

AMOS, THE PROPHET OF GOD

BIBLE TEXT : **Amos 1:1-15; 2:4-8; 4:11-13; 5:18-20; 7:10-17; 8:4-13; 9:11-15.**

LESSON 329 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgements of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Amos 1:1-15

¹ The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. ² And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither. ³ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: ⁴ But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. ⁵ I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD. ⁶

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom: ⁷ But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: ⁸ And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD. ⁹ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: ¹⁰ But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof. ¹¹ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: ¹² But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah. ¹³ Thus saith the LORD; For

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

From Shepherd to Prophet

Many times in the history of Israel, God sent prophets to tell His chosen people of future events. As Israel so often turned to the worship of idols, the prophets' messages were usually warnings of judgement.

Among the prophets was Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa, a village located about ten miles south of Jerusalem. He had never been to the school of the prophets, nor was he born into an outstanding family; but God looked into his heart and saw that here was a man He could trust to give Israel a message from Heaven.

Amos did not particularly enjoy telling the Israelites about all the grief that would come upon them, but what could he do when the call of God was upon him? "The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8). Forty times in his prophecy we read: "thus saith the LORD." Amos could but speak the things that God told him to say.

For Three Transgressions

The nations to whom Amos first spoke were nations that had done harm to Israel. When God had called Abram to become the father of the Jewish race, He had said: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Genesis 12:3). Many heathen nations had mistreated Israel, and all their sins had been noted. Now they were going to be punished for them. "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." Many times Amos used that expression: "For three transgressions . . . , and for four," meaning that it was not for one or two sins that they were going to suffer, but that they had many times done wicked deeds that deserved punishment. Of course, even one sin will bring judgement upon the sinner. How much more guilty were these people who had committed many sins.

There are people today who feel that they are the elect of God, and that no matter how much sin they commit they are still the children of God and will go to Heaven. But the Bible says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4), regardless of who he is.

The Rich Oppressors

After Amos' words of judgement against the heathen, he turned to Israel and told them what God had against them. At this time Israel was a conquering nation, and proud of her strength. There were many rich people in the land who lived in luxury, and who oppressed the poor. These Israelites had even been selling the people for slaves.

The theme of Amos' sermons was the righteousness of God. God wants His people to love one another, to be kind to the poor, to lend a helping hand to the needy, and, above all, to judge fairly and equally. Again and again Amos told the people that in order to live together happily, and to enjoy the favour of God, they must be good to one another and love mercy.

The selfish people who think only of themselves and their own families, and spend all their time getting things for themselves,

three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border: ¹⁴ But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind: ¹⁵ And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD.

Amos 2:4-8

⁴ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked: ⁵ But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem. ⁶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; ⁷ That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name: ⁸ And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their god.

Amos 4:11-13

¹¹ I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. ¹² Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. ¹³ For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what *is* his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, *is* his name.

Amos 5:18-20

¹⁸ Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end *is* it for you? the day of the LORD *is* darkness, and not light. ¹⁹ As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. ²⁰ *Shall* not the day of the LORD *be* darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

are not happy. The happy people are those who give to others and try to help those who are in need.

Blessings Promised on Condition

God had indeed said that Israel was His chose people. "Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6). But the promise of blessings had been given them only on condition that they obey the commandments of God. Amos now had to tell them that they had not kept those commandments, and therefore were not entitled to the blessings they thought were theirs.

When Moses said that God would keep His covenant with those who loved Him, even to a thousand generations, he added, "And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them" (Deuteronomy 7:9,10).

The judgements of God are very sure. Anything that God has said will come to pass. Parents may sometimes threaten to punish their children for disobedience and then, when the child is disobedient, forget to give the punishment. But not so with God. What He has said will come to pass. How careful we should be to obey the rules God has given us in the Bible so that we will enjoy the blessings He has promised, rather than suffer the judgements, which will come upon the disobedient.

Closed Ears

The people of Israel did not like the words of Amos and asked him not to speak so to them. Many people today do not want to hear about the judgements of God, but the judgements will come anyway, even if they do not hear them. Would you not rather know the dangers that lies ahead, so that you could avoid it? If your house were on fire, would you want people to keep the truth from you because it was unpleasant news? Would you not rather know the truth so that you could call the fire department before you house had burned down?

