

4. Summer fruit (8:1-3) – Israel is ripe for judgment. Note the wordplay between Summer Fruit (קַיִץ) and End (קֵץ).

5. The LORD by the Altar (9:1-4) – The LORD will destroy everything in Israel, from the Temple on out, and the people will be taken captive.

A Few Applications from Amos

- (1) Seek the LORD in all things.
- (2) Hate evil, love good.
- (3) Treat the poor with compassion.

What did the LORD want?

- Seek me and you will live (5:4)
- Seek good and not evil (5:14)
- Hate evil, love good (5:15)
- Establish equity (5:15)
- Promote justice and righteousness (5:24)

Amos 5:24 But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

(4) Be humble to a word from a prophet (though do test the word as per 1 John 4:1) – compare with Amaziah's response in Amos 7.

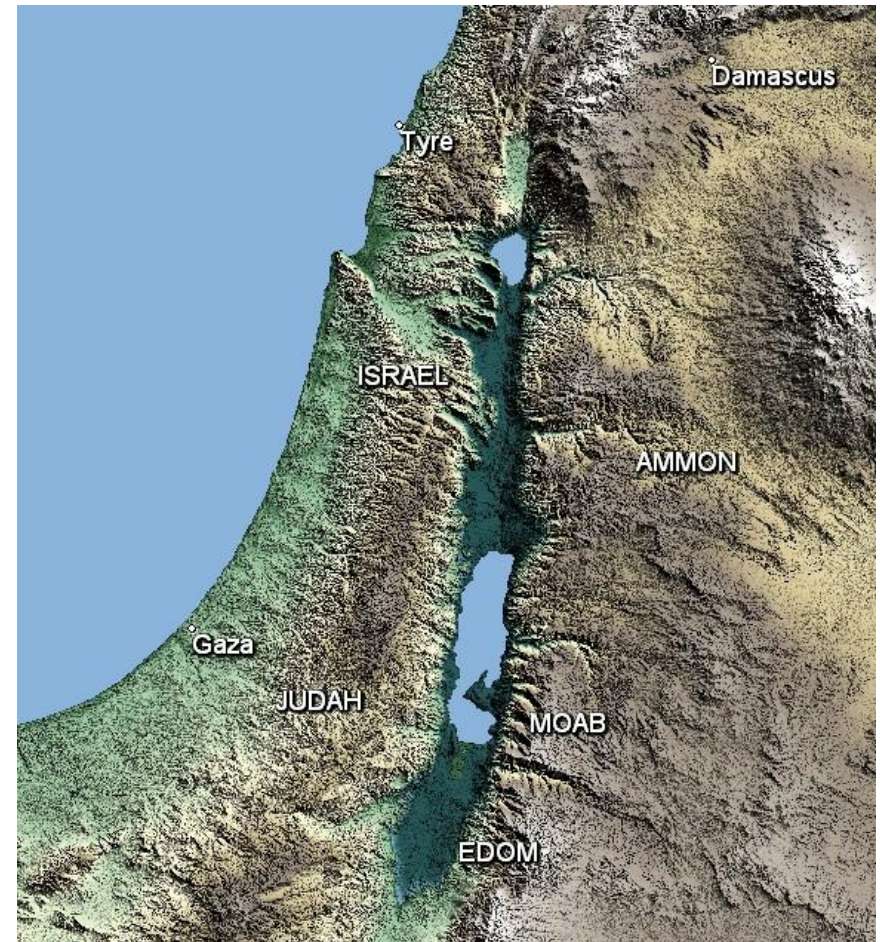
(5) Just as Amos, if the LORD calls you to something different, drop everything and follow Him (just as various Disciples did in Luke 5, as well).

What else can we take from Amos?

What can we learn about God from Amos?

Amos

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Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa. There was a Tekoa in both Israel and Judah, but from Amaziah's reply to Amos' prophecy in chapter 7, it's pretty clear that Amos was from the Tekoa in Judah. Amos' words were not very welcome, as they were stern and promised exile and judgment against various nations. During a time of prosperity under Jeroboam II (Israel) and Uzziah (Judah), the people had gotten selfish and lazy. They were rich and satisfied, and they had neglected the poor and destitute. The LORD was not pleased, and the people would soon see that in full force, as the nation of Israel was carried away into exile by the Assyrians later in the century (722 BC).

Amos' Identity and Trade

(1) Amos 1:1a The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa.

(2) Amos 7:14-15 ¹⁴ Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. ¹⁵ But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' ¹

Amos was likely financially well-off, as he was a shepherd (owned a flock) as well as tended fig trees. The LORD had a greater commission on Amos' life for this given time. His explanation here to Amaziah suggests that he did not decide to be a prophet on his own, as he chose to be a farmer first and foremost. The LORD had called him to be a prophet to Israel.

Time of writing: During the time of Jeroboam II in Israel and Uzziah in Judah – between 793 and the early 750s BC, more specifically between 767 and around 750 BC.

Quick Outline of Amos

- I. Amos 1-2 – The LORD Roars in Judgment
- II. Amos 3-6
 - A. Warnings of Punishment on Israel
 - B. Pleas to Repentance in Israel
- III. Amos 7-9:6 – Five Visions
 - A. Locusts (7:1-3)
 - B. Fire (7:4-6)
 - C. Plumbline (7:7-9)
 - D. Summer fruit (8:1-3)
 - E. The LORD by the Altar (9:1-4)
- IV. Amos 9:7-15 – Restoration of a Remnant

A Brief Walkthrough of Amos

The Roaring of the LORD

Amos 1:2 – "He said: "The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers."

