

Amos

MEANING “Burden” or “Burden Bearer”

AUTHOR: Amos

TIME WRITTEN: **Amos 1:1** - “The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.”

1. Uzziah reigned from 767 to 739 B.C.
2. Jeroboam II reigned from 782 to 753 B.C.
3. This would leave an overlap from 767 to 753 B.C.
4. Over 200 years later, Zechariah referred to this earthquake in Uzziah’s reign.

Zechariah 14:5 -

“Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.”

5. Amos 7:11 anticipates the 722 B.C. Assyrian captivity of Israel and indicates that at the time of writing, Jeroboam II was not dead.

6. Thus, Amos prophesied in Bethel about 755 B.C.

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 30th Book in the Bible
- 30th book in the Old Testament
- 8th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 3rd of 12 Minor Prophet Books
- 29 have preceded it. 36 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 9

VERSES: 146

WORDS: 4,217

KEY WORD: The judgment of Israel

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Amos 3:1-2** - “Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”
2. **Amos 8:11-12** - “Behold, 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. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it.”

KEY CHAPTER: Amos 9

1. Set in the midst of the harsh judgments of Amos are some of the greatest prophecies of restoration of Israel found anywhere in Scripture.
2. Within the scope of just five verses (9:11-15), the future of Israel becomes clear as the attention is turned toward the coming Messiah.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT AMOS:

1. Amos prophesies during a period of national optimism in Israel.
 - a. Business is booming
 - b. Boundaries are bulging.

2. But below the surface, greed and injustice are festering.
3. Amos, the farmer-turned-prophet, lashes out at sin unflinchingly, trying to visualize the nearness of God's judgment and mobilize the nation to repentance.
 - a. The nation, like a basket of rotting fruit, stands ripe for judgment because of its hypocrisy and spiritual indifference.
4. The only Old Testament appearance of the name "Amos" is in this book.. (It shouldn't be confused with Amoz, the father of Isaiah.)
5. Background:
 - a. **Amos 7:14** - "I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit."
 - b. He came from the rural area of Tekoa in Judah, twelve miles south of Jerusalem.
 - c. He tended a special breed of small sheep that produced wool of the finest quality.
 - d. As a grower of sycamore figs, he had to puncture the fruit before it ripened to allow the insects inside to escape.
 - e. He lived a disciplined life, and his knowledge of the wilderness often surfaces in his messages.
 - f. Although from the country, he was educated in the Scriptures.
 - g. He delivered his message in Bethel because it was the residence of the King of Israel and a center of idolatry.
 - h. His frontal attack on the greed, injustice, and self-righteousness of the people of the northern kingdom made his words unpopular.
6. Astronomical calculations indicate that a solar eclipse took place in Israel on June 15, 763 B.C. This event was probably fresh in the minds of Amos's hearers in **Amos 8:9** - "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight."
7. Amos ministered after the time of Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah and just before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah.
8. At the time, Uzziah reigned over a prosperous and militarily successful Judah.
 - a. He fortified Jerusalem.
 - b. He subdued:
 1. The Philistines
 2. The Ammorites
 3. The Edomites.
 - c. Economic and military circumstances were almost ideal.
 - d. However, prosperity only increased the materialism, immorality, and injustice of the people.
9. During these years, Assyria, Babylon, Syria, and Egypt were relatively weak.
 - a. Thus, the people of Israel found it hard to imagine the coming disaster predicted by Amos.
 - b. However, it was only three decades until the downfall of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians.
10. The key theme in the Book of Amos is The judgment of Israel.
 - a. The judgment of Israel will be brought about because of two things.
 1. The holiness of God.
 2. The sinfulness of His covenant people.
 - b. Amos unflinchingly and relentlessly visualizes the causes and course of If Israel's quickly approaching doom.
 - c. God is gracious and patient, but His justice and righteousness will not allow sin to go unpunished indefinitely.

- d. The sins of Israel are heaped as high as heaven:

1. Empty-ritualism.	6. Arrogance
2. Oppression of the poor	7. Greed
3. Idolatry	8. Materialism
4. Deceit	9. Callousness
5. Self-righteousness	
- e. The people have repeatedly broken every aspect of their covenant relationship with God.
- f. Nevertheless, God's mercy and love are evident in His offer of deliverance if the people will only turn back to Him.
- g. To this end God graciously sends Amos as a reformer to warn the people of Israel of their fate if they refuse to repent. But they reject his plea, and the course of judgment cannot be altered.

SUMMARY OF AMOS

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Amos's message of the coming doom of the northern kingdom of Israel seem preposterous to the people.
- B. Unsurprisingly, Amos's earnest and forceful message against Israel's sins and abuses is poorly received.
- C. The prophet of Israel's Indian summer presents a painfully clear message: "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel" (**4:12**)
- D. There are three major divisions in the book:
 - 1. The Eight Prophecies. (1:1 - 2:16)
 - 2. The Three Sermons. (3:1 - 6:14)
 - 3. The Five Visions. (7:1 - 9:10)

THE EIGHT PROPHECIES. (1:1 - 2:16)

- A. Amos is called to God for the unenviable task of leaving his homeland in Judah to preach a harsh message of judgment to Israel.
 - 1. Each of his eight oracles in chapters 1 and 2 begins with the statement, "For three transgressions of . . . and for four."
 - 2. The fourth transgression is equivalent to the last straw . . . the iniquity of each of the eight countries is full.
- B. Amos begins with the nations that surround Israel as his catalog of catastrophes gradually spirals in on Israel herself.
- C. Seven times God declares, "I will send fire."

1. 1:4	5. 1:14
2. 1:7	6. 2:2
3. 1:10	7. 2:5
4. 1:12	

THE THREE SERMONS. (3:1 - 6:16)

- A. In these chapters, Amos delivers three sermons, each beginning with the phrase "Hear this word." (3:1; 4:1; 5:1)
- B. The three sermons:

1. The first sermon (Amos 3) is a general pronouncement of judgment because of Israel's iniquities.
2. The second sermon (2) exposes the crimes of the people and describes the ways God chastened them in order to draw them back to Himself.
 - a. Five times He says, "Yet you have not returned to Me." (4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11)
3. The third sermon (5 and 6) lists the sins of the house of Israel and calls the people to repent.
 - a. But they hate integrity, justice, and compassion, and their refusal to turn to God will lead to their exile.
 - b. Although they arrogantly wallow in luxury, their time of prosperity will suddenly come to an end.

THE FIVE VISIONS. (7:1 - 9:10)

- A. Amos's three sermons are followed by five visions of coming judgment upon the northern kingdom.
- B. The five visions:
 1. The first vision: The first two judgments of locusts and fire do not come to pass because of Amos's intercession.
 2. The second vision: The first two judgments of locusts and fire do not come to pass because of Amos's intercession
 3. The third vision of the plumb line is followed by the only narrative section in the book (7:10-17) wherein Amaziah the priest of Bethel wants Amos to go back to Judah.
 4. The fourth vision pictures Israel as a basket of rotten fruit, overripe for judgment.
 5. The fifth vision is a relentless portrayal of Israel's unavoidable judgment.

THE FIVE PROMISES. (9:11-15)

- A. Amos has hammered upon the theme of divine retribution with oracles, sermons, and visions.
- B. Nevertheless, Amos ends his book on a note of consolation, not condemnation.
- C. God promises to:
 1. Reinstatate the Davidic line.
 2. Renew the land.
 3. Restore the people.