


# Note

## Amos – Part 1 of 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	Job Elihu	Job
About 2000 BC <b>Era of Patriarchs</b>	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC <b>Era of prophets</b>	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC <b>Era of princes</b>	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC <b>Era of priests</b>	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther
	Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah	Isaiah
	Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah	Jeremiah
	Jeremiah	Lamentation
	Ezekiel	Ezekiel
	Daniel Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar	Daniel
	Hosea	Hosea
	Joel	Joel
	Amos	Amos 

# Summary

## **Amos - Part 1 of 1 .....3**

The book is about the prophet Amos who was not from a prophetic background but was a shepherd by profession. Amos was from the Southern Kingdom but was sent to the Northern Kingdom to rebuke injustice among all; even among God's chosen people. The book focuses on God's righteousness and justice. Contrary to what the Israelites would have expected, they were also warned that they will be judged for their sins as the nations surrounding them. We do see from the book of Amos that God expects His people to be righteous and just as He is. However, the Israelites were often found conforming to the sinful patterns of others and their worthless worship.

From the warnings of Amos we can also reflect on our own lives and how we treat and interact with others. We need God to help us recognize how our attitudes and behaviors might be unfair or even oppressive to others. When our lives lack commitment to follow God's justice, our worship will be counted as empty rituals.

The book of Amos reminds us that God is just and righteous. It also reminds us that He hates hypocrisy and therefore His children have no leniency when it comes to His judgement against Sin. He is fair God. Amos's warnings do not only proclaim disasters but they were also pointing to repentance. Christians today must remember to heed God's warnings and respond accordingly too. We ought to demonstrate a transformed life when we turn to Yahweh in repentance and seek His ways. This is what the beautiful book of Amos is about.

# Transcript

## Amos – Part 1 of 1

Today, we study the Book of Amos. Amos and Hosea were the last chance prophets for the Northern Kingdom of Israel just before the Assyrians came in. Chronologically, Amos precedes Hosea by about 10 years, though in the Bible books it comes after Hosea.

Hosea was the prophet who was the last one pleading with Israel, begging them to remember what a compassionate God they had, and telling them He would receive them back. A God who loves loyalty. We learnt the word, steadfast love. Or if you read the King James, lovingkindness in Hebrew, chesed the love of marriage, not of lust. In marriage, there is a loyalty; love and loyalty. So that is what Hosea focused on.

Amos was very different. He warned. He was a tough accuser. You don't do this, you will get this. You continue to sin, you will pay the price. So he was the tough guy. That's how God works, sometimes using the tough guy, then the gentle guy, basically to appeal to different parts of our character.

Both of them, Hosea and Amos lived or prophesied at the time of Jeroboam, the second, not the first. Jeroboam, the second was a very good military leader. And Israel was at a very strategic crossroad between the three populated continents of the world; Asia, Europe, and Africa. It was right at the hub, like Singapore is the hub of many nations, a trading place. Same for Israel, for the Northern Kingdom. The Southern Kingdom was out of the trade routes. The Northern Kingdom was bigger, 10 tribes. Jeroboam was a great military leader. So there was a kind of stability at that time, in terms of social structure, not religion. And there was a lot of business, so they became very prosperous. So Hosea and Amos had to work in a crowded, and prosperous place. Prosperity tends to lead to inequality. The rich get richer, traders get richer, business people get richer, and the inequality gap gets bigger. Then with social inequality, the rich feel they are better than the poor. We think our success came because of our ability, so we look down on others.

With the prosperity came a kind of indulgent living. They lived overly luxurious lives at the expense of the poor. They partied and then there's immorality. And yet at this time in Israel, the Northern Kingdom, there was

a lot of religiosity. People went to the temple, the golden calf at Bethel, and they worshipped the golden calf, but they still claim to be worshipers of Jehovah God. I hope you understand what I'm saying. Very much like today. Many Christians say we are Christians, but their God is money, power and fame and popularity, health, wealth, whatever.

