

## **AMOS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Amos chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God. First of all we are told that the writer of this book is Amos and his name means, “burden” or “burden bearer.” That is a tough name and as we will see, his name reflected his mission. He was to bring this heavy burden of judgment against the Northern Kingdom of Israel primarily but will also deal with some of the nations that surrounded Israel as well as the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

And it must have been shocking, maybe unbelievable news to these people in Israel, for they were living in a time of physical or material prosperity and their borders had increased as we will see in a minute. It was the best of times and it was the worst of times. They had it all except for God and thus, things will be bad! You see, Amos is going to share the news of God’s judgment coming upon them for their sin that was manifested in their actions.

As we will see Amos ministered during the days of Jeroboam II who ruled from around 793 to 753 B. C. in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The timeframe for this book many feel is around 760 to 753 B. C. And during his reign things were going fairly well as I have said.

The war with the Syrians, which was going on for a long time was now over. Around 800 B. C. the Assyrian Empire defeated Syria and thus, took away the power of this nation that kept the Northern Kingdom of Israel from expanding. Thus, Jeroboam II was able to recapture some land and expand Israel’s borders. And with Syria in check, Israel enjoyed great prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II.

Now this land that they were able to gain had some very lucrative trade routes running through it, from Assyria to the north and Egypt to the south. And what Israel did was tax those trade routes as the caravans traveled between these two empires. And you thought Illinois was bad with their taxes on their highways!

So prosperity filled the land, things were going well but like I have said, spiritually speaking they were dead, lifeless and God was going to call them on it and He is going to judge them to awaken them out of their spiritual sleep.

Now Amos was born and lived in an area called Tekoa, which was located about 10 miles south of Jerusalem about six miles southeast of Bethlehem. But don't think of this place as very hospitable. This city was located on a hilly ridge that overlooked the desert wilderness. Dr. Adam Smith said, "The men of Tekoa look out upon a desolate and haggard world."

When we hear of names like Daniel or Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Isaiah we see them as men of God, prophets of God. When we hear the name Amos, not so much! Amos had no formal training. And, as we will see he was a herdsman and yet God used him in a powerful way. In Amos 7:14-15 we see Amos explain this very thing that he was not trained up in these things and yet God called him.

We are told, "**Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: 'I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, "Go, prophesy to My people Israel."**" Amos 7:14-15.

I like that because God can use common people, average people to do great things. All God asks is that we are available for Him to use and that we are willing to take those steps of faith. And as we do and we see what God does He gets the glory because we know it can't be us, we know our abilities. The problem does come when we lose sight of the fact that we are nothing and we think it is about us, it is not as we see with this man, Amos!

Let me share this with you and then we will dig into this book. We are told,

Unlike other prophets, Amos was not a man whose life was devoted to hearing and speaking the Word of the Lord. He was no product of the “schools of prophets,” nor a professional “Seer.” He left his flock for a limited period, at the command of God, to deliver a specific message at Bethel. That done, he presumably returned to his sheep-tending at Tekoa.

- Herbert F. Stevenson

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Amos chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

## **AMOS 1**

### VERSE 1

1. The first thing we learn about Amos is that he was a herdsman or a shepherd. It is not the typical word for “*shepherd*” but speaks of managing or owning large herds of sheep and goats, and also in charge of other shepherds. Also, in Amos 7:14 we are told that he gathered fruit from the sycamore-fig trees, which grew some 25 to 30 feet high and produced fruit 3 or 4 times per year.

As I have said, Amos was not a prophet and as far as we know no one in his family was. And yet God called him for this special purpose, which he did and then he went back to being a herdsman!

Now through the eyes of man he was unqualified but through the eyes of God he could do all things! He was humble before the Lord and God lifted Him up to speak to the nation. Never forget that. It is not about our strength, our intelligence, our talent, but it is about God working in us and through us for His glory!

Don't ever feel God can't use you, He can and He wants to! It is out of our weakness that He shows Himself strong and thus, like I have said, He gets the glory for the work that is being done!

