

AMOS

INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – Amos, a shepherd and farmer of Tekoa (7:14), called of God to prophesy. His name means, "burden bearer".
2. DATE – The book is clearly dated in 1:1 as two years before the earthquake during the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. It is usually dated 760-755 BC just before the times of Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.
3. READERS – Though Amos is from Judah near Bethlehem, he is sent primarily to the northern tribes of Israel. See 2:6, 5:1, and 7:10.
4. THEME – Amos reminds Israel of God's faithfulness to His covenant, which will mean judgment on Israel for breaking the covenant.
5. KEY VERSES – 1:2, 3:12, 4:12, 5:24. KEY PHRASES - "for three sins and for four", "Hear this word", and "What do you see, Amos?"

OUTLINE

Amos is one of the easiest books to outline because he uses key phrases in each section of the book.

1. FOR THREE SINS AND FOR FOUR I WILL PUNISH. CH 1:1-2:16
 - A. The Introduction to the book and promise of judgment. Ch1:1-2
 - B. God promises judgment on Israel's neighbors. Ch1:3-2:5
 - C. God promises judgment on Israel for her sins. Ch2:6-16
2. HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL. CH 3:1-6:14
 - A. In spite of privileges, Israel will be punished. Ch3:1-15
 - B. Israel has refused to return to God. Ch4:1-13
 - C. God urges Israel to seek Him. Ch5:1-17
 - D. Woes are pronounced on Israel and the promise of exile. Ch5:18-6:14
3. THE LORD SHOWS AMOS FIVE PICTURES OF ISRAEL'S FUTURE. CH 7-9:10
 - A. Locusts will strip the land. Ch7:1-3
 - B. Fire will devour the land. Ch7:4-6
 - C. A plumb line symbolizes Israel's failure to measure up. Ch7:7-17
 - D. Ripe fruit symbolizes that Israel is ripe for judgment. Ch8:1-14
 - E. The altar is pictured as destroyed and Israel is judged. Ch9:1-10
4. ONE DAY THE REMNANT WILL BE RESTORED. CH 9:11-15

THE IMPORTANCE OF AMOS

1. One of the great warnings of Amos is for a people who take their relationship with God for granted and fail to live it out in a holy life. That holy life shows first in righteous judgments in court.
2. Amos preaches cleverly, preaching around Israel to her neighbors to gain Israel's attention before centering on Israel's sins.
3. Chapter four tells all God tried to do to bring Israel back to Himself. We are reminded of God's grace to Jonah in Chap. 1, and to us in His mercies.
4. Amos uses pictures of everyday life to illustrate God's dealing with His people. This is a great teaching technique that Jesus used in parables.
5. Amos gives the answer any preacher of God's Word *must* give when opposition to God's message arises. See 7:10-17.
6. Amos shows real knowledge of the Books of Moses and uses them frequently in his preaching. See 2:7,8,12, 4:4,5 and 5:22.
7. Once again, in spite of Israel's wickedness, God promises that while He will destroy the majority in judgment, He will preserve the minority as a remnant because of His covenant. Compare Amos 3:12 to Romans 11:5.

AMOS

1 – The Lord announced judgment for sins on the neighbors of Israel but it is really an announcement of judgment by God against Israel. Amos used a very clever technique to announce the judgment. He first announced judgment against several of the nations around Israel including Judah. He was circling in. There is a pattern in each announcement that goes, "Because she (he, they)...So I will send a fire..." The point seems to be to draw the circle closer in around them so that they feel God's judgment about to come on them. The sins mostly are the evil treatment of neighbors. V2 "The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."

2 – Amos listed blessings God gave Israel. God had blessed Israel with destruction of their enemies, deliverance from Egypt, Nazirites and prophets. Yet the people had rejected, even abused and misused all of the gifts God had given. V12-13 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.' Behold I will press you down in your place, as a cart full of sheaves presses down."

3 – One of Amos' traits is lists. His lists lead to his main point that is found in the final item of the list. See V6 "Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the Lord has done it?" The point seems to be that once the Lord speaks, those who are his prophets must proclaim his word. This is a compulsion that cannot be ignored or stuffed. Look at the power of V7-8. "For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord has spoken; who can but prophesy?"

4 – Amos is a great writer. Note how he writes or speaks with genuine rhythm. God announced that he had sent all kinds of troubles, hunger, drought, thirst, and blight on crops. The repeated phrase of response is, "Yet you have not returned to me." The idea is that they had been given many chances but those chances were about to run out. V12-13 "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel! For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth – the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name." Wow! Does that inspire worship? Make sure as you read that you also worship God for who he is and what he has done for us.

5 – This is a call to the nation of Israel to turn to the Lord and away from all other crutches on which they rely. V4 "For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: 'Seek me and live; but do not seek Bethel.'" V14-15 "Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts will be with you, as you have said. Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph." The judgment of God is evident in this chapter. See V21-24 where God explains that he rejected their "solemn assemblies" and their sacrifices and offerings. V23-24 "Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." It is also here that Amos first announced God's word that they would be taken away into exile. V27 "And I will send you into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts."

6 – The judgment of God on the nation would be terrible and devastating. V14 "For behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, declares the Lord, the God of hosts; and they shall oppress you from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of the Arabah." It came because of the pride that led them to live in self-indulgent luxury. But they were V6 "not grieved over the ruin of Jacob!" One of the ways the pride showed was when they condemned other nations but did not realize that they were guilty of the same or worse since they had had the revelation of the Lord.

7 – Amos prophesied that judgment was certainly coming on the land. This was not his word but the word of the Lord. He did not seek to be a prophet but the Lord called him and gave him the message. Note also that when the Lord announced two of his judgments that Amos pled with a prayer on behalf of Israel. V3, 6 "The Lord relented concerning this; 'This also shall not be, said the Lord God.'"

8 – The Lord communicated his word to Amos by a series of pictures. This one was of a basket of ripe fruit representing that the nation was ripe for judgment by God. There were references to the darkness at noon as at the crucifixion in V9, and the famine of the word of the Lord. V11-12 "Behold the days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land – not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it." The judgment in this chapter was devastating but all it did was indicate how seriously the Lord takes the sins of even his own people. We see our sins so lightly. How heavy do yours feel today? Lord, help us cast them onto you and receive your grace and forgiveness, totally undeserved.

9 – The nation of Israel would be destroyed by God but not completely. Then the same God who judged and destroyed them would restore the remnant. V14 "I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit." The judgment would come on people even if they tried to run away to escape. V4 "And if they go into captivity before their enemies, there I will command the sword and it shall kill them; and I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good." V10 confirms that God's judgment would fall even on his own people because they deserved it. "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, Disaster shall not overtake or meet us."