

The Minor Prophets - Amos

- Introduction
 - The Hebrew word for Amos is עָמוֹס (ah-mose) which means “burden”.
 - There is only one man in the O.T. with this name.
 - Amos was a sheep breeder [1:1], a herdsman and grower of sycamore figs [7:14].
 - Amos was among the shepherds from Tekoa, a town about 10 miles south of Jerusalem.



- Amos delivered his message during the reign of Uzziah in Judah (802 to 750 B.C.) and Jeroboam II in Israel (793 to 753 B.C.).
- The message was delivered two years before a significant earthquake [Zech 14:5] – likely a consequence of Uzziah’s rebellion [2 Chr 26:16ff].
- Archaeology has uncovered evidence of this earthquake occurring around 760 B.C.
- Israel (Northern Kingdom) was experiencing a time of material prosperity during this time.
 - The Assyrians were preoccupied with conflict from territories to its north.
 - Israel had reclaimed lands in the Transjordan which gave it control of the trade routes.
 - Commerce thrived which allowed people to accumulate wealth and build lavish homes.
- Spiritually, however, they were bankrupt.
- The term אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (ah-don-ay YHWH) is used 21 times in Amos [1:8; 3:7, 8, 11, 13; 4:2, 5; 5:3; 6:8; 7:1, 2, 4x2, 5, 6, 8:1, 3, 9, 11; 9:5, 8].

- This term, translated Lord God in the NASB, occurs only 5 times in all the other Minor Prophets [Obad 1; Micah 1:2; Hab 3:19; Zeph 1:7; Zech 9:14].
- The term for God emphasizes His sovereignty as well as His covenant relationship with His people.
- Rebellion in defiance of God’s covenant promises had brought about the need for this message.
- Observations from the Text
 - These are the words of Amos which he saw (in a vision?) concerning Israel [1:1].
 - Amos is identified as a נִקְדָּה (no-qed) which is not a shepherd, but a sheep breeder [2 Kgs 3:4].
 - Although a vision is not specifically mentioned here, this is the means of communication that the Lord employed as described in chapter 7.
 - Amos described a Lion’s roar [1:2] just as Joel had previously done [Joel 3:16].
 - The roar of the Lion has eight יְהוָה אֱמַר כֹּה (koh aw-mar YHWH) “Thus says the Lord” oracles against various nations [1:3-2:16].
 - These judgments were irrevocable.
 - These judgments were pronounced against nations that had rebelled against God.
 - Their rebellion included acts of barbarianism [1:3, 13], deportations of slaves [1:6, 9], willful hatred [1:11] and desecration of the dead [2:1].
 - Using a number followed by the next highest number is common in the O.T. [e.g. Job 5:19; Ps 62:11-12; Pr 30:15-16; 18-19; 21-23; 28-31].
 - Damascus [1:3-5]
 - Elisha had ministry there [2 Kgs 8:7-16].
 - Hazael had threshed Gilead [2 Kgs 10:32-33] as an instrument of God’s discipline [2 Kgs 13:3ff].
 - This judgment against Damascus was carried out by Tiglath-Pileser III [2 Kgs 16:7-9].
 - Gaza [1:6-8]
 - Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron were all Philistine cities.
 - The Philistines were a thorn in the side of Israel from the time of the Judges forward.
 - Zephaniah and Zechariah also spoke against the Philistines [Zeph 2:4-7; Zech 9:5-6].
 - This judgment was fulfilled when Alexander the Great conquered the Philistines and they were absorbed into the Hellenistic culture.
 - Tyre [1:9-10]
 - Like Gaza, Tyre had sold communities of captives to Edom [1:9 cp. 1:6].
 - Unlike Gaza, Tyre had broken a “covenant of brotherhood” [1 Kgs 5:1-12].
 - This judgment of Tyre was spoken of by a number of prophets [Isa 23:1-18; Ezek 26:1-27:36; Joel 3:4-8; Zech 9:2-4].
 - Like Gaza, Tyre was conquered by Alexander the Great and became captives themselves.

- Edom [1:11-12]
 - As we saw in Obadiah, Edom was a constant enemy of Israel [Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Obad 1-21; Mal 1:2-5].
 - This opposition was fueled by an unabated hatred toward “his brother” Israel which stemmed all the way back to Jacob and Esau.
 - This judgment was fulfilled when the Assyrians conquered Edom and they never again functioned as a sovereign nation.
- Ammon [1:13-15]
 - Ammon and Moab were daughter nations to Abraham’s nephew Lot [Gen 19:30-38].
 - The Ammonites had engaged in the atrocity of brutally killing pregnant women [2 Kgs 8:12; 15:16; Hos 13:16] in order to devastate their enemies and expand their territory.
 - This judgment was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Ammon and they never again functioned as a sovereign nation.
- Moab [2:1-3]
 - Moab pushed Edom back into their own territory [2 Kgs 3:26-27?], opened the royal grave and burned the bones of Edom’s king.
 - This was a contemptuous act against Edom who placed much importance on a dead man’s body being peacefully laid in the family burial site.
 - This judgment was fulfilled when, like Ammon, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Moab and they never again functioned as a sovereign nation.
- Judah [2:4-5]
 - Judah had rejected the Law of the Lord and had not kept God’s word.
 - Judah was also guilty of being led astray by the same false gods that had been a snare to their ancestors.
 - Judah’s judgment was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and took the people of the Southern Kingdom captive.
- Israel [2:6-8]
 - Israel was called out for various transgressions...
 - Selling the poor into slavery.
 - Disrespecting the poor.
 - Sexual immorality.
 - Corruption of temple worship.
 - Israel’s judgment was fulfilled when the Assyrians conquered them and took the people of the Northern Kingdom captive.
- Epilogue for Judah and Israel [2:9-16]
 - God had given them military victories.
 - God had saved them from out of Egypt.
 - God had raised up leaders for them.
 - But they had rebelled, forcing the Nazarites to drink wine and silencing the prophets.
 - The epilogue ends with a description of how God would strip them of their strength so that even the bravest of their warriors would taste bitter defeat.

