

Midweek | Minor Prophets

Session 7: Amos

Burden Bearer, message of judgement

- Prophet Amos was older contemporary of Hosea

Prophet	Historical Context (Time)		Canonical Context (Book)	Message
Hosea	750	Israel	Judah	Yahweh is holy in his love
Joel	425	Locust plague	Remnant	The Spirit of God is the guarantee of the fullness of restoration
Amos	760	Israel	Judah	The Day of the Lord: Desolation and restoration

- Amos ministered God's Word to Israel, the Northern Kingdom for several weeks in 760 B.C., shortly before an earthquake that shook Israel's national existence; about a magnitude 8!
- According to Amos 1:1 the prophet spoke at the temple of the Golden Calf in the city of Bethel just two years before the earthquake. He spoke of the land being shaken 8:8 "Shall the land not tremble for this, and everyone mourn who dwells in it? All of it shall swell like the river, heave and subside like the Nile." Houses being smashed 6:11 "For behold the Lord gives a command: He will break the great house into bits, and the little house into pieces." Altars being cracked 3:14 "I will visit destruction on the altars of

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Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground."

The temple at Bethel being struck and collapsing 9:1 "I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said, "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, and break them on the heads of them all.

- The prophet's repeated references to the earthquake's effects is why it bears his name! Amos' Earthquake impacted Hebrew literature immensely. After the gigantic earthquake, no Hebrew prophet could predict a divine visitation in judgment without alluding to an earthquake. Isaiah 2:19,21; 6:4; Joel 3:16 repeats the motto of Amos 1:2 "The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake."
- The panic caused by Amos' Earthquake must have been legendary in Jerusalem because Zechariah recalled the terrifying event 230 years later in Zechariah 14:5 "You shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with you."

Who was Amos?

- Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, a rural community about 5-10 miles south of Bethlehem.



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- Amos 7:14 "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit. 15 Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, Go, prophesy to My people Israel."
- Amos was more than an illiterate shepherd. He was a keeper or raiser of sheep, goats and possibly cattle. He would have been more like a rancher breeding livestock and supplying others. He was a man of substance and refinement. His use of language is particularly expressive, direct, vivid and forceful. His book includes oracles, vision reports, numerical sayings, wordplay, wisdom sayings, irony, rhetorical questions, metaphors, similes, alliteration, parallelism, hymns, and the messenger formula, "This is what the Lord says." The four hymns (1:2; 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6) along with the oracles (words of God), the visions, and the prophetic mission point to Yahweh as the sovereign, free, and all-powerful Ruler over the nations.
- Amos was well educated and at home with the social judicial and international affairs of his day. He spoke publicly at Bethel, at Israel's capital Samaria, and possibly at Gilgal.
 - If the wise thought it prudent to keep silent for self preservation (5:13) Amos could not and would not be silenced. Amos was called to do Yahweh's roaring! 3:8 "A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"
- Amos was shaped by his rural experiences that gave him a clearer perspective of the evils he saw as he walked through the cities of the Northern Kingdom. The Israelites accepted their lifestyle as normal. But Amos who came to them from the rural countryside of the Southern Kingdom recognized their lifestyle as a perversion and an abomination to God. Israel was further down the proverbial tubes than Judah. So when God needed a prophet He calls and sends Amos a Jew to speak to

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the Samaritans! God inspires Amos to speak but does not dictate as if the prophet were simply a loud speaker. God is having a conversation with His chosen prophet! He makes the prophet aware of His presence and reminds him of his own experiences. The prophet's personality surfaces in what he speaks and writes.

- Do you see a NT correlation here? Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in JN 4:9 "How is it that you being a Jew, ask a drink from me a Samaritan woman? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."

Amos receives by revelation 5 visions of God's judgment upon Israel.

Locust	Fire	Plumb Line	Fruit Basket	Temple
Suspension of judgement		Judgement is inevitable		God's abandonment of Israel
I s r a e l ' s g u i l t				

These visions show us His firm determination to destroy Israel. And the prophet's role as intercessor. (Drama ie. Sun. AM)

They are recorded in Amos 7:1-9:10

7:1-3 Swarming locusts devouring the grass of land

7:4-6 conflict by fire devouring the territory

7:7-9 a plumb line and a sword against house of Jeroboam. The plumb line demonstrated how far off course they were. Before Amos can intercede the Lord declares He will no longer be gracious 7:8 "I will not pass by them anymore."

Interruption by Amaziah the priest of Bethel 7:10-17

- Amos 7:10-17 When Amaziah the priest at the Bethel sanctuary tried to silence Amos by driving him out of the northern kingdom of Israel because he was

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"politically incorrect," Amos blasted him! Amos 7:16 Now therefore, hear the Word of the Lord: You say do not prophecy against Israel, and do not spout against the house of Isaac.

Amaziah represents the establishment that is unresponsive to God's word and offended by it! Invariably God's prophetic word will be at odds with political correctness!

Consider the next verse:

17 Therefore thus says the Lord: Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; your land shall be divided by survey line; you shall die in a defiled land; and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land.

We were driving to Texas a couple of weeks ago and saw a roadside sign with the words of Amos 4:12 "Prepare to meet your God O Israel."

Amos' censuring approach brings up a few questions:

Is it always a prophet's or preacher's duty to infuse people with faith, confidence and a positive message? NO

Is there ever a time or a circumstance when it is appropriate for a prophet, preacher to fill people with doubt about their lifestyle?

YES

What kind of circumstance?

When people are doing wrong and do not realize it.

Consider The Revelation of Jesus Christ to the 7 churches of Asia in chapters 2 and 3.

He both affirms and rebukes. It's not a choice between Hellfire and Brimstone preaching or Positive, Happy Clappy, prosperity only preaching! "We're all good" messages. False dichotomy!

The 4th vision

8:1-3 "Amos, what do you see?" A basket of summer fruit. "The end has come upon my people Israel." The time is ripe for judgment! V. 5-14 Their day of demolition!

Perhaps the most damning part of all is

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11 Behold the days are coming says the Lord God, that I will send famine on the land.

Not a famine of bread, Not a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord.

12 They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.

The final vision is climactic. Amos 9:1-3

Yahweh will abandon His people. They are doomed!

It's the Day of the Lord but not the one they had expected!

Amos had interceded on Israel's behalf but to no avail! They would have to undergo the shock of divine abandonment and learn that Yahweh could not be taken for granted.

Israel had mistakenly believed that ultimately their destiny was in their own hands.

Their teaching on the Day of the Lord was a promised Golden Age.

They were blind to their sin of pride.

They longed for the Day of the Lord as a deserved era of blessing and prosperity.

But Amos spoke of the awe of this day as an inescapable doom and likened its anguish to darkness.

Amos 5:18-20. Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness and not light

Israel refused to repent

Before the Messiah, Jesus would come, God sent John the Baptist preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord! For One mightier than I is coming, whose sandals I'm not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (LK 3).

Repentance and salvation

Isaiah 61:2 The spirit of the Lord God is upon us and He has anointed us to...proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.

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Amos 9:8 YET!

Amos 9:11-15

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Amos 5 speaks of the elders in the gates of the city.

5:1 Hear this word which I take up against you, this lamentation, O house of Israel: 3 For thus says the Lord God: 6 Seek the Lord and live, Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it with no one to quench it in Bethel-- 10 They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.

V. 11-13

V.14-15 Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the Lord God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

24 But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.