

The PROPHETS of ISRAEL

Amos

Amos 5:1-2

June 27, 2026

Last week we looked at the reluctant ministry of Jonah – a “servant of Yahweh – the prophet from Gath Hepher.”

By contrast, Amos was from the small village of Tekoa in Judah. He was a blue-collar worker – not a prophet. Prophesying was not his normal gig:

Amos 7:14-16a - 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-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ Now then, hear the word of the LORD....

Interestingly, the 1st verse of the book gives us information that provides an historical marker for the prophecies that follow:

- 1st – Amos prophesied 2 years before “the earthquake.” Biblical scholars, Historians and Archeologists accept the date of 760 BC as the year a major, region-wide, earthquake occurred in Palestine. An earthquake so catastrophic Zechariah wrote about it some 240 years after it happened (Zechariah 14:5).
- 2nd – Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah (792-740 BC) and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (793-753 BC).

This information gives us a date for Amos’ ministry of 762 BC.

As we learned last week, Israel’s northern enemies were not particularly active against Israel at this time, creating a power vacuum Jeroboam II happily filled. He expanded Israel’s territory and gained control of the extremely lucrative trade routes – Israel and Judah prospered.

From the outside looking in, it would be easy to assume that the political and economic prosperity both nations enjoyed, were proof of God’s blessings resulting from their fidelity to the Covenant.... However:

Amos 1:2 - He said: “Yahweh roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.”

Despite appearances, Yahweh was not happy and judgment was coming. To begin, Amos gave 8 separate indictments, but interestingly, the 1st seven were against the nations that surround Israel – beginning with the Arameans and their capital city, Damascus:

- This is what Yahweh says: “For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth.”....
- This is what Yahweh says: “For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom.”....
- This is what Yahweh says: “For three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood.”....
- This is what Yahweh says: “For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked.”....

- This is what Yahweh says: *"For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders."....*
- This is what Yahweh says: *"For three sins of Moab, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he burned, as if to lime, the bones of Edom's king."....*

These nations did not acknowledge God or worship him, yet, as Sovereign of the universe, he was holding them accountable to a baseline of moral conduct. They were charged with cruelty, slave trade, treachery, genocide, brutality and a lack of compassion. As a result, the judgments were fixed - they would happen.

This was some pretty serious stuff. Those in Israel, who heard Amos's words, no doubt thought, "Preach it, brother!" But God was not finished and Judah was up next:

This is what Yahweh says: *"For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because they have rejected the law of Yahweh and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed."....*

Well, this was getting a little too close for comfort and now Amos turned to Yahweh's indictment against Israel:

This is what Yahweh says: *"For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.*

They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.

They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed.

Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name.

They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge.

In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines....

Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain. The swift will not escape, the strong will not muster their strength, and the warrior will not save his life. The archer will not stand his ground, the fleet-footed soldier will not get away, and the horseman will not save his life. Even the bravest warriors will flee naked on that day," declares Yahweh....

Surely Adoni does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared-- who will not fear? Adoni has spoken-- who can but prophesy?" "Hear this and testify against the house of Jacob," declares El Shaddai. "On the day I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel; the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground. I will tear down the winter house along with the summer house; the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed and the mansions will be demolished," declares Yahweh. 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!" Adoni has sworn by his holiness: "The time will surely come when you will be taken away with hooks, the last of you with fishhooks. You will each go straight out through breaks in the wall, and you will be cast out toward Harmon," declares Yahweh. "Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings-- boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do," declares Adoni. (2:6-4:5)

The problem was that Israel believed, wrongly, that the covenant protected them despite their behavior. However, Amos was there to tell them that their "status" did not cancel obedience. In fact, their "status" made them more accountable to God and apparently, God had been trying to get their attention for some time (4:6-11):

- "I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, yet you have not returned to me."
- "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up. People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to me."

- "Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, I struck them with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees, yet you have not returned to me."
- "I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, yet you have not returned to me."
- "I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me."

The truth was what God really wanted was for them to simply return to him:

Amos 5:4 - *This is what Yahweh says to the house of Israel: Seek me and live.*

Amos 5:14-15 - *Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then El Shaddai will be with you, just as you say he is. Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps El Shaddai will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.*

But they refused to listen ---- so the indictment continued:

Amos 5:7-15 - *You who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground,*

you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth.

You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain.

I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins.

You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts.

The greed, injustice and treatment of the poor was simply a reflection of the breakdown in Israel's relationship with God.

Amos 5:21-27 - *I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.*

The deeply personal covenant relationship God had established with Israel had been perverted. Their worship was steeped in tradition and outward formality and an n outward show of religiousness was not what God wanted from his people: "Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" But the people refused to listen, so Amos Continued (6:1-14) - Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria

You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches.

You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves.

You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments.

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

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

Adoni has sworn by himself—El Shaddai declares: "I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses; I will deliver up the city and everything in it." If ten men are left in one house, they too will die.... For El Shaddai 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."

Yet, despite Israel's unrelenting disobedience, God was still willing to turn away his judgments:

Amos 7:1-9 - *This is what Adonai 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. When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Adonai, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!" So Yahweh relented. "This will not happen," he said.*

This is what Adonai showed me: Adonai was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. Then I cried out, "Adonai, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!" So Yahweh relented. "This will not happen either," Adonai said.

However, if ignored, mercy would eventually come to an end – leaving only judgment:

This is what he showed me: Yahweh was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. And Yahweh asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," I replied. Then he said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. "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." "The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. "

Amos' words should have caused the people to consider their actions, if even for a moment, but they remained unrepentant, arrogant and self-confident, so Yahweh threatened something WAY worse than any plague, famine or invading army – He would stop talking:

Amos 8:11-14 - *"The days are coming," declares Adonai, "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 My words. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of Yahweh, but they will not find it. "In that day "the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst. They who swear by the shame of Samaria, or 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."*

God called Israel to repent. But His warnings went unheeded.

Until Next Time.....