you give someone else facing a similar situation?

Consider It

1. What did God show Amos in his first vision? (8:1-3)

2. For what sins was God punishing the sons of Israel? (8:4-6)

3. How were the helpless being treated? (8:4-6)

4. What punishment was being described in each of the following passages:
 - a. 8:7-8

 - b. 8:9-10

 - c. 8:11-14

5. What did Amos see in his next vision? (9:1-6)

6. Where did God say people would try to hide from Him? (9:1-6)

7. What would happen to those who submit to captivity as a means of escaping judgment? (9:1-6)

8. What authority did God have for making this judgment? (9:1-6)

9. To whom did God compare Israel? (9:7-10)

10. Whom did God say would be punished in judgment? (9:7-10)
11. What would happen to those who were not destroyed? (9:7-10)
12. What did God promise to do for Israel after the judgment? (9:11-15)
13. What would He do for their crops? (9:11-15)
14. What would He do for their captives? (9:11-15)
15. What would He do for their cities? (9:11-15)
16. What would He do for their children? (9:11-15)

Comprehend It

1. What is “summer fruit”?
2. What did God mean by showing Amos a basket of summer fruit?
3. What did God mean by saying He would cast them forth in silence?
4. Why was God so concerned about how the helpless and needy were treated?

5. How would you summarize the sin of Israel from this passage?
6. What happened two years later, according to Zechariah 14:5?
7. Of the three punishments (earthquake, darkening of the sun, famine of God's word), which do you think would be worst? Why?
8. How did the response of Israel in chapter 9 compare to the response of the people as Jesus predicted in Luke 23:30?
9. How did it compare to Revelation 6:12-17?
10. What was God's purpose in bringing this judgment?
11. What did God promise to do to those who were not guilty?
12. Why was this important?
13. Why did God offer hope to the people at the end of His prophecy?

Connect It

1. When you think of the "End Times", what concerns you the most?

2. Why are some people allowed to continue in sin while others are judged by God?
3. How does Jesus' instructions in Matthew 25:31-46 apply to this passage?
4. What does our treatment of the helpless indicate about our love for God? Our pride? Our heart?
5. How do you treat those that are "down and out"?
6. Have you ever had a time when you could not understand God's word and sought Him to understand it, but the understanding would not come? If so, what might have been a cause?
7. God told the people they could not run from Him or hide from Him. Have you ever tried to run from God? If so, how? How did it turn out?
8. When you read about God telling the Israelites to destroy entire peoples in the Old Testament, does this seem fair? Why or why not?
9. What right does God have to judge the world?
10. Does this cause you concern? Why or why not?
11. Does the hope of Heaven help you to live for God now? If so, how or why?

12. What have you learned from studying Amos that you want to tell someone else?

13. What have you learned from studying Amos that is changing the way you live your life?

14. What have you learned from studying Amos that has changed the way you see God and His activity in the world?

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