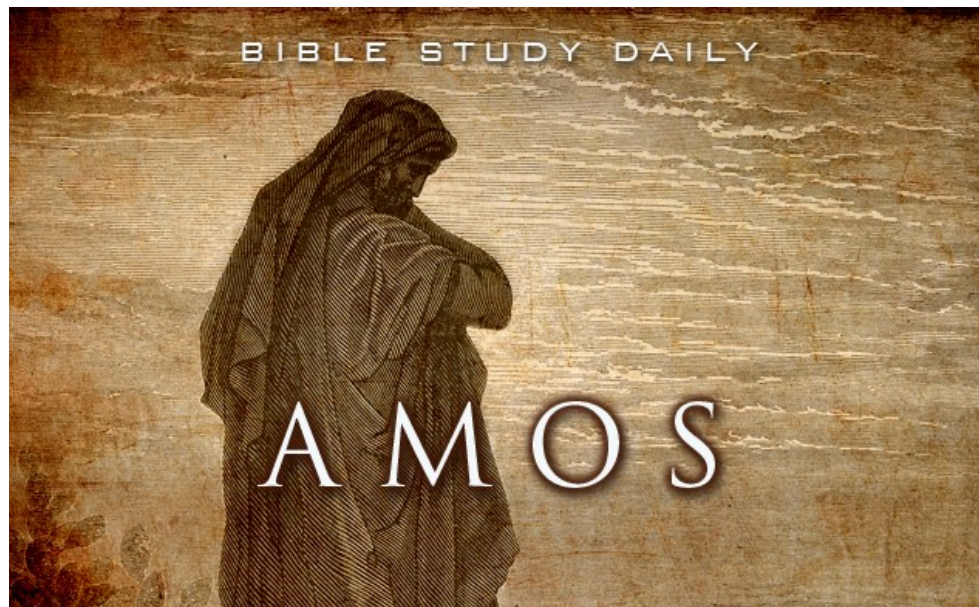




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Amos as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The book of Amos is named for its author, Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa (about 10 miles south of Jerusalem).

Author

Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa (v. 1). The Hebrew word for shepherd in verse 1 is not the common word for shepherd, but a word that means “sheep breeder.” In Amos 7:14 the word used for shepherd means a cattleman or herder. In addition, in Amos 7:14 Amos says he took care of Sycamore-fig trees. Sycamore-figs were grown in warmer valleys near Tekoa.

Based on his description Amos was a breeder, a rancher, and a farmer.

Genre

Prophecy (the third of twelve books commonly referred to as the “Minor Prophets”).

Literary Form

Primarily prophetic poetry except for small sections of prose in chapter 7 and 8.

Note: There are six major sections in the book: 1:3-2:16, 3:1-15, 4:1-13, 5:1-6:14, 7:1-8:3, and 8:4-9:15. Divine speech (“the Lord says,” “the Lord has spoken,” and “the Lord declares” is used a total of 49 times: 14 times in the first section (1:3-2:16) and seven times in each of the subsequent five sections.

Time Frame

Amos dates his prophecy during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah (790-739 B.C.), and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (793-753 B.C.), two years before the great earthquake. Archaeologist found evidence of a large earthquake in Israel around 760 B.C. (Zechariah 14:5), so Amos’ prophecy was likely in about 762 B.C.

This was a time of great wealth in both Judah and Israel, particularly in the cities.

Emphasis

Amos’ prophecy is directed at Israel. He emphasizes the sovereignty of God with a warning of impending judgement, but ends with a message of hope.

Outline

- 1) Prophecies against the nations (1:1-2:16)
- 2) Prophecies against Israel (3:1-6:14)
- 3) Prophecies of God’s judgement (7:1-9:10)
- 4) Prophecies of Israel’s restoration (9:11-15)

What I Noticed Today

(Amos 1-5)

Amos 1

In verse 1 Amos records the vision he saw regarding Israel during the reign of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel.

Note: Some translations say Amos was a “shepherd.” The Hebrew word is better translated “sheep breeder.” It is a specific and unusual word used only here and in 2 Kings 3:4.

In verse 2 Amos establishes the theme for the book. God is roaring like a lion (sending a message of judgment) from Jerusalem (in Judah) to Carmel (in Israel).

Amos 1:3-2:16

This is the first of six major sections in the book. There are a series of eight oracles (messages) against six Gentile nations plus Judah and Israel: Damascus (Syria) 1:3-5, Gaza (Philistia) 1:6-8, Tyre (Phoenicia) 1:9-10, Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15, Moab (2:1-3), Judah (2:4-5), and Israel (2:6-16).