- The roar continues with three שְׁמַעוּ הַדְּבָר (shim-`oo ha-da-bar) “Hear this word” warnings [3:1-5:27].
 - Israel will be punished [3:1-15].
 - Chosen and held accountable [3:1-2].
 - Events are connected, not coincidental [3:3-6].
 - So, too, are these events connected [3:7-8]...
 - God speaks – men prophesy.
 - Israel ignores God’s counsel – the Lion roars.
 - The Lion roars judgment – people fear.
 - Pagans could recognize Israel’s faults [3:9-10].
 - Although some would be delivered [3:12], Israel would surely be punished [3:11-15].
 - Israel is unrepentant [4:1-13].
 - The rich, spoiled women (cows of Bashan) would be punished for their callousness [4:1-3].
 - Empty ritual obedience solved nothing [4:4-5].
 - God tried to get Israel to repent, but they would not return to Him [4:6-11].
 - ∴ Israel must prepare to meet God [4:12-13].
 - Israel’s funeral dirge [5:1-27].
 - Israel’s doom is certain [5:1-2].
 - Military defeat is certain [5:3].
 - The remnant is called to seek the Lord [5:4-6].
 - Israel had distorted justice [5:7, 10-13].
 - God is sovereign and will destroy [5:8-9].
 - Hope for salvation for the remnant [5:14-15].
 - God will “pass through” Israel [5:16-17].
 - Unrepentant Israel should not hope for blessing in the coming Day of the Lord [5:18-27].
- The roar concludes with a הוֹי (hoh-ee) “Woe” declaration [6:1-14].
 - Israel was complacent in its prosperity [6:1].
 - Israel should take note of nations that had already suffered defeat [6:2].
 - Calneh and Hamath overrun by Assyria.
 - Gath devastated by Aram (and later Judah).
 - Israel arrogantly assumed they could not be overtaken [6:3].
 - Israel’s leaders were more concerned about “living large” in their decadence [6:4-6].
 - ∴ They would be the first taken into exile [6:7].
 - The Lord declared His loathing of Israel’s arrogance and their sure destruction [6:8].
 - The people could not escape by hiding in their houses which would also be destroyed [6:9-11].
 - Because they had distorted justice and relied upon their own strength, God promised Israel that another nation would afflict them [6:12-14].

- The Lord showed Amos five visions [7:1-9:15].
 - Vision #1: The Lord was forming a locust swarm at the most vulnerable time [7:1-3].
 - Amos interceded and the Lord relented [7:2-3].
 - Similar intercessions by Moses and Daniel [Ex 32:9-14; Num 14:11-20; Ps 106:23; Dan 9:16-19].
 - Vision #2: The Lord was going to contend with Israel using fire [7:4-6].
 - Amos interceded and the Lord relented [7:5-6].
 - He was persistent in prayer [Luke 18:1-8; Jas 5:16b].
 - Vision #3: The Lord showed Amos a plumb line [7:7-9].
 - The plumb line reveals Israel's unrighteousness.
 - This time intercession by Amos was not fitting [Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11].
 - In the midst of these visions, Amaziah attempts to undermine Amos' ministry [7:10-17].
 - Amaziah feared that the people could not handle Amos' messages.
 - Amaziah himself was unwilling to listen.
 - Vision #4: The Lord showed Amos a basket full of ripe fruit [8:1-3].
 - The fruit here is קַיִטִּים (kah-yits).
 - The "end" here is קַיִץ (kayts).
 - The "end" would bring a great slaughter [8:3].
 - The result was a "Hear this" message of grief and divine silence [8:4-14].
 - Their unrighteous dealings would result in divine punishment and mourning [8:4-10].
 - God would also withhold His word [8:11-14].
 - Vision #5: The Lord showed Amos destruction and restoration for Israel [9:1-15].
 - The decreed "end" was described [9:1-4].
 - God is sovereign – His decree will stand [9:5-6].
 - Israel would not get special treatment [9:7].
 - God would destroy the nation, but He would preserve the remnant [9:8-10].
 - Though Israel would certainly be taken into captivity, God would restore them as a nation – eventually on a permanent basis [9:11-15].
- Applications for Today
 - Although God is patient and longsuffering, His tolerance of our sins is not everlasting.
 - Repentance opportunities are not infinite [Isa 1:5-6; Jer 5:3; 8:5-7].
 - Events are connected – there is a reason for everything [Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11; 3:11].
 - When He hands out judgment sometimes only a few will be delivered – a remnant.
 - God reveals His will to us [Gen 18:17; John 15:15] and it is up to us to seek to understand what His will is [Eph 5:17].
 - When God withholds His word from a nation destruction cannot be far away, so prayer for that nation becomes even more critical [Num 6:23-27; Ezra 6:10; 7:23; Jer 29:7; 1 Tim 2:1-2].