

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK  
AMOS  
THE JUST JUDGMENT OF GOD**

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Remember how at the end of the school year they would always have a year book signing party?

There would always be an opportunity to select the person "most likely to succeed!"

If, when Amos went to school, they had a designation for the person "most likely to become your neighborhood prophet," he would certainly not have been the one chosen for that honor!

**AUTHOR**

Every glimpse into the background of Amos would seem to make him an unlikely candidate for prophet.

Though apparently familiar with the Pentateuch, Amos was not instructed in the schools of the prophets, nor was he commissioned as a prophet.

His family background was not significant.

*7:14 Not a prophet- Never commissioned formally as a prophet  
Not a "son of a prophet"- Never went to prophets' school.  
(He wasn't a seminary grad!)  
He was a farmer!*

His work was that of a herdsman and dresser of sycamore figs-He was a farmer! (7:14)

He probably owned a small plot of land with a few oxen.

He would have been middle class in a small farming community.

He came from Tekoa, ten miles south of Jerusalem (1:1).

Amos, though a citizen of Judah, was called by God to take a message of judgment to Israel.

*7:15 "Yahweh took me from following the flock"  
He never asked for this job!  
God called him!*

*How did Amos view his call by God? 3:8*

*"When God speaks, everybody listens!"  
When God says, "Speak!" You have to do what He tells you.*

Contemporary prophets:

Previous to Amos:	Elisha died about 40 years before (ca. 800 B.C.) Jonah
Following Amos:	Hosea (N) Isaiah, Micah (S)

## DATE

According to the introduction to the book, Amos was a contemporary of Uzziah (767-39 B.C.) and Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.).

These two kings ruled simultaneously from 767 to 753 B.C.

A date near the end of that period seems logical, perhaps about 760 to 753 B.C.

## BACKGROUND

Israel was under the reign of Jeroboam II (Judah was under Uzziah)

Jeroboam II - 2 Kings 14:23-29

Descendant of Jehu (3rd generation of the 4) 2 Ki. 10:27-32 (Cf. Ex. 32:3-5)

Like all the kings of Israel, he was an evil king.

But he was one of the "good-bad" kings of Israel!

Continued the error of Jeroboam I

That's why he was named after him.

His family valued Jeroboam's style.

Jeroboam reigned during a time of prosperity

He restored dominion of Israel over Damascus and Hamath (Syria)

One of the most capable kings of Israel (N)

Extended the borders back to those of David/Solomon's time (Incl. what Uzziah did)

*He trusted in his wealth and power, rather than in Yahweh*

Israel was enjoying military success and becoming prosperous.

At the same time, it was characterized by immorality and idolatry.

The conditions are the same as those underlying Hosea's message, since the two were contemporary prophets to Israel (N).

The message is given about thirty years before the destruction of Israel.

Their course toward destruction was firmly set.

The political/socio-economic decline was about to begin.

The spiritual decline already had. Look at the description:

2:6-7; 8:4-6 - Injustice abounds

2:12 - They reject what God has established

5:12 - Bribes

5:25-26 - Idolatry

In short, like other pre-exilic prophets,

Background: Sin and idolatry

Purpose: Repentance

Message: Judgment

## **PURPOSE AND THEME**

Amos attempts to warn the northern kingdom that judgment is coming soon.

His purpose is to call them to repentance in order to prevent their fall.

## **ORGANIZATION**

The book begins with a description of the judgment about to fall on the surrounding pagan nations 1-2

Each of the nations surrounding Israel is dealt with, slowly closing in and including Israel at the end.

Specific detailed attention is then directed to the judgment of Israel and their subsequent restoration. 3-9

## **ARGUMENT**

### **JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS 1-2**

Eight nations judged 1-2

### **INTRODUCTION 1:1-2**

Amos begins with an introduction presenting his own background and the time at which these words were revealed 1:1

The basic theme of the book is revealed to be judgment 1:2

*"The Lord roars and thunders!"*

### **JUDGMENT REVEALED 1:3-2:16**

Amos begins by giving the broad scope of the coming judgment.

He wants them to see it in proper perspective.

The judgment of God is not directed at Israel alone, but on the whole region.

Amos predicts judgment against:

Damascus (Syria)	Gaza (Philistines)
Tyre (Phoenicians)	Edom (Esau's descendants)
Ammon	Moab.

*Why these?*

The judgment on these nations is based on their treatment of Israel.

God's standards for judging pagan nations are different than His standards for judging His people.