2. The timeframe of Amos' ministry is when King Uzziah ruled in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and Jeroboam II ruled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And like I have said, during the reign of Jeroboam the Northern Kingdom of Israel reached its zenith of power, living in a time of great prosperity.

We are also given one more detail of when Amos was ministering and it does narrow it down a little more for us. At the end of verse of 1 of Amos chapter 1 we are told that he ministered, **“two years before the earthquake.”**

What is interesting to me is that some 200 years later we see Zechariah mention this earthquake that took place during the reign of King Uzziah. We are told in Zechariah 14:5 of this earthquake. Zechariah tells us, **“Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.”**

Now according to historical records there was an earthquake in 760 B. C., which would place the time of Amos’s ministry or speaking forth these words at 762 B. C.

3. Again, Amos lived in Tekoa, “Hicksville” you might say and it means “camping ground.” And really that is all this place was and is today. It was and is still located about 10 miles south of Jerusalem and about six miles southeast of Bethlehem in the hill country of Judah.

## **VERSE 2**

1. This roar of the Lord speaks of God’s judgment coming upon the inhabitants of the land. Here we are going to see judgment poured out on 6 Gentile nations, then upon Judah, and lastly, the focus of his ministry, the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And one day the Lion from the tribe of Judah will roar with His judgment against a Christ rejecting world, as the book of Revelation shows us.

2. Now it is possible that when Amos says, “**And utters His voice from Jerusalem**” he is coming against the false worship that was going on in the Northern Kingdom of Israel as they set up the gold calves in Dan and Bethel. The Temple was in Jerusalem and the Lord was speaking there but the Northern Kingdom was practicing false worship, a worship that God did not accept!

### VERSES 3-5

1. That phrase “**For three transgressions . . . and for four**” is a Hebrew idiom and listen to how Sidlow Baxter explains it. He wrote,

The phrase is not to be taken arithmetically, to mean a literal three and then four, but idiomatically, as meaning that the measure was full, and more than full; the sin of these people had overreached itself; or, to put it in an allowable bit of modern slang, they had “gone one too many,” they had “tipped the scale.”

- Sidlow Baxter, Explore the Book, p. 130

So the idea here is sin upon sin upon sin, it is speaking of the completeness of their sin and that the cup of their wickedness is now full and judgment is going to come.

2. So this first judgment is against the Syrians, as Damascus was the capitol of Syria. I think this was born out of what transpired in II Kings 8:7-15. Elisha was the prophet at this time, and Ben-Hadad, was the King of Syria and he was sick. So he sends one of his top men, Hazael to go and find out from this prophet if he would recover from this illness or if he was going to die!

So Hazael goes and inquires of Elisha and we read in II Kings 8:10, “**And Elisha said to him, ‘Go, say to him, ‘You shall certainly recover.’ However the LORD has shown me that he will really die.’**” Sounds like double-talk, but it is not as you will see. After Elisha said this he began to stare at Hazael, his eyes were totally fixed upon him, and Hazael became very uncomfortable with this. Then Elisha began to weep and finally Hazael had enough and he wanted to know what was going on.

And Elisha tells Hazael that he will kill Ben-Hadad, take over the throne and come against the children of Israel, killing the men, dashing their children upon the rocks, and cutting open the pregnant women.

And in II Kings 8:13 we are told “**So Hazael said, ‘But what is your servant - a dog, that he should do this gross thing?’ And Elisha answered, ‘The LORD has shown me that you will become king over Syria.’**” Hazael can’t believe what Elisha has said, he does not see himself as that evil, but Elisha says that this is from the Lord, that Hazael will do these evil things.