Each oracle begins with the phrase “Thus says the Lord,” in which the Lord charges them with specific sins against His people, then He renders specific judgment upon them, and concludes the oracle with “says the Lord.”

Note: If you look at a map these nations completely surround Israel.

Note: Each oracle also contains the phrase “for three transgressions...and for four.” This phrase can also be translated, “for three transgressions and for another four” which is a total of seven, the number of completeness after which comes God’s judgment.

Oracle 1. In verses 3-5 the oracle against Damascus (Syria) because they threshed Gilead in Israel, God would break down the city gate, end the reign of the king, and exile the people to the city of Kir (where they came from).

Oracle 2. In verses 6-8 the oracle against Gaza, and other cities in Philistia: Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron. They had captured whole cities and exiled them to Edom.

Note: We know from Joel 3:4-8 that the people exiled to Edom were then sold as slaves to other countries.

Because of this. God would set fire to their city walls, devour their strongholds, and the people would all perish.

Oracle 3. In verses 9-10 the oracle against Tyre because they delivered whole cities into exile in Edom in violation of a treaty between the two

nations. Because of this, God would set fire to their strongholds and the people would perish.

Oracle 4. In verses 11-12 the oracle against Edom because they pursued their brother (looking back to the relationship between Esau and Jacob) and killed them with the sword. Because of this, God would send fire upon Teman and Bozrah (both major cities. Teman in the south, and Bozrah in the north.).

Oracle 5. In verses 13-15 the oracle against Ammon because they ripped open pregnant women (a particularly cruel practice in ancient warfare to decimate an enemy). Because of this, God would set fire to the walls of the city of Rabbah, destroy the city, and the kings and his officials would be sent into exile.

Amos 2

Oracle 6. In verses 1-3 the oracle against Moab because they opened the grave of the king of Edom and burned his bones. Because of this, God would set fire to Moab, destroy their strongholds, and kill their kings and officials.

Oracle 7. In verses 4-5 the oracle against Judah because they rejected the Law of the Lord and had listened to lies that led them astray. Because of this, God would set fire to Judah and destroy Jerusalem.

Oracle 8. In verses 6-16 the oracle against Israel because they sold the righteous and the poor into slavery, they denied justice to the poor, men and their sons had sex with the same woman (perhaps a concubine or a temple prostitute), they violated God's law about taking certain kinds of pledges against debts, and they drank wine taken from the poor in honor of foreign gods.

God had brought them up out of Egypt and given them the land of the Amorites and He had raised up prophets among them. They added to their transgressions by making the Nazarites drink wine (forbidden for them) and commanded them not to prophesy. The Israelites rejected God and His prophets. Because of all this, God would crush them so quickly and harshly that their best soldiers would drop their weapons and flee.

Amos 3-6

Having rendered the oracle of judgment against Israel, Amos now expands the reasons for the judgment in a series of five messages. The first three begin with the phrase "Hear this word" (3:1, 4:1, 5:1), the next two begin with "Woe to you" (5:18, 6:1).

Amos 3

Message 1. In verses 1-2 God reminds the people of Israel that it was He who brought them up out of Egypt. Out of all the families on earth, He had chosen them. Therefore, He will punish them for their sins.

In verses 3-6 Amos asks a series of seven rhetorical questions known as epigrams: if one thing is true the other thing is true (example: can two walk

together without agreeing to meet?).

Note: In this series the epigrams move from innocent to dangerous to disaster: two walk together, lion roars because he has prey, a lion cries out, a bird falls into a trap, a snare captures an animal, a warning trumpet blows in the city, disaster comes upon the city.

In verses 7-8 Amos explains the Lord does nothing without explaining His purpose to His prophets first. But the lion (God) has roared, so judgment will most certainly follow.

In verses 9-10 Amos calls on the strongholds of Ashdod and Egypt to assemble in the mountains of Samaria to see the oppression, and how sinful they are because they have rejected God.

In verses 11-15 the Lord says because of this, He would bring an adversary who would surround them, conquer them, and plunder their riches. God's judgment would be complete (only bits of evidence would remain, e.g. parts of a leg or an ear), and those who lie on their couches and beds should not think they will escape judgment.

God would destroy the altars in Bethel (sanctuary of Jeroboam II), He would destroy the king's winter house and summer house, and all the other great houses.

Amos 4

Message 2. Amos 4 is the second of the six major sections of the book. It is directed at the wealthy aristocratic women of Israel because they had exploited the poor and for their refusal to repent.