*"For three . . . , even for four . . . ."*

Three is sufficient cause. *"Three strikes you're out!"*

But they had four! They've gone far beyond!

This is one more offense than even God can tolerate!

### **Judgment on Syria 1:3-5**

*Against whom? Why?*

They threshed Gilead–Manasseh, Reuben and Gad (Transjordan)

*What's the judgment?*

Destruction, dispersion

### **Judgment on Philistia 1:6-8**

*Against whom?*

Traditional city-states of the Philistines

*Why?*

They took a people (Israel) captive to deliver them to Edom

*What's the judgment?*

Fire and destruction–they will perish

### **Judgment on Phoenicia 1:9-10**

*Against whom? Why?*

They delivered a population (Israel) to Edom

They forgot about the covenant they had made with Israel

*What's the judgment?*

Destruction by fire

### **Judgment on Edom 1:11-12**

*Against whom? Why?*

They went after their brother

The descendants of Esau went after the descendants of Israel (Jacob)

Stayed angry–refused to forgive

*What is the judgment?*

Destruction by fire

### **Judgment on Ammon 1:13-15**

*Against whom? Why?*

Descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:30-38)

Attack on Gilead—ripped open their pregnant women

*What is the judgment?*

Destruction by fire

Captivity

### **Judgment on Moab 2:1-3**

*Against whom? Why?*

Descendants of Lot

They burned the bones of the king of Edom

This was a demonstration of exaggerated anger and vengeance.

*What is the judgment?*

Destruction by fire

No rulers left—headless government

### **Judgment on Judah 2:4-5**

*Against whom?*

Following the announcement of judgment on the other nations, Amos moves on to predict judgment against Judah.

*Why?*

Their judgment is caused by rejection of the law and unfaithful conduct.

Different standard applied than for pagans. This is *God's* people!

*What is the judgment?*

Destruction by fire—impacted all of Judah in general.

Only Jerusalem was spared because of Hezekiah.

In the end, Jerusalem is also judged.

### **Judgment on Israel 2:6-16**

When Amos completes these announcements, the reader can picture the rejoicing of Israel at the good news.

All their enemies around them are going to be destroyed by God!

Even their chief rival, Judah, is going to be destroyed.

Now they can enjoy their recently gained wealth, free from oppression.

Then the prophet goes too far!

*Against whom? Why?*

He announces judgment on Israel (N) because of their greed and immorality.

In spite of their privileged position before God, they have rejected Him and sought to follow their own wicked way.

Cause of judgment 2:6-12

Injustice 2:6-8

Rebellion 2:9-12

*What is the judgment?*

Description of the judgment 2:13-16

Destruction

**The first part of the book can be summarized:**

- 1. God is going to judge the nations because of their treatment of His people, Israel.**
- 2. God is going to judge His people because of their disobedience and rebellion against Him.**

### **JUDGMENT ON THE REBELLIOUS PEOPLE–ISRAEL 3-9**

#### **THREE MESSAGES: CAUSE AND CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT 3-6**

Following the announcement of judgment, Amos describes in detail, in three messages, the cause and certainty of the judgment coming against Israel.

Introduced by "*Hear this word, . . .*" 3:1; 4:1; 5:1

#### **First message: Privileged position abused 3**

They're judged because they have a privileged position but have been unfaithful.

Privileged position 3:1-2

Their privileged position is first presented.

*What privilege have they received?*

Divine message 3:3-8

The message is declared to be the necessary result of Yahweh's speaking.

Amos had no choice in the matter.  
It was God's message.  
He had to proclaim it!

Sinful reputation 3:9-10

The cause of judgment, namely, their guilt, is said to be reported among the nations.

*Everybody knows about it!*

Certain judgment 3:11-15

Therefore, judgment is certain.

An enemy will surround them.

Death and destruction will follow.

## **Second message: Playing games with God 4**

Injustice and hypocrisy 4:1-5

They are judged because of their greed and selfishness, and because their religion is purely hypocritical and self-centered.

*How are they treating their neighbor?*

*What is the main characteristic of their worship that is about to provoke divine judgment?*

Repeated warnings 4:6-11

God has given them many warnings! *What are the main ones?*

4:6, 7-8, 9, 10, 11

They have been warned repeatedly, through famine, drought, plague, pestilence, and the overthrow of cities.

*How have they responded to the warnings?*

Yet, they have not returned to the Lord.

*Therefore, what is God going to do about it?*

Coming judgment 4:12-13

The judgment of God will come on them to show them that they are playing games with the great God of the universe.

