

AMOS, THE PROPHET OF GOD

BIBLE TEXT : Amos 3:1-15; 5:1-27; 6:1-6; 7:1-15; 9:1-15.

LESSON 329 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Amos 3:1-15

¹ Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

² You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

³ Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

⁴ Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

⁵ Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin *is* for him? shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

⁶ Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*?

⁷ Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

⁸ The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

⁹ Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof.

¹⁰ For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.

¹¹ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; An adversary *there shall be* even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled.

¹² Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Called from Secular Employment

1. Amos was a herdsman of Tekoa and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, Amos 7:14;

Amos 1:1

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. His early life furnished simple, but beautiful, illustrations for his prophecies, Amos 3:8,12; 6:1.

Amos 2:13

¹³ Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.

3. Amos felt a keen responsibility to answer God's call, Amos 3:8; 7:15.

II Amos' Authority and Message

1. "Thus saith the LORD" or similar passages appear 40 times in this Book, Amos

Amos 1:3

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:

Amos 1:6

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:

Amos 1:9

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: 3:11, etc.

2. Impending judgements were spoken against the surrounding nations,

Amos 1:3-15

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

corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch.

¹³ Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,

¹⁴ That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground.

¹⁵ And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

Amos 5:1-27

¹ Hear ye this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel.

² The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there is* none to raise her up.

³ For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.

⁴ For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live:

⁵ But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought.

⁶ Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Bethel.

⁷ Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,

⁸ *Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name:

⁹ That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.

¹⁰ They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

¹¹ Forasmuch therefore as your

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 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 2:1-3

¹ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:

² But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, *and* with the sound of the trumpet:

³ And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD.

3. The Word of the Lord was directed against Judah,

Amos 2:4-5

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.

4. The main weight of Amos' messages was spoken against Israel, Amos 3:1-15; 6:7-14.

Amos 2:6-16

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.

⁹ Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

¹⁰ Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

¹¹ And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. *Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel?* saith the LORD.

¹² But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not.

¹³ Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves.

treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

¹² For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate *from their right*.

¹³ Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it *is* an evil time.

¹⁴ Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

¹⁵ Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

¹⁶ Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.

¹⁷ And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the LORD.

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?

²¹ I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

²² Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

²³ Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

²⁴ But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a

¹⁴ Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself:

¹⁵ Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and *he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself*: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself.

¹⁶ And *he that is* courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

Amos 4:1-13

¹ Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

² The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.

³ And ye shall go out at the breaches, *every cow at that which is before her*; and ye shall cast *them* into the palace, saith the LORD.

⁴ Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years:

⁵ And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

⁶ And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

⁷ And also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.

⁸ So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

⁹ I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured *them*: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

¹⁰ I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

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.

5. God called the Children of Israel to sincere repentance, Amos 5:1-27.

6. Amos cried out against sin and selfishness, Amos 6:1-6;

Amos 8:4-6

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?

mighty stream.

²⁵ Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

²⁶ But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

²⁷ Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts.

Amos 6:1-6

¹ Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

² Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: *be they* better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?

³ Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

⁴ That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

⁵ That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;

⁶ That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

Amos 7:1-15

¹ Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings.

² And it came to pass, *that* when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small.

³ The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

⁴ Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat

III Intercession and Persecution

1. Several of God's impending judgements were stayed through Amos' prayers, Amos 7:1-9.
2. Amaziah persecuted Amos, charging him with treason, and tried to drive him from the land of Israel, Amos 7:10-13.
3. The judgement of the Lord fell upon Amaziah, Amos 7:16, 17.
4. Amos' closing message pictured the certainty of Israel's desolation, Amos 7:14; 9:1-10.

