

Bible Synthesis IV
(Bible Survey)

INTRODUCTION TO
AMOS

1. INTRODUCTION

Amos, whose name means, “burden” or “burden-bearer,” a native of Judah, was called to go prophesy to Israel. He was from the barren hill country southeast of Jerusalem overlooking the Dead Sea. He was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (7:14). He was not of the school of the prophets (7:14–15), he was a God-called prophet.

Amos had a stern message for a luxurious and self-indulgent age. He was the prophet of woe. These prophecies show that national sin brings national judgment, and while the sins of individuals are judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ (for believers) and at the Great White Throne Judgment (for the lost), nations are judged in this world at this time (there will be a future judgment of the nations as was seen in Joel). History proves, though, that nations are indeed judged here and now. The wheels of God’s judgment move slowly, but they move with sureness—God will indeed judge.

2. AUTHOR

Amos = “burden” or “burden-bearer” — His name provides us with a key to the leading message of the book, he bore a burden to Israel.

- (1) A native of Tekoa (1:1) located 12 miles from Jerusalem and 5 miles southeast from Bethlehem
- (2) He was a “herdsman” (1:1; 7:14–15). This may have been a shepherd or a cattleman (although, see 7:15).
- (3) He was a gatherer of sycamore fruit (7:14).
- (4) He was very bold — he prophesied at:
 - 1. Bethel, the religious center (7:10)
 - 2. Gilgal, a prominent commercial city (4:4; 5:4–5)
 - 3. Samaria, the capital (3:9–12; 4:1–3)

3. RECIPIENTS

- (1) Israel (1:1) — This is the northern kingdom, as he distinguishes Israel and Judah in the verse. See also 2:6, 11; 4:12; 5:1, 4.
- (2) Judah received a warning also in this book (2:4–5; 3:1; 6:1).

Israel was secure from outward enemies and inwardly prosperous during the time when Amos wrote. Prosperity had produced its inevitable fruits—pride, luxury, selfishness, greed, oppression, and moral decay. Israel was so sunken in the depths of corruption that the words of this simple prophet were fruitless.

4. DATE OF WRITING

- (1) During the days of Uzziah, king of Judah (1:1)
- (2) During the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel (1:1)
- (3) Two years before the earthquake (1:1)

The date of the earthquake cannot be determined with exactness, although it is mentioned again in Zech. 14:5–7. A comparison of 6:2, 13 with II Kings 14:23 seems to indicate that his ministry took place after Jeroboam had regained Israel’s territory, as predicted by the Prophet Jonah, but before the death of Jeroboam in 753 B.C. (7:11a) or the fall of Samaria in 7:22 (7:11b).

5. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- (1) Eight “burdens” against the surrounding nations — Amos 1 – 2
- (2) Three sermons against Israel for her sins — Amos 3 – 6
- (3) Five visions — Amos 7 – 9
- (4) Amos took warnings to Jeroboam II and Israel (like the unnamed prophet many years before — I Kings 13). He speaks against such sins as idolatry, luxury, revelry, debauchery, oppression, extortion, bribery, and injustice.
- (5) It begins with a word against the Gentiles around Israel (1:1 – 2:3) and on Judah 2:4–5), but after that, he prophesies against Israel. After judgment is to be blessing upon Israel (9:11–15).

6. THEME

The inevitable judgment of God on sin
(The patience of God in punishment)

7. KEY PASSAGES

Amos 4:11–12; **9:14**

8. KEY TERM

“punishment” — 9 times; “punishments” — 1 time
“transgression” — 12 times; “transgressions” — 1 time
“I will not turn away the punishment thereof” — 8 times

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OUTLINE OF
AMOS

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|---|--------------------------|
| 1. General Judgments Against the Nations | — Amos 1 – 2 |
| (1) Judgments upon the surrounding nations | — 1:1 – 2:3 |
| (2) Judgments upon Judah and Israel | — 2:4–16 |
| 2. Specific Judgments Against Israel | — Amos 3 – 6 |
| — Contained in Three Proclamations | |
| (1) The sin of presumption | — 3:1–15 |
| (2) The sin of religious orthodoxy | — 4:1–13 |
| (3) The sin of moral and ethical corruption | — 5:1 – 6:14 |
| 3. Symbolic Visions of the Coming Judgment | — Amos 7:1 – 9:10 |
| — Contained in Five Visions | |
| 4. The Promise of Messianic Blessings | — Amos 9:11–15 |