Amos was sent by God to address this problem of social injustice. There was so much social injustice at this time, as opposed to Hosea who focused more on spiritual adultery saying You claim to be children of God but you worship other gods. On the other hand, Amos said you claim to be a child of God, the righteous and just God but you are unjust, and unrighteous, oppressing the poor. So he addressed a different aspect of their lives.

Now his name means burden, a burden bearer, he really had to carry this burden. He was a Southerner. He came from the Southern Kingdom. So his accent obviously was different from the Northerners. He was a herdsman, a shepherd; lowly job. And as a sideline, he took care of Sycamore fig trees, which are the lowest kind of fruit which the poor eat. So this poor rough guy from the South was sent to the North to warn the King and the elite of the Northern Kingdom of the judgment to come from Assyria. That's a tough job. That's why his name is called burden bearer. He had to carry this burden so he tracked up from the Southern Kingdom, went to the Temple of Bethel, stood at the stairs of the temple and preached.

What we are going to read in Amos is the collection of his preachings, mostly poems. As usual, most prophecies are poems, in this book more than 90% are poems. So, for me who is not a poetic person, I have to listen very carefully to get the feel and get the facts out of the feeling. I will be honest, before I dare to teach this, I had to listen to this book about 6 times in different versions before I got the feel, and read through many times.

Let's look at the theme of this book.

Amos 5:24 ESV

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

So justice and righteousness must flow out of our relationship with God. If we claim to have a relationship with the just and righteous God, then justice and righteousness must flow out of our life. So what does justice mean and what does righteousness mean? Justice speaks of the need to act against

anything that is wrong. So if somebody does wrong, a rich man oppresses, takes advantage of a poor person, that's wrong. If he abuses his power, then justice must be taken against that person, whether he's rich, powerful, or whatever, a rich man beating his maid must go to jail. That's justice. Righteousness speaks of right relationships. That's all it is. Right relationships with God, right relationships with people. Whether we are rich or poor, we must all have right relationships. We are all brothers and sisters made in the image of God. We may have more possessions but we don't have more rights in the eyes of the law.

Basically this must flow out of our Christian lives. Now, this is very important nowadays because Christianity is quite divorced from this. A lot of Christians do exactly the opposite. Historically let's look at the slave trade. The people who went to Africa and simply just went into a village and took all the strong men and put them into slave ships and brought them to America were 'Christians'. Then they were sold to slave masters in America who were 'Christians.' They went to church, they donated money to church. All the Christian nations were involved in slavery. I use the word Christian, but they're not necessarily born-again. Just like the Israelites who claim they were Jehovah believers. These nations: European, American -claim to be Christian. They have big beautiful Cathedral, they have tons of religious ceremonies in the churches, all financed by the slave trade. So we see that there's gross injustice to the weak Africans who cannot withstand their guns and their power.

And then we see the drug trade. The East India Company forced China to take opium in exchange for tea. They basically, were the biggest drug pushers in history. They were Christian nations; the United Kingdom, England, "very, very spiritual". How can you enslave an entire nation, 20% of the world's population with drugs, forcing them to buy your drugs, opium? They were drug pushers for almost 200 years and they were all 'Christians.'

Then we look at colonialism, all done by European countries, including America. They just went with their gunboats, took over the entire nations, made them their slaves to work for them and enrich them. And then they praised God for all that. I hope you see that Amos is not out of sync. Amos dealing with social injustice is not something for another generation. It's for us today. And right now today, you see some of the most horrendous crimes committed in the business world, in the power world, using military might, using influence etc. to subjugate people, all under the brand of Christianity. And that's why Christians don't have a good name in many

countries. So please see this book as being very relevant to us. Don't just look at the Europeans, don't just look at the Americans. The way we treat our maids, our foreign workers, the way we look down on nations poorer than us-it's very much the same. It's just in a more modern cultured form, not gunboats, but arrogance. The injustice is the same. So let's have justice and righteousness flowing out of us.

