

## **Amos 1**

**2009 October 23<sup>rd</sup> for November 12<sup>th</sup>**

Amos was a shepherd of Tekoa. He had a vision “two years before the earthquake” during the reign of Uzziah in Judah and Jereboam in the north.

“The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem;  
the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.”

God passed judgment on several of Israel’s neighbors, each for three sins - even four.

Damascus would be burned and destroyed and the people exiled, “Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth,”

Gaza would be burned and the king destroyed, “Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom,”

Tyre would be consumed by fire, “Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood,”

Edom would suffer God’s anger and fire, “Because he pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion,” and

Ammon would fall in battle, the walls burned on a stormy day with violent winds and their king would go into exile with his officials, “Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders.”

## **Amos 2**

**2009 October 24<sup>th</sup> for November 13<sup>th</sup>**

The judgments continue:

Moab would go down in “great tumult” in the midst of battle, “Because he burned, as if to lime, the bones of Edom’s king.” (This had been a great insult, intended to deprive the deceased of eternal rest.)

The sins of Judah were not atrocities of battle, they were infidelity to God.

“For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.  
Because they have rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept his decrees,  
because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed.  
I will send fire upon Judah that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem.”

Finally, the denunciation of Israel, the northern kingdom, concludes the “three sins / four sins” pattern and goes into as much detail as all those before put together.

“For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.  
They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.  
They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed.  
Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name.  
They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge.  
In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines.

“I destroyed the Amorite before them, though he was tall as the cedars and strong as the oaks.  
I destroyed his fruit above and his roots below.

“I brought you up out of Egypt, and I led you forty years in the desert to give you the land of the Amorites.  
I also raised up prophets from among your sons and Nazirites from among your young men.  
Is this not true, people of Israel?’ declares the Lord.”

“But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.  
Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.  
The swift will not escape, the strong will not muster their strength, and the warrior will not save his life.  
The archer will not stand his ground, the fleet-footed soldier will not get away, and the horseman will not save his life.  
Even the bravest warriors will flee naked on that day,’ declares the Lord.”

### **Amos 3**

**2009 October 24<sup>th</sup> for November 16<sup>th</sup>**

The word of God against Israel continues. Israel was the only family, of all the families on the earth, that God had chosen. Therefore, all their sins would be punished. Do people walk together without agreeing to? Does a lion roar without prey? Does a bird get caught in a trap that isn't there? Don't the people tremble and cower when the trumpet sounds, when the battle starts?

Proclaim it everywhere, God has brought about these disasters. He has roared like a lion. He has brought prophesy resulting in oppression and unrest.

“They do not know how to do right,’ declares the Lord, ‘who hoard plunder and loot in their fortresses.’”

So God decrees:

“An enemy will overrun the land; he will pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses.’”

“As a shepherd saves from the lion’s mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites be saved, those who sit in Samaria on the edge of their beds and in Damascus on their couches.”

“Hear this and testify against the house of Jacob,’ declares the Lord, the Lord God Almighty.

“On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground. I will tear down the winter house along with the summer house; the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed and the mansions will be demolished,’ declares the Lord.”

#### **Amos 4**

**2009 October 24<sup>th</sup> for November 17<sup>th</sup>**

“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, ‘Bring us some drinks!’ The Sovereign Lord has sworn by his holiness: ‘The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks, You will each go straight out through the breaks in the wall, and you will be cast out toward Harmon,’ declares the Lord.

“Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings -- boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do,’ declares the Sovereign Lord.”

God gave them hunger but they did not return to him. He gave them drought in spots and rain in other spots. “People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink,” but they did not return to him. God struck the gardens and vineyards with mildew and locusts but they did not return to him. He sent plague to them, just like he had to Egypt, some men were killed with swords and captured by enemies, but they did not return. Some were overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah but they still did not return to their God.

“Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel.

“He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth -- the Lord God Almighty is his name.”

#### **Amos 5**

**2009 October 25<sup>th</sup> for November 18<sup>th</sup>**

Israel had fallen, never to recover. Only ten percent of those who marched out would come back. They shouldn't seek Bethel, Gilgal, or Beersheba for those places would be overthrown in their own ways.

The God who made the day and the night, the stars in the heavens and who brings the dawn was displeased at the way that the people had turned "justice into bitterness" and despised the truth. They "trampled on the poor" so, although they had built fine houses, they would not live in them.

"Seek good, not evil, that you may live.  
Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is.  
Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts.  
Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph."

But the day of the Lord would come. There would be wailing and mourning everywhere.

"It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear,  
as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him."

God hated their religious feasts, sacrifices, and celebrations. He would have nothing to do with them and commanded that they dispense with their noisy songs. They exalted their king, they brought God sacrifices for forty years in the desert, but he would send them into exile.

## **Amos 6**

**2009 October 25<sup>th</sup> for November 19<sup>th</sup>**

Complacency was not acceptable to God. Some of the people lived in luxury, sleeping on fine beds and eating fine foods, but because they "do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph" they would go into exile.

