

## Lesson #23

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** read the book of Amos**BACKGROUND**

**Author:** Amos. Born in Tekoa in Judah. His occupation was shepherd and farmer.

**Date and Place of Ministry:** preached some 28 years in Israel c. 773 - 745 BC, during the reign of Jeroboam II.  
A contemporary of Jonah 790-755 BC.

**Theme and Purpose:** To warn Israel that national disobedience brings judgment.

**Scripture background:** 2 Kings 14:23-27

**OUTLINE**

- I. God's Judgment 1:1 - 9:7
  - Nations under His judgment
  - Facts about His judgment
- II. God's Promise 9:8-15

**HISTORICAL SETTING IN ISRAEL**

**Politically:** the situation is the same as under Jonah.

Jeroboam II becomes king in 783 BC. In mercy, to encourage obedience, God sends Jonah to say the king will expand the borders of Israel to former boundaries. 2 Kings 14:23-27. Under Jeroboam II, the northern nation of Israel has her greatest period of strength and security.

**Economically:** Political success has brought economic prosperity along with a lavish lifestyle. Amos 6:4-6

**Spiritually:** During the 11 years of expansion, the Jews accepted God's mercy and blessing, but rejected God's laws. The king and people are involved in idolatry and immorality. However on their holy days, they still offer animal sacrifices and have their worship of music and liturgy. They do this as part of their culture. The people think their political strength, economic success and religious observance proves they have God's favor. They have no idea Israel is headed for ruin. Amos 6:4-6

**CHRONOLOGY**

- BC    **1100**    Samuel started a seminary for the prophets in Bethel.
- 930**        The beginning of the civil war.
- Jeroboam I** put a golden calf in Bethel to create a new place of worship for the northern nation of Israel.
- 790-755**    **Jonah's** ministry in Israel and Nineveh; he lived and worked in Samaria, the **political** capital.
- 783-743**    **Jeroboam II** (13th king of Israel during the civil war) brings prosperity to Israel.
- 773-745**    **Amos'** ministry in Israel; he lived and worked in Bethel, the **religious** capital.

**EXPLANATIONS**

**The prophet Amos** lives during the Jews' civil war.

He is from Judah (the south) and is sent as prophet to the rival nation of Israel (the north).

He is a farmer from the country and is sent to the elite - to city people who socialize with the king.

**God's future judgment** against enemy nations and **Judah**

- 1:3 Syria for extreme cruelty when she occupied Israel 25 years earlier.
- 1:6 Gaza and the Philistines for slave trading - selling Jews to Edom.
- 1:9 Tyre and the Phoenicians for slave trading - selling Jews to Edom.
- 1:11 Edom for buying the Jews in order to kill them; they are descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother.
- 1:13 Ammonites for their inhumanity; they descended from Abraham's nephew Lot.
- 2:1 Moabites for their inhumanity; they descended from Abraham's nephew Lot.

God holds the nations responsible for the knowledge they have at the moment. He judges them for violations of laws and codes which they all have and accept. For centuries He warned them in ways they could understand, but they refused to change their behavior. So within 600 years, God will bring final judgment. All these people as ethnic groups or races will be destroyed. Today there are no Philistines, Phoenicians, Syrians, Assyrians, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites nor Egyptians. While their names are still used, it is Arabs who live in their lands. The only people left from the Old Testament Middle East are Arabs, Jews and Persians (Iran). Specific warnings of God's judgment on these other peoples came first thru the prophet Amos.

- 2:4 **Judah** for disobedience and idolatry



## EXPLANATIONS continued

### God's future judgment against Israel

**Why:** bribery, injustice and immorality 2:6-8; hypocrisy 5:21-24; greed and dishonesty 8:4-6  
because she did not respond to God's past warnings when He sent famine, drought, blight and plagues 4:6-12

**What:** the enemy will overrun their land 3:11;

They will be exiled beyond Damascus (Assyria). 5:27

Their places of worship will be destroyed because they are worshipping God in the ways of the world.

Jeroboam II and his family will be killed. 7:9

There will be a famine of hearing God's words. 8:11 (no more prophets or messages from God)

**Facts :** based on the picture language of dreams God gives to Amos.

**Locust:** God is willing to show mercy if the people respond. 7:1

**Drought:** the emphasis is still on God's mercy; they do not have to experience judgment. 7:4

**Plumb line:** God measures Israel's conduct according to His rules. 7:9

The emphasis changes from mercy to fairness.

**Ripe Fruit:** Israel is ripe for judgment; it is imminent. 8:1

**Lord by altar** commanding judgment: it is inevitable and cannot be changed. 9:1

This was given in the last year of Amos' ministry. Some 20 years later judgment came.

### God's future promise for Israel

Jews who are descendants from all 12 tribes will respond to God and live in the land.

They will never be uprooted because Jesus will be King in His Kingdom; we also will be in that Kingdom.

## DEFINITIONS and MEANINGS

**Three sins, even for four** means *sin after sin after sin until it is impossible to count them.*

### APPLICATION: God blesses Gentile nations

- \* When a nation has complete information about God and uses the Bible as the basis of her laws, He expects her people to respond to that knowledge. When later generations decide they want God out of their life, after giving many warnings, God will step aside.
- \* When He does, things will happen that make us think things are still good and we still have His blessings. There is an **increase in religious activities**. Hundreds of thousands attend churches each weekend. But their lives are filled with immorality, violence, greed, hypocrisy and dishonesty. There is no clarity of right and wrong. **When our creed does not affect our conduct, our religion is worthless to God.**  
  
There is an **increase in** beautiful forms of **worship and music**. And God is not against them. But without holiness and purity in our lives, our worship will never have God's approval.  
  
There is an **increase in Bible translations and churches**.  
But so many of their leaders are no longer teaching the Word of God as written. They would rather give their own ideas and stories rather than the truth of God.  
People are not believing God's Word as written. They not only question, but also change what God has said. There is no respect for His commands.  
**There is a famine for hearing God's Word.**
- \* When these things begin and people pray for the nation, God withholds judgment. But there comes a time when His judgment is inevitable. Nothing can stop it. However, even if the **nation** must be judged, God will show mercy to **individuals** within the nation who want to follow Him.  
  
While we grieve for our nation, judgment is coming. However, there is still much for us to do. It starts with **our** lives. It is essential to fill our minds with God's Word so we know what He has said. It is necessary to have holiness in our life so we can reflect the character of God. God can then use us to share His message of mercy with others.

**To Study a Book:** scan thru the book twice, jotting down information...

first about the **author:** who he is; when and where he lives; where he goes; what his message is  
then about **conditions:** politically, economically and spiritually

