

Commentary Notes - Amos

by Walter Beuttler

The book of Amos emphasizes the importance of righteousness and warns of the consequences of persistent national sin.

Scripture: Amos 3:7, Amos 5:24, Amos 9:11, Amos 9:15

Topics: "Judgment And Repentance", "Righteous Living"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the book of Amos, highlighting the prophet's message of impending judgment due to the persistent national sins of pride, luxury, selfishness, and oppression in Israel and Judah. Amos, a humble herdsman, received a divine call to deliver a grievous message of punishment, emphasizing the importance of righteousness and penitence to avoid ultimate doom. The prophet's originality, faithfulness, and courage in declaring God's word serve as a model for all believers.

Transcript

A. THE BOOK OF AMOS

1. At the time when Amos prophesied in the northern kingdom, both Israel and Judah stood high in prosperity under the reign of Uzziah king of Judah, and Jeroboam II of Israel
2. Prosperity in both kingdoms had produced its common fruits of pride, luxury, selfishness, and oppression
3. Israel, secure from outward enemies and strong in inward resources, was very far from expecting ruin, yet within fifty years the kingdom was utterly destroyed
4. The book opens with the prediction of judgment, not only upon the surrounding nations, but also upon Israel and Judah
5. The key word of the book is "punishment"

B. THE PROPHET AMOS

1. Amos was a native of Tekoah, a place twelve miles from Jerusalem and six from Bethlehem
2. He was "among the herdmen of Tekoah," and therefore not a prophet by education or profession, but "a keeper of sheep" and a "dresser of sycamore fruit."

3. The word "dresser" means "nipper" or "pincher," for the sycamore fruit (the wild fig only eaten by the very poorest) can only be ripened by puncturing it

4. He received his divine call while following the flock and drew his figures of speech from his simple life as a herdsman

5. As an untrained man he is a brilliant example of the fact that a man may have had no technical training at all and yet be a prophet of the Lord

6. As a prophet of the Lord Amos was a model for:

(1) He was humble in that he made no attempt to hide his lowly family status and employment

(2) He was alert for his message is full of his observations from nature in which he lived a solitary life

(3) He was original in that he did not borrow his illustrations from other sources, he selected them from his own observation and experience

(4) He was faithful in that he did not calculatingly adapt his message to popular opinion in order to ingratiate himself with his hearers

(5) He was courageous in that he declared God's word in the face of hostile sovereigns and threats of punishment

7. The name Amos means "Heavy" or "Burden," in allusion to the grievous message which he had to declare. Thus Amos became the prophet of woe

C. THE MESSAGE OF AMOS

1. The people chosen by God to be the depository of his truth must be righteous

2. Persistent national sin will bring the inevitable judgment of God

3. There is no escape from ultimate doom but by way of penitence

(With due acknowledgment to Pulpit Commentary and G. Campbell Morgan - Living Messages of the Books of the Bible)

JUDGMENTS, 1:1-2:16

A. JUDGMENTS OF NATIONS, 1:1-2:3

1. List the foreign nations due for judgment in:

(1) 1:3-5-Syria (4) 1:11-12-Edom

(2) 1:6-8 - Philistia (5) 1:13-15 - Ammon

(3) 1:9-10 - Phoenecia (6) 2:1-3 - Moab

2. Why is punishment against Israel's neighboring nations announced, 1:3-2:3? Because of their mistreatment of God's people

3. What is meant by the repeated expression "For three transgressions and for four" in 1:3-2:17? A great number, like a measure filled up to overflowing

B. JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL, 2:4-16

1. For what reason is judgment to fall upon:

(1) Judah, 2:4-5? For Judah's offences against God and his law

(2) Israel, 2:6-8? For injustice, greediness, incest, luxury, and cruelty

2. What accusation is made in 2:10? Ingratitude

3. Point out God's complaint in 2:11-12: The people attempted to get rid of the Nazarites' witness against them by:

(1) Seducing the Nazarites into breaking their vow of separation

(2) Forbidding the prophets to prophesy under threat of reprisal

4. What event fulfilled "that day" in 2:16 as to:

(1) Israel? The Assyrian captivity (734 B. C.) under Shalmaneser

(2) Judah? The Babylonian captivity (606 B. C.) under Nebuchadnezzar

JEHOVAH'S CONTROVERSY, 3:1-9:10

A. SINS OF THE "WHOLE FAMILY," 3:1-6:14

1. Point out the essence of 3:2:

(1) Responsibility is commensurate with privilege

(2) Therefore the peculiar favour which God has shown the Israelites increases the guilt of their sin and consequently their punishment

