

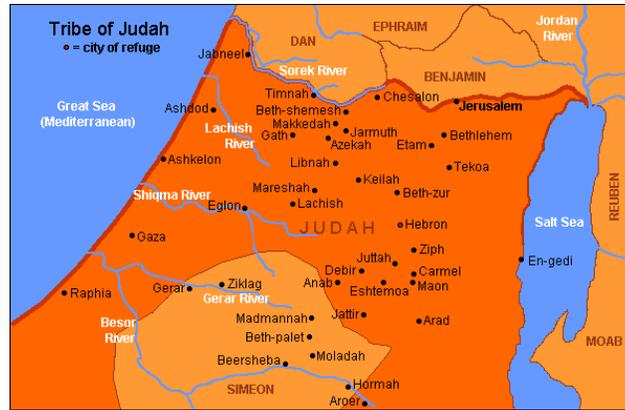
OT-OV

Lesson 128

1. Last week I finished teaching the Book of Joel and started teaching an overview of the book of Amos. We need to review some of that learned and then pick up with new material on page three.
2. Amos from Judah authored the book of Amos in c. 760. Although Amos was a native of Judah, he prophesied primarily about Israel.
3. The prophet before preaching against the ills of the ten northern tribes, foretells of judgment against the nations surrounding Israel even including the southern Kingdom of Judah.



4. The prophet reveals the spiritual corruption of Israel under the religious formalism and material prosperity of the time. He castigates the leaders for the deterioration of social justice and morality and predicts dire judgment if they refuse to repent.
5. Amos did not receive his training in the religious schools or prophetic guilds of his day. To the contrary, he denied any previous connection with the formal religious community. (Amo 7:14-15).
6. He placed himself in the midst of the world in which he lived, a shepherd around Tekoa (Amo 1:1) and a dresser of sycamore fig trees in the Jordan valley. (Amo 7:14).
7. His home it would seem was Tekoa, [a village situated about ten miles south of Jerusalem and 12 miles west of the Dead Sea].
8. Critical study seems to indicate the book was written some 40 years before the Northern Kingdom is defeated by Assyria in c. 721.



9. His ministry led him to Bethel, the center of religious apostasy in the northern kingdom. It was there he encountered great animosity from the Priests of Israel, particularly Amaziah.



10. Socially, two distinct classes had developed, the poor and the rich. The rich were seeking greater riches by any means. Moral evils were rampant. Drunkenness and sexual license were at an abominable level. Religious perversion pervaded the land. For the most part idolatry was common. (Amo 2:6-8)

11. The faithful were scorned, chastised and mocked. The depth to which the people had fallen was characterized in their seeming indifference to their position as a divinely delivered and cared for nation. (Amo 2:9-12)

12. Repentance and obedience were imperatives, the only escape from imminent judgment. So much for background information now let's take a quick look at the book itself.

13. Outline With Comment:

I. Introduction and Eight Prophecies of Judgment (chapters 1-2)

A. Introduction (Amo 1:1 and 2)

B. Judgment on Damascus (Amo 1:3-5) > Comment: Amos' first message was against Damascus. God singled them out because of their attack against the land of Gilead in Israel east of the Jordan River. For this indiscretion Amos predicts God would discipline Damascus; such discipline occurred in c. 320 when Alexander swept through the land of Palestine on his way to conquer Persia..



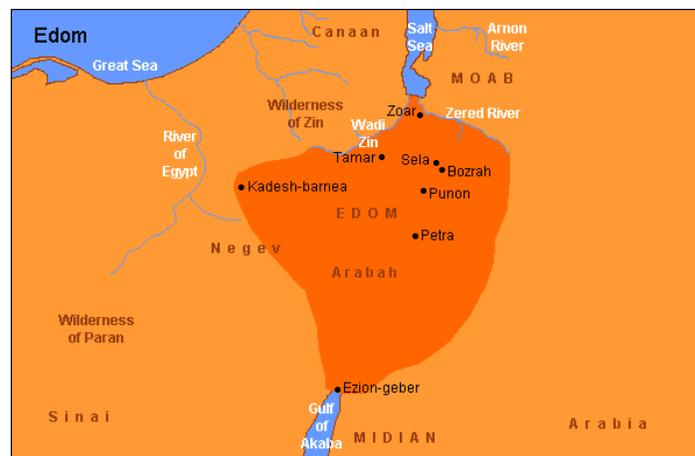
C. Judgment on Philistia (Amo 1:6-8) > Comment: The Philistines had captured entire communities of Israelites and sold many as slaves to the Edomites. For their error Amos foretells how four of their five major cities would be destroyed; all but Gath was named, perhaps because at the time of Amos' writings Gath had already fallen. The four were also destroyed by Alexander in c. 320.



