

## Amos Propheezies the Destruction of Israel

Amos 1:1-2; 5:11-15; 21-24.

### Chapter 1

**1** The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen 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.

**2** And he said, Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

### Chapter 5

**11** Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. **12** For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right. **13** Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time.

**14** Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. **15** Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

**21** I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. **22** Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. **23** Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. **24** But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

## Sermon on Amos

Amos is one of 12 minor prophets of the Bible. It is important to note that “minor” is not a reference to their significance as prophets, but rather a reflection on the length of the books that are named after their prophecies.

Other prophets of the same time would have been Jonah, Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah.

Amos was a relatively poor person; he was herdsman he tells us in the first verse. He is from Judah and not from Israel itself.

Three of Amos most famous prophecies of doom were in fact already extant at the time of his prophesying. Assyria had already conquered most of Damascus’s territories and was marching across vast swathes of Israel as it consumed Tyre and the Levant.

Enmity between Israel and the Assyrians dated to at least 853 BCE and the Battle of Qarqar (or Karkar), in which King Ahab of Israel, had fought alongside of the Kings of Damascus and Tyre, against Emperor Shalmaneser III of Assyria. The Assyrians win that battle, and eventually by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> BCE century, control Egypt, Babylon and the Levant, as well as Israel and Judah.

The major earthquake that occurred in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE in Israel, occurred around Tel Agol in the Jezreel Valley. This occurred about a decade before Amos began his mission of prophecy in the 850s. The eclipse

also occurred prior to the beginning his prophecy, astrologists in China and Babylonia, were already determining the cycles of occurrence of eclipses.

I tell you these things so that you will know that he was describing why God was allowing these things to occur, rather than foretelling these events.

Chabad, a Jewish source of learning says this about the prophets and prophecy:

***A prophet is not an oracle: a prophecy is not a prediction. Precisely because Judaism believes in free will, the human future can never be unfailingly predicted. People are capable of change. God forgives. As we say in our prayers on the High Holy Days: "Prayer, penitence and charity avert the evil decree."***

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/2290655/jewish/Testing-Prophecy.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2290655/jewish/Testing-Prophecy.htm)

Below is what Chabad tells us about Amos, Israel at the time Amos lived, and the context of the prophecy of Amos:

***The Prophet Amos lived during the long reign of King Jeroboam II. Jeroboam the son of Joash reigned over the Ten Tribes of Israel for forty years (793–753 BC ). Under his reign the Northern Kingdom of Israel enjoyed one of its most happy and prosperous periods. He recovered every piece of land which had been lost by his forerunners.***

***Many in the Northern Kingdom became very wealthy and led a luxurious life. Israel became an important partner with Phoenicia, and wealth flowed from this relationship. Unfortunately, prosperity brought a collapse of moral standards. The great ideals and commandments of the Torah to help the poor, and to practice justice were ignored. It was an age of corruption.***

***Hand in hand with this degeneration of morals, they turned toward idolatry. People built altars on the mountains to the Canaanite gods, Baal and Ashtarte. Jeroboam the 1<sup>st</sup>, set up Golden Calves in the north and south of the country to turn the people away from the Temple in Jerusalem. The teachings of the Torah and the holy commandments were viewed with contempt.***

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/112277/jewish/The-Prophet-Amos.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/112277/jewish/The-Prophet-Amos.htm)

Robert Gordis, a theologian, wrote in an article that Amos Chapter 4, verse 12, is a call to repentance by the people of Israel; "Similarly, Harper, in ICC, points out that "every prediction of disaster was in itself an exhortation to repentance, in order that, if possible, the disaster might be averted.""

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3622465?read-now=1&seq=11>

So what are we to make of Amos?

Amos is obviously telling about God's very righteous condemnation of Israel, and in particular, the government and leaders of Israel. Chapter 2 spends a great deal of time not only outlining the faults of Judah and Israel, but also of the Assyrians, Damascus, the Phoenicians and Tyre. Those entities however are not the people of Abraham's tribes; they are not the elect of God.

The greatest frustration of God is that his elect have not repented for failing to follow God's commandments. Amos repeats God's warning in Chapter 2 verse 6:

**<sup>6</sup> Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes— <sup>7</sup> they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name: <sup>8</sup> and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined.**

As we read in Chapter 5, God isn't accepting the empty platitudes supplied in the offerings, and sacrifices that the people of Israel offered, nor their words spoken in rote inside the Temple. He is so angry with the people that he is threatening that only 1 in 10 will survive his wrath. God shows Amos in Chapter 7 how this will transpire, and Amos begs God not to destroy all of the people. God relents for the people of Jacob for the 3 times, but in the 4<sup>th</sup> event of their sins, he calls out their destruction.

In Chapter 9, God states:

**<sup>8</sup> Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah. <sup>9</sup> For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth. <sup>10</sup> All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, evil shall not overtake nor meet us.**

God then proves that he intends to see Israel reborn:

**<sup>11</sup> In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; <sup>12</sup> that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this. <sup>13</sup> Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. <sup>15</sup> And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.**

Again, what should we make of this?

We should start by looking at the importance of repentance in this story; God was willing to forgive, had there been honest repentance. God wasn't looking for words that weren't a heartfelt repentance, and he expected actions that reflected those words of repentance.

God expected a change.

There is a remarkable similarity to this story of the comments of Christ in Luke 13;

**<sup>13</sup> Now there were some present at that very season who told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they have suffered these things? <sup>3</sup> I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.**

In this same chapter of Luke, Christ tells us of the parable of the fig tree, that will not produce. Interestingly he uses the triad examples of failing God, in Chapter 2 of Amos. Three years it fails and on the 4<sup>th</sup> the vineyard owner will cut it down.

Again, in Luke 17, Christ reminds us of the importance of repentance:

***<sup>3</sup> Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. <sup>4</sup> And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.***

Christ dies so that our sins are forgiven, but for what good is forgiveness, if we don't feel a need to repent?

Our first step in Christ's forgiveness is belief in him, if we believe in him, we will be forgiven. Paul explains in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians that this is but our first step in our maturation of life with Christ. We must logically understand that to be forgiven also entails understanding the sin in our lives. We naturally must desire change our lives in ways that are closer to Christ's will for our lives.

We will undoubtedly fail, which is why Luke 17: 3 - 4 is so important to us all. Repentance is the acknowledgment of our sins, and the desire to see change. We don't want to become the Israel of King Jeroboam II.

We understand that our prayers need to be more than simply empty repeated phrases; they must be the **contrite** heart of followers of Christ.

We pray in your name:

Dear Father;

O loving and kind God, have mercy. Have pity upon me and take away the stain of my transgressions. Let me be pure again. I admit many deeds haunt me. It is against you and you alone that I sinned. You saw it all, and your sentence against me is just. I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment I was conceived. You deserve honesty from the heart; yes, utter sincerity and truthfulness.

Oh, give me this wisdom.

Cleanse me through the sacrifice you made on that cross. Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires. Don't toss me aside, banished forever from your presence. Don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you. Then I will praise your ways to others, and they—guilty like me—will repent and return to you. O my God, you alone can rescue me. Then I will sing of your forgiveness, for my lips will be unsealed to sing of your praises.

Amen