

Amos: Jesus the Restorer of His people

- I. Chapter 1-2 The last straw (Eight prophecies)**
- II. Chapters 3-6 Are you listening (Three sermons)**
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The situations in which Amos and Joel prophesized were exact opposites:

- Joel spoke a nation that had just gone through a plague of locusts
- Amos spoke to a nation hit with the blessing of prosperity

In Joel's time people were no doubt thinking "*Why me*" and during Amos' time they were thinking "*Why not me*". The nation of Israel hadn't seen this kind of prosperity since the time of Solomon as Israel had expanded its borders by beating back the Syrians and by doing so had gained valuable trade routes by which they were taxing the caravans that traveled between Assyria and Egypt. On the surface things couldn't be better but underneath the nation prosperity was ripping them away from a walk with their God. So God would send not your ordinary prophet to speak to Israel as Amos was not from Israel but rather from Judah and not a well to do socialite or an intellectual priest. No Amos was a hillbilly farmer (fig picker) from the wrong side of the tracks and the wrong area of the country. He was sent after the time of Obadiah Joel and Jonah and before Hosea, Micah and Isaiah.

Saints, don't you find it a bit interesting that what "bugs us" bugs the Lord but often what doesn't "bug us" bugs the Lord? You see we are very prone to think that as long as things meet our expectations then "*all is well with our soul*" but the truth of the

matter is God's more into our "holiness" than he is into our temporary "happiness". And what make bring us temporary pleasure may very well in the end destroy us!

I. Chapter 1-2 The last straw (Eight prophecies)

In 1:1 Amos identifies himself as one of the "*sheepbreeders of Tekoa*" then in 7:14 he repeats this by saying, "*I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.*" Not your typical school for spiritual leadership one might think until you consider the folks that God used in the Bible:

Moses: Who was called after watching his father in laws sheep

David: Who was called while watching his father's sheep

Amos: Who is called while caring for the flock

Where do you find shepherds? Why you find them caring for and feeding the flock, loving on folks, watching over the needs of others, willing to lay down their lives for the benefits of others. Tekoa was a small village 12 miles south of Jerusalem known for a special breed of sheep that was sought after for its wool. Apparently he also took care of a crop of sycamore figs which were pollinated by a small wasp that if left in the fig would cause it to rot, so Amos would have to puncture each fig before the fig ripened to allow the wasp to escape. Saints remember what the Lord says in Zech. 4:10 "*For who has despised the day of small things*"? Because these are the "*eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.*" God delights in calling hicks from Tekoa to come and speak on His behalf to the religious elite in Bethel. The earthquake mentioned must have been pretty sever as it is mentioned 300 years later in Zechariah 14:5.

In the next section (verses 3- 2:3) Amos speaks of God's coming judgment upon 6 areas: Syria (Damascus is its capital), Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab. And you

can imagine them saying, “*Well they have it coming*”! Have you noticed that our sin always looks worse on someone else? Then in 2:4-5 God tells Amos that He is going to judge Judah, and I bet they thought, “*Serves those self righteous folks right*”. Now in each case God speaks through Amos saying “*For three transgressions and for four*” which was the slang for saying that this was the straw that broke the camels back. They probably said, “*What a great day, haven’t you heard God’s going to get the Syrians, Edomites, Ammonites, people of Tyre, the Moabites and even those self righteous relatives from Judah*”. Ah but hear what Jesus says in Matthew 7:2 “*For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*” You see every thing that god was saying against those other folks was an illustration of what He saw in them as well, even though things were going well. Israel was guilty of everything they saw wrong in every one else. Oh what a lesson these words of Amos are for us! Do we say as Paul said to Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:15 “*that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*” Ever wonder why you can spot certain sins and faults on folks, could it be that they are the same ones you live with each and everyday?

II. Chapters 3-6 Are you listening (Three sermons)

This section has Amos preach three sermons which each start with the words “*Hear this word*” 3:1, 4:1, 5:1. In the first sermon Amos pronounces Judgment against Israel’s sins. God starts off by saying in 3:3 “*Can two walk together, unless they are agreed*”? God was leading the people one way and they were walking in the opposite direction even though they were claiming they were walking with God. The in verse 4-6 Amos asks a series of rhetorical questions each with the answer no, to illustrate what God meant. Then

he says in 3:7-8 *“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?”* For 40 years Israel would be in an economic blessing and they were into already 10 years but in 30 years they would be destroyed and taken captive by the Assyrians and all that they came to think was because they had deserved it would be gone saying in 3:15 *“I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, says the Lord.”*

The 4th chapter introduces to us Amos; second sermon where by he exposes the crimes of the people and the attempts by God to get them to stop and come back to Him as five times God says through Amos, *“Yet you have not returned to Me”*. In 4:1 God says, a bunch of fat lazy stubborn cows that, *“Oppress the poor, crush the needy, who say to your husbands, “Bring wine, let us drink!”* According to 4:4-5 they were still *“Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days.”* But such an offering was *“a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven”*. In other words they were playing church instead of being transformed by living the truth! It was as Casting Crowns sings a *“Stain glass masquerade, fancy steeples full of plastic people”*. So God was going to send lean times upon them in verses 6-8 in order that they would be motivated to return to God. Or else according to 4:12 that they needed to be *“prepared to meet your God, O Israel!”*

The 5th and 6th chapters are Amos’ third sermon where he lists the sins of Israel and calls the people to repent. But God knows that they hate integrity, justice and compassion choosing to live in luxury for the next 30 years. In appears based upon verse 8 that they were into astrology and the worship of the stars and with all this hypocrisy it’s no wonder that God says 5:21-23 *“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor*

your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.”

According to 6:1 “*Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, and trust in Mount Samaria*” they were living the life and worshipping idols thinking that God was not ever going to call them on the carpet for their life styles. Amos the farmer prophet asks them in 6:12 “*Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood*”.

III. Chapters 7-9:10 I can see it now (Five visions)

Amos three sermons are followed by five visions of the coming judgment, the first two were to be by locusts and fire but Amos intercedes on their behalf. Then in 7:7-17 Amos sees a plumb line as God sees that the people have put up a wall to keep God out of their lives. Hey saints, there have been to many times that His people have built up walls to keep God out from the things we want but remember that if you keep Him out of the things of your life you also wall Him out from delivering you from the things that enslave you! The response to these first three visions is that in 7:10 Amaziah the priest of Bethel says in 7:12 “*Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy.*” To this Amos says, “*Hey look, this wasn’t my idea I was just a herdsman and a fruit picker until the Lord took me.*”

In chapter 8 we are given the 4th vision and that is that Israel is a basket of rotten fruit. Oh how they had become spoiled from the bountiful blessings that God had lavished upon them and instead of surrendering His blessings they hoarded them and they were good for nothing. They were fat now but because they had rejected the Word of

God Amos declares in 8:11 that *“the days are coming, says the Lord God, That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”* Paul said the same thing to Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:3 that *“a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear.”* That such a time would be characterized by according too 2 Tim. 3:2 a time when *“men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy”*

The fifth vision is doorposts that have been shaken (9:1-10) which spoke of the fact the roof was falling in on them, judgment was certain and swift because of their persistence to walk after the things of this world.

IV. Chapter 9:11-15 I promise you (Five promises)

But just as certain is God’s judgment is His promise to restore those who turn to Him as Amos gives five promises. Amos sees a time when David’s temple will be rebuilt, a time when they will again reign with the Lord a time when in verse 13 *“the plowman shall overtake the reaper”*, *“the treader of grapes him who sows seed”*. At that time Amos says *“The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.”* Then God says, *“I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them”*.