So as he returns home, Hazael tells the King that he will recover from this illness but the next day Hazael takes a wet cloth and places it over the face of Ben-Hadad and kills him just as Elisha had said. And Hazael came against Israel in the area of Gilead and did all these horrible things upon them and now God was going to judge them for that. The Assyrians, under their leader Tiglath-Pileser III, conquered Syria and took them captive to Kir in 732 B. C.! (II Kings 16:7-9). That is what the Lord is saying through Amos, “**The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir.**”

VERSES 6-8

1. In these verses we see the judgment of God against the Philistines who were the perennial enemy of Israel. Keep in mind that they were powerful. They occupied the area along the Mediterranean Sea, five major cities; Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and the fifth city was Gath, which is not mentioned here probably because it had already been destroyed.

2. Remember as the children of Israel came into the land, the land was divided up by lot and the area the Philistines occupied was given to the tribe of Dan. But they were not able to drive out the Philistines so the tribe of Dan moved farther northward, leaving this troublemaker in the land.

They were always at war with Israel and they even sold their captives to the Edomites and God says he will destroy them for their actions. Have you met any Philistines lately? There are none! God's Word did come to pass, just as He said! And no, the Palestinians are not Philistines!

VERSES 9-10

1. The Phoenicians occupied the city of Tyre which was just north of the borders of Israel, located on the Mediterranean Sea. During the reign of King David there was a covenant between David and Hiram, King of Tyre.

During the reign of King Solomon, Hiram sent cedars of Lebanon to help build the Temple, besides workers. But then, down the road, this covenant was broken and they too were selling Jews into slavery to the Edomites.



So God judged Tyre, first by the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar, who finally overtook the city, but many of the people relocated to an island just off shore. Then, the Grecian Empire under the leadership of Alexander the Great built a causeway out to the new city of Tyre and finally destroyed it.

### VERSES 11-12

1. The Edomites were relatives to the Jews. Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. And Esau settled in the area of Edom which was located southeast of Israel and God judged them for their anger, their refusal to let it go.

And it is amazing all the years they held onto that anger until that anger finally boiled over and was manifested in their actions. They rejoiced when Israel was attacked, taken into captivity instead of mourning over what had happened to them.

And now God was going to repay them for their actions. And even today the area of Edom is a barren wilderness with no major roads going through it and just a few primitive villages remaining.

2. The lesson for us is that we need to learn to give our anger to God and let Him be our avenger. Paul put it like this in Romans 12:17-21, **“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

VERSES 13-15

1. The Ammonites lived in the area we call Jordan today with its capital being Ammon! But in those days Rabbah was the capital. And God is judging them for the atrocities they perpetrated upon the children of Israel.

And the Ammonites were brutal, like many of the other nations. They killed the pregnant Jewish women, murdered their unborn children and the reason for doing this is simple. They did this to expand their borders! Get rid of future generations as well as wiping out existing ones!

And thus, God was going to judge them and He did for their sins against the Jewish people!

**AMOS 2**VERSES 1-3

1. Here is the sixth and last of the judgments that Amos brings against the Gentile nations that have surrounded Israel. Keep in mind that Moab was a southern neighbor to Judah and here God is judging Moab because as they defeated the King of Edom, killed him, they also dishonored his body by putting lime upon it, which helps to destroy it, eat it up.

Don't get the idea that this is all that Moab did. Obviously Moab and these other nations did many evil things but God picks out one of them to show us why He is judging that nation.

2. As we read on we now see God turn to Judah and speak of His judgment against her and then, the main focus will be against the Northern Kingdom of Israel!

VERSES 4-5

1. Judah is being judged just like the other nations because they too piled sin upon sin and God was going to judge them for it! And notice the key thing that brought this judgment upon them, not the only thing but a very important one!

The Jews had the Word of God, they were entrusted with the oracles of God and yet they turned from it, reaching a point of despising it. Thus, judgment was going to come upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

And as the Babylonians came in under the leadership of their King, Nebuchadnezzar, they destroyed the city of Jerusalem and burned it with fire in 586 B. C. And you can go to see the excavation site of the city of Ophel, the city of David, and you will find 6 inches of ash from this period of time, just as God said would happen. That He would send fire down upon Judah! The Babylonians burned the city with fire!

