

I. **NAME AND PERSONALITY OF THE PROPHET.**

- A. The name *Amos* means "burden bearer."
- B. He was a herdsman (1:1).
- C. He was a dresser of sycamore trees (7:14).
- D. His home was in Tekoah, a town of Judah (7:12).
- E. Amos might be called the great reformer. He was the stern prophet of justice and righteousness. His very attitude breathes the desert air of his life's environment.
- F. Amos was:
 1. Humble--in not hiding his station in life.
 2. Wise--in not preaching over the heads of the people.
 3. Cleaver--in catching people's fancy by judging their enemies first.
 4. Fearless--in not tickling the ear, but telling the truth.
 5. Faithful--"Thus says the Lord," was his message.

II. **DATE OF THE BOOK AND OF THE PROPHET.**

- A. Date of the book is about 755BC. This is during the reign of Jeroboam II (783-743BC) and Uzziah (779-740BC).
- B. Amos prophesied to Judah, Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Israel.
- C. Some of the characteristics of Israel were:
 1. Great luxury and ease.
 2. A sense of false security which brought on idleness.
 3. Great financial riches (second only to Solomon's day).
 4. General materialism meant oppression of the poor by the rich.
 5. There was moral corruption everywhere.
- D. The book is written after Obadiah (Amos quotes Obadiah v10-14 in 1:11-12) and after Joel (Amos quotes Joel 3:16 in 1:2).
- E. The people were threatened by two perils:
 1. Moral and religious corruption (a wrong conception of God).
 2. Temptation to follow the successes of the Assyrians.

III. **OUTLINES OF THE BOOK OF AMOS.**

- A. Simple outline:
 - I. Judgment Against the Nations (1-2).
 - II. Judgment Against Israel (3-6).
 - III. Visions regarding the Future.
 - A. The Devouring Locusts (7:1-3).
 - B. The Consuming Fire (7:4-6).
 - C. The Searching Plumb-line (7:7-9).
 - Interlude: Argument with Amaziah (7:10-17).
 - D. The Summer Fruit-Basket (8:1-10).
 - Interlude: A Famine of Words (8:11-14).
 - E. The Lord at the Altar (9:1-10).
 - F. The Restored Tabernacle of David (9:11-15).
- B. Supplemental Outline:
 - I. God's Judgments Against the Nations (1:1-2:16).

- A. Superscription (1:1-2).
- B. Judgments upon Israel's heathen neighbors (1:3-2:3).
- C. Judgments upon God's own people (2:4-16).
 - 1) Judah (2:4-5).
 - 2) Israel (2:6-16).
- II. Details of Israel's Sin and Her Judgment (3:1-6:14).
 - A. Israel's special relationship with God (3:1-8).
 - B. Israel's moral, social, and spiritual decay (3:9-5:15).
 - C. Announcement of Judgment (5:16-6:14).
 - 1) The lament of the people (5:16-17).
 - 2) The first woe: The Day of the Lord (5:18-27).
 - 3) The second woe: destruction and exile (6:1-14).
- III. Five Visions of the Coming Judgment (7:1-9:10).
 - A. First vision: Locusts (7:1-3).
 - B. Second vision: Devouring fire (7:4-6).
 - C. Third vision: The Plumb-line (7:7-9).
 - D. Interlude concerning Amaziah's opposition to Amos at Bethel (7:10-17).
 - E. Fourth vision: Basket of summer fruit (8:1-14).
 - F. Fifth vision: the Altar (9:1-10).
- IV. The Promise of the Kingdom (9:11-15).
 - A. The kingdom to be built (9:11).
 - B. All nations to be given entrance (9:12).
 - C. Blessings of the kingdom (9:13-15).

IV. THE THEME AND THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF AMOS.

- A. The theme of the book of Amos is: **God is a God of ethical Justice and Righteousness.**
- B. The message of the book of Amos is: **Doom.**
- C. The false confidence of the people is as follows:
 - 1. God is our God and we are His people.
 - 2. God brought Israel out of Egypt.
 - 3. We worship God regularly.
- D. Amos answered these false strongholds with the following:
 - 1. He stressed the Spiritual Character of God.
 - 2. He emphasizes the Universality of God's Rule.

V. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE.

- A. Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society.
- B. Nations and individuals that have been favored are laden with corresponding responsibilities.
- C. Ease, luxury, and idleness lead to open sin.
- D. Nations and by analogy individuals, are bound to live up to the light and knowledge granted them.
- E. The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to His commands (5:21-24).
- F. The need for personal conviction in the Prophet (7:14-15).
- G. The discipline of the desert is valuable. What a great service the desert did to Amos.

VI. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

- A. What is your typical response when you hear people talking about the injustices in society today?
- B. What might have been the expected response from the six Gentile nations to whom Amos spoke? How do you think the people of Israel may have responded to Amos' messages to the Gentile nations?

- C. Why was Judah to be judged? How was their judgment different from those of the Gentile nations?
- D. What temptations to injustice, idolatry or immorality do you face in your life?
- E. Why did God call a prophet at this time? Why did he call Amos?
- F. Why is helping the poor and vulnerable an essential way of expressing our commitment to the Lord? How can you and your church show more care for widows, orphans, the poor and strangers?
- G. In what ways are you addicted to affluence? What influences are feeding this addiction? What can you do about it?