

## Bible Study notes and Questions on the Book of Amos

**Overview:** Amos had worked among the herdsmen of Tekoa in Judah (12 Miles south of Jerusalem) being the poorest kind of farmer. His name means “burden, burden-bearer, one with a burden”. He gathered sycamore fruit (**7:14**) which were figs that the poor ate. He had no religious training but seen by God to be just the right man to call. Amos responded in obedience to bring God’s word mainly to the northern kingdom of Israel.

His message came in about 760-750BC during the reign of Jeroboam II king of Israel (790-753BC) and in the days of Uzziah king of Judah (792-740BC) two years before the earthquake (**1:1, Zechariah 14:5**). At that time both kingdoms Israel and Judah were enjoying great prosperity and affluence but spiritually, particularly in the northern kingdom, there was increasing idolatry, living in luxury and extravagant indulgence amongst the rich people, immorality, injustice, corruption and oppression of the poor. Amos had condemned social and religious corruption. Along with Hosea, Amos was given a final warning from the Lord to Israel to repent, to turn back to God. If not, the northern kingdom of Israel would come under the rule of Assyria which eventually came about in 722-721BC. Amos prophesied against Israel possibly most of the time at Bethel the main religious sanctuary. He met opposition from Amaziah the priest of Bethel (**7:10-13**). Amos stood boldly to foretell the death of Jeroboam II (**7:11**) and a severe judgment from the Lord to come to Amaziah and his wife and children (**7:17**). He was not deterred by the anger of religious leaders and others in declaring God’s judgment upon the northern kingdom of Israel.

Amos began with God’s judgments on the neighbouring nations around Israel, all of them had proved to be enemies (**1:3-2.3**). He then rebuked Judah and Israel for much sin (**2:4-8**). Further judgments along with warnings have been given by God to his people in **3:1-15**. God had pleaded with his people to repent but they continued to reject him even after various judgments for disciplinary purposes had been sent (**4:6-11**). God had continued to appeal to his people to seek him (**5:4-6, 14-15**) but again there is no response to repent. The desolations upon Israel have been shown in detail such as many of God’s people going into captivity (**6:7-8**) especially the rich people for living in luxury although religious but disobedient to God’s word, affliction from enemies (**6:9-14**) leading to defeat, destruction and death, judgment on those who abuse the poor (**8:4-10**), famine (**8:11-13**) and further punishments to bring utter ruin on Israel. The final chapter begins with declared judgments from God on Israel to bring destruction (**9:1-10**).

Despite such a gloomy picture of judgments against Israel, the final five verses (**9:11-15**) show restoration to come to Israel in the future when God’s people will never be thrown out of the land again. There is the hope for Israel as a nation serving the Lord as shown in the coming Messianic millennial kingdom (1000 years) to be established on earth when Jesus Christ will return to rule over the whole earth (**Revelation 20:1-6**).

### Bible Study Questions

- Q.1)** Read **Chapters 1 & 2**. A) Show what we are told in **1:1-2** that seems to set the scene for **1:3-2:16**. B) Show the transgressions/sins of each nation or city mentioned from **1:3** to **2:8**. C) How did God intend to punish each nation or city from **1:3** to **2:8**? D) What had God done for the children of Israel in **2:9-11**? E) How did God show his displeasure against his people Israel in **2:12-16**.
- Q.2)** Read carefully **Chapter 3**. A) Show the ways God has intended to punish his people Israel. See **3:1-2, 9-15**. B) What spiritual insight can we learn in **3:3-8**, particularly in the relationship God has with his prophets?
- Q.3)** Read **Chapters 4**. A) Show the further sins of God's people. You may find it helpful to make a list. B) Show the ways God had punished his people in **4:6-11**. Compare with **Leviticus 26:13-34**. Why is God so grieved at the response of his people Israel? C) What do we understand by God's words in **4:12-13**?
- Q.4)** Read **Chapter 5**. A) What is known of the condition of God's people in **5:1-3**? B) What did God require his people to do to live right? See **5:4-8, 14-15, 24**. C) Show the wickedness of God's people in **5:9-13**. D) What is meant by the day of the Lord? See **5:18-20**. It is helpful to Read **Zephaniah 1:14-18**. E) What did God hate his people doing in **5:21-23, 25-26**? F) Consider the judgment God has intended for his people in **5:16, 17, 27**?
- Q.5)** Read **Chapter 6**. A) Show how many people were living in the time of this prophecy of Amos. See **6:1-6**. B) Consider carefully how God will deal with such people in **6:7-14**.
- Q.6)** Read carefully **Chapter 7**. A) Show how Amos was clearly a man of prayer. See **7:1-6**. B) What is understood of the plumb line in **7:7-9**? C) Show the boldness of Amos in **7:10-17** especially in dealing with Amaziah priest of Bethel. D) What have we been told of Amos' background in **7:14-15**? Who is eligible to serve the Lord?
- Q.7)** Read **Chapter 8**. A) What has God shown to Amos regarding the basket of summer fruit? See **8:1-3**. B) Show how God is grieved at the treatment of the poor and needy in **8:4-6**. Look back at **4:1-2**. C) List the series of judgments that God will bring in **8:7-14**.
- Q.8)** Read **Chapter 9**. A) Show how God has shown his judgments on his people in **9:1-5**. B) Show any further judgments God has for his people in **9:6-10**. Can you see also that God will not totally destroy Israel? C) Look carefully at **9:11-15** and consider the evidence of a future fulfilment of Israel to be restored as a nation to be established fully in a coming millennium (1000 years). See also **Acts 15:13-17**.

### Miscellaneous Questions

Where scriptural references have been given, this is not a complete list. Further study will be needed to fully answer the questions.

- Q.1)** What is known of who God is? See **1:2; 3:7-8; 4:2, 12-13; 5:8, 16, 27; 9:5-6**.
- Q.2)** Consider carefully the prophecies in this book. You may find it helpful to write them down and show whether they have been fulfilled. Can you see any prophecies still to be fulfilled?
- Q.3)** Consider the ways of wickedness where Israel has sinned greatly against God in this book and compare with what we see of wickedness today.
- Q.4)** Look carefully to see if you can find words that are repeated several times in this book: for example, "Bethel", "the poor", "devour the palaces". Show any spiritual significance in these repeated words.
- Q.5)** Consider how God requires his people to live right in Amos' time. Show how relevant this prophecy of Amos is to us in the world today.
- Q.6)** What is known of the character of Amos? Read **1:1; 4:1; 7:1-17**.

## Bibliography

The list of resources available will be helpful in studying the scriptures. The author may not necessarily agree with all the views of the writers of the reading material.

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