2. What is the underlying meaning of the comparisons in 3:3-8? Amos seeks to establish that his message of woe is the logical effect of a related cause, namely Israel's sin

3. Give the meaning of 3:7: God does not execute judgment without first of all giving his people a warning and time to repent

4. What does God do in 3:9? He summons Ashdod (Philistia) and Egypt to bear witness to the iniquities of Samaria that they should bring about this overthrow of the kingdom, the destruction of the city with its altars and palaces, and the exile of the people

5. List the specific sins for which God's people are to be judged according to:

(1) 3:10 - Violence and robbery

(2) 3:15 - Living in luxury

- (3) 4:1 - Corruption of their women
- (4) 5:7 - Injustice and unrighteousness
- (5) 5:10 - Persecution of the righteous
- (6) 5:11 - Oppression of the poor
- (7) 5:12 - Corruption of their judiciary
- (8) 6:1-6 - Indifference to the sin of the land
- (9) 6:4-6 - Disregard of the poor
- (10) 6:5-8 - Living in carefree pleasure

B. SINS OF THE "WHOLE FAMILY," 3:1-6:14 (cont'd.)

1. Give the meaning of the repeated complaint "ye have not returned unto me," 4:6-11: That all means of divine chastisement have failed to bring the people back to God
2. God urges the people to do what in 5:1-15? To seek God in expectation of finding grace
3. Why does God contrast "seek ye me" with "seek not Bethel," 5:4-5?
 - (1) Bethel and Gilgal were the scenes of idolatrous worship, where there could be no true seeking after God
 - (2) The people were seeking the house of God instead of the God of the house
4. What are:
 - (1) "The seven stars," 5:8? The constellation of the Pleiades, a most remarkable cluster of stars in the northern winter sky
 - (2) "Orion," 5:8? The constellation Orion, the most brilliant constellation dominating the northern winter sky
5. Why does Amos call attention to the Pleiades and Orion in 5:8? In order to emphasize his appeal and so provide an incentive to seek an omnipotent God in place of impotent idols
6. In 5:21-27 God despises the very feast which he himself ordained. Why? Because of the unrighteousness of the worshippers
7. Account for Israel's propensity to idol worship, 5:25-27? The innate capacity and demand in the human nature for worship was bestowed upon idols partly because they do not rebuke for sin nor demand rectitude of life
8. What is announced in 5:16-6:14? - The Assyrian captivity which took place in 734 B. C.

JUDGMENT ON THE "WHOLE FAMILY," 7:1-9:15

A. VISIONS OF JUDGMENT, 7:1-9:10

1. Give the nature of the five judgments from:

- (1) 7:1-3 - Israel's complete destruction
- (2) 7:4-6 - Severer judgment than the locusts
- (3) 7:7-9 - Precise judgment
- (4) 8:1-3 - Israel's final end
- (5) 9:1-10 - Judgment of Israel's religious life

2. The first two vision judgments were withheld by what, 7:2-3? By the prophet's intercession

3. Of what was Amos accused in 7:10-11? Treason

4. Comment on 7:10-17: Instead of going somewhere else as ordered, he presented his credentials and continued to prophesy

5. Of what were the people guilty in 8:4-7?

- (1) Of contempt for their religious days
- (2) Of greediness for gain
- (3) Of oppression of the poor

6. Comment on 8:8-14: The famine of hearing the word of God is the severest judgment and was fulfilled in God's four hundred year silence between the Old and the New Testaments

7. What was the "sin of Samaria," 8:14? The worship of the golden calf in Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom

8. What is prophesied in 9:1-10? The dispersion of Israel among the nations

9. Give the meaning of 9:9: The Lord knows them that are his and will keep them even though they must necessarily pass through the national judgment

B. RESTORATION OF ISRAEL, 9:11-15

1. What is announced in 9:11-12: Re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy under Christ

2. The description in 9:13-15 deals with what? With Israel's prosperity in the kingdom age

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