

LESSON TEXT: Amos 1:1–3:15  
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Jereboam II, great-grandson of the bloody Jehu, ruled the ten northern tribes (Israel) from about 793-753 B.C. The borders of Israel had been extended the farthest ever. Prosperity was approaching the level of the days of David and Solomon. But it was all accompanied by an almost unprecedented degree of **social corruption**. Archaeological discoveries in Palestine furnish a dramatic picture of Canaanite Baal worship in Israel at this time of drunkenness, violence, gross sensuality, and idolatry. The effect Baalism had upon Israel is seen in the terrible injustices, debauched living, oppression of the poor, and moral depravity denounced by Amos, Hosea and Isaiah.

If you were God, where would you look for someone to speak out against injustice and depravity? GOD TURNED TO A FARMER, A SHEEPHERDER! AMOS! Amos was a “hillbilly” from the rugged mountains south of Bethlehem (the wilderness of Judea). A common, ordinary, every-day working man was God’s choice! Although Amos said: “I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son,” he was an expert communicator! He was decisive, concise, logical (3:8), picturesque with illustrations, but straightforward! HE MINCED NO WORDS!

God has used people from multi-varied backgrounds to communicate his word to a sin-sick world. But isn’t it interesting that God used a “hillbilly” farmer to be one of his most eloquent spokesmen? Having been born of farmer-ancestry, grown up on a farm, and having preached in a farming community, I am not surprised at the skill of Amos! I know farmers to be some of the wisest, most expert and gentle “prophets” of God. BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND LEARN WHAT A “HILLBILLY” FARMER DID FOR THE LORD!

**It’s True:** “...only those who chronically suffer injustice can have a true insight into what Justice consists of...” Sydney Harris

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would God call a shepherd, unschooled, and unknown to such an awesome responsibility as he laid upon Amos? 1:1-2
2. How could God hold heathen nations responsible for their actions? They did not know Jehovah or his word. 1:3—2:3
3. Is God really concerned with geo-politics, wars, boundaries, POWs, international treaties (i.e. “covenants”) Why? 1:3—2:3
4. What led Judah away from “the law of the Lord”? 2:4 How are human beings to know the difference between truth and falsehood? **1 Jn. 4:1-6**
5. To what did Amos appeal as a warning to Israel? 2:9-11
6. How does God look on those who forbid the preaching of his Word? 2:12-16
7. What is Amos’s point in his “one-liner” probers about “walking together,” “lions,” birds,” “snares,” and “trumpets”? 3:3-8
8. Why does God invite Assyria to “look” upon Israel’s depravity? 3:9-11
9. Is it really possible that Israel did “not know how to do right”? Were they idiots or illiterates? 3:10. Do you know anyone like this?
10. How does Amos’s warning apply to God’s people today?

***It’s Also True: Just as surely as a person’s unbrushed and unflossed teeth will rot, hurt and disintegrate—so a society without moral boundaries because of unbelief and idolatry will rot, hurt and disintegrate.***

***History has proved it time and time again!***

—Paul T. Butler

“It is considered awkward to use seriously such words as good and evil, but if we are deprived of these concepts what will be left? We will decline to the status of animals.”

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

LESSON TEXT: Amos 4:1—6:14  
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”—thus Amos thundered. Isaiah said to king Hezekiah, “Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order; for you shall die, you shall not recover.” Jeremiah told the false prophet, Hananiah, “This very year you shall die...”

Now if a doctor tells a person, “I am sorry to tell you that you have a terminal illness”—that person usually makes some effort to “prepare to meet God.” But that is only when the person has become ill, knows it, and has sought a physician in hope of a cure. What if a preacher went to Hollywood or Joplin, and began proclaiming to all the healthy people walking the sidewalks “Prepare to meet your God, folks, because you are going to face his judgment shortly”? He would certainly be laughed at, and probably threatened as Amos was (7:10-13). Healthy, prosperous, comfortable and powerful people seldom think of themselves as “terminal” or “shortly to face judgment.”

That is the kind of people with whom Amos had to deal. Some in Amos’s audience were flippantly and insolently “desiring the day of the Lord” (5:18; see Isa. 5:19). Amos was preaching to a prosperous powerful, healthy people. They scoffed at the very idea that God would come upon *them* in judgment!

Take a good look at Amos, chapters 4,5 & 6, and you’ll find much of your own 21<sup>st</sup> century world! Remember, Peter predicted that from the beginning of Christianity, “scoffers will come...saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” Actually, God has **already** judged this world! It is doomed! Anyone who does not believe in his Son is **judged already** (Jn. 3:18,36). BELIEVE AND OBEY WHILE YOU STILL HAVE TIME! PREARE TO MEET YOUR GOD!

