

Amos

Amos lived in Judah but preached in the northern kingdom during Jeroboam II, 750 BC

It starts with a little bit about Amos referring to himself as shepherd and dresser of sycamore trees but the quality suggests he was educated and not just a poor farmer. There is a poem or song intertwined in his book.

The general theme is God puts his people on the same playing field as surrounding nations, he wants them all to be good. They are not above the judgement of God.

“More than almost any other book of Scripture, the book of Amos holds God’s people accountable for their ill-treatment of others. It repeatedly points out the failure of the people to fully embrace God’s idea of justice. They were selling off needy people for goods, taking advantage of the helpless, oppressing the poor, and the men were using women immorally. Drunk on their own economic success and intent on strengthening their financial position, the people had lost the concept of caring for one another; Amos rebuked them because he saw in that lifestyle evidence that Israel had forgotten God.”

He addresses the women of Samaria or “you cows of Bashan” (4.1-3)

Rich persons in Samaria or “you who are at ease in Zion” (6. 1-7)

Rich persons in Jerusalem or “you who devour the needy, annihilating the poor of the land” (8. 4-8)

His Visions

Locusts - A vision of grasshoppers or young locusts, which devour the grass, but are removed at Amos' humble request;

Fire - Fire drying up even the deep, and withering part of the land, but removed at Amos' humble request;

A plumb line - A plumb-line to mark the buildings for destruction. It denotes that God's judgments are measured out by the most exact rules of justice. Here it is placed "in the midst" of Israel, that is, the judgment is not to be confined to an outer part of Israel, it is to reach the very center. This was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, after a three years' siege of Samaria, took it and carried away Israel captive finally to Assyria.

A basket of fruit - The visions are resumed as though the priest at Bethel had trembled at the presence of Amos, and had ceased to persecute him. There is a remarkable play of words, qait being the Hebrew for “summer fruit,” and qêts for “end.” It is harvest time, the end of the agricultural year. Israel is ripe for his final doom, that shall sweep down like a scythe.

God beside the altar - Amos sees a vision of the heathen temple of the Northern Kingdom falling in on the people and the rest being slain. Amos then goes into great detail explaining that none of the false-worshipping Jews of the Northern Kingdom would escape judgment; there would simply be no place to hide. Notice the thoroughness with which Israel will be destroyed in verse 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." They won't simply be defeated by the Assyrian army; they will be deported and spread throughout the nations. In fact, at the fall of Israel to the Assyrians, the influential people of Israel were deported to other lands. However, Amos does prophesy the preservation of a God-fearing remnant in verse 8 when he says, "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."

The upbeat segment (Amos 9:11-15)

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:

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.

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.

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.

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.