Amos was trying to help the Israelites. He did not want to see them suffer. But his efforts were not appreciated even by the religious people. The high priest sent word to the king that Amos was a traitor to his country. Amos did prophesy that the king would die, and that the Israelites would be captured by the enemy, but it was the truth and was not the fault of Amos. God was sending judgements for Israel's sins.

When Jesus was on earth He warned people to repent or they would perish. They did not listen to Him, but said, "Away with Him." They killed Him just as they had killed many prophets before Him. But the words He spoke began to be fulfilled very soon; and within 40 years, more than a million Jews had died and many millions more suffered cruel hardships. Let us always remember that the things God has spoken will come to pass.

Mercy Granted

Some of the judgements that God told Amos to proclaim were so terrible that Amos began to pray for the people. "O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." Amos was pleading for mercy upon the Israelites. God heard that prayer, and held back the judgement. But still Israel did not repent.

Judgement has been held back long from our nation because there are yet many people who are praying for God's mercy. There are still people who will be saved. But how long judgement will be withheld we do not know. Any day God may say, "It is enough." He will take His righteous people out of the world, and all the fury of the Tribulation will break upon those who have refused to listen.

Amos 7:10-17

¹⁰ Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹ For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. ¹² Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: ¹³ But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it *is* the king's chapel, and it *is* the king's court. ¹⁴ Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: ¹⁵ And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. ¹⁶ Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac. ¹⁷ Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

Amos 8:4-13

⁴ Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, ⁵ Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? ⁶ That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? ⁷ The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. ⁸ Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt. ⁹ And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: ¹⁰ And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only *son*, and the end thereof as a bitter day. ¹¹ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the

Visions

The first judgements God gave to Amos were by spoken word. But as time went on, the revelation became stronger, and God showed Amos visions of things to come. Finally Amos saw a vision of the Lord standing by the altar proclaiming that all the sinners would die. "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: . . . and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them" (Amos 9:1-3).

The Day of the Lord

The Israelites were looking for the day of the Lord. They thought that God would surely pour out punishments upon the heathen, and give Israel dominion over all the world. But Amos warned: "Prepare to meet thy God." He said that the day of the Lord would be a day of thick darkness, and not light. If they thought they were going to get relief in that day they were like the man who runs from a bear and then has to face a lion; or who goes into his house, thinking he will find shelter, and there a snake bites him. The bite of the snake is worse than if the bear had bitten him. There was only one way to escape the wrath of God, and that was to repent and turn from all their sins.

No matter how much people talk about the Bible and claim to be Christians, if they have not been born again there is no hope of escaping God's judgements for them.

Famine for the Word

Amos told of a time when there will be a greater famine than a famine for bread. People suffer terribly when they cannot get food; and they think they can get along very well without the Bible. But there is a time coming when people will wander from sea to sea, even running, to try to hear the Word of God. The people who have neglected to learn the commandments of God, who have laughed at the teachings of Jesus, who have said as the Jews, "Away with him," will want to hear the Truth, but will not be able to find it. Their only hope will be gone.

How we should treasure the Word of God! The Word is our Light to guide us through an unfriendly world, and take us safe to Glory. It is our comfort here. It is our food from heaven, healing for our bodies, strength for every task.

The Millennium

Amos still held out hope to the Israelites. Though God would bring all these judgements upon Israel, yet He would save a remnant. A few would yet turn to God and enjoy the blessings of Canaan when the curse is lifted. "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."

Amos was faithful in telling Israel all the fierce judgements that would befall them, and God gave him the joy of holding up the hope of the Millennium which all who live godly in Christ Jesus will enjoy.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Amos?
2. What qualifications did he have to be a prophet?
3. To whom did Amos speak first?
4. Why was judgement coming upon those nations?
5. Why did Israel think they would not suffer punishment?
6. What did the Israelites believe about the day of the Lord?
7. What did Amos say about a famine for the Word of God?

land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: ¹² And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*. ¹³ In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.

Amos 9:11-15

¹¹ In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: ¹² That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. ¹³ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. ¹⁴ And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. ¹⁵ And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

8. What will God do for the Jews in the Millennium?