

AMOS (Teacher's Edition)

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AUTHOR-

The author of this book is clearly identified as the prophet Amos in the introduction (1:1). Amos was a humble herdsman, or shepherd, of Tekoa (1:1), a village near **Jerusalem** in the southern kingdom of **Judah**. But God called him to deliver His message of judgment to the people who lived in **Israel**.

Amos indicates that he was no prophet, or son of a prophet, but a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit- yet the language used in the book indicates **he was educated**. His **unquestioning obedience** and his clear proclamation of God's message show that he was committed to the Lord and His principles of holiness and righteousness. Amos' keen sense of **justice and fairness** also comes through clearly in the book.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

Amos indicated in his book that he prophesied during the reigns of King Uzziah in Judah and King Jeroboam II in Israel (1:1). This

places his prophecy between 760- 750 B.C. and with his ministry lasting perhaps only 2 years.

ABOUT THE BOOK-

Amos' ministry came during a time of peace and prosperity. Both Israel and Judah had reached new military and political heights, yet religion was at an all-time low. Everyone interpreted their prosperity as a sign of God's blessing on them. But Amos rises up at the Lord's bidding and speaks of the excessive luxury of the wealthy (6:3-7), which had no concern for the needs of the poor. He speaks against a nation that had departed from the worship of the one true God. The situation clearly called for a courageous prophet who could call the nation back to authentic faith as well as a policy of fairness and justice in their dealings with their fellow citizens. Hence, this awesome book is one of the most eloquent cries for justice and righteousness to be found in the Bible. And it came through a humble shepherd who dared to deliver God's message to the wealthy and influential people of his day. His message is just as timely for our world, since God still places a higher value on justice and righteousness than on silver and gold and the things that money will buy.

BASIC THEMES OF AMOS -

This book is a message of judgment. God's people had violated the Covenant and God's punishment of their sin will be severe. Even the nations that have sinned against God and Israel will be judged as well! This teaches us that God is a universal King: He is sovereign over all. Everyone must answer to Him.

Amos stresses that righteousness and justice are essential to a healthy society. Religion is far more than ritual: it demands righteous living. The way people treat their neighbors reveals what their relationship with God is like.

Something else brought out in Amos is the deceptiveness of riches. Rampant luxury and self-indulgence were clearly manifest in Israel and is so evident among us today. As then, material prosperity leads us to believe we are ok with God. It deceives into giving money as our service of God rather than our hearts in true worship. It separates us many times from the poor God wants us to help. After considering all the above, you might say that a statement of Jesus' regarding the two most important commandments can sum up Amos: "Love God and your neighbor as yourself".

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

A brief look at the outline of the book should make the key word no surprise: JUDGMENT. This comes because of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of people.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER-

Though there are many passages that speak to the key theme and word, I narrowed it down to one verse. My key verse is: **Amos 3:2**. In keeping with God's continual theme of judgment and **restoration**, I felt that one chapter said it all: **Amos 9**.

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- **Amos' coming from a humble background to declare the word of the Lord resembles Jesus' beginning in a manger and coming from Nazareth**
- **Amos was a shepherd- Jesus is the Shepherd of our souls**
- **The plumb line in 7 speaks to Jesus as the plumb line by which our lives are measured**

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- **The prophetic and the office of prophet are the work of the Spirit**
- **The fire of judgment speaks to the cleansing fire of the Spirit**
- **God speak to him was through the Spirit**
- **The new wine in 9:13 speaks of the Spirit**

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-

Amos 5:14, 15, 24

We must seek for true justice for all peoples. Fight against injustice in your prayers and do not bow to class or racial discrimination- it has no place in the church.

Amos 6:1

Fight complacency by being zealous for the things of God. Reject any spirit of spiritual elitism.

Amos 8:11, 12

The worse judgment of all is when God no longer speaks to you. Hunger and thirst humbly for God's Word while it is still available.