

**BOOK OF AMOS**

1. Amos and Hosea were the last chance prophets for the Northern Kingdom of Israel- just before the captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by Assyrians in 722 B.C.
2. Chronologically, Amos preceded Hosea by about 10 years though it is placed after Hosea in the Bible. Hosea is actually the last prophet for the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
3. Hosea tried to woo the Israelites back via the demonstration of his own marriage with a prostitute showing the kind of steadfast love that God has for Israel. In contrast, Amos did not try to woo the Israelites back. He warned them as a tough accuser about the price of sinning, etc. God uses different methods to appeal to different parts of the human character.
4. Both Amos and Hosea prophesied during the time of King Jeroboam II who was a good military leader. The Northern Kingdom of Israel (also called Israel) was strategically located in the centre of 3 continents namely, Europe, Asia, and Africa and was therefore hub a major international trading center. However, the Southern Kingdom (called Judah) was out of the trade routes. Hence the Northern Kingdom was prosperous at that time.
5. However, there was social inequality in the Northern Kingdom. The rich were proud and oppressed the poor. They also led indulgent lives (alcohol and immorality) and worshipped idols of golden calves. But outwardly they still claimed to worship Jehovah God, like many “Christians” today.
6. Amos warned them of social injustice. Oppressing the poor is an act of rebellion against the commands of a just God. Amos’ warning focused on a different aspect of their sinful lives (namely, social injustice) as compared to Hosea who warned them of their spiritual adultery.
7. Who is Amos?
  - a) Amos’ name means “burden bearer”.
  - b) Amos came from the Southern Kingdom. He was a shepherd and he also took care of sycamore trees (which was a lowly job)..
  - c) Amos, a poor guy from the South was sent by God, to warn the rich people of the Northern Kingdom
8. The book of Amos is a collection of sermons, mostly in poetry because they are prophecies. It is best to listen to this book in different versions to get a feel of the facts.

**What is the Theme of the Book of Amos?**

1. Amos 5:24. Let justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. If we claim to have a relationship with God, justice and righteousness must flow out of our life powerfully.
2. Justice means the need to act against anything that is wrong (e.g. oppression of the poor, abuse of power). Regardless of a person’s status, they still have to be punished.
3. Righteousness means a right relationship with God and people (regardless of social status). Today many Christians are doing exactly the opposite. Some recent historical examples are:

- a) Slavery trade. American Christians brought slaves from Africa to sell to American Christians. These American slave traders were church-goers and donated part of their profits to church. These “Christian” nations have big and beautiful cathedrals, etc. financed by slavery trade. .
- a) Drug trading. The United Kingdom (also a “Christian” nation) sold opium to China. These drug traders introduced drugs to China to get them addicted.
- b) Colonialism. Even today, we see these rich countries using influence and military might in business dealing such as arms trading to subjugate people in the name of Christianity.

All these were done by Western “Christian” nations. Amos is therefore a book that is applicable to modern Christians today. It teaches us to reflect on how we should treat foreign workers, domestic helpers or even nations poorer than us. Do we have the same arrogance and injustice?

### Amos Chapters 1 to 2

1. Amos began his warning of judgement on other nations first, such as Damascus, Gaza, etc. instead of judgement on Israel. The Israelites liked that message because it was about judgments on their neighbours.
2. Amos then went on to warn them of the judgement on Judah (the Southern Kingdom). Again, the Israelites (in the Northern Kingdom) liked it because Judah was their rival.
3. Amos then hit Israel (Northern Kingdom).
  - a) Chapter 2:6. God will punish the Northern Kingdom because they sold the poor into slavery and the same man and his father went into the same girl (Father and son having sex with the same girl at their temples as part of their religious worship). They gave loans with high interest and took over the houses and children of those who were unable to repay their usurious loans. This was against God’s commandments, given via Moses, not to sell brethren into slavery. So they oppressed the poor via such loans and worshipped like the Canaanites.
  - b) Chapter 2:12. They made the Nazarites drink wine (intoxication) and commanded prophets not to prophesy. Just like some churches today, which do not teach the Word of God but give motivational speeches focussing on health and wealth, etc. and claim that all sins have been settled at the Cross so you can do anything you want. The Northern Kingdom had prophets who were not sent by God

### Amos Chapter 3

1. Chapter 3:4-8.
  - a) Lions do not roar till they see the prey. Animals do not fall into traps if they do not step into one. People are only afraid when a trumpet is blown because it means war!
  - b) Therefore, verse 6 says, “If calamity is in a city, is it not the Lord who has done it?” Before God punishes, He will first warn.