In verse 1 Amos referred to the women as the "cows of Bashan" (Bashan was in Samaria, east of the Sea of Galilee). They oppress the poor and crush the needy and they demand more drink from their husbands.

In verses 2-3 the Lord swears by himself that these women will be dragged away with hooks to Harmon.

Note: The Hebrew here suggests that those who resisted would be hooked together and dragged. The phrase "cast out" suggest they would be dead.

In verses 4-5 Amos sarcastically calls on Israelites to go to Bethel and Gilgal to sin, to bring tithes and offerings of leavened bread (unleavened was required), and proclaim their freewill offering (not supposed to make a big deal or brag about giving their offerings). They pretend to love the Lord but it is all outward show.

In verses 6-11 Amos offers seven examples in which the people had suffered judgment by God and had refused to repent. Each example follows the formula, "I (God) did this to you.... yet you did not return to me, declares the lord": hunger/famine (v. 6), drought (vv. 7-8), blight and mildew (v. 9), locusts (v. 10), military defeat (v. 10), and finally devastation (v. 11).

In verses 12-13 because they had resisted God's chastening, they must be ready for God's judgment (prepare to meet your God), the God who formed the mountains, creates the wind, and declares His word to man, the Lord of Hosts is His name!

Amos 5

Messages 3 & 4. In Amos 5, Amos gives the third (vv. 1-17) and fourth messages (vv. 18-27) to highlight the sovereignty of God to judge those who rejected Him while allowing time for people to acknowledge their sin and repent.

Note: Both of these messages in Amos 5 follow a chiastic structure: the message or theme of early sentences or chapters is repeated in reverse in the later sentences or chapters.

The parallel structure of verses 1-17: the message of vv. 1-3 is repeated in vv. 16-17, vv. 4-6 is repeated in vv. 14-15, v. 7 is repeated in vv. 10-13, and in the middle vv. 8-9 are the most important.

- a. **Judgment is coming.** In verses 1-3 Amos calls the people of Israel to hear this lament in which virgin Israel falls with no one to rescue her.
 - b. **Call for repentance.** In verses 4-6 seek God and live for judgment is coming
 - c. **Charge of injustice.** In verse 7 some have turned justice into bitterness (wormwood).
 - d. **God is sovereign.** In verses 8-9 God made the universe and His dominion is certain.
 - c. **Charge of injustice.** In verses 10-13 you abhor righteousness and truth, you oppress the poor, you take bribes, and turn away the needy.
 - b. **Call for repentance.** In verses 14-15 seek good not evil that you might live.
 - a. **Judgment is coming.** In verses 16-17 there will be wailing and mourning in the streets, fields, and vineyards because of God's judgment.

The parallel structure of verses 18-27: the message of vv. 18-20 is repeated in v. 27, vv. 21-23 is repeated in vv. 25-26, and v.24 in the middle is the most important.

- a. **Judgment is coming.** In verses 18-20 woe to those who look forward to the Day of the Lord (judgment).
 - b. **Charge of hypocrisy.** In verses 21-23 God rejects their religious offerings and offerings.
 - c. **Call for repentance.** In verses 24 become righteous and support justice.
 - b. **Charge of hypocrisy.** In verses 25-26 your sacrifices and offerings

were made to foreign gods.

a. **Judgment is coming.** In verse 27 because of their hypocrisy, God would send them into exile in Damascus (Syria).



What I Noticed Today

(Amos 6)

Amos 6

Message 5. In chapter 6 Amos gives the fifth message describing Israel's sins and the judgment for their pride.

In verses 1-3 Amos speaks a woe against Zion (Jerusalem) and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria (Israel). The leaders of Samaria considered themselves to be the best among all the people in Israel. But Amos tells them to go look at the cities of Calneh, Hamath, and Gath which had all been by invaders. Israel's pride made them think they would not face a day of disaster.

In verses 4-7 Amos described the second woe on those who sit around in luxury eating and drinking, and anointing themselves with the finest oils. They showed no concern for the destruction of Joseph (the northern kingdom) nor their own impending destruction. Therefore, said Amos, these leaders would be the first to be sent into exile.

In verses 8-10 the Lord swore by Himself that he hated the pride of Jacob (the northern kingdom), and his strongholds, and He would deliver up the city, and everyone and everything in it. The devastation would be so complete that if men hid in a house to avoid the sword they would be killed by pestilence. Those who survived would be afraid of even mentioning the name of the Lord for fear that they would also be killed.

In verse 11 The Lord will destroy the houses; the large house will be broken into fragments and the small houses will be broken into bits.