God abhorred the "pride of Jacob." He hated the fortresses. Everything in the city would be "delivered up." If there were ten men in the house they would all die and if someone came in to take care of the bodies and found someone alive, they would say, "Hush! We must not mention the name of the Lord."

God prepared a great oppressor for Israel. His hand would smash the house to pieces. Their conceit would end.

## **Amos 7**

**2009 October 25<sup>th</sup> for November 20<sup>th</sup>**

God showed Amos that he was preparing a swarm of locusts. After the king's harvest, before the workers could come through for a second gleaning for the regular people, locusts would destroy everything. Amos cried out that this would destroy Jacob. God relented and did not do it.

God then showed Amos a wall that he was measuring with a plumb line. This is the way God would measure Israel. He had had enough idolatry. All would be destroyed.

Another prophet, apparently a false one, sent word to king Jeroboam that Amos was raising a fuss in Israel. He quoted Amos' words against the king, that he would die by the sword and his people go into exile. Amaziah then went after Amos and told him to get out and go home.

“Amos answered Amaziah, ‘I was neither a prophet nor a prophet’s son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, “Go prophesy to my people Israel.” Now then, hear the word of the Lord. You say,

“Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac.”

‘Therefore this is what the Lord says:

“Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword.

Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile, away from their native land.’”

The prophets don't take insult and competition lightly....

## **Amos 8**

**2009 October 26<sup>th</sup> for November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

“This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. ‘What do you see, Amos?’ he asked.

“‘A basket of ripe fruit,’ I answered.

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

“‘In that day,’ declares the Sovereign Lord, ‘the songs in the temple will turn to wailing. Many, many bodies -- flung everywhere! Silence!’”

This is because they trampled the needy and tried to rid themselves of the poor. This is because they couldn't wait for the festival or the Sabbath to be over so they could get back to the business of selling each other marked up wheat. This is because when they were at business, they cheated with dishonest scales and substandard products.

The whole land would be punished. It would heave like the Nile. Noon would be like night. “I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.” There will be famine and thirst. Even the young, strong people will faint and stagger in all directions.

“They who swear by the shame of Samaria, or say, “As surely as your god lives, O Dan,” or “As surely as the god of Beersheba lives” -- they will fall, never to rise again.”

## **Amos 9**

**2009 October 27<sup>th</sup> for November 24<sup>th</sup>**

In this final chapter of Amos, Israel is destroyed, then restored.

“I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said:

‘Strike the tops of the pillars so that the thresholds shake.  
Bring them down on the heads of all the people; those who are left I will kill with the sword.  
Not one will get away, none will escape.  
Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them.  
Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down.  
Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them.  
Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them.  
Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them.  
I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good.’

“The Lord, the Lord Almighty, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn --  
the whole land rises like the Nile, then sinks like the river of Egypt --  
he who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth,  
who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land --  
the Lord is his name.

“‘Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?’

“‘Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?

“‘Surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom.  
I will destroy it from the face of the earth --  
yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob.’

“‘For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations  
as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground.  
All the sinners among my people will die by the sword,  
all those who say, “Disaster will not overtake or meet us.”’

“‘In that day I will restore David’s fallen tent.  
I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be,

so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,' declares the Lord, who will do these things.

“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord,  
‘when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes.  
New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.  
I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.  
They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.  
I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,’  
says the Lord your God.”

This restoration seems to be a common prophet’s dream, Amos is not the only one with last words like these.

### **Obadiah 1 - 11**

**2009 October 28<sup>th</sup> for November 25<sup>th</sup>**

(Obadiah has only one chapter.)

At some point in Judah’s history, Edom, their ancient rival dating back to the days of their patriarchs Esau and Jacob, kicked them when they were down and took unfair and humiliating advantage. The prophet Obadiah, in his brief, one chapter book, is concerned entirely with this cruel injustice.

In a vision, Obadiah saw God speak against Edom. Despite their protection from the mountains and their hubris (“soar like the eagle”), he would bring them down. If a thief came in the night or someone ransacked a vineyard they would leave something, but not when Edom was conquered by their own allies. They would be backed up to the border, trapped, and overpowered. The wise men and the warriors would be destroyed, this in payment for the way they had treated Jerusalem.

“On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.”

### **Obadiah 12 - 21**

**2009 October 30<sup>th</sup> for November 30<sup>th</sup>**

This is a list of things that neighbors don’t do to neighbors when they are down, i.e., that Edom should not have done to Israel in her day of trouble.

They don’t rejoice or boast, they don’t march through their gates or look down on them or take away their wealth, and they don’t wait at the crossroads to kill or enslave their fugitives.

What you do will be done to you. In the end, Israel will be saved. Jacob will be the fire and Esau the stubble. “There will be no survivors from the house of Esau.”

People from Edom's neighboring countries will occupy their territories and cities. Foreigners will be their governors.

This is God's word against Edom given through Obadiah.

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