

Amos

Denunciation of Sin

Introduction:

Amos was the first of a new school of prophets.

- Like Elijah and John the Baptist, he spoke of how offended the Lord was by sin common in the daily life of the Northern Kingdom – sins of oppressing the poor, idolatry, and empty ritualistic worship of the Lord.

Amos was an unschooled shepherd and a native of Judah, but he was called by God to prophesy to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel and Uzziah, king of Judah.

Sparing no one, the prophet fearlessly announced the impending judgment of the Day of the Lord.

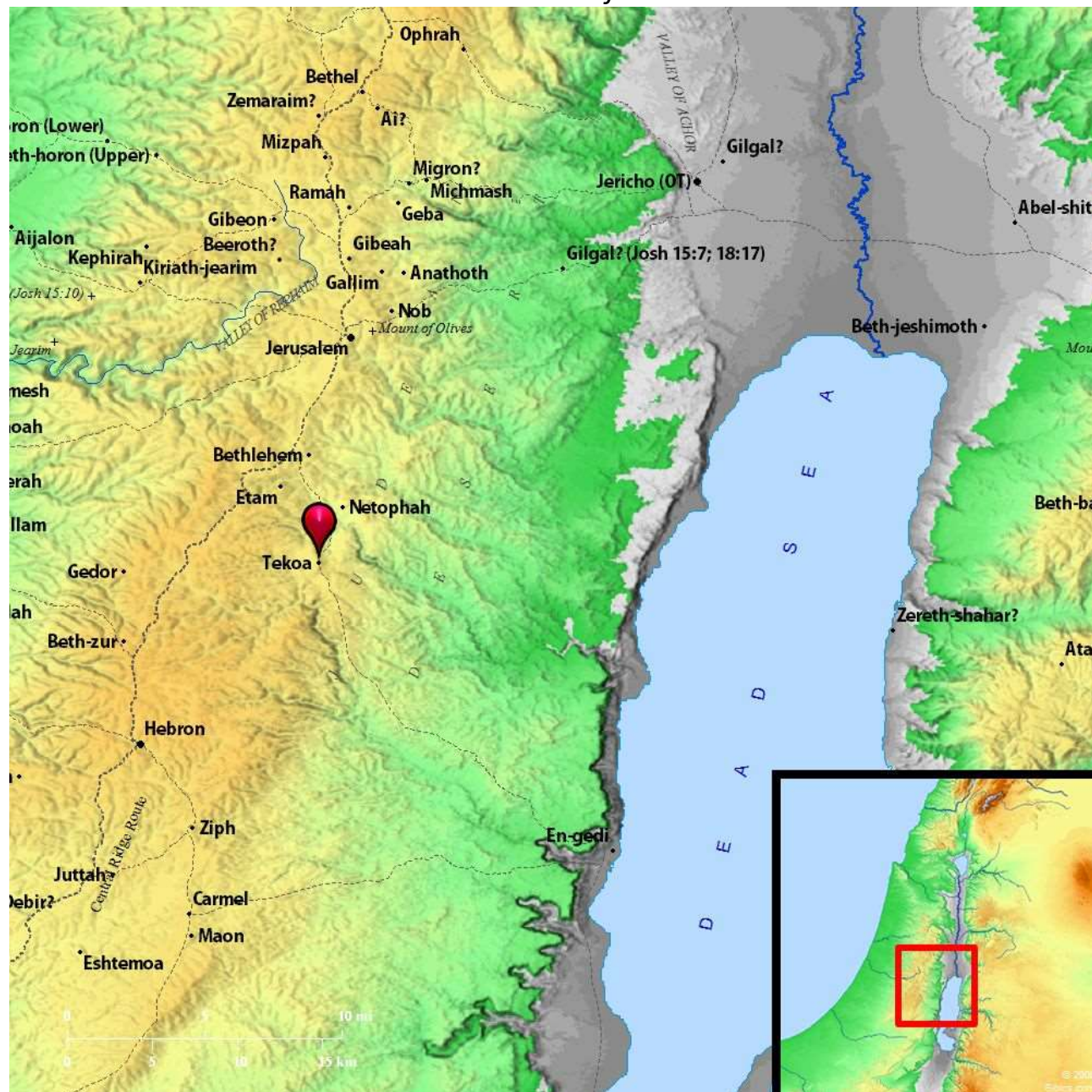
Although the dominant theme of the book is judgment, the final words promise the restoration of a righteous remnant of God's people.

Amos was from Tekoa, a small town about 12 miles south of Jerusalem.

- He “*was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:” (**Amos 7:14**).
 - He was not a priest or a member of the prophet's school.
 - He was a shepherd and took care of sycamore-fig trees.
 - His book shows literary skills, so he may have been well educated or well-traveled.
 - Perhaps he traveled extensively selling his wool.
 - The places mentioned may have been places he visited.

Amos

Denunciation of Sin



Tekoa – The Homeland of Amos

The Ministry of Amos

Amos speaks with brutal frankness in denouncing sin.

- He collided with the false religious leader of his day and was not intimidated by any.
- He continued to speak his message boldly.

Many of the conditions in Israel during Amos's time are evident in today's society.

- We need Amos's courage to ignore danger and stand against sin.

Amos

Denunciation of Sin

The Announcement of Judgment

Amos announces judgments from God against eight nations.

- He begins by announcing God's judgment of six foreign nations around Judah and Israel, which would have had the people nodding their heads and cheering with glee in agreement with the wickedness of those around them and the need for punishment.
- But then Amos turns to Judah and Israel themselves, who also faced the harsh reality of judgment.

Amos 1:1-2

1) Other historical records from the period mention an earthquake that occurred at this time, and it is mentioned later by the prophet Zechariah (**Zech. 14:5**).

