



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

Amos

Chapter 1-9

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.

2 And he said:

“The Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.” Amos 1:1-2

The Universal Judgment of the Lord

The prophetic ministry of Amos took place during the reigns of two kings of Judah: Uzziah and Jeroboam, sometime between 793-739 BC.

Though a shepherd from Tekoa, a town in Judah, his ministry was addressed Judah, Israel and the surrounding nations. His message is one of universal judgment. The oracles address not only the neighboring nations around Judah and Israel, but then address the internal corruption and rebellion in Israel and Judah itself.

There could be no pointing of fingers and laying of blame beyond the borders of Judah and Israel. The sin which the people would see in their neighbors should be observed within themselves.

Literary Structure

Amos: Oracles and Visions of Justice		Chap. 1-9
Oracles of Judgment	Against the Nations	1:2-2:5
	Against Judah and Israel	2:6-6:14
Visions of Judgment	Locust, Fire and Plumb Line	7:1-9
Narrative Interlude	Condemnation of Political Denial	7:10-17
Visions of Judgment	The Basket of Summer Fruit	8:1-14
	The Lord Beside his Altar	9:1-10
Restoration	The Booth of David	9:11-15



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The Window and the Mirror (1:1-9:10)

The flow of the oracles of the prophet Amos is to gather his Judean and Israelite readers into revealing their sense of self righteousness as they look out the window to see the judgment against their neighbors (1:2-2:5). But then, he turns the window into a mirror and shows them their own sin (2:6-6:14). The political reality Amos is facing is revealed in the narrative of chapter 7:10-17:

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹ For thus Amos has said,

"Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land." Amos 7:10-11

Hope for the Righteous Remnant

The major note of Amos is judgment. He is sounding a strong warning. He does signal the inevitability of judgment because of the unresponsiveness of the leadership. His note of restoration is a word of hope for the faithful remnant.

"In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, ¹² that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name," declares the Lord who does this. 9:11-12

This prophecy will ultimately find its fulfillment the days of the New Covenant. In Acts 15, James signals its fulfillment with the responsiveness of the Gentiles to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (cf Acts 15:17-18)