



# The Minor Prophets

AMOS “Preacher of Righteousness”  
765—755 B.C.

## AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

This book is written by the prophet Amos (1:1). Amos (meaning *to bear* or *burden-bearer*) was reared in Tekoa, a small town in the hill country of Judah, six miles south of Bethlehem and 18 miles from the Dead Sea. He was a shepherd or possibly a sheep breeder and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. He was a rugged, out-of-doors type of man, quite different from the society of Israel to whom he ministered. He was not schooled as a prophet but called from secular employment to bring a divine message (7:14-15). Unlike Hosea, Amos presented a straightforward message of justice to the political and spiritual leadership of Israel. Amos dates his ministry by the reign of King Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel. Uzziah ruled from 787-735 B.C., and Jeroboam II reigned from 790-749 B.C. Therefore, a date of 760 B.C. is given for Amos.

## PURPOSE OF AMOS

In the days of Amos, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was still deeply involved in their worship of the golden calves. Although Amos was from a town in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, God chose him to go to the Northern Kingdom to deliver His message of coming judgment. Some of that message was delivered in the corrupt city of Bethel, which was one of the centers of calf worship (7:10-17).

## IMPORTANT DATA ABOUT AMOS

- Key word: Prepare to meet God
- Key chapter: 4 — Climax of the message
- Key verses: 3:1-3; 4:11-12
- Key characters: Amos and Amaziah
- Geography of Amos: Israel

## BACKGROUND

### ❖ Historical circumstances

- Amos ministered to the Northern Kingdom Israel during the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II (790-749 B.C.). In the eighth century, King Uzziah (790-740 B.C.) in Judah and King Jeroboam II in Israel expanded their borders, took control of the trade routes surrounding their countries, and became very prosperous. An upper class society emerged (3:11-13), built expensive homes (3:15; 5:11; 6:4, 11), enjoyed a carnal life-style (6:1-4), and exploited the poor (2:6-7; 5:7, 10-13; 6:12; 8:4-6). Political corruption ruled the day as leaders oppressed the people and committed violence and robbery (3:9-10). Religious fervor was high, but it lacked true devotion to God. Merchants did observe the Sabbath and feast days, but were dishonest and chafed under closing their businesses for religious days (8:4-6). Indeed, the nation was experiencing great material prosperity along with many social injustices and spiritual disregard of God. The people did not listen to God's prophets.
- Amos, like no other prophet, denounced even the social evils of Israel because they pictured the spiritual corruption and decay (wanton luxury—3:1-15; greed—2:6-7; moral depravity —2:7; social and economic injustices—4-6; 5:7-12).

### ❖ Amos' background

- Amos was a farmer (herdsman) before he began to preach (1:1; 7:14) from the area of Tekoa, in Judah.
- Thus, Amos was a country layman from Judah called to go to the North, Israel.
- Sometimes called the preacher of righteousness because of his hard preaching against sin.

## SUMMARY

Amos began his message by pronouncing judgment on six nations that surrounded Israel. God condemned these nations for their many sins against God's people (1:3-2:3). Amos probably gave these messages as a reminder to Israel that God was well aware of Israel's oppressors. But although Israel may have enjoyed this part of Amos' message, they hated the rest. After a brief word against Judah for sinning in the light of knowledge (2:4-5), Amos targeted Israel. Israel was guilty of many terrible violations of God's laws (2:6-16). Amos reminded Israel that God had been disciplining them now for many years, but so far they had not responded. Since they had not responded and repented, Israel was told to “prepare to meet your God” (4:12). Amos then gave some descriptions of the devastating judgments to come (5:3). But the message ended with Amos' looking into the future and seeing the time when God will again restore Israel (9:11-15). The marvelous restoration will take place when Messiah comes and establishes His kingdom.

# OUTLINE

- I. The Prologue (1:1-2) \_\_\_\_\_
- II. The People Judged (1:3-2:16) \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Sledges of Torture – Damascus (1:3-5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Slave Trafficking – Gaza (1:6-8) \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Severing Treaty – Tyre (1:9-10) \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Sword of Terror – Edom (1:11-12) \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. Sadistic Triumphant – Ammon (1:13-15) \_\_\_\_\_
  - F. Spoiling Tombs – Moab (2:1-3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - G. Spurning The Torah – Judah (2:4-5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - H. Social Transgressions – Israel (2:6-16) \_\_\_\_\_
- III. The Purpose of Judgment (3:1-6:14) \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Ruined Relationships – First Message (3:1-15) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Refusal to Repent – Second Message (4:1-13) \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Repentance Requested – Third Message (5:1-17) \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Ritual Reviewed – Fourth Message (5:18-27) \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. Rich at Rest – Fifth Message (6:1-14) \_\_\_\_\_
- IV. The Pictures of Judgment (7:1-9:10) \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Judgment Diverted – Vision of Locusts (7:1-3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Judgment Delayed – Vision of Fire (7:4-6) \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Judgment Determined – Vision of Plumb Line (7:7-9) \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Judgment Dialogue – Voice of the Priest (7:10-13) \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. Judgment Described – Voice of the Prophet (7:14-17) \_\_\_\_\_
  - F. Judgment Declared – Vision of Summer Fruit (8:1-14) \_\_\_\_\_
  - G. Judgment Day – Vision of Lord on Altar (9:1-10) \_\_\_\_\_
- V. The Prosperity after Judgment (9:11-15) \_\_\_\_\_

## AMOS' MESSAGE FOR TODAY: "A PEOPLE GROWN SOFT"

**Thought:** You need to re-evaluate your life. What 3 things characterized Israel's lifestyle that made God so upset?

### I. Content with External \_\_\_\_\_ (4-5)

What do we Mean?

- A. They were engaged in religious \_\_\_\_\_ (4:4-5)
  - 1. They had religion (vs. 4)
  - 2. They had enthusiasm about their religion (vs. 5)
  - 3. They had preachers (7:10-17)
- B. God desired a righteous \_\_\_\_\_ (5:21-24)
  - 1. God hated their religion (vs. 21-23)
  - 2. God wanted righteousness (vs. 24)

### II. Lived in Sinful \_\_\_\_\_ (6:1-14)

God says two things to them:

- A. Their lifestyle was one of \_\_\_\_\_ (6:1)
- B. Their lifestyle was under \_\_\_\_\_ (6:7ff)

### III. Blinded (oblivious) to Approaching \_\_\_\_\_ (7-9)

Chapters 7-9 consist of 5 visions of judgement (locust (7:1), fire (7:4), plumbline (7:7), summer fruit (8:1), the altar (9:1)). These showed the certainty – "it will come to pass."

- A. Reasons? They were blinded to their sins, resulting from:
  - 1. Special relationship they assumed they had with God
  - 2. Tremendous privileges enjoyed as God's children (Ps. 147:19-20)
  - 3. Responsibilities they had neglected (3:2b)
- B. Remedy

**Conclusion:** God wants a right relationship.