. That is the character of God. Do not question 'why' when you are punished because you must have first heard His warnings but ignored it. Israel had been warned over and over again by God over the years, with each warning getting more severe than the last, until finally God has to judge it.

c) When Christians are judged, we should not see it as bolt of lightning out of nowhere. E.g. Covid-19 crisis is a warning to the arrogance of mankind. Hotel, airline, and restaurant businesses are gone overnight. It makes us realize that we are just men, not God. Names of famous chains (e.g. hotel chains, departmental stores, etc.) are gone but God's name lasts forever.

#### Amos Chapter 4

1. Amos 4:1. Cows of Bashan are pampered cows were famous for providing delicious tender beef. It refers to the pampered Israelites and wives of the rich who just enjoy shopping, getting pampered in spas, and having many servants to serve them.
2. Amos 4:4-5. Warning about leavened offerings. These refer to those rich "Christians" who thank "God" (their own prosperity god) in church for riches gained through oppression of the poor and not through God's blessings.

#### Amos Chapter 5

1. Amos 5:4-5 is a call to Israel for repentance. Seek the Lord and live and not be annihilated.
2. Amos 5:14. Seek good and not evil that you may live. When you seek God, the evidence is in doing good. If you seek God then it will show in your daily life. Do not disconnect the two like those people involved in colonialism, drug dealers, etc. because God will judge all fake Christians who have no evidence of life change.
3. Amos 5:7. Warning to those who corrupt the justice system.
4. Amos 5:12. Warning to those who afflict the righteous by taking bribes. Secular activities and church life are all linked, they are not disconnected.
5. Amos 5:18. The Day of the Lord will be darkness to these people. On the day of judgement, if they call on God, He will not help but punish them. The Day of the Lord is not a day of rejoicing for them unlike for true Christians.

#### Amos chapter 6

1. Warning to those who felt secure in Zion (Jerusalem) and Samaria.
2. Amos 6:3-6. Warning to the rich in Israel who were enjoying life and did not care for the poor or their own spiritual state. Like many rich Christians today who worry about whether their car is the latest model, or whether their house is the biggest, etc.

#### Amos chapter 7

1. Amos 7:1. Amos saw a vision of Locusts and Amos pleaded with God for mercy.
2. Amos 7:4. Amos saw a vision of Fire and Amos again pleaded with God for mercy.
3. Amos 7:7. Amos saw a vision of the Plumb Line. Plumb lines are used by surveyors to ensure buildings do not fall over time like the Leaning Tower of Pisa. God gave the

Law to keep Israelites on track but they did not obey. The Law of God is His plumb line.

4. Amos 7:10. Amaziah (the high priest) complained to King Jeroboam II to stop Amos from preaching about the prophecy of Assyrians coming to attack Israel. But Amos refused and prophesied against Amaziah. People do not want to hear the truth and will try to stop you.

### Amos Chapter 8

1. Amos 8:1. Amos saw a vision of the Summer Fruit which was an indication that the people of Israel were ripe for punishment; it was time for God to punish them.
2. Amos 8:2 says, "The end has come upon My people."
3. Hosea preached around this time when the end of the Northern Kingdom was near.

### Amos chapter 9

1. Amos 9:1-10. Total destruction of Israel was prophesied here.
2. Amos 9:11. However God promised that Israel would be restored through the Seed of Jesse in Jesus.
3. Amos 9:12. The phrase "All Gentiles" here hints that Gentiles will also be included in God's saving plan through Jesus. In Acts 15:16-17, when the Israelites could not accept that God's Salvation was to be extended to Gentiles, the Jerusalem Council quoted Amos 9:12 to counter their argument.
4. Amos 9:15 talks about the Eternal Kingdom. Both Jews and Gentiles who believed in Christ are included.

### What is the big picture in the book of Amos?

1. God is compassionate with loyal love. His love is demonstrated in His restoration.
2. God is just; even Christ had to be punished because He carried our sins on the Cross.
3. God is righteous; He wants us to have the right relationship with Him and with others. We are all made equal in the image of God, so there should be no oppression of the poor. If you are born-again, your life will reflect it. (E.g. do you withhold your maid's passport or cancel her permits unreasonably?)
4. God hates hypocrisy more than unrighteousness. He will severely punish those who carry God's name and shame it. People hate Christians in colonized countries because of this hypocrisy.
5. When God judges, it is fair because He must have already warned those He is judging. But people ignored these warnings. Seek the Lord in the warnings (even in Covid-19).