2. As I see what is happening in our nation and in our churches, we too are negating the Word of God, putting it down instead of applying it to our lives and walking accordingly! Our leaders, our people want to negate God's Word to promote their own wicked lifestyles.

We need to get back to God's Word, for as Peter said, **“as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”** II Peter 1:3-4. Don't forget that and don't despise it! That is a warning from God!

Now let me share with you just a couple of things to show you how the church is moving away from God's Word. You see, just as God judged the Gentile nations around Israel for their sin, God also judged Judah because of their sin and I think the church too will be judged because as Peter said in I Peter 4:17, "**For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**"

Just listen to what some are saying in the Emerging Church regarding the Word of God, how they are putting it down. We are told,

Drop any affair you may have with certainty, proof, argument – and replace it with dialogue, conversation, intrigue, and search.

– Brian McLaren, *Adventures in Missing the Point*, p. 84

The ultimate bible study or sermon in recent decades yielded clarity. That clarity unfortunately was also often boring and probably not that accurate, either, since reality is seldom clear but usually fuzzy mysticism, not black and white but in living colour.

– Brian McLaren, *Adventures in Missing the Point*, p. 84

The Christian faith is mysterious to the core. It is about things and beings that ultimately can't be put into words. Language fails. And if we do definitively put God into words, we have at that very moment made God something God is not.

– Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis*, p. 32

Emergent doesn't have a position on absolute truth, or on anything for that matter. Do you show up at a dinner party with your neighbors and ask, 'What's this dinner party's position on absolute truth?' No, you don't, because it's a non-sensical question.

– Tony Jones (<http://theoblogy.blogspot.com/2005/11/national-youth-workers-convention.html>)

We must stop looking for some objective Truth that is available when we delve into the text of the Bible.

– Tony Jones, *Postmodern Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), p. 201

The inerrancy debate is based on the belief that the Bible is the word of God, that the Bible is true because God made it and gave it to us as a guide to truth. But that's not what the Bible says.

– Doug Pagitt, *A Christianity Worth Believing*, p. 65

For too many people the name Jesus has become a symbol of exclusion, as if Jesus' statement 'I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me' actually means 'I am in the way of people seeking truth and life. I won't let anyone get to God unless he comes through me . . . The name Jesus has too often become a symbol of elitism, exclusivity, and aggression.

– Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, p. 78

All I can say is what God's Word tells us, **"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."** Isaiah 8:20. There is no excuse for us today for we have many Bibles at our disposal. The problem is we listen to the words of men instead of the Word of God!

God held Judah accountable and He does not change. He has told us what we need to live and grow as Christians and we need to obey!

3. Now Amos will move onto God's judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

#### VERSES 6-8

1. We have seen this over and over again and Israel is following right along piling sin upon sin just as the seven previous nations that God judged had done!

Now God speaks against the Northern Kingdom of Israel. You see, because of their prosperity, they turned from God and sought fulfillment by oppressing the people, living immoral lifestyles, all kinds of injustice was taking place.

One writer put it like this, "They were licentious to the uttermost abomination; for in their idol feasts, where young women prostituted themselves publicly in honor of *Astarte*, the father and son entered into impure connections with the same female."

VERSES 9-12

1. How easy we forget all that God has done for us and so did the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Thus, God is recounting what He has done for His people. How He drove out the Amorite, which was a representative of the nations in Canaan at the time of the conquest when Joshua and the children of Israel entered the land.

Even prior to coming into the Promised Land God is reminding them how He brought them out of Egypt and He brought them into a land that was flowing with milk and honey. But to get there, because of their unbelief, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and God sustained them all those years prior to entering the Promised Land! This was all part of their history and they forgot what God had done for them.

How do I know that they forgot what God had done for them? Their actions showed where they were at. We just read how they treated people, how immoral they were, how they did what they wanted instead of what God wanted! They forgot what God had done for them!

Not only that but God raised up the prophets who spoke forth the Words of God to direct the people. The people were dedicated to the Lord and they said that they would obey the Lord, and they didn't.

