

AMOS – LESSON FOUR

INTRODUCTION:

1. Amos came from obscurity in the wilderness of Judea to rise in importance in being God's messenger to northern Israel, only to return to obscurity in his time.
2. Amos came with the bluntness of a rugged outdoorsman to be God's minister to the decadent affluent who are ripe before God for destruction.
3. "Let justice roll...;" "Prepare to meet thy God;" were his exhortations regarding just treatment among men, and imminent Divine Judgment.

I. THE AUTHOR – AMOS

- A. He was from a village Tekoa, a small town six miles south of Bethlehem, and less than 20 miles east of the Dead Sea. Tekoa contained inhabitants on the edge of the wilderness of Judea.
- B. The name: "Amos" is synonymous with "burden." (Amos 1:1, 7:14)
 1. To bear, place a burden on, or burden-bearer.
 2. Amos early on in his Book as God's prophet pronounces eight "burdens" on the surrounding nations, including Judah and Israel (Chapters 1-2)
 3. Amos was a "herdsman" and a "tender" - literally a "pincher" of the Sycamore fig tree.
 - a. Followed the flock among other "herdsmen." - of a small, rugged breed of sheep whose wool was of superior quality, and therefore valuable.
 - b. Helped ripen the soft, woody, fig-like fruit from trees.
 - c. a ranching and farming background, not descending from the schools of prophets.

II. THE DATE OF THE BOOK: 755 B.C. (Amos 1:1, 2 Kings 14:23-25)

- A. Amos' prophecy can be dated around 755 B.C. – approximately a little over two decades following Jonah's prophetic cry against Assyria's capital city, Nineveh (780 B.C.)
 1. The latter end of Jeroboam II as king ruling 41 years over the northern kingdom of Israel.
 2. During the 52-year reign Uzziah as king ruling 52 years over the southern kingdom of Judah.
- B. A time when prosperity was being experienced in both Judah and Israel, under the rebuilding of these two kings' lengthy reigns, while the soon dominant world power Assyria was beginning to emerge and manifest their strength to the west.
- C. With physical prosperity, God's people were decaying spiritually. They were turning away from a Holy God, ripe to experience his judicial wrath.

III. PRACTICAL DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK (Adapted from J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore The Book, page 133 and Homer Hailey, A Commentary on the Minor Prophets, page 88)

- A. Eight Burdens of Judgment upon: (chapters 1-2) – “for three transgressions, yea for four...”
1. Damascus (capital of Syria) – for cruelty in war - 1:1-3
 2. Gaza (stronghold of Philistia) – slave traffic - 1:6-8
 3. Tyre (principal city of Phoenicia) – delivered up “brothers” - 1:9-10
 4. Edom – implacable hatred from Israel - 1:11-12
 5. Ammon – intense and uncalled for cruelty 1:13-15
 6. Moab – vengeance on a king’s carcass - 2:1-3
 7. Judah – religious apostasy - 2:4-5
 8. Israel - 2:6-16
 - a. injustice and oppression, shameless immorality, contempt for the Lord (2:6-8)
 - b. Scornful contempt of the divine benefits bestowed (2:9-12)
 - c. Inescapable punishment coming (2:13-16)
- B. Three Sermons (chapters 3-6)
1. Condemnation of wealthy ruling class for civil and religious inequities (3:1-4:5)
 2. Unheeded chastisements (4:6-13)
 3. Overthrow of the kingdom of the ten tribes experienced (5:1- 6:14)
- C. Five Visions (chapters 7-9)
1. Grasshoppers (7:1)
 2. Fire (7:4)
 3. Plumbline (7:7)
 4. Summer Fruit (8:1-3)
 5. God Over The Altar (9:1-4)

IV. THEME OF THE BOOK: “Justice before a Holy God “

- A. “But Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos 5:24)
B. Unheeding God’s chastisement: “ Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12).

V. MESSAINIC BLESSINGS FORESEEN (Amos 9:11-15)

- A. Raising up tabernacle of king David is fulfilled in the reign of Jesus, the Messiah, who offers salvation for the Jew and Gentile remnant (Amos 9:11-12, Acts 15:16-18).
B. Book opens with burdens of judgment upon Gentiles and Jews – Book closes with rebuilding the Davidic kingdom in the spiritual rule of Jesus Christ blessing the Jews and Gentiles.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When did Amos prophecy?

2. What notable event of nature occurred shortly after Amos was called to his prophetic work?
3. What does Amos mean by saying “For three transgressions...yea, but for four”?
4. What do the eight burdens say regarding the subject of “Inhumanity” in this world?
5. What was Judah’s sin: why does Amos make this distinction among the nations?
6. How did Israel show contempt for God’s Holy Law?
7. How do we know that God displeased when we show contempt for the blessings he bestows upon His people?
8. What does a cart full of sheaves pressing mean in 2:13?
9. How does Amos establish his right to speak his prophecy against Israel?
10. Why are the palaces of Ashdod, Egypt and Samaria connected in Amos’ denouncing pronouncement of judges?
11. How does Amos address the wealthy women of Samaria ?
Is this improper language of God’s ministering servants ?
If so, whom do you blame?
12. What does Amos’s denunciation of the religious festivities in Bethel say about our own religious activities?
13. In what forms did Jehovah’s “chastisements” come upon Israel?

14. In what sense does Amos' statement, "...prepare to meet thy God" mean?
 - (a). Heed God's warnings to change now...
 - (b). Because you have heard all of God's warnings with no change...

15. Can Amos be a "prudent man" as God's prophet?
How is he being considered "prudent" ?

16. What do the 'two woes" of chapters 5-6 say about how God views His people?

17. How do the five visions of chapters 7-9 point to the processes of God's just judgment:
 1. Vision of locusts (grasshoppers) :Judgment _____.
 2. Vision of devouring fire: Judgment _____.
 2. Vision of the plumb line: judgment _____.
 3. Vision of the basket of summer fruit: judgment _____.
 4. Vision of the smitten sanctuary: Judgment _____.

18. What words of Amos could not the priest, Amaziah, bear?
How does he express his displeasure with Amos?

19. How does Amos respond to Amaziah's denunciation of Amos ?

20. How is the day of raising the tabernacle of David fulfilled in Christ?