

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

September 11, 2022

The Prophet Amos

Israel, Prepare to Meet Your God!

Situational Context: 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. The Jeroboam was Jeroboam II.**

Amos was not a prophet who earned his living from the office. He served during the time of Jonah, after the death of Elisha. Isaiah was prophet in Judah.

Lesson Theme: Amos 4:12-13 **After ignoring God’s discipline, Samaria, Israel, is under God’s decree of judgment.**

1. Warning: Amos 4:1-3 (ESV) ¹ **“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink!’** ² **The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks.** ³ **And you shall go out through the breaches, each one straight ahead; and you shall be cast out into Harmon,” declares the LORD.**

Interpretation: The cows of Bashan are the wealthy women of Samaria, who had been raised and cared for like the prime cattle of Bashan, a fertile area east of the Jordan River. [sworn by his holiness] The phrase occurs once elsewhere. No oath can be greater or more final. The Assyrians frequently led prisoners by ropes attached to rings or hooks in their noses or lips. Their self-indulgent lifestyle was reflective of the wealth and indulgence of the Northern Kingdom.

Supporting Texts:

Hebrews 6:13-14 (ESV) ¹³ **For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself,** ¹⁴ **saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.”**

Psalm 89:35 (ESV) ³⁵ Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David.

Discussion Starters:

What does verse one reveal about the wealth of Israel?

How would they have oppressed the poor and needy?

What were the seeds of their indulgences?

2. Keep On Sinning: Amos 4:4-5 (ESV) ⁴ **“Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; ⁵ offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!”** declares the Lord GOD.

Interpretation: These were important sites in the earlier history of Israel; Bethel was a sanctuary during the period of the judges, and Samuel judged both there and at Gilgal (1Sa 7:16). They were also centers of syncretistic worship during the period of the divided kingdom. Israel’s religious observances go even beyond what the law required. Though enthusiastic about ritual, they had no living relationship with God. The covenant law made it clear that they were not to burn leavened bread as a sacrifice. **Amos sarcastically urges them to continue in their disobedience. The nation’s disobedience made it apparent that Israel loved rituals and idolatry rather than the Lord.**

Supporting Texts:

Amos 5:5 (ESV) ⁵ but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing.”

Leviticus 2:11 (ESV) ¹¹ “No grain offering that you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey as a food offering to the LORD.

Discussion Starters:

Why does the Lord invite them to keep on sinning?

What was the root of their ceremonialism?

What is syncretistic worship?

What are some examples of syncretistic worship today?

3. Ignored Discipline: Amos 4:6-11 (ESV) ⁶ “I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, **yet you did not return to me,**” declares the LORD. ⁷ “I also withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest; I would send rain on one city, and send no rain on another city; one field would have rain, and the field on which it did not rain would wither; ⁸ so two or three cities would wander to another city to drink water, and would not be satisfied; **yet you did not return to me,**” declares the LORD. ⁹ “I struck you with blight and mildew; your many gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured; **yet you did not return to me,**” declares the LORD. ¹⁰ “I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I killed your young men with the sword, and carried away your horses, and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; **yet you did not return to me,**” declares the LORD. ¹¹ “I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; **yet you did not return to me,**” declares the LORD.

Interpretation: This section reviews what the Lord did in discipline to warn His people and draw their attention back to Him. All the disasters mentioned were threatened in the covenant (Dt 28). Israel should have understood this and repented. But as the refrain repeats, "you did not return to me".

Supporting Texts:

Amos 4:8-11 (ESV) ⁸ so two or three cities would wander to another city to drink water, and would not be satisfied; yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “I struck you with blight and mildew; your many gardens and your

vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured; yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD. ¹⁰ “I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I killed your young men with the sword, and carried away your horses, and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD. ¹¹ “I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD.

Discussion Starters:

How might the events sent by God been viewed by the people?

How do these events illustrate redemptive discipline?

Why didn't the people repent?

4. The Lord's Decree: Amos 4:12-13 (ESV) ¹² “Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”

¹³ For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!

Interpretation: [Prepare to meet your God.] The phrase comes from Ex 19:15-17, where, after three days of sanctification, the people met the Lord at Sinai. Then they met a God who was graciously forging a covenant with them. Now they would meet a God who was coming to judge their covenant disobedience.

Supporting Texts:

Exodus 19:15-17 (ESV) ¹⁵ And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.” ¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

Discussion Starters:

How were they to meet their God?

Israel had committed the unpardonable sin. What was it?