Amos 8:1-3

¹ **Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit.**

² **And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.**

³ **And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord GOD: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.**

5. God gave an encouraging promise of light and hope, Amos 9:11-15.

NOTES:

A Needed Prophet

The reign of Jeroboam, son of Joash (sometimes called Jehoash), king of Israel, was one of brilliant military success; but it was a reign also of terrible moral degradation. Much land had been restored to the Children of Israel through the military might of this king; and no doubt a great amount of plunder and riches had accumulated through these successful wars, resulting in a luxurious, idle, sinful life for these people. God's prophets cried out against these sinful conditions, but apparently the Children of Israel took no heed. In fact, the people did their utmost to cause God's messengers to be silent (**Amos 2:11-12** ¹¹ **And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD.** ¹² **But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not.**).

Jesus said, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country" (Matthew 13:57). Would the Samaritans and the Children of Israel have given greater heed to a prophet who came from outside their own country? God sent Amos, a herdsman from Tekoa, of the tribe of Judah, to be a missionary to these ungodly people. The voice of Amos, enlivened and empowered by the Spirit of God, rang out in no uncertain sound against the evils practiced by the Children of Israel. God's message was directed to several of the neighbouring nations as well, but the main burden of Amos' prophecy was aimed directly at the Children of Israel. The spirit of the simple shepherd was greatly stirred and grieved by the apostasy that he found among these people who once worshipped the God of Heaven.

No Excuse

God had been very good to and considerate of the Children of Israel: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). The Lord had led these people out of Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness 40 years, that He might bring them into this Promised Land. The Lord destroyed the Amorites before them. He said their "height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath" (Amos 2:9).

God had poured blessings without number upon these people: blessings in their cities and in their fields, blessings of the fruit of the ground and the increase of their cattle, blessings of basket

up a part.

⁵ Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small.

⁶ The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

⁷ Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

⁸ And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

⁹ And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

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 sycomore fruit:

¹⁵ And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

Amos 9:1-15

¹ I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.

and of store; but in return for all these blessings, the Children of Israel had committed one outrageous sin after another which profaned God's holy name and stirred up His anger.

The sinful condition of these people, the Children of Israel, was further aggravated by their professing to be serving God; but God said, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The Israelites had a form of religion, but they refused to fully honour the God of their fathers, and they denied Him the worship that was His due. God explicitly commanded: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:3-5). The golden calves with their altars in Bethel and Dan were a blasphemy and an outrage of the true worship of God in Jerusalem. Daily sacrifices were held — but with forbidden leaven; the tithes and freewill offerings were brought to the profane altars by proclamation; but God recognised no part of it.

God's highway of holiness leads to Heaven, but the Children of Israel were travelling in the opposite direction. God allowed many physical judgements to overtake the Israelites to cause them to return unto Him, but they would not return. Amos certainly felt the burden of his message to these people. As he prophesied the final apostasy of these people from their God and the resulting judgement and calamity that were sure to follow, the message burned from his lips: "therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12).

Higher Dispensation

The message of Amos to the people of Israel is the message of God to the world today. Under the Gospel dispensation God has not dealt with an individual nation, but with the people of the whole world. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11,12). God has poured great blessings upon all people, the greatest of all blessings being the gift of His Son. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Have the sons of men received and appreciated God's greatest gift? No. on the whole, men have rejected the Lord Jesus. Has God dealt faithfully with people and nations even though they have rejected Him and His precious Gift? Yes. For nearly two thousand years and in myriads of ways He has reasoned with the children of men and tried to persuade them of their sins and responsibility. Will God hold guiltless the Christ-rejecting people? Never! Every person who rejects the Saviour will stand speechless before God in judgement for his neglect. May every living soul turn to the Saviour while in mercy He pleads: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

God's Ways

Men have sometimes hesitated to leave their secular employment to answer God's call, because they felt unqualified for so high a calling; however, if the call of God is true, there need be no fear. Amos was a lowly herdsman, but God used the wisdom and experience that Amos had obtained, while tending sheep, to illustrate mightily the message to Israel. "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? ... The lion hath roared,

² Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:

³ And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; 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:

⁴ And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

⁵ And the Lord GOD of hosts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt.