There were those who took the vow of the Nazarite, which was a vow of consecration unto the Lord. And even after all God did, they turned from Him. They encouraged the people not to consecrate themselves to the Lord and they restricted what the prophets could say. Thus, they encouraged sin and silenced those who would come against their actions.

And tragically we see that same thing happening in the church today. Those who want to silence those who are speaking forth the Word of God and instead, they want to encourage immorality, sin!

Paul warned us in II Timothy 4:2-5, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

In other words, don't let others stop you from speaking forth the Word of God because it is what will change people's lives for the better, it is what will bring them to Jesus!

2. One more point here and that deals with what God has done for us and how we should walk. David Guzik wrote, “This principle - a walk with God based in gratitude for what He did for us - is important for the Christian, and shows why the believer must continually hear the message of the cross. We must live our lives in proper gratitude for what the LORD has done for us.”

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 4:1-3, **“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”**

Paul just spend three chapters in Ephesians speaking of all that we have in Christ, what God has done for us and now he tells us that we need to walk accordingly. How important that is. God has given us so much and we just take it for granted. May we live for Him for He died for us!



VERSES 13-16

1. Amos 2:13 is better translated, “**I will press you under.**” In other words, because of their sin, God was going to press them down, put a strain upon them.

Adam Clarke put it like this in his commentary, “The marginal reading is better: ‘Behold, I will press your place, as a cart full of sheaves presseth.’ I will bring over you the wheel of destruction; and it shall grind your place-your city and temple, as the wheel of a cart laden with sheaves presses down the ground, gravel, and stones over which it rolls.

And Spurgeon gives us a little different look at this verse as he wrote, “Now, it is to be understood, dear friends, before we proceed farther, that our text is but a figure, since God is not to be oppressed by man; all the sin that man can commit can never disturb the serenity of his perfections, nor cause so much as a wave upon the sea of his everlasting calm. He doth but speak to us after the manner of man . . . so the Lord says that under the load of human guilt he is pressed down, until he crieth out, because he can bear no longer the iniquity of those that offend against him.”

2. Now keep in mind that at this point they were living in luxury, the Kingdom had reached its zenith of power and yet, God says that is all going to change. And in 721 B. C. the Assyrians came in and captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of her sin and her refusal to repent before God. And you can read about this in II Kings chapter 17, the capture of Samaria or the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

But keep in mind that over the years, as their wealth, possessions increased, something was decreasing. You see, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was becoming weak and they did not even see it. Not that their military might had decreased but the strength of the Lord was diminishing in their lives. They were not going to be able to stand against the enemy. In fact, they will flee, even the strong will not have the strength to fight because their strength comes from the Lord!

It is as I Corinthians 10:12 says, “**Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**” This is a lesson for us today as well. If we think we can do it apart from the Lord, look out. The Lord says you won’t and as you try you will get farther from Him. Not that God has moved, you have and your actions will reflect that.

And this chapter closes with these words to show the strength of man or what man looks like apart from God, “**‘The most courageous men of might Shall flee naked in that day,’ Says the Lord.**” Amos 2:16.

### **AMOS 3**

#### **VERSES 1-2**

1. Some may feel that God is not fair in what He is doing to Israel and just in case you feel that way He is going to show why He brought His judgment upon them. Here in Amos chapter 3 we see that because of their *present* situation Israel deserved God’s judgment. Then in Amos chapter 4 we will see that God was fair in judging Israel, they deserved it as their *past* is looked upon. And then in Amos chapter 5 we will see that Israel’s judgment is deserved as we look into the *future* of the nation.

2. So this evening we will finish up looking at Israel's *present* situation and we will look at their *past* and *future* next time. First of all, in Deuteronomy 7:6 we are told "**For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.**"

So we clearly see that God chose them, not because they were worthy but God chose them to be the instrument that He would use to reveal His grace to the people. They were to bring the plan of salvation to men. They were to declare the truths of God to a world in need. They knew the will of God but they chose to disobey it. Thus, with privilege, with knowledge comes responsibility.