D. Judgment on Phoenicia (Amo 1:9-10) > Comment: Amos directed his third message against Tyre because they too had taken whole cities captive and sold them as slaves to the Edomites. So, says the prophet, Tyre would be dealt a fatal blow and that occurred when Alexander built a causeway to the Island of Tyre and threw the city into the sea.



E. Judgment on Edom (Amo 1:11-12) > Comment: By purchasing for themselves slaves of Israelites, Edom also purchased their downfall. When we next overview Obadiah we will see further prophecies against this nation. The Nabataeans defeated the Edomites in c. 646.



F. Judgment on Ammon (Amo 1:13-15) > Comment: Like Damascus Ammon also coveted the land of Gilead. To extend their hegemony the Ammonites slaughtered many of the Gileadites; for this indiscretion Amos predicted the destruction of Rabbah. During Byzantine rule in the 4th cen. A.D. it ranked in importance with Gerasa (Jerash) and was strongly fortified. It became the seat of a bishopric but was apparently destroyed, perhaps at the time of the Muslim conquest.

G. Judgment on Moab (Amo 2:1-3) > Comment: Moab which as you can see from our map is located along the eastern edge of the Dead Sea. Their predicted destruction is said to be the result of desecrating the grave of Edom's king - "burning the bones." The Moabites were disciplined by Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar in c. 681 and c. 612 respectively.



H. Judgment on Judah (Amo 2:4-5) > Comment: God judged all the previous nations based on their treatment of others however Judah is held to a higher standard because they had His Word. He would judge Judah, said Amos, because they had rejected God by openly violating His protocol. As a result Amos foretells of the destruction of Jerusalem in c. 586 by the forces of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonian Empire.



I. Judgment on the Northern Kingdom (Amo 2:6-16) > Comment: Having begun with Israel's enemies, Amos circled the land until his coil of condemnation finally arrived at Israel. Israel as we will see was guilty of manifold error and religious hypocrisy. The Assyrians in c. 721 defeated the northern Kingdom.

II. Three Messages of Judgment (Chapters 3-6) > Comment: After his initial messages Amos spoke directly to the people of Israel. He challenged the people to listen to the Lord's words. Midway through each message he stressed the consequences of their sin.

III. Amos ended this section by pronouncing two woes: the first was directed at those who naively longed for the Day of The Lord, not realizing that their deliverance must first be preceded by tribulation. The second woe was directed at the complacent people who allowed their material wealth to blind them to the desperate needs of the poor of their land.

Amo 3:1 Hear this word the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel-- against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt:

Amo 3:2 "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins." ...

Amo 3:11 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "An enemy will overrun the land; he will pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses." ...

Amo 4:1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, "Bring us some drinks!"

Amo 4:2 The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his holiness: "The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks ...

Amo 5:18 Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light.

Amo 5:19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.

Amo 5:20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light-- pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness? ...

Amo 6:1 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come!

Amo 6:2 Go to Calneh (one time capital of Assyria) and look at it; go from there to great Hamath (a one time capital of the Amorites), and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours?

Amo 6:3 You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror.

Amo 6:4 You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves.

Amo 6:5 You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments.

Amo 6:6 You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.

Amo 6:7 Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

Amo 6:8 The Sovereign LORD has sworn by himself-- the LORD God Almighty declares: "I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses; I will deliver up the city and everything in it."

Amo 6:13 you who rejoice in the conquest of Lo Debar and say, "Did we not take Karnaim by our own strength?"

Amo 6:14 For the LORD God Almighty declares, "I will stir up a nation against you, O house of Israel, that will oppress you all the way from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah."

