

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

September 4, 2022

The Prophet Amos

Situational Context: Israel is now two separate enations. In chapter one the Lord pronounces judgment upon Israel’s neighbors, particularly Assyria.

Amos seems to be unknown except was he wrote, **Amos 1:1 (ESV)** ¹ **The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds 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.**

Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah over Judah (792–740 BC) and Jeroboam II over Israel (793–753). The main part of his ministry was probably carried out c. 760–750. Both kingdoms were enjoying great prosperity and had reached new political and military heights.

The Prophet Amos presents the Lord charges against both Judah and Israel, that they do love the Lord or their neighbor as commanded in the covenant.

Lesson Theme: Amos 2:12-16 **The Lord has done mighty works on behalf of His people and has provided them with every spiritual resource to prosper under the Lord’s hand. They have despised the Lord’s means for their blessing, so judgment is upon them.**

1. Judah and Israel Judged: Amos 2:4-8 (ESV) ⁴ Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked. ⁵ So I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem.” ⁶ **Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals— ⁷ those who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted; a man and his father go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned; ⁸ they lay**

themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.

Interpretation: The five oracles against pagan nations are concluded, and the southern kingdom of Judah is now addressed. Divine judgment moves ever closer to the northern kingdom of Israel, where Amos himself prophesied. For rejecting God's revealed covenant law, and so God Himself, they were particularly worthy of judgment. Judah's covenant privileges implied greater responsibility.

Supporting Texts:

Exodus 15:26 (ESV) ²⁶ saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."

Deuteronomy 4:39-40 (ESV) ³⁹ know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. ⁴⁰ Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Luke 12:48 (ESV) ⁴⁸ But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

Discussion Starters:

What category would place the Lord's charges against the people?

What happened to their sanctification by God?

What were the covenant crimes against them?

2. The Lord Presents His Case: Amos 2:9-11 (ESV) ⁹ "Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars and who was as strong as the oaks; I destroyed his fruit above and his roots

beneath.¹⁰ Also it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.¹¹ And I raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?” declares the LORD.

Interpretation: Faithful to His covenant promises, the Lord had driven out the Canaanites (simply called "the Amorite" here) from the Promised Land. By reminding them of His covenant faithfulness, the Lord presses His case against Israel's unfaithfulness. The Lord sovereignly raised up prophets. The prophets served as covenant lawsuit messengers, sent to recall the people to obedience. Nazirites. The Old Testament mentions Samson by name as a Nazirite.

Supporting Texts:

Deuteronomy 18:15-16 (ESV)¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’

Judges 2:18 (ESV)¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

Hebrews 12:15 (ESV)¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

Discussion Starters:

What were their covenant offenses against God?

How do Christians despise their separation (sanctification)?

3. No Mercy: Amos 2:12-16 (ESV) ¹² “But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, ‘You shall not prophesy.’ ¹³ “Behold, I will press you down in your place, as a cart full of sheaves presses down. ¹⁴ Flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not retain his strength, nor shall the mighty save his life; ¹⁵ he who handles the bow shall not stand, and he who is swift of foot shall not save himself, nor shall he who rides the horse save his life; ¹⁶ and he who is stout of heart among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day,” declares the LORD.

Interpretation: In contrast with the Lord’s faithfulness, Israel sought to defeat God’s purposes by commanding His messengers not to prophesy, and by making the Nazirites drink wine (in violation of their vow). They showed contempt for both the Lord and His law. [I will press you down] Just as a cart bogs down from the pressure of its contents and so becomes immovable, so Israel will be unable to flee. This is a vivid picture of helplessness: the fleet of foot will not escape and the strong will not stand their ground. All units of the army will fail before God’s anger.

Supporting Texts:

Psalms 33:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (ESV) ¹¹ Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.

Discussion Starters:

What idols does the Lord mention that cannot save them?

Samaria was destroyed in 722 B.C. thirty or so years after this prophecy. Why is judgment so slow but also so sure?