

Amos

Who, When, Where

Written by Amos. Unlike most of the other prophets mentioned in the Bible, Amos wasn't a "professional". He hadn't been brought up serving in the temple, intending to be a prophet. He was just a farmer but God chose him to bring a major prophecy against the pride and arrogance of Israel.

We can date Amos pretty accurately because we know the earthquake he mentioned occurred in the early 760's BC. So Amos wrote around 764 BC while Uzziah and Jeroboam were on the thrones of the divided kingdom.

Just a few years before Isaiah and Hosea, and about 150 years before the Exile to Babylon. Zechariah also mentions this earthquake, (more than 200 years later). It must have been a big one!

Amos was in Tekoa, about 10km south of Jerusalem. But it seems his main ministry was in the north, in Judah.

Summary

Israel and those around her have been sinning against Yahweh. Sins of oppression and injustice.

He has been disciplining them but they have not returned to him, so he is going to bring judgement against them. Not just discipline, but punishment.

But because of his love for them he relents rather than make it total destruction as their sin deserves, and eventually he will return them to the land, never to be taken away again.

Before You Read

What sins do you think are the worst?

Do you think pride and arrogance are worse than murder?

Does God?

Do you relent?

Key Verses

Amos 3:2

*I have only chosen you of all the families of the earth.
Therefore I will punish you for all of your sins."*

Er... could you choose someone else?

Hebrews 12 reminds us that any father who loves his son will discipline them. Yahweh is a good father. He knows that sin needs consequences otherwise it will run out of control.

This is a reminder that sometimes suffering is a good thing. It can be the outpouring of Yahweh's love for you.

Amos 3:7

*Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing,
unless he reveals his secret to his servants the prophets.*

This shows so much about Yahweh's nature. Why does he warn us? We can't run away and hide somewhere to avoid it. He warns us because he wants us to repent so he doesn't have to hurt the ones he loves so deeply.

Amos 5:21

*I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I can't stand your solemn assemblies.*

Yahweh is not interested in what you do. He is ONLY interested in why you do it. You could give everything you have to the poor but if you do it for motives of pride it will still be a sin.

You can have the best church services on the planet. But if your motives are wrong you may as well spend Sundays at the pub.

Only Yahweh can show you your heart. Even if you look yourself you can be deceived. Ask him to show you this week. If you dare.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

Why do you think Yahweh places such an emphasis on social justice? It seems Israel's failure to look after the poor, and to have a right attitude regarding their own wealth and blessing really offended him.

How about us? Do you think the church is doing well when it comes to social justice? How about you?

Why does Yahweh always relent when it comes to punishing his people? He always seems to be giving them one more chance to change their ways. What can you learn about that?

Do you think there was anything in God choosing a farmer rather than a "professional" prophet to deliver this message?