In verse 12 Amos uses two ridiculous examples of a horse running on rocks (where a goat would be) and plowing in the rocks with oxen to illustrate how ridiculous Israel had become by turning justice into poison and righteousness into wormwood (bitterness).

In verse 13 the army rejoices over their victories thinking they have won them based on their own strength.

In verse 14 therefore, the Lord will bring judgment upon them by bringing a nation against them that will oppress them from Lebo-Hamath (in the north) to the Brook of Arabah (in the south).

Amos 7-9:10

Having given the reason for God's coming judgment, Amos now begins to describe through a series of five visions the total destruction of the land, the buildings, and the people (7:1-3, 7:4-6, 7:7-9, 8:1-3, and 9:1-4).

Amos 7

Vision 1. In verses 1-3 Amos sees locusts devouring the fields just as their

second crop of the season began to grow.

Note: The king got the first crop, the people ate from the second crop. If the second crop failed or was destroyed the people would starve.

Amos prayed to the Lord and the Lord relented and did not send the locusts.

Vision 2. In verses 4-6 Amos sees a fire devouring the land. Amos again prays to the Lord so the Lord relented and did not send the fire.

Visions 3. In verses 7-9 Amos sees the Lord holding a plumb line (a plumb line was used to make sure a building was straight up and down). The Lord would use the plumb line to determine who was “true to plumb.” The Lord determined the high places and sanctuaries were “out of plumb” and would be torn down/destroyed.

Verses 10-17 are a response to Amos’s third vision. Amaziah the priest sent word to Jeroboam the king accusing Amos of conspiring against the house of Israel. Amaziah told Amos to run away to Judah and to never prophesy in Bethel because it is the king’s sanctuary and temple for the kingdom.

Note: Amaziah, like many other leaders of this time, refused to accept the words of Amos as being from the Lord.

Amos’ response was the Lord had brought him from Judah to Israel to prophesy so that is what he intended to do. Because Amaziah rejected Amos’ warning, the Lord said Amaziah would be sent into exile and his household would all die.

Amos 8

Vision 4. In verses 1-3 the Lord showed Amos a basket of fruit and asked him what it was. Amos answered it was a basket of ripe fruit. The Lord said it was time for the end of the people of Israel. The result of the Lord’s harvest would be wailing from the people and silence from the Lord.


Note: The idea of “summer fruit” or “ripe fruit” suggests the fruit was ready for harvest. As such, the Lord had determined that it was time for the “harvest” of judgment upon the people of Israel.

In verses 4-10 Amos describes in more detail the sin of the people and the judgment that the Lord would bring.

The powerful had oppressed the poor and needy. It was an imposition to stop work to worship the Lord at the festivals, feasts, and Sabbaths. They cheated people using dishonest scales and weights. They forced the poor into slavery over minor debts.

The Lord swore by Himself saying he would not forget any of their deeds. He promised to bring judgment upon them so their feasts would turn into mourning, their songs of joy into songs of lament, they would shave their heads and wear sackcloth (signs of mourning).

In verses 11-14 the Lord said in those days (the days of judgment), the people would want a word from the Lord but He would be silent. They would



wander the countryside seeking a word from the Lord but He would remain silent. Those who worshiped in Samaria (the calf idols) will fall and never rise again.

Amos 9

Vision 5. In verses 1-4 Amos sees the Lord bringing the sword of judgment against the people of Israel. Amos saw the Lord standing by the altar with a sword. He struck the pillars causing the roof to fall in on the people. Those who escaped were killed by the sword. Even if they tried to dig into Sheol or climb to heaven the Lord would find them and kill them. If they are captured and sent into exile He would still command the sword to kill them.

In verses 5-6 Amos describes the Lord God of Hosts as sovereign over all the earth and the heavens.

In verses 7-10 Amos describes the Lord's sovereignty in terms of the countries He has already lifted up and taken down. The Lord will command the people of Israel to be sifted, the righteous would not pass through the sieve but the sinners would fall to the ground and die by the sword.

Note: They sifted grain to separate the kernel of grain from the chaff. The kernel (the righteous), would not pass through, while the chaff (the waste product, here the unrepentant sinners) would pass through the sieve to the ground.

In verses 11-15 In that day (the day of judgment) the Lord would raise up the city once again and restore a remnant of the faithful. The "booth of David" (or "tent of David") describes how the people of God would once again be united under Davidic rule (Jesus' Millennial reign). Gentile nations (represented by Edom) will be included in the Lord's blessings. At this time, the people will be prosperous and live in peace.