And in the previous chapter we saw God bring some charges against them, not the full extent of what they did but to show that sin upon sin upon sin was coming forth from their lives and thus, the judgement of God fell upon them. And they should have known better and they did, they just chose to do what they wanted, when they wanted, with whoever they wanted! There is a responsibility that we have with what we know.

We see this in Matthew chapter 11, where Jesus said beginning in verse 21 **“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”** Matthew 11:21-24. You see, Israel, like people today, rebelled against the known will of God, it was not a sin of ignorance and God held them accountable!

And Christians have not learned the lesson. They will say things like this when they sin, ***“God’s not done with me yet!”*** or ***“It is all under grace!”*** That is true but if that is how you feel I am concerned about you even being saved! Sin should cause us to grieve and repent not rejoice! We should not make excuses for our sin but humbly come before the Lord and repent!

Morgan gives to us this interesting insight, “The false deduction which is too often made is that if we are the privileged people of God, *therefore* we may look for His mercy, He will not punish us. That is not so. The measure of our privilege, in the Divine economy, is the measure of our responsibility. Therefore if we fail to fulfill that responsibility He will not pass over our sins, but rather will visit upon us all our iniquities. It is well that those nations who boast of the Divine favour, should lay this lesson to heart.”

VERSES 3-6

1. Here we see Amos give to us six statements and these statements are obviously true. For example, “**Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**” Of course they can’t because they would be going in opposite directions. It is kind of like what we might say today, “Is the Pope Catholic?” It is obvious, of course he is!

And the idea here is that these six obvious statements will lead us to the seventh statement and the conclusion, “**If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?**” In other words, when judgment comes you need to understand that this is not bad luck or an accident, this is the hand of God coming upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel!

Even today people laugh at the idea of the judgment of God and will call things, “It was just Mother nature!” No, it was Father God! No good luck or bad luck but just the hand of God working in the lives of people, nations and this world! Thus, it is better to walk with Him than apart from Him!

Now I want to take a minute to talk about this idea, “**Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**” We talked about this already but the point God is making here is you can’t walk with God and try to pull Him in another direction, to where you want to go. God has stated in His Word the path we are to go down, and thus, to walk with Him means to follow Him, His terms, His way. The only way you can walk with God is to surrender to Him, and Israel refused. May we learn the lesson!

Secondly, many in the church today want us to be in unity and this unity is apart from the truth. There can be no unity apart from truth. So much of the church, not all, but a lot have moved away from the truths of God found in the Word of God and they deny the judgment of God, they explain away sin, they embrace sin, they have so many worldly, unbiblical ideas and they want us to be united with them! We can't because light and darkness don't mix and if you don't have the Word of God then you are in darkness!

### VERSES 7-8

1. Make no mistake about it and this is important for us to understand. God warns us ahead of time, through His Word, through other people, through pastors. It is then up to us to either respond to what God is showing us or to ignore it. But if you ignore what God says and judgment comes, then you can't blame God!

We see this throughout the Bible. Prior to God bringing the flood upon the earth and destroying man-kind except for Noah and his family, we are told, “**And the Lord said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’**” Genesis 6:3. God gave man 120 years to listen to what Noah was telling them and they refused and judgment came. They could not blame Noah and they could not blame God, they were warned!

And we see this over and over again, God revealing Himself to mankind and warning mankind of what will happen if they continue down that path. Clarke put it like this, “Such *secrets* of God are revealed to them, that they may inform the people; that, by repentance and conversion, they may avoid the evil, and, by walking closely with God, secure the continuance of his favour.”

2. What is interesting today is that many want us to stop talking about the coming judgment of God, stop warning people. The world is not getting worse it is getting better they tell us! And many in the church feel that the world will get better and better as it becomes all Christian and then Christ will return.