Let's look at Chapter 1 and chapter 2, as Amos begins his judgment against the Northern Kingdom. Amos was sent to the Northern Kingdom to warn them. But he starts very wisely by judging the nations around. So imagine him standing at the stairs of the Temple and saying: "God will judge Damascus, God will judge Gaza, God will judge Edom, and so on." And you know, all the religious people and the leaders who were going to the Temple were saying, I like this prophet, he's really hammering them. Then after he judges the neighbouring nations, he judges Judah for their sins. They like it because Judah was their rival. And then he turns his guns on them and he then begins to hit them right between the eyes. Let's look at some of their sins, and I hope you see yourself in it. Please don't see it as just the sins of Israelites, something that happened 2000 years ago.

#### Amos 2:6 ESV

Thus says the Lord: For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals-those who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted; a man and his father go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned;

Verse 6 says, you sell into slavery the poor Israelites. Jews were notorious for lending money. Up till today, the big bankers of the world are Jews. And they lend money at interest and when you can't pay the interest, then they take away your house. You have no more house, you still can't pay, they take over your kids. And so they sell those kids to slavery. Now, that's not allowed by the covenant of Moses, you can't sell the Israelites to slavery, but they did it anyway.

So number 1, they oppressed the poor. Now, one of the best ways to oppress the poor is to lend at high interest, knowing that guy can never pay you back. So finally they own everything he owns, including him. Then the second part says the men sleep, go to bed with the same woman and God's name is profaned. What are you talking about here? Now, their religion, as

I've said, many, many times, is a sex religion, where they went to the temple and have sex with the prostitute. The father went in first by having sex, then the son went in to worship by having sex again. Can you imagine this in the temple? So that's how horrendous it was, that's why God not only wants to eliminate the Canaanites but eliminate Israel.

Amos 2:12 ESV (underline this too)

But you made the Nazarites drink wine, and commanded the prophets saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'

So basically, God did send people there to warn them. The Nazarites were not supposed to drink just as men of God are not supposed to be living the high life, be drunk with power and wealth and luxurious living. But today's pastors are basically Nazarites who take a vow to serve God, but they drink wine, they get intoxicated with power, popularity. You know, we have all these so-called men of God who live like celebrities, and don't teach the Word of God, they give motivational speeches. Go on, God will bless you, don't worry about sin, sin has been settled at the cross, go ahead, sin, sin, sin, it's been settled. And so they had prophets that were not God-sent.

Amos 3:4-8 ESV

Does a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Does a young lion cry out from his den, if he has taken nothing? Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth, when there is no trap for it? Birds don't just get stuck in the ground unless it is trapped. "Does a snare spring up from the ground when it has taken nothing? (You put a trap on the ground unless an animal's steps in that trap, it snaps. If it doesn't, nothing happens.) Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? (You know in those days when the trumpets blowing, you know, enemies are coming.) Does disaster come to the city unless the Lord has done it? For the Lord does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants, the prophets. The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?

God is saying that in every action, there are related actions. When a lion sees a prey, he gets excited because he has something to eat. When a bird gets caught in the snare, he's stuck on the ground. When an animal steps in a trap, the trap moves. In other words, all these actions are related. God is saying, before I punish you, I warn you. It's always related. I don't punish you without warning you.

So learn one character of God - God says, I always warn. Never say to me, how come you are punishing me? I didn't know. Israel had been warned over and over again by natural calamities, by enemies attacking them, time after time. God starts with a small warning, a bigger, bigger, bigger warning, until finally, God has to judge. In other words, Christian whenever you are punished, it is not out a bolt of lightning out of nowhere. God has warned you, but you didn't pick it up.

Right now we're going through a crisis like never before. I think businessmen are going into a crisis like never before. We are now talking about the COVID-19 crisis. Now I'm not saying it's a direct pandemic to the people of God alone, but I think it's a warning to the arrogance of men. You know, at the Tower of Babel, men said, we will make a name for ourselves. We will do this. We, we, we, and the businessman have been going for years prospering. Look at the business I have built-wow! And then suddenly, the COVID virus comes and everything they built - the airlines, the hotel business, the restaurants are not worth a lot now. And now you say, who am I? I am just a man, just a little man, tiny, not a Tower of Babel. I don't need a name for myself. Names come, names go, God's name is lasting. So I hope you see here in Chapter 3 - God warns.

Amos 4:1 ESV (underline and read it or listen to it)

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, Bring that we may drink!