IV. Three Visions of Judgment: Visions of Locust, Fire, and a Plumb line; (Chapters 7) >
Comment: The first two visions focus more on Amos than on the people of Israel. This stern prophet had a tender heart as he pleaded with the Lord on behalf of the Northern Kingdom. God twice spared Israel in response to Amos' prayers, but in the third vision, the plumb line, God reminded Amos that mercy had to be balanced with justice. If the people refused to repent, God could no longer withhold His judgment. As if to illustrate Israel's lack of repentance, Amos inserted his encounter with Amaziah, the head priest at Bethel. Through this conflict Amos realized that the leaders (and the people) would not repent.

Amo 7:1 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king's share had been harvested and just as the second crop was coming up.

Amo 7:2 When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

Amo 7:3 So the LORD relented. "This will not happen," the LORD said.

Amo 7:4 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: The Sovereign LORD was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land.

Amo 7:5 Then I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

Amo 7:6 So the LORD relented. "This will not happen either," the Sovereign LORD said.

A. A vision of a plumb line is now used to describe the evaluation of Israel.

Amo 7:7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing upon a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand.

Amo 7:8 And the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," I replied. Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

Amo 7:9 "The high places of Isaac will be destroyed and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined; with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."

B. The translation "Upon a wall" in verse seven is better "Beside a wall." The wall is the kingdom of Israel.

C. The measuring of the wall described in verse eight by the plumb line is a symbol of the testing of Israel's conduct "I will not again pass by them any more" is better "I shall not pardon them."

D. In the previous visions God had listened to the plea of the prophet, but now he did not permit intercession. The just punishment had to come.

E. The high places of verse nine are references to the so-called high places, which were natural hills or artificial mounds.

F. Other nations also used such high places in their worship of their pagan gods. These high places, with their pagan influence, eventually contributed to the corruption of Israel.

G. It is clear that Amos uses these metaphor to describe the destruction of Israel, the nation. The parallelism is obvious, the sword symbolizes the coming of the Assyrian army. (Amos 6:14).

Amo 6:14 For the LORD God Almighty declares, "I will stir up a nation against you, O house of Israel, that will oppress you all the way from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah."

H. Amaziah the high priest rejects the prophet as does Jeroboam the II.

Amo 7:10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words.

Amo 7:11 For this is what Amos is saying: "Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land."

Amo 7:12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there.

Amo 7:13 Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

Amo 7:14 Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-figtrees.

Amo 7:15 But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

Amo 7:16 Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac.'

Amo 7:17 "Therefore this is what the LORD says: "Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile, away from their native land."

V. Two Visions of Judgment: The Basket of Ripe Fruit and The Famine of God's Word (Chapter 8) > Comment: Amos' fourth vision stressed the imminence of God's judgment on Israel. The time for mercy was past; the time for judgment had arrived. The fruit was ripe because it was time to harvest what Israel had sowed - judgment. The second vision, the Famine of God's Word refers to the absence of God's Word, no longer would He provide instruction to His people. Amos does predict they will search but not find God because their fifth cycle of discipline has arrived.

Amo 8:1 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: a basket of ripe fruit.
 Amo 8:2 "What do you see, Amos?" he asked. "A basket of ripe fruit," I answered. Then the LORD said to me, "The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer

...
 Amo 8:11 "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD, "when I will send a famine through the land-- not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.