That is not what the Bible says, it will get worse and unless the Lord returned there would be no flesh that would survive! And in spite of those in the church that want to silence us, when God puts a desire, a passion in your heart, you can't hold it in, you have to share it. Jeremiah found that out. He was a spokesperson for God, and the people hated him for that, and Jeremiah finally had it.

And in Jeremiah 20:9 we read, **“Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.’ But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not.”**

You see, he couldn't hold back, God's Word compelled him to speak forth the truths of God no matter what. And the same is true in our own lives. You can usually tell where a person is at with the Lord by what they talk about, what the passion of their heart is!

And it is getting more difficult to talk about the Lord today because people don't want to hear it but don't let them silence you because it is God's Word that will bring them to saving faith and our silence will keep them lost!

VERSES 9-10

1. The Northern Kingdom of Israel moved away from the Lord and went into a state of confusion. We see oppression, violence, robbery, the streets were unsafe, the people were afraid to go out, they had all kinds of chariot-jacking's I guess! Let's just say that it was bad. And not only that, their enemies were told of their condition and of the judgment that was coming upon them. It gave their enemies a chance to rejoice over Israel's judgment.

Keep in mind that Ashdod was the leading city of the Philistines and Egypt was thought of as a place of slavery by the Jews. And God calls for these cities to come and witness the sin of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, why? So they will understand the judgment that God will bring down upon them for their sin, this is why Israel is being judged by God!

One writer put it like this, "Their reputations for injustice and brutality would be resented by the Israelites, who would consider themselves in every way morally superior to those whom God had summoned as witnesses." It will also "show that covenant law is not the only criterion for testing Israel's behaviour but that by any standards of international decency they have become culprits." (Hubbard) Judgment came not because they were good but because they were wicked and refused to repent and return to the Lord!

VERSES 11-12

1. In other words, they would not escape God's judgment no matter how hard they fought. No matter how strong their military might may be, they would have no strength to win because they were ultimately fighting against God!



This happened as the Assyrians invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel, some 30 years or so after Amos spoke these words! The Assyrians came down and wiped out the Northern Kingdom of Israel just as God said would happen if they continued down this path!

2. Now verse 12 seems a little strange, what is it speaking of when it says, **“Thus says the Lord: ‘As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion Two legs or a piece of an ear, So shall the children of Israel be taken out Who dwell in Samaria - In the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!’”**

I think the idea here is this. A shepherd was responsible for the sheep he was tending and if one was lost or missing he was held accountable for the loss. The only exception was if a wild animal, like a lion, ate the sheep or goat. But even then you would have to show proof that you didn't barbecue the animal and eat it or just lost it because of your negligence. Thus, you would bring a piece of the animal that the lion ate, like an ear or a leg to show proof.

Now what in the world does that have to do with Israel? As God devours Israel in His judgment He will leave a remnant behind, like an ear or a leg you might say, showing what has happened to the people of God for their sin.

VERSES 13-15

1. They had their religious activities going on, the golden calf in Bethel they used to worship God by. They also had their summer houses in the hill country of Samaria and down by the Jordan River they had their winter homes. They lived in a time of prosperity and religious activities and God says He is going to cut all of those things out, His judgment is coming. All that will remain is a piece of an ear or a leg, a remnant showing that He has done these things to them. No longer a time of prosperity, but of poverty and captivity!

2. Let me close this evening with this for us to think about. There are many things that can get in the way of our relationship with God, don't let them. These things can become idols in our lives and we worship them instead of the Lord. I am not saying we bow before them but they are more important to us than the Lord, we are more willing to do those things than spend time with God!

May we stand strong in the Lord! It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”** Have the right heart attitude, the right focus and God will supply you with the things you need, not necessarily what you want!

But I will say this, God does bless us abundantly above all that we ask or think. He gives to us just what we need! Praise God for that. If we would only be satisfied in that and not like Israel who wasn't and went wandering and found themselves being judged by God for her actions. Learn the lessons because God will destroy those idols we put up in our lives!

**TEKOA**



