

## AMOS

Amos, whose name means ‘burden’ or ‘burden-bearer’, lived in Tekoa, a small village ten miles to the south of Jerusalem, and five miles to the south of Bethlehem. ... Today, Tekoa is an Arab ‘Palestinian’ village in the so-called West Bank. Its modern name is Tuqu, and it has a population of 3500. Long before the Palestinians, though, God had given the region to the tribe of Judah ... and that is the reason for the Israeli ‘settlement’ in Tuqu today. ... Amos, was from the tribe of Judah and belonged to the southern kingdom which had remained faithful to David’s grandson, King Rehoboam.

Tekoa comes from a word meaning ‘trumpet-blast’, and that explains Jeremiah’s reference, [Jer. 6:1](#) [blow the trumpet in Tekoa](#). Amos also used this analogy in [2:2](#) and [3:6](#) ... the ‘trumpet’ which is the *shofar* (the ram’s horn).

He was not from a priestly or a noble background, but came from a humble setting, [Amos 1:1](#) [among the herdmen of Tekoa](#), - he was a sheep-breeder/dealer ... who also cultivated sycamore trees, [7:14](#) [I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit](#) ... From out of that social environment, he said, [15](#) [the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel for 1:2 The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.](#) ... He was already a busy man, and God uses busy people!

He began his prophecies by addressing the sins of the surrounding nations:

- The sin of Damascus, [1:3](#) [they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron](#)
- The sin of Gaza, [1:6](#) [they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom](#)
- The sin of Tyrus, [1:9](#) [they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:](#)
- The sin of Edom, [1:11](#) [he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:](#)
- The sin of Ammon, [1:13](#) [they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border](#)
- The sin of Moab, [2:1](#) [he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime](#)

And then his attention turned to the sins of Judah ([2:4,5](#)), [2:4](#) ... [because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err](#) ... and to his prophecies against the northern tribes of Israel ([2:6-16](#)), [2:6](#) ... [because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a](#)

pair of shoes, - i.e. their greed (v.6), their abuse of the poor and the afflicted (v.7), incest (v.7), and idolatry (v.8)..

Of course, the people were oblivious to these accusations for these were times of apparent prosperity and security in both kingdoms, - north and south. ... They did not recognise the concerns of the prophet.

Amos lived during the long and settled reigns of King Uzziah of Judah (790-740 BC) and King Jeroboam II of Israel (793-753 BC), which means he was a contemporary of Jonah, Hosea, and Isaiah. (By the way, Isaiah was the son of *Amoz*, [Is. 1:1] ... *not* the son of Amos) ... But the period of prosperity and security was not the complete story, as Chuck Swindoll comments, “while their outer lives gleamed with the rays of success, their inner lives sank into a pit of moral decay”, **3:10** For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. **11** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; An adversary there shall be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled. **12** Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch. **13** Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, **14** That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. **15** And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD. ... **5:1** Hear ye this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Israel. **2** The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up. **3** For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel. **4** For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live: **5** But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought. **6** Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel. ... And this was God’s call to His people, **5:24** let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

... But surely, since we are in times of peace and prosperity, why do we need to place such emphasis on listening to God or His prophet? We can ‘relax’ our attitudes, leave behind many of the last vestiges of the religion of former days, and ‘progress’ forward. Don’t give up religion, but produce one that is more suitable to our needs ... and that is what the nations of Judah and Israel were

doing for they had their own form of religion which was proving so popular, ... *and it was thriving* ..., **4:4** Come to Bethel [**7:13** ... *it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court*], and transgress; at Gilgal [**II Kings 4:38** *And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him (i.e. a school for prophets)*] multiply transgression ... **5:21** I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. **22** Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. ... Spiritually, it was rampant corruption and moral decay.

From the outset, Amos had a challenging task ... Not only was he to proclaim an unpopular message, but also he belonged to the southern kingdom, and yet God sent him to be His prophet to the northern kingdom (**7:15** *And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.*) This, in itself, caused a certain degree of acrimony because the unappreciative Amaziah, - who belonged to the northern kingdom, - told Amos from the southern kingdom in no uncertain terms, - **7:12** *Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there ... Get away back to where you came from, and take your messages with you! ... Neither he nor they were welcome!*

Basically, Amos addressed two primary sins: (i) the absence of true and Godly worship, (ii) a complete lack of righteous justice. Their worship was ritualistic performance, and not from the heart, and it affected their behaviour towards others because they had nothing but abhorrence for outsiders! ... **5:10** *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.* **11** *Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.* **12** *For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.* **13** *Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time. ... 6:12* *Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock. ... God had repeatedly appealed to them, 3:1; 4:1; 5:1* *Hear this word ... 5:13* *Hear ye ... 7:16* *hear thou the word of the Lord ... 8:4* *Hear this ... but they were not interested, - they would not listen, - so He told them He would judge them ... and one of the ways He would judge them was by sending a famine, 8:11* *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: 12* *And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north*

even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it ... *a famine of the Word of God!*

... The Lord had already showed Amos a basket of summer fruit (ch. 8) ... *over-ripe* and past its best, and He used it as an illustration, **8:2** he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. **3** And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord GOD: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence. ... **8** Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? ... **10** And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

You cannot mock the Lord and expect blessing from Him! ... And the sad state of the land was that their spiritual promiscuity had turned them into an apostate people who had abandoned the law and the commandments of God. They had wilfully rejected the messages from the faithful prophets as they proclaimed the Word of God, and this pattern was continued in how the people failed to receive the message from Amos.

