

# Amos – Study Guide

Grace Lutheran Church – Tucson

The name of Amos is found in Scripture only in the book that bears that name.

Amos was one of the 12 “Minor Prophets.” Why did they receive this name? **The books are short that they wrote (a minor prophet’s book would fit all on one scroll)**

**The Jewish Old Testament ends with II Chronicles (the Christian Old Testament ends with Malachi)**

Amos 1:1-2 (NIV84)

**<sup>1</sup>The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa – what he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel. <sup>2</sup>He said: “The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.”**

- The name “Amos” comes from the word “to load” or to “carry a load”
- Uzziah was king of Judah 792-740 BC. **The southern kingdom**
- Jeroboam (II) was king of Israel 793-753 BC. **The northern kingdom**
- Tekoa was about 6 miles south of Bethlehem, 12 miles from Jerusalem.
- How would you summarize the message of this initial verse of Amos’ prophecy? **God is angry – this is a judgement. God is going to do something.**

Amos 1:3-5 (NIV84)

**<sup>3</sup>This is what the Lord says: “For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth. <sup>4</sup>I will send fire upon the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadid. <sup>5</sup>I will break down the gate of Damascus; I will destroy the king who is in the Valley of Aven and the one who holds the scepter in Beth Eden. The people of Aram will go into exile to Kir,” says the Lord.**

- In addition to Damascus, Amos prophesies similar judgement against Gaza, Tyre, Edom, and Moab. Why would God’s prophet deal with these nations? **These other nations were wronging God’s people. Remember that God’s people are not exclusively special, as God wants all people (nations) to be saved. For example God sent Jonah to Ninevah.**
- Amos did his work in the northern kingdom of Israel, but his words of judgement included a rebuke of the kingdom of Judah.

Amos 2:6-16 (NIV84)

<sup>6</sup>This is what the Lord says: “For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. <sup>7</sup>They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. <sup>8</sup>They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines.

<sup>9</sup>I destroyed the Amorite before them, though he was tall as the cedars and strong as the oaks. I destroyed his fruit above and his roots below. <sup>10</sup>I brought you up out of Egypt, and I led you forty years in the desert to give you the land of the Amorites. <sup>11</sup>I also raised up prophets from among your sons and Nazirites from among your young men. Is this not true, people of Israel?” declares the Lord. <sup>12</sup>But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

<sup>13</sup>Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain. <sup>14</sup>The swift will not escape, the strong will not muster their strength, and the warrior will not save his life. <sup>15</sup>The archer will not stand his ground, the fleet-footed soldier will not get away, and the horseman will not save his life. <sup>16</sup>Even the bravest warriors will flee naked on that day,” declares the Lord.

- What were the most serious wrongs that the people of Israel had committed?

**“...sell the righteous for silver...”- abuse of the court system**

**“...garments taken in pledge...” – they were supposed to give it back, but didn’t, showing no compassion.**

**“...made the Nazirites drink wine...” which is against the vow the Nazirites made**

**Note that it shows every aspect of their daily lives was wronging God, but God was still faithful.**

- Why was their sin so grievous?

The altars of heathen gods were still there; they had not been torn down and destroyed; the hearts of the people are not focused on God

- What judgement did God pronounce?

**I will crush you – all of you!**

Amos 3:1-8 (NIV84)

<sup>1</sup>Hear this word the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel--against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: <sup>2</sup>“You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.” <sup>3</sup>Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? <sup>4</sup>Does a lion roar in the thicket when he has no prey? Does he growl in his den when he has caught nothing? <sup>5</sup>Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground where no snare has been set? Does a trap spring up from the earth when there is nothing to catch? <sup>6</sup>When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble?

When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? <sup>7</sup>Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. <sup>8</sup>the lion has roared—who will not fear? The Sovereign Lord has spoken—who can but prophesy?

- What is the main point of Amos' prophesy here? *If they weren't doing wrong there would be no problem; this is a cause and effect, over and over.*

Amos 3:11-13 (NIV84)

<sup>11</sup>Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "An enemy will overrun the land; he will pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses." <sup>12</sup>This is what the Lord says: "As a shepherd saves from the lion's mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites be saved, those who sit in Samaria on the edge of their beds and in Damascus on their couches." <sup>13</sup>"Hear this and testify against the house of Jacob," declares the Lord, the Lord God Almighty.

- What was the judgement that God threatened?  
*An enemy is coming (they Assyrians.)*
- Why is the picture of judgement here an appropriate picture for Amos to employ?  
*Amos knew about sheep and dangers that predators caused, so he was using it to show how serious the damage was at this point.*

Amos 4:1-8 (NIV84)

<sup>1</sup>Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, "Bring us some drinks!" <sup>2</sup>the Sovereign Lord has sworn by his He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth--the Lord God Almighty is his name.