One of the species of the cows of Bashan was famous for its beef. They were like Kobe beef. These cows were pampered. The women of Northern Israel, the wives of the rich people were pampered-in the spa all day, having their massage and having manicures and having their maids bringing their drinks, and pushing their kids around, they walk around the supermarket strutting around with the maids behind them.

Amos 4:4-5 ESV

Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim free will offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel! declares the Lord God.



You know, as they live the high life, you know what they do? They go to the temple of Bethel and thank God for their prosperity. Thank God that they are so blessed today. Actually, the blessing came from oppression of the poor, manipulating people, abusing their maids and abusing their employees, not the blessing of God. This is not Israel, this is Singapore.

And then we see Amos 5:4-5 For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live;". Then we see verse 6, "Seek the Lord and live". So God says, Seek me, not another god, seek the Lord. I want you to jump to Chapter 5 verse 14, Amos says: "Seek good and not evil, that you may live;". That is funny. I thought to live, in verses 4 and 5 says, Seek God. If you have God, you will not be punished by God. Verse 14 says, no, not seek God, seek good. Which is it? Seek God or seek good? It's the same thing. When you seek God, you will be seeking good. Seek God and the evidence of you having sought God, is that you will be seeking good, to do right. It's not disconnected.

The religions we have and the time 3000 years ago almost, and today is very similar- it's disconnected. God is God. What I do in the office is what I do my office, nothing to do with God. On Sunday I go and worship God, seek God. Monday to Saturday, I seek to make money at the expense of others. I seek a luxurious life at the expense of others. They are two unrelated things. But when you look at verse 4, verse 5 and verse 14, you realize it's the same thing. When you seek God, you will seek good. So I hope you see what Amos is trying to tell us, all along that there is this disconnect - Slave traders, slave owners went to church, opium dealers went to church, colonialists built the biggest churches in Singapore, exploited the natives-all totally unrelated. They really believe it was right. Today, we continue this religion that Amos is judging against.

Amos 5:7 ESV

(He is charging them.) Verse 7: O you who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth. (He is talking about the judges. The judiciary was totally corrupt.)

5:12 For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins-you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.

We go to Bible studies, and religious studies and they are so delinked from our lives. God said the judiciary, the business, your lives are all linked together.

When the calamities came and their businesses collapsed,  
Look at Amos 5:18 ESV (And God said to them) Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light and gloom with no brightness in it?

They were saying, God help us, God help us, please come down and help us. God said when I come down, you know what I'm going to do? I am going help you, I am going to punish you more. What? You know there are thousands of people right now are going to their churches in the midst of the COVID crisis, seeing their businesses collapse, their luxurious life shaken, and they're crying out to God, please come and God says, do you know what you're asking for? The day of the Lord, when I come, It won't be a good day for you. I am going to send you to hell, you're not even believers. You mean thousands who go to our churches are not believers? Yes, I believe so. Just as the millions in the Temple of Bethel and Dan, the Israelites, the 10 tribes went faithfully with their offerings, week after week, they were not Jehovah's people, they were not God's people.

Chapter 6 Having to preach against His own country.

Amos 6:1 ESV Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria (Samaria is the Capital of Northern Israel), the notable men of the first of the nations (big businessmen controlling the trade routes) to whom the house of Israel comes!

6:4 Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with a finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!

Luxurious living, not caring too much about spiritual things, worrying about whether the ivory of the bed was the latest fashion or whatever oils are the best oils. They are concerned about that, not concerned about their spiritual state, not concerned about the world around them, the spiritual state of the world. So this was the condition that Amos was preaching at.

Now in Chapter 7, Amos sees visions. Let's look in verse 1. Amos then sees a vision of locusts and he pleads with God. Please God, not locusts, we can't handle it. It will wipe us out. Then in Chapter 7, verse 4, he sees a vision of fire burning everywhere. Oh God please, not that God. Have mercy! And then Chapter 7, v 7 he sees a plumb line. Builders always dropped a plumb line to see if the wall is vertical. If the wall is not 100% vertical, over the years it would tilt and fall down. Plumb lines make sure your wall is correct. So God says I give you a plumb line, I give you the law of God to keep you on track. So basically, Amos sees visions and God is helping him to see what's going to happen and he pleads no locusts, no fire. God says I give you a plumb line.