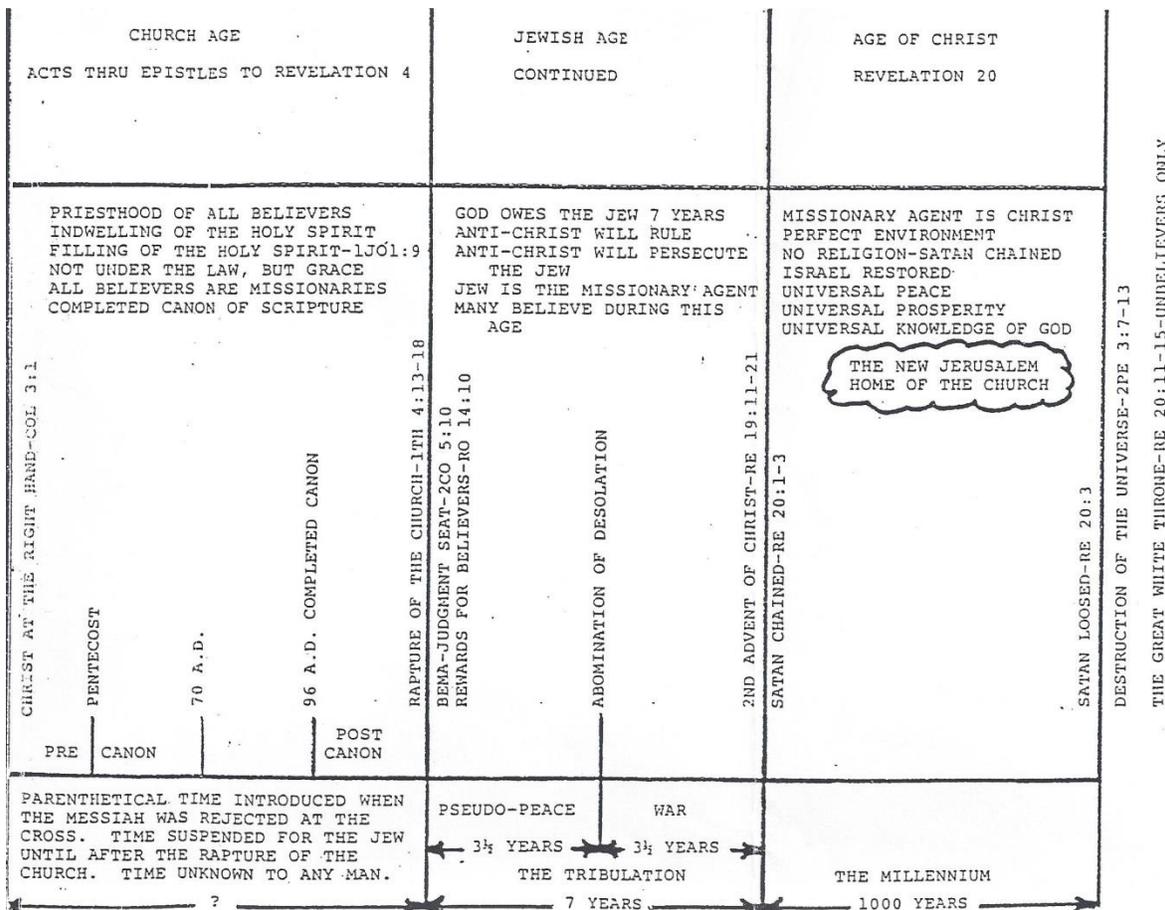
Amo 8:12 Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it.

Amo 8:13 "In that day "the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.

Amo 8:14 They who swear by the shame of Samaria, say, 'As surely as your god lives, O Dan,' or, 'As surely as the god of Beersheba lives'-- they will fall, never to rise again."

VI. God's Coming Will Bring Discipline In Advance of Restoration (Amo 9:1-10) >

Comment: The time of Jacob's trouble - the Tribulation must precede the Second Advent of Christ.



Amo 9:1 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said: "Strike the tops of the pillars so that the thresholds shake. Bring them down on the heads of all the people; those who are left I will kill with the sword. Not one will get away, none will escape.

Amo 9:2 Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down.

Amo 9:3 Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them ...

Amo 9:8 "Surely the eyes of the Sovereign LORD are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth-- yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," declares the LORD.

Amo 9:9 "For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground.

Amo 9:10 All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.'

VII. Israel's Future Restoration (Amo 9:11-15) > Comment: Virtually all of Amos is a message of judgment. Yet Amos, like the other prophets, looked forward to a time of national blessing when God would one day fulfill His covenant promises with Israel. God's restoring "David's fallen tent" is an allusion to His restoration of a united kingdom of Israel under the rule of David and the Messiah.

Jer 30:3 The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess,' says the LORD."

Jer 30:9 Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

Eze 34:24 I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.

Eze 37:19 say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph--which is in Ephraim's hand-- and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.'

Eze 37:20 Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on

Eze 37:21 and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land ...'

Eze 37:22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

Eze 37:23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

Eze 37:24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.

A. God said this will be a time of unparalleled prosperity and peace. The grain harvest will be so abundant that the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman. That is to say it will be time to plant before the workers can finish harvesting all of last year's crop! God will restore the exiles to "rebuild" their cities and "plant their crops."

B. God then gave a dramatic announcement: During this Messianic Age He will plant Israel in their own land," and they will "never again ... be uprooted." That is when all His promises to Israel are fulfilled.

Amo 9:11 "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be,

Amo 9:12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Amo 9:13 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.

Amo 9:14 I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

Amo 9:15 I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.

End Lesson