<sup>4</sup>"Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. <sup>5</sup>Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings—boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do," declares the Sovereign Lord.

<sup>6</sup>"I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord. <sup>7</sup>"I also withheld rain from your when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up. <sup>8</sup>People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.

- Describe the "cows" referred to in verse 1. *Bashan was known for its strong bulls and fat cows; Amos was describing the wealthy women in Samaria as being like those fat cows concerned only with their own selfish needs—above and beyond daily needs---at the expense of the needy.*
- What was the problem with the worship life of the Israelites? How do many today fall into the same sins? *Their gift giving back to God was not heartfelt so it was not good – not acceptable to God. .*

- What should the famines and droughts have done for the Israelites? Why? **The troubles should have led them to repentance. Worshiping the Baals would lead God to stop rain, causing fertile fields to dry up and the crops to wither.**

Amos 4:12-13 (NIV84)

**<sup>12</sup>“Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” <sup>13</sup>He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness and treads the high places of the earth—the Lord God Almighty is his name.**

- What would God do to the Israelites? **Because the Israelites have not returned to God, so they must, therefore, face him as the stern and righteous Judge that He is. These 2 passages are powerful reminders that our Lord God is Almighty.**

Amos 5:18-27 (NIV84)

**<sup>18</sup>Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. <sup>19</sup>It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. <sup>2</sup>Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light—pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?**

**<sup>21</sup>I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. <sup>22</sup>Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. <sup>23</sup>Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. <sup>24</sup>But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-falling stream! <sup>25</sup>“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel? <sup>26</sup>You have lifted up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols, the star of your god—which you made for yourselves. <sup>27</sup>Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,” says the Lord, whose name is God Almighty.**

- Why would the people have longed for the “day of the Lord” Why was this a mistake? **Amos was telling them that, if they continue in their impenitence, the Lord’s coming would be worse trouble for them than they have ever been in or ever seen as He is coming as a Judge.**
- What would God do to his people? **God is going to send them into exile beyond Damascus. He is ripping them out of the Promised Land to a land far away.**

Amos 7:10-17 (NIV84)

**<sup>10</sup>Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel send a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: “Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. <sup>11</sup>For this is what Amos is saying: “Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.””**

<sup>12</sup>Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. <sup>13</sup>Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.” <sup>14</sup>Amos answered Amaziah, “I was neither a prophet nor a prophet’s son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. <sup>15</sup>But the Lord too me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go prophesy to my people Israel.’ <sup>16</sup>Now then, hear the word of the Lord. You say, “do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac.’ <sup>17</sup>”Therefore this is what the Lord says: “Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile, away from their native land.”

- How bad was the situation in Israel? How bad would their destruction be? **Amos repeated that the Israelites would go into exile far away, that it would happen in Amaziah’s time, and that Amaziah’s wife would be a casualty of invading soldiers and that his offspring would be killed by them; his property would be taken over by the invading army.**
- **Amos could not stop preaching God’s words or change God’s words to suit Amaziah, just as our preachers, our pastors, cannot alter God’s words to suit themselves or others. We are blessed with pastors who stay in the Word and teach us to read and study the Bible for ourselves.**

Amos 8:9-12 (NIV84)

<sup>9</sup>“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. <sup>10</sup>I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping. I will make all of you wear sackcloth and shave your heads. I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day. <sup>11</sup>“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land--not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.”

- What would God do to his people?  
**For the unrepentant, it will be days and days of God’s wrath and our weeping and mourning.**
- What warning is there in verses 11-12 for God’s people today? **The warning is for the loss of God’s presence, loss of hearing, reading, and learning God’s word.**

Amos 9:8-10 (NIV84)

<sup>8</sup>“surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth—yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,” declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup>“For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground. <sup>10</sup>All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, ‘Disaster will not overtake or meet us.’”

- What glimmer of hope is found in these words, even among the threats?

**“...yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob...” offers the glimmer of hope that out of the remnant that survives, the Savior will come.**

- Why was God going to punish the people? **His people were unrepentant. There were even some who thought they were too strong and beyond God’s reach, but God says this punishment will be for them all.**

Amos 9:11-15 (NIV84)

**11”In that day I will restore David’s fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be. <sup>12</sup>so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the Lord, who will do these things. <sup>13</sup>“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. <sup>14</sup>I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. <sup>15</sup>I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God.**

- What would God do for his people? Why?  
**God will send a savior, The Savior, Jesus Christ, who will accomplish what we could not and His perfection will wash away all our sins and, by His grace, grant us God’s forgiveness.**

**God does this because He loves us. He is patient, oh so patient, with us, and He shows us how much He loves us every day.**

**Take heed from Amos’ words from God: seek Him, thank Him, be faithful to Him.**