Nevertheless, God had made covenants, - *unconditional* covenants, - with their fathers ... and He would keep His word and honour those covenants, **Amos 9:8** Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; *saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob*, saith the LORD. **9** For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

... He will not abandon them as a nation, but instead He gave them a promise that one day He would restore from out of them a righteous remnant, **9:11** *In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen* ... And that was a prophecy referred to by James the brother of Jesus in Acts 15 when a special Council was held in Jerusalem. All the leaders of the churches met together to deal specifically with an issue that threatened, - from within, - the foundations of the faith.

The matter at hand was whether Gentiles converts should be allowed into the church without being circumcised ... Some (the Judaizers) insisted, **Acts 15:1** *Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved* ... and a whole row erupted ... In fact, after Paul and Barnabas had returned from their missionary journey to Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Cilicia, they visited the

church which met in Antioch (Syria) and shared with them, <sup>3</sup> ... declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren ... But the 'hot topic' concerned this issue concerning circumcision. ... It's great they have been saved, and they have been baptized ... but have they been circumcised?!

It caused such a row! <sup>2</sup> When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. ... And in Jerusalem, the row escalated! The issue would not go away, <sup>5</sup> there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

So, a decision had to be made. Firstly, <sup>6</sup> the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Then, <sup>7</sup> when there had been much disputing [*συζήτησις, study, examination, debate*], Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe [*Acts 10, concerning Cornelius; and Acts 11*]. <sup>8</sup> And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; <sup>9</sup> And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke [*i.e. of the Law, and in particular, the practice of circumcision*] upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our [*Jewish*] fathers nor we were able to bear? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

This was followed by a great silence as everyone, - without exception, - then listened to the missionary report, <sup>12</sup> ... Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. ... Then, James developed what Peter had said when he described how salvation was the same for the Gentiles as it was for the Jews, - no additives and no extras ... simply, believing in Christ (v.11). To further augment his argument, he quoted from this passage in Amos chapter nine, *Acts 15:13* ... saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: <sup>14</sup> Simeon [*Peter*] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. <sup>15</sup> *And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,* <sup>16</sup> *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.*

... There are some who say James was using this quotation to teach the nation of Israel had been replaced by the Church ... meaning, the Lord has finished

with the Jews, as a nation ... and all His previous promises and covenants which related to them have been transferred to the Church.

... But that is *not* what James was saying, - or even remotely hinting at, - for he did *not* say that what Paul, Barnabas, and Peter was promoting was a *fulfilment* of Amos 9:11, but he simply said it was *in agreement with*, Acts 15:15 *And to this agree the words of the prophets* ... for Amos 9 is clearly describing events in the end times, - Amos 9:11 *In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, - and James is in agreement, - Acts 15:15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ... And that is when God will regather His people Israel to their land and bless them abundantly ... That is the simple, plain and literal meaning as to how James used this passage from Amos.*

He was in full *literal* agreement ... The fallen tabernacle/house of David *will* be raised again ... And that refers back to the time when David wanted to build a house for the Lord, but the Lord deferred the privilege to his son, Solomon. However, through Nathan, the Lord said to David, II Sam. 7:12 *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ... 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*

Then David went in before the Lord, and said, II Sam. 7:22 *thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? 24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God. 25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. 26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. 27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. 28 And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: 29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever*

before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

... And that is what Amos 9 was referring to ... Amos came from a small village five miles down the road from Bethlehem, where David came from ... and Amos belonged to the same tribe of Judah as David belonged to ... so therefore, Amos was being specific in his prophecy, **11** In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: **12** That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. **13** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. **14** And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. **15** And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God. ... God keeps His Word for He is faithful. The promises He has made to the people of Israel, He will bring them all to pass ... and through grace we are also privileged to be included, **Eph. 3:6** That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. ... That ultimately means when the Lord Jesus returns to this earth, we shall reign together with Him. Amen.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF AMOS

- I. Judgments Against the Nations (1:1–2:16)
  - A. Introduction (1:1, 2)
  - B. Against Israel's Enemies (1:3–2:3)
  - C. Against Judah (2:4,5)
  - D. Against Israel (2:6–16)
- II. Condemnations Against Israel (3:1–6:14)
  - A. Sin of Irresponsibility (3:1–15)
  - B. Sin of Idolatry (4:1–13)
  - C. Sin of Moral/Ethical Decay (5:1–6:14)
- III. Visions of Judgment and Restoration (7:1–9:15)
  - A. The Lord Will Spare (7:1–6)
    - 1. Vision of locusts (7:1–3)
    - 2. Vision of fire (7:4–6)

- B. The Lord Will No Longer Spare (7:7–9:10)
  - 1. Vision of the plumb line (7:7–9)
  - 2. Amos at Bethel (7:10–17)
  - 3. Vision of the fruit basket (8:1–14)
  - 4. Vision of the altar, The ruined temple (9:1–10)
- C. The Lord Will Restore ... The Glorious Kingdom (9:11–15)