⁶ *It is* he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name.

⁷ *Are ye not as children of the* Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?

⁸ Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD *are* upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.

⁹ For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

¹⁰ All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

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.

who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:4, 8). Amos must have experienced the attacks of lions upon the flocks that he guarded, and he knew that the lion did not roar until the fatal charge had been started upon the prey. Amos ministered to a different flock now — the flock of Israel. A new voice of judgement was heard — the voice of God. Something had to be done quickly if the flock was to be saved, and Amos felt a keen responsibility to warn that flock and to try to save them from God's wrath.

God can in like manner use the man, from any occupation, who will fully answer His call. Every born-again Christian has an interest in the work of proclaiming the good news of salvation, whether he can devote full time to that work or not. The life of ever man who professes to know and serve the risen Saviour is as an open book, and his life and actions are read by the people of the world. Whatever is read in the life of one who is merely professing Christianity, rather than what is read in the Word of God, is too often the sinner's basis of judgement for all Christianity. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Amos practices an essential in his ministry that is often overlooked by modern prophets. Amos brought God's message, and he ordered his life according to God's Word. Forty times in this small book we read, "Thus saith the LORD," or some similar passage. Amos feared not to cry out against sin, for he knew the power of God to deliver from sin and keep free from sin. When Amos cried out, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria" (Amos 6:1), no man found Amos sitting idly by to enjoy the pleasures of the world and sin; neither was Amos trusting in carnal security. The message of God stirred Amos to his very depths, and he could not abide the man who was not aroused to repentance by God's message of impending judgement. Every true Christian should feel the same concern for the lost as Amos felt for Israel.

Persecution

Such a standard of conduct is sure to bring reproach and persecution. Amos soon felt the persecution. Amaziah, the priest, sent word to the king of Israel that Amos was conspiring against the king, and that the land was not able to bear all his words. The priest counselled Amos to flee from Israel and return to Judah to prophesy, if he had to prophesy. Amos was a humble man (another worthy, essential attribute of God's true messenger). He did not hesitate to tell Amaziah that he had not been a prophet until the Lord called him from the shepherd's life and commissioned him with this message to the Children of Israel. All of Amaziah's threatenings could not stop God's message. God overruled Amaziah's evil design and spoke a message of dire calamity to that ungodly false priest. Amaziah would have fared much better if he had listened and hearkened to the prophet's message instead of trying to drive the prophet away.

Jesus said to His followers: "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" (Luke 17:1, 2). Persecution has never stopped the true Church but has made it stronger in the Lord and in faith.

Real Love

Amos had a real love for the people of his ministry, as evidenced by the way that he cried out so strenuously against their selfishness, idleness, idolatry, and other sins. Also on at

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.

least two occasions the Lord, through a vision, showed Amos impending judgements to come upon the Children of Israel; but through Amos' intercessory prayer, the judgements were diverted.

In like manner the world stands in need of prayer today. God's judgements hang over the people of the world like a dark cloud of fierce indignation. The prayers of God's people are as a bulwark holding back the fullness of the judgements from falling upon the world. Some day this restraining force will be removed and God's wrath, in its unabated fury, will be poured upon the world. The Lord has called the people of the world to return unto Him, but they have refused to return. He is saying to the nations as He said to Israel: Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O nations: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God.

QUESTIONS

1. To what tribe did Amos belong?
2. What was Amos' occupation before the Lord called him to prophesy?
3. Why were the Children of Israel's sins so grievous in the sight of God?
4. What were some of the illustrations that Amos used in his prophecy?
5. What was the basis of Amos' messages to the Children of Israel?
6. In what way was Amos able to turn some of God's judgements away from the land of Israel?
7. Why was the Prophet Amos persecuted in the land of Israel?
8. How did Amos react toward the persecution from Amaziah?
9. How does the Lord regard the man who is "at ease in Zion"?