2) The Lord is often referred to as a shepherd and His people as sheep.

- Here he is described as a ferocious lion ready to devour those who are evil and unfaithful.

Carmel means "Fertile Field".

- It was a very fertile area.
- A drought capable of drying up this area would have to be quite severe.

Amos

Denunciation of Sin



Amos

Denunciation of Sin

Amos 1:3-2:5

The accusation “for three transgressions ... and for four” means that these nations have sinned again and again.

- This phrase echoes through these verses as God evaluates nation after nation.
- Each nation had persistently refused to follow God’s commands.
 - Sinful practices soon become a way of life, making them easy to ignore and soon accepted as normal.
 - The beginning of the process of correction is analyzing our conduct against the commands of God, accepting and confessing that conduct with is contrary to those commands, asking God to forgive us of that conduct, and beginning the process of conduct in accordance to the commands of God.

Amos 1:3-5 - Damascus

Damascus was the capital of Syria.

- In the past, Syria had been one of Israel’s most formidable enemies.
- After Assyria defeated Syria in 732 B.C. (**II Kings 16:9**), Damascus was no longer a real threat.

The Syrians had been slaves in Kir, but here they were free, (**Amos 9:7**).

- Decreeing that the Syrians should go back to Kir is like saying that the Israelites should go back to Egypt as slaves.

Amos 1:6-8 - Gaza

Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron were four of the five major cities of Philistia, an enemy who often threatened Israel.

- The fifth city, Gath, had probably already been destroyed.
- Therefore, Amos was saying that the entire nation of Philistia would be destroyed for its sins.

Amos 1:9-10 - Tyrus

Tyre was one of two major cities in Phenicia.

- Several treaties had been made with this city, which supplied the cedar used to build David’s palace and God’s Temple

Amos

Denunciation of Sin

Amos 1:11-12 - Edom

Both Edom and Israel had descended from Isaac: Edom from Isaac's son Esau, and Israel from Esau's twin brother Jacob. (**Genesis 25:19-28; 27**).

- But these two nations, like the two brothers, were always fighting.
- Edom had rejoiced at Israel's misfortunes.
- As a result, God promised to destroy Edom completely, from Teman in the south to Bozrah in the north.

Amos 1:13-15 – Ammon

The Ammonites had descended from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughter (**Gen. 19:30-38**).

- The Ammonites were hostile to Israel; and although Israel began to worship their idols, the Ammonites still attacked (**Judges 10:6-8**).
- After Saul had been anointed Israel's king, his first victory in battle was against the Ammonites (**I Sam. 11**).
- Rabbah was Ammon's capital city.
- Amos's prophecy of Ammon's destruction was fulfilled through the Assyrians invasion.

Amos 2:1-3 – Moab

The Moabites had descended from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his older daughter (**Gen. 19:30-37**).

- Balak, king of Moab, tried to hire the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites so they could be defeated (**Num. 22-24**).
- Balaam spoke the Lord's word of blessing instead, but some of the Moabites had succeeded in getting Israel to worship Bal (**Num. 25:1-3**).
- The Moabites were known for the atrocities (**II Kings 3:26-27**).
- An archaeological artifact, the Moabite Stone (below), reveals that Moab was always ready to profit from the downfall of others.

Amos

Denunciation of Sin



The Moabite Stone, otherwise known as the Mesha Stele, contains an ancient inscription by Mesha, King of Moab during the late 9th century BCE, elements of which match events in the Hebrew Bible. The inscription describes two aspects of how Mesha lead Moab into victory against ancient Israel.

(Brown 2019)

Amos

Denunciation of Sin

******After Solomon died, the Kingdom divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin became the southern Kingdom (Judah) under Solomon's son Rehoboam.

The other 10 tribes became the northern Kingdom (Israel) and followed Jeroboam, who had rebelled against Rehoboam.

God had punished other nations harshly for their evil actions and atrocities. But God also promised to judge both Israel and Judah because, they ignored the revealed law of Judah and Israel.

God's people knew what God wanted and still they ignored him and joined pagan nations in worshipping idols. ******

Amos 2:4-5 – Judah

Amos probably won over his audience as he proclaimed God's judgment against the evil nations surrounding Israel.

- But then he even spoke against his own nation, Judah

Now the focus turned to the northern Kingdom.

God condemned Israel for five specific sins:

- (1) Selling the poor as slaves (**Deut. 15:7-11; Amos 8: 6**).
- (2) Exploiting the poor (**Ex. 23: 6; Deut. 16: 19**).
- (3) Engaging in perverse sexual sins (**Lev. 20: 11-12**).
- (4) Taking illegal collateral for loans (**Ex. 22: 26-27; Deut. 24: 6, 12-13**).
- (5) Worshipping false gods (**Ex. 20:3-5**).

Amos 2:6-8 – Israel

Amos was speaking to the upper-class.

- There was no middle class in the country - only the very rich and the very poor.
- The rich observed religious rituals.
- They gave extra tithes, went to places of worship, and offered sacrifices.
- But they were greedy and unjust, and they took advantage of the helpless.

Amos 2:9-11

The prophets were constantly challenging people to remember what God had done!

- When we read a list like this one, we are amused at Israel's forgetfulness.
- But what would the prophets say about us?
- God's past faithfulness should have reminded the Israelites to obey Him; Likewise, what he has done for us should remind us to live for him.

Amos

Denunciation of Sin

Amos 2:12

The Nazarites took a vow of service to God.

- The vow included abstaining from wine and never cutting their hair.
- But instead of being respected for their disciplined and temperate lives, they were being urged to break their vows.
- If the Nazarites were corrupted, there would remain little influence of good among the Israelites.

Amos 2:16

“That day” refers to the time when Assyria would attack Israel, destroy Samaria, and take the people captive (722 BC).