

Overview of the Book of Amos

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By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—From time to time, Bible students enjoy studying different books of the Bible. At this time, I want to begin a series of articles about the book of Amos.

This first article will be an overview about the book.

Who was Amos?

Amos is often cited as a man who was a different prophet. Bible students like to contrast him to the other gentlemen who served as prophets in the Bible. Much of the contrast is noted in Amos 7:14.

Amos 7:14—“Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: ‘I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.’ ”

When did Amos prophesy?

According to Amos 1:1, the man Amos prophesied during the reigns of King Uzziah of Judah (often identified as reigning 767-739 B.C.) and King Jeroboam of Israel (often identified as 782-753 B.C.). This leaves a possible time frame of 767-753 B.C.

Since Amos 7:9-11 seems to indicate a time frame late in the reign of Jeroboam, some Bible students consider 760-753 B.C. as the probable date of writing.

Lived in southern kingdom

According to Amos 1:1, the man Amos was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa. Tekoa was approximately five miles south of Bethlehem. Hence, Amos lived in the southern kingdom of Judah.

Preached about northern kingdom

However, Amos was called by God to go into the northern kingdom of Israel to be God’s spokesman.

Isaiah 7:15—“Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”

Organization of the book

Bible students often identify the organization of the book of Amos as four sections.

- Eight prophecies of judgment
- Three sermons of judgment

- Five visions of judgment
- Five promises of judgment

Eight prophecies of judgment

- Judgment on Damascus—Amos 1:3-5
- Judgment on Gaza—Amos 1:6-8
- Judgment on Tyre—Amos 1:9-10
- Judgment on Edom—Amos 1:11-12
- Judgment on Ammon—Amos 1:13-15
- Judgment on Moab—Amos 2:1-3
- Judgment on Judah—Amos 2:4-5
- Judgment on Israel—Amos 2:6-16

Three sermons of judgment

- The first sermon: Israel's present—Amos 3:1-15
- The second sermon: Israel's past—Amos 4:1-13
- The third sermon: Israel's future—Amos 5:1–6:14

Five visions of judgment

- Vision of locusts—Amos 7:1-3
- Vision of fire—Amos 7:4-6
- Vision of the plumb line—Amos 7:7-9
- Historical parenthesis (opposition of Amaziah)—Amos 7:10-17
- Vision of the summer fruit—Amos 8:1-14
- Vision of the stricken doorposts—Amos 9:1-10

Five promises of the Restoration of Israel

The five promises about the restoration of Israel are found in Amos 9:11-15. In the coming weeks, we will be exploring various scriptures in the book of Amos. Next week, we will talk about Amos 3:3.

Amos 3:3—"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"