The LORD roaring – Sign of Judgment

wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it."

This is amazingly harsh judgment. Have you ever gone through a 'night season' where you can't discern God's direction? Imagine that for an undefined period of time. In response for today, we should become pure and keep clean before God, as well as seek the LORD's voice in every life matter.

The Lord Promises Restoration for a Remnant

Amos 9:11-15 "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, ¹² so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things. ¹³ "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. ¹⁴ I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵ I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.

The book ends on a positive note. Instead of leaving His people for good, the LORD does promise restoration for a remnant of the faithful. Perhaps a major future fulfillment of this promise took place when Israel became a nation again in May, 1948. A "tenth" is mentioned also in Amos 5:3 (compare with Isaiah 6:13), symbolic of a remnant being spared.

The Five Visions

1. Locusts (7:1-3) – Similar to that found in Joel. Amos pleads for the LORD's mercy, and He decides not bring this vision to pass.
2. Fire (7:4-6) – Similar to that found in Joel – fire leading to drought and famine. Amos again pleads for the LORD's mercy, and He again decides not to bring this vision to pass.
3. Plumbline (7:7-9) – The LORD will bring level justice on Israel.

¹ Quoted biblical text used in this booklet is taken from the *New International Version*, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Amos 7:14-17 ¹⁴ Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. ¹⁵ But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' ¹⁶ Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say, "'Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac.' ¹⁷ "Therefore this is what the LORD says: "Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile, away from their native land."

Wow, what a shocking response. Amos' message signifies that the nation of Israel would be carried into exile during Amaziah's life, and that he and his family would be utterly ruined in various ways. Indeed in 722 BC, Israel was carried off into exile by the Assyrian empire.

The Day of the LORD

Amos 8:8-9 ⁸ "Will not the land tremble for this, and all who live in it mourn? The whole land will rise like the Nile; it will be stirred up and then sink like the river of Egypt. ⁹ "In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight."

Immediate fulfillment: The desolation of the exile.

Future fulfillment: Compare with Matthew 27:45 and Luke 23:44.

Matthew 27:45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land.

Luke 23:44 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Famine from Words of the LORD

Amos 8:11-12 "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD, "when I will send a famine through the land-- not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. ¹² Men will stagger from sea to sea and

Other occurrences of the 'roaring' of the LORD: Jeremiah 25:30, Hosea 11:10, Joel 3:16, Amos 3:8.

Every mention of the LORD roaring is a reference to Judgment, whether to protect His people or to execute judgment against a rebellious nation (often Judah and Israel).

Something was going on in Israel that dishonored God greatly!

Judgment against the Nations (Fire)

The LORD then displays His wrath against the nations that have done injustice and have not shown compassion on other fallen nations.

"For three...for four..." seems to be a formula – refers to consistent and recurring sin ("for multiple offenses" could be a possible translation).

Amos proclaims the Word of the LORD against: (1) Damascus, (2) Gaza, (3) Tyre, (4) Edom, (5) Ammon, (6) Moab, (7) Judah, and (8) Israel. The first seven are promised destruction by fire, whether the fire is on the security of a wall or the worship center of a temple. Israel is promised exile.

Israel's sins

Amos 2:6-8 ⁶ This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not turn back *my wrath*. They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. ⁷ They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. ⁸ They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines.

Judah was guilty of violating the LORD's commands in disobedience. Israel was guilty of injustice, sexual and priestly corruption, and idolatry. The LORD reminds Israel of all He has done for them – rescuing them from Egypt, as well as minor and major conquests. Indeed, as in 1 Samuel 8, the people had explicitly rejected the LORD. We also see from Amos 8 that those in advantaged states were selling grain at dishonest (inflated) prices:

Amos 8:4-5 ⁴ Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?"-- skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales,

Note how the LORD feels about dishonest scales:

Proverbs 11:1 The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.

Proverbs 20:23 The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.

Complacency – “Cows of Bashan”

Amos 4:1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, "Bring us some drinks!"

The people were enjoying prosperity too much, so much so that they were compared to the best cows of Bashan. While this gluttony went on, they were oppressing and crushing those who were less-advantaged.

Another passage on Israel's complacency:

Amos 6:4-7 ⁴ You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. ⁵ You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. ⁶ You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. ⁷ Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

Disaster should turn our Hearts and Prayers to God

Amos 4:6-13 ⁶ "I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. ⁷ "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up. ⁸ People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not

returned to me," declares the LORD. ⁹ "Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, I struck them with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. ¹⁰ "I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. ¹¹ "I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. ¹² "Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel." ¹³ He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth-- the LORD God Almighty is his name.

The LORD caused famine, drought, and fires as a result of the people's sinfulness. Still the people refused to turn back to Him and His mercy. How many times throughout the prophets have we seen the LORD show mercy on repentant nations? Nobody seemed to pick up on that. It shows in part that our hearts are desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). Literally, who can know the depth of the wickedness of our hearts (cf. Jeremiah 17:9)?

Amaziah's Improper Response to a Prophet

Amos 7:10-13 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. ¹¹ For this is what Amos is saying: "'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.'" ¹² Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. ¹³ Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

Amaziah did not want to hear Amos' declaration against the land and announced to the King that Amos was causing trouble. Amaziah told Amos to go back (home) to Judah and commanded him to get out. The Prophet was not wanted there. But look what Amos said in return: