

Amos the Prophet

Russell Kemp—January 20, 2024

What do I want to talk about today? Yea, here comes Amos. Now, Amos Moses was a Cajun. He lived by himself in the swamp. He hunted alligators for a living. He'd knock them in the head with the stump. The Louisiana law gonna get you Amos. It ain't legal hunting alligators in the swamp, boy!

How many of you remember that song by Jerry Reed? I knew that. I knew there were some other rednecks out there. I'm not alone here.

Anyway, I bring that up because today I really do want to talk about Amos. Not Amos Moses, just Amos the prophet who was not actually a prophet.

Amos 1:1: "The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa..."

Amos 7:14: "Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, 'I was no prophet, nor was I a prophet's son... [but he goes on to describe who he really was]But I was a shepherd and a gatherer of fruit from sycamore trees.'"

So, he basically was a shepherd and a farmer. However, he was no ordinary farmer, as we can tell by his writings. He was obviously well educated. He lived in Tekoa in the highlands of Judah, **but he did have a prophetic message that was to be delivered to the nation of Israel!**

Amos 1:1—he gave significant indications of his timeframe, because he mentions the kings of Israel, Jeroboam-II Judah and Uzziah at the time of his preaching. He also mentions that he preached two years prior to an earthquake.

Scientific evidence points to the quake being in the mid 8th century B.C. So, it is assumed that he preached at approximately 760_{B.C.}

His preaching was at a period of time when the dominant empires of Babylon and Egypt and Assyria were relatively weak, which allowed Israel and Judah to enjoy relative prosperity, which in all too many cases led them to become morally and spiritually godless and corrupt.

So, now we know who Amos is.

- What did he preach?
- What was his message for Israel?
- What does that matter to us today?

Like most of the prophets, he had a message of destruction for the nation *for not keeping the laws and the ordinances of God!*

In all cases, the message they carried from God came to pass. What does that have to do with us today? *As in most cases, these messages had a current fulfillment, but they also had a warning for a latter-day fulfillment, which would affect us!*

Notice that like other prophets, Amos refers to the Day of the Lord, an event mentioned not only by other prophets, but it's also mentioned in the book of Revelation. A time when God will actually intervene in the affairs of men to bring real repentance to a defiant world, a world that just refuses to see that God's way of life brings love and peace and harmony.

Amos 5:18: "Woe to those desiring the Day of the LORD! What *is* this for you? The Day of the LORD *is* darkness and not light... [not something to look forward to] ...as *if* a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him... [going away from one, can't get away from the other] ...or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a snake bit him" (vs 18-19). *Not a very pleasant thought!*

Verse 20: "*Shall* not the Day of the LORD *be* darkness and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?"

Do you think God approves of our holidays today, and assembling on Sunday instead of the Sabbath Day?

Verse 21: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies."

Amos had a message for us as well today. ***IF*** we continue to do the same foolish things that bring destruction to the nations of old, they brought destruction to the nations of old, Amos paints a terrible picture of the results of spiritual blindness that had infected Israel.

Amos was sent to Israel to denounce their terrible social and religious corruption. They did not repent and as a result, just a few decades later, they were invaded and they were destroyed by the king of Assyria.

Let's take a look at a few of God's accusations against Israel.

1. **they were corrupt**

Even though God blessed them, even though He blessed them, they were corrupt.

Amos 2:10 [transcriber's correction]—God told them: "Also, I brought you up from the land of Egypt and led you forty years through the wilderness

to possess the land of the Amorite.”

Amos 3:1: “Hear... [remember] ...this word that the LORD has spoken against you, 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” (vs 1-2).

God makes it clear in verse three that they were not doing **HIS will** when He says:

Verse 3: “Can two walk together unless they be agreed?”

2. **the greedy and the rich oppress the poor**

Let me just hit on a few of the Scriptures addressing this issue. This is one of their evils.

Amos 2:6: “Thus says the LORD, ‘For three transgressions of Israel, yea for four, I will not turn away its punishment; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals.’”

Amos 4 is an example of the things that they were doing:

Amos 4:1: “Hear this word, cows of Bashan who *are* in the mountain of Samaria—who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, ‘Bring in *wine* that we may drink.’”

Amos 5:11: “Therefore—because of your trampling upon the poor, and because you take tribute of grain from him—though you have built houses of carved stone, you shall not dwell in them; though you have planted desirable vineyards, you shall not drink wine from them.”

We could also turn to Amos 6:4 or Amos 8:4 for other examples of what was taking place. Because of time limitations, I won’t do that. Just suffice it to say that they were not kind to the poor.

3. **their justice system was corrupt and depraved**

Sure sounds familiar to what’s taking place in my own nation today.

Amos 5:10: “They hate him who rebukes in the gate, and they despise him who speaks uprightly.”

Verse 12: “For I know your many transgressions and your many sins. They afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate. Therefore, the prudent shall keep silent in that time; for it *is* an evil time. **Seek good and not evil**, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as you have spoken. **Hate the evil, and love the good**, and establish judgment in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious *to* the remnant of Joseph”

(vs 12-15).

Surely we know we don’t need to reward the evil instead of the just today. ***This could be a warning for our nations of today!***

4. **Like many today they practice dishonest business dealings; they’re corrupt!**

Amos 8:5: “...‘When will the new moon be gone so that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great, and perverting the balances by deceit.’”

- corrupt businesses
- corrupt money
- corrupt handling of money

5. **their worship services were nothing but empty ritual**

That’s all they were, ***empty rituals!*** Again, sounds familiar to today in many ways.

Amos 5:21: “**I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.** Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them. Nor will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals. Take the noise of your songs away from Me; for I will not hear the melody of your harps. But let judgment roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream” (vs 21-24).

Verse 25: “‘Have you offered sacrifices and offerings to Me forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? But now you have carried the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves. So, I will cause you to go into exile beyond Damascus,’ says the LORD, Whose name *is* the God of hosts” (vs 25-27).

All this corruption, where does it lead? ***This is what the prophet was telling them! God uses punishments to bring repentance for His people!*** Just as we as parents of our own children, we correct our children, and we do it to change their behavior.

Amos spells out these punishments in chapter four, and note that these are the same type of punishments described by Jesus Christ in Matt, 24 and again in the book of Revelation.

In Amos 4:6 *we see famine*.. “And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities... [in other words, obviously no food to spoil the teeth; God also says]: ...and lack of bread in all your places... [Did it work? *No!*] ...**yet, you have not returned to Me,**’ says the LORD.” (v 6).

These are lessons for us today. Are we going to imitate what ancient Israel did without any

punishment? Next, notice how God controls the weather as He brings about drought:

Verse 7: “And I have also withheld the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest. And I caused rain to fall on one city and caused it not to rain on another city; one field was rained on, and the field on which it did not rain dried up. So, two *or* three cities wandered to one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; **yet, you have not returned to Me,**’ says the LORD.” *He punishes, but they did not return!*

Verse 9—*He also describes the destruction of the crops:* ‘I have stricken you with blasting and mildew. When your gardens and your vineyards, and your fig trees, and your olive trees increased, the creeping locust devoured them... [notice once again]: ...**yet, you have not returned to Me,**’ says the LORD.”

He goes on to describe disease epidemics and defeat in battle:

Verse 10: “I have sent the plague among you after the manner of Egypt... [same way I punished Egypt] ... I have slain your young men with the sword, and have taken away your horses. And I have made the stench of your camps to come up into your nostrils... [notice once again] ...**yet, you have not returned to Me,**’ says the LORD.

Finally, He talks about fiery destruction as that similar to what they had in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verse 11: “I have overthrown some among you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked out of the burning; **yet, you have not returned to Me,**’ says the LORD.

Notice that Israel was warned by God in Ezekiel. what would happen to them if they turned away from Him?

Israel was warned by Ezekiel; Ezekiel 6:3: “And say, ‘Mountains of Israel, hear the Word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, ‘Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.’”

Verse 6: “In all the places where you live, the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; so that your altars may be laid waste and become desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.”

Do the nations of Israel ever learn that they cannot continue to defy God without some form of correction? *Doesn't seem so!*

Many of these events recorded by the prophets of old have actually occurred. However, there is also a warning for our modern nations not to go down the same path that caused these events in the first place.

I don't believe that the same God that corrected ancient Israel is oblivious to the sins of our modern day nations. It's hard for me to understand that the sins that were considered terrible when I was a child are commonplace and acceptable today. Our worship of God as a way of life has rapidly declined.

- Do we read these ancient prophets like Amos as just a lesson of history?
- or*
- Do we realize that is a prophetic warning for us today?

Israel was destroyed just as Amos warned in 722_{B.C.}, but the authors of the New Testament give warnings of similar future events without repentance today. So, what should be our reaction to Amos and the other prophets? *Notice the warning!*

God gives to Israel; Amos 5:1: “Hear this word, which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Israel. The virgin of Israel has fallen; she shall rise no more; she lies forsaken on her land. There is none to raise her up, for thus says the Lord GOD, ‘The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave a hundred, and that which went out *by* a hundred shall have ten left in the house of Israel’” (vs 1-3).

That's a pretty dire warning. Just as Amos gave us warning to Israel, **we**—as individuals as well as collectively as a church body—**have a responsibility to warn the world of these coming events IF** we continue on our path away from God, **which certainly doesn't seem to be changing anytime in the near future!**

The Churches of God today, and that includes all of us, you and I, have a responsibility to warn the world of the coming events without repentance. Notice what comes with that responsibility:

Ezekiel 33:1—*this is our responsibility:* “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them, “When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him for their watchman”’” (vs 1-2). *That would be you and I!*

Verse 3: “If, when he sees the sword come upon the land, he blows the ram's horn and warns the people, Then whoever hears the sound of the ram's horn and does not take warning, if the sword does come and take him away, his blood shall be on

his own head” (vs 3-4).

In other words, if we give a warning and people don't listen, it's their own responsibility.

Verse 5: “He heard the sound of the ram's horn and did not take warning. His blood shall be on himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have delivered his life.... [What happens if we don't give a warning?] ...But if the watchman sees the sword coming, and does not blow the ram's horn and the people are not warned; if the sword comes and takes *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity. But I will require his blood at the watchman's hand.” (vs 5-6).

Do we have a responsibility? Now, in many ways, speaking of the Churches of God directly, He says:

Verse 7: “And you, son of man, I have set you as watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore, you shall hear the Word from My mouth, **and warn them from Me.**” *That's a responsibility that we're given!*

Verse 8: “When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked one, you shall surely die’; if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked one shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at your hand. But, if you warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul” (vs 8-9).

That's a pretty dire warning for people that have been given the responsibility of a watchman. Like Amos, ***we as a Church of God have the responsibility to teach the Word of God and to warn of pending events if the people refuse to keep God's commandments and they continue to sin!***

God has not given us this knowledge that we have to keep it to ourselves. We will be judged on how we keep this commission that we've been given.

Like any parent, God corrects His children for their own benefit. I've been there, raised a lot of children. Not always pleasant to correct your children, but it's required. Punishment is never pleasant, but it always serves a purpose.

But like any parent, God's ultimate goal is to bless His children. Not to punish them, but to bless His children. Though the prophet Amos has promised that there are better days ahead, Amos refers to these blessings, but they are intended for the latter days.

Like most of the prophets, these events are intended for a period of time when Satan has been bound and Christ assumes His position as King of kings and Lord of lords. We find these events in:

Amos 9:10—*how God will not tolerate sin:* He says, “All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, who say, **The evil shall not draw near, or confront us.**”

However, once God has bound Satan and Christ has assumed his role as King of kings and Lord of lords, we shall see the blessings that God intends for mankind.

- in v 11 we see the restoration of David's tabernacle
- in vs 13-15 we see the blessings of God that He intends for Israel

We often read these events, obviously, at the Feast of Tabernacles, because they are intended for the thousand-year period of time under the rule of Christ

Amos delivered a message to ancient Israel, but that message is to us as well today. It's for us, as well, today.

- Will we listen?
- Will we fulfill our role in keeping the Word of God?

Like Amos, will we as a watchman blow the ram's horn and warn the world of the sinful behavior and its results? These are warnings for us today, not just for ancient Israel. I hope we heed these warnings, but we have a responsibility.

We need to live up to them and fulfill the role that God has given us!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Amos 1:1
- 2) Amos 7:14
- 3) Amos 1:1
- 4) Amos 5:18-21
- 5) Amos 2:10
- 6) Amos 3:1-3
- 7) Amos 2:6
- 8) Amos 4:1
- 9) Amos 5:11, 10, 12-15
- 10) Amos 8:5
- 11) Amos 5:21-27
- 12) Amos 4:6-11
- 13) Ezekiel 6:3, 6
- 14) Amos 5:1-3
- 15) Ezekiel 33:1-9
- 16) Amos 9:10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Amos 6:4
- Amos 8:4
- Matthew 24

- Amos 9:11-15

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