*You can't play games with God and walk away unscathed!*

They're about to find out who they're fooling around with.

They're going to "meet Him"—come face-to-face with Him.

## **Third Message: Rejection of invitation 5-6**

God is going to judge them because they have rejected His invitation to repent and turn back to Him.

Description of judgment 5:1-3

They are shown a picture of Israel after its judgment.

Their lament over the punishment of the nation is prophesied.

Invitation to repent 5:4-15

*What does God ask of them?* 5:4 5:6 5:14

*What are the three things God promises them if they repent?*

5:14a 5:14b 5:15

He calls on them to repent, but the invitation is rejected.

Rejection of invitation 5:16-27

Judgment is again presented as the inescapable result of their sin.

*How does God respond to their worship, as long as they live in the midst of so much injustice?*

Reputation for sin 6:1-6

Even the heathen nations are more righteous than Israel.

Prediction of captivity 6:7-14

Therefore the captivity is predicted.

## **FIVE VISIONS: ILLUSTRATIONS OF COMING JUDGMENT 7-9:10**

Five visions foresee the coming judgment.

*"This is what the sovereign Lord showed me . . . ." 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1*  
Along with final statement: *"I saw the Lord . . . ." 9:1*

### **First three visions 7:1-9**

The first two visions, namely, the vision of the locusts and the vision of fire, aren't carried out because of the prophet's intercession.

#### **Vision of the locust plague 7:1-3**

Revelation 7:1  
Intercession 7:2-3

#### **Vision of fire 7:4-6**

Revelation 7:4  
Intercession 7:5-6

#### **Vision of the plumb line 7:7-9**

The plumb line, a picture of judgment, is carried out against Israel.

This is the standard by which the building is measured – *they don't meet the norm!*

*So you tear it down!*

Judgment is coming.

Revelation 7:7  
Interpretation 7:8-9

*"I will spare them no longer!"*  
*No intervention will help them! It's too late!*

### **Interruption for rejection 7:10-17**

The visions are interrupted by a scene in which Amaziah, the priest, rejects and opposes the words of Amos.

They should have listened to the warning!

The source of Amos' message is God, *not* the prophet.

The purpose of inserting this section seems to be to show the final rejection of God's appeals by the people.

This was their opportunity to reverse the judgment.

The priest represents the people before the messenger of Yahweh.

When he rejects Amos' message, the people, too, are guilty.

They will be judged as he has been.

Opposition of Amaziah 7:10-13

Authority of Amos 7:14-16

Judgment on Amaziah 7:17

### **Last two visions 8-9:10**

Following the judgment on Amaziah, Amos continues the visions, showing that it is too late for repentance.

#### **Vision of the basket of summer fruit 8**

The basket of summer fruit indicates that judgment is imminent.

Summer fruit is the last crop—it is ripe! It won't wait.

Judgment is imminent—*“I will spare them no longer!”*

Revelation 8:1-2a

Interpretation 8:2b-3

Cause of judgment 8:4-6

Description of judgment 8:7-14

#### **Vision of the smitten lintel 9:1-10**

The final vision, that of the smitten lintel, pictures the judgment as fulfilled and complete.

The whole nation is under destruction

Even in this vision a glimpse of hope is given.

God promises that He will not allow the people to be destroyed completely, though the nation will be.

Revelation 9:1a

Interpretation 9:1b

Impossibility of escape 9:2-4

Power of the Judge 9:5-6

Description of judgment 9:7-10

### **PROMISE OF RESTORATION 9:11-15**

The message concludes with a final promise of future restoration.

*The judgment messages always ended this way!*

God wasn't finished with His people forever!

The judgment isn't permanent—IT'S CORRECTIVE!

The people will be regathered and their kingdom restored.

They will receive peace and prosperity which no one can take away.

This promise is fulfilled when Messiah establishes His kingdom on the earth and they recognize and receive Him.

Although God must judge His people for unbelief and rebellion, He has not abandoned them.

They will be restored and God will fulfill His covenant promises to His people.

**Restoration of throne 9:11-12**  
**Restoration of prosperity 9:13**  
**Restoration of land 9:14-15**

### ***How do we relate the message of Amos to life today (as God's people)?***

It's important to distinguish between God's Word of judgment against His own people for injustice, disobedience and rebellion against His standards and His Word of judgment against pagan nations for their treatment of Israel and their extreme moral perversion.

God never asks pagans to conduct themselves like the people of God.  
*That's an impossible task that people without God will never fulfill!*

***What God will never accept is for His people to conduct themselves like pagans!***