Amos 7:10 ESV (we see Amos is stopped from preaching).

Then, Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam, King of Israel saying, Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, Jeroboam will die by the sword, etc.

So basically, the high priest comes out and say, stop prophesying, you have no right to prophesy here. We don't want to hear your words about Assyria coming and conquering us, and conquering the King. So, Amaziah asked the King to stop him and lo and behold, Amos refused to. He said, you will be punished too, your wife will be a whore, etc, etc. You can read that. So basically, when you prophesy truth, when you preach truth, people don't want to hear it. People will do everything to stop you.

Then Chapter 8 begins with, This is what the Lord God showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit. If a basket of summer fruit is ripe and ready for eating and if you don't eat it, it rots. Basically God is telling Amos they are ripe for punishment. Chapter 8, God is saying this is the end.

Amos 8:2 Then the Lord said to me: The end has come upon my people, Israel; I will never again pass by them. The songs of the temple should become wailings in that day.

So we see here, Chapter 8, Amos is told that's it! And then Hosea comes and then the Assyrians come.

Chapter 9 speaks of the total destruction of Israel. Very, very sad. But the last part of Chapter 9, all prophecies.

Amos 9:11 ESV In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, declares the Lord who does this.

You know it just passes you by, but for the Jews - God will restore the Tabernacle of David! Yes, God has promised that the line of David will not be gone forever. But....all nations? Excuse me Amos, I thought we are the only nation.

You know, this is a hint that the Gentiles would come in. And if you, please write this down, Acts chapter 15 verse 16 and 17, hundreds of years later, when Jesus rose again and the gospel spread to the Gentiles, the Council at Jerusalem, the Elders have to decide, Are Gentiles really able to be saved? Is God really going to save the Gentiles? The Gospel is going out and we hear they are believing in Jesus. Are we supposed to accept Gentiles? In Acts 15, the Council in Jerusalem used Amos Chapter 9 verse 11, and 12, to say, of course, God will receive the Gentiles. Remember what the prophet said, and all nations shall be brought in.

And then Amos 9:15 right at the end, "I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them," says the Lord, your God.

The eternal Kingdom. So here we see, after all this punishment, sent into exile, but they will come back a time when the seed of Jesse, Jesus Christ, descendant of David will come on the throne, and there'll be an eternal Kingdom. And all nations, including the remnant Jews will be one great, glorious, eternal Kingdom.

So that's the Book of Amos. What's the big picture? What's the connection? In Hosea we learned about God's compassion, His loyal love, His steadfast love. Other books, you learn other parts of God's character, another part of God's character. God is just. Even when Christ carried sin on the cross, God had to punish him. Why? He is just. That is the character of God. When there's sin, it must be punished and when Jesus was carrying our sin, he had to be punished. And He is righteous. He wants right relationships, us and him, us and our neighbours, us and our wives, we care for others. They are God's creation. They're not for us to abuse, we're

not better than them. We are all made in the image of God, to be respected, to have fair and equal rights.

Number 1 - the character of God is just and righteous. And if you worship this God and you really know this God, your character will be just and righteous. You won't be a slave trader, you won't be a maid abuser, you won't be an employee abuser.

Number 2 - God hates hypocrisy more than unrighteousness. People who call him God will be punished more. Because they use his name, they claim to be Christians -the slave traders, drug dealers, colonialists, etc. God will punish them. Be sure of that because they carry the name of God. I have been to countries where people will say straight to my face that Christians are disgusting because of these hypocrites who carried the name of God. Christianity is often linked to oppression.

Another character of God we can learn here is when God judges, He is fair because He warned, and warned and warned. Today, we have a warning in some form or other. When something happens, step back and ask, God, show me your lesson. I don't want to ignore it. Don't just say this virus is just a natural calamity. Show me what I can do to respond. I need your wisdom. So may this book of Amos, looking very quaint, far away, ancient, be very relevant. May God be very real to you, the God of justice and righteousness. Wonderful God.

God bless you!