**It’S True: “One of the horrors of hell is the undying memory of a misspent life”  
“Son, remember...” Luke 16:25**

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Amos call the women of Israel “cows”? Do we have any “cows” in 21<sup>st</sup> century society? 4:1
2. Is Amos really exhorting the people to go to Bethel and sin? 4:4
3. Name 6 “natural disasters” God sent to bring Israel to repentance 4:6-13; would God do that today (check Luke 13; Rev. chs. 6,8,9,16)
4. Since God is everywhere, why did Amos tell Israel, “Seek the Lord”? 5:1-5 Is there a message for NT believers about this (see John. chs. 4,14,15,16)
5. What does God expect of believers in business dealings according to Amos? 5:6-12
6. If the “smart” man is silent in evil times, what about the “dumb” preacher—what is he supposed to do? 5:13
7. Are we really supposed to “hate” evil? 5:15-20. How?
8. How could God command the Israelites to keep certain feasts and then say he “hates” their feasts? 5:21
9. Are these texts (Amos 5:23 & 6:5) prohibiting the use of instrumental music in worshipping God?
10. What is justice? Does God demand it? How is it turned into poison? 6:11-14

**It’s Also True:** In *USA TODAY*. Friday, August 27, 1993, Barbra Reynolds, a black lady columnist, wrote an article entitled, “If your kids go ape in school, you’ll know why.” She wrote, “Don’t be surprised if our little darlings go ape or get up to monkey-shines when they return to class.” She unequivocally blames the teaching of evolution in the schools for the animal-like behavior of the students. She concludes her column, “Human action is determined by core beliefs. Creationism teaches that humans are wonderfully made with the promise of high expectations. If evolution is forced on our kids, we shouldn’t be perplexed when they beat on their chests, or worse yet, beat on each other and their teachers.”

LESSON TEXT: Amos 7:1—9:15  
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

The following prayer was prayed by an Ethiopian Christian at Soddu, Walamo, Ethiopia: “Almighty God, from the depth of my heart I plead with thee to send us trouble. When our king was exiled we were in much trouble with the foreign rulers. We had to meet in secret and were in constant danger of our lives. That was the time when we worked in harmony with our fellow Christians. Many a night after I had locked my door and gone to bed, tired from a day’s long journey of preaching, there came a persisting knocking. Lord, how I wanted to sleep—surely they wouldn’t want to be baptized at night and be hunted and chased and put in prison and beaten, but they said they had seen the Christian’s joy and they too, wanted that. Every night there were more and more. We read Thy Word and talked about it and prayed through the nights. We shared our joy in the Lord. We worked side by side with only one desire—to preach and teach the Gospel. The, Lord, our king came back. The foreign rulers were forced to leave our country...we have peace in our land. We baptize in the daytime. We are not beaten. We meet and pray, yes, but we are beginning to grow careless in our zeal for Thee. Jealousies creep in and spoil the harmony. Petty troubles surface in large meetings. We are selfish in our ambitions. Dear Lord, send us more trouble, I pray Tee, that we may forget ourselves and be so dependent on Thee that we have no time to become selfish and jealous of our fellow Christians. For Jesus’s sake, Amen.”

Few people have the courage and faith to pray like that! The Israel of Amos had no such faith. Yet that is the way God works his grace toward mankind. These last three chapters of Amos teach that God works through trouble (chastening) to produce blessing. The whole Bible teaches that! Every book in the Bible teaches it! BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL—THIS IS AN INVALUABLE LESSON!

**It’s True:** “Adversity makes men, and prosperity makes monsters.”  
Victor Hugo, French poet, novelist and dramatist —1802-1885

QUESTIONS:

1. How could the Lord relent from judgment on one hand, Amos 7:1-6, and carry out judgment on the other hand, Amos 8:1; 9:10?
2. What is God’s plumb line? Does the church practice “plumb-line” preaching today? 7:7-9. See Revelation chs. 2 & 3
3. When Amos was forbidden to preach, should he have begun an “underground church” in Israel? 7:10-17. What does God think about “underground faith”?
4. What’s wrong with “offering wheat for sale”? 8:4-8. Is it wrong to make a profit in one’s business?
5. If you were without the Word of God would you think of it as a “famine”? 8:11-14. Do you hunger for his Word? See Mt. 4:4; 5:6; Jn. 6:35-63
6. Does God really “command the sword” of our enemies? 9:2-4. Where can a person go to get away from God?
7. Why bring up again, the identity of Jehovah-God? 9:5-10
8. What is the fulfillment of “the booth of David” prophecy? See Acts 15:16-17
9. Is Israel’s “possessing Edom,” 9:12, a Biblical mandate for modern Israel to drive the Palestinians out of their homes and farms?
10. What blessing resulted from the “captivity” and “shaking of Israel among the nations”? 9:9-15

**It’s Also True:**

“Laugh and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone;  
For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,  
But has trouble enough of its own.”

—Ella Wheller Wilcox, American poet (1855-1919)

The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond, and must be polished, or the lustre of it will never appear.”

—Daniel Defoe, English novelist and journalist (1660-1773, also author of *Robinson Crusoe*)

“No stranger to trouble myself,  
I am learning to care for the unhappy”

—Publius Virgil, ancient Roman poet