

Why Read Amos? (Extra Notes for Cyprus Training Session, June 2018)

Unrelentingly negative, portraying the LORD's fierce judgment.

8v2-3, 9-10:

"The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass by them.

³ The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day," ...

"So many dead bodies!" "They are thrown everywhere!" "Silence!"

"I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.

¹⁰ I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation;

I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head;

I will make it like the mourning for an only son & the end of it like a bitter day.

(also highly structured & poetic!)

Israel's Sins ⇨ The Inevitability of Judgment (see 3v2-8)

Unpopular, *therefore* necessary.

Amos modelling courage in the face of opposition, 7v16-17

Starts as a 'Stealth bomber': 1v2-2v5 (seven point sermon)

...followed by 2v6-16 (the unexpected *main* point)

SINS: market place & holy place (together! 2v7-8, Luke 20v47)

9v11-15 total change of tone!

How possible? As in Joel, seeking the Lord is vital (5v4-6, 14f)

Repentance is a necessary, but not a sufficient explanation.

9v11-15 cited in Acts 15v15-17 => Gospel blessing.

...so the explanation is the ☩

Market place – oppression, sharp practice, injustice

8v4-6 ...you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end,⁵ saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances,⁶ that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and sell the chaff of the wheat?" (also 2v6-7, 3v10)

5v10-13, 6v12: ¹⁰ They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth... ¹¹...you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, & turn aside the needy in the gate. ¹³ Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time. ^{6v12}...you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood...

Funds fine property (3v15) & a luxurious lifestyle (4v1, 6v4-6)

Holy Place – Enthusiastic, extravagant (4v4-5) Self-assured (5v14, 18, 6v1)... and yet rejected, as idolatry (8v14, 5v26)

5v21-23 "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. ²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. ²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. ²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Note: personal piety and prophetic criticism opposed...

2v12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'

Amos – "The Lion Roars"

Amos, his context & his message: The Lord Roars. 1v1-2

Judgment on seven of Israel's Neighbours... 1v3-2v5

...and on Israel herself! 2v6-16

Inevitable, fearful Judgment. 3v1-8

Nations Summoned to see Samaria's Sin and Judgment. 3v9-15

Cows of Bashan to be Judged. 4v1-3

Come to Bethel and Sin! 4v4-5

Despite judgments, Israel has not returned to the LORD. 4v6-13

A Lament: Sins & judgment; Seek the Lord & Live 5v1-17

Woe to you: the Day of the LORD! I hate your religion! 5v18-27

Woe to Those at Ease in Zion, ungrieved by Joseph's ruin. 6v1-7

...The Lord Hates Jacob's Pride. 6v8-14

Three Visions: Locusts, Fire (both averted) and Plumb Line. 7v1-9

...NARRATIVE: Amos Accused by Amaziah, Priest of Bethel. 7v10-17

...A Fourth Vision: A Basket of Summer Fruit – The End. 8v1-3

Oppressors Indicted; In those days: Word-Famine Coming. 8v4-14

Vision: Inescapable Judgment (though not total). 9v1-10

In those days: David's Booth Restored; Abundant Harvest! 9v11-15

Tentative outline: seven sections, unrelenting judgment, with the only exceptions being in the centre and at the very end.

Lamentation: ^{5v1} Hear this word that I take up over you in **lamentation**, O house of Israel: ² "Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel; forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up." ³ For thus says the Lord GOD: "The city that went out a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went out a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel."

⁴ For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "**Seek me and live;** ⁵ but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing." ⁶ **Seek the LORD and live**, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,

Sins of Social Injustice: ⁷ O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!

Poetic Description of the LORD: ⁸ He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the LORD is his name; ⁹ who makes destruction flash forth against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress.

Sins of Social Injustice: ¹⁰ They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth. ¹¹ Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. ¹² For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate. ¹³ Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time.

¹⁴ **Seek good, and not evil, that you may live;** and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said. ¹⁵ Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Lamentation: ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord: "In all the squares there shall be **wailing**, and in all the streets they shall say, '**Alas! Alas!**' They shall call the farmers to **mourning** and to **wailing** those who are skilled in **lamentation**, ¹⁷ and in all vineyards there shall be **wailing**, for I will pass through your midst," says the LORD.

Poetic Parallels in Amos (ESV)

Parallel judgments in 1v3–2v16

^{1v3} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Damascus , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,	^{1v6} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Gaza , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,	^{1v9} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,	^{1v11} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Edom , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,	^{1v13} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of the Ammonites , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,	^{2v1} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,	^{2v4} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Judah , and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
<i>Inhumanity to fellow human beings</i>						<i>Disloyalty to Yahweh</i>
<u>because</u> they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron.	<u>because</u> they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom .	<u>because</u> they delivered up a whole people to Edom , and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood .	<u>because</u> he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever.	<u>because</u> they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead , that they might enlarge their border.	<u>because</u> he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom.	<u>because</u> they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked.
⁴ <u>So</u> I will send a fire upon the house of Hazeael, and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad.	⁷ <u>So</u> I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour her strongholds.	¹⁰ <u>So</u> I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her strongholds."	¹² <u>So</u> I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah."	¹⁴ <u>So</u> I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour her strongholds,	² <u>So</u> I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the strongholds of Kerioth,	⁵ <u>So</u> I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem."
⁵ I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir,"	⁸ I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn my hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,"			with shouting on the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; ¹⁵ and their king shall go into exile , he and his princes together,"	and Moab shall die amid uproar, amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet; ³ I will cut off the ruler from its midst, and will kill all its princes with him,"	
says the LORD.	says the Lord GOD.			says the LORD.	says the LORD.	

^{2v6} Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of **Israel**, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,

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

⁹ "Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them... ¹⁰ Also it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness... ¹³ "**Behold**, I will press you down in your place, as a cart full of sheaves presses down. ¹⁴ Flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not retain his strength, nor shall the mighty save his life;

Parallel judgments in 7v1-9 and 8v1-3

^{7v1} This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, he was forming locusts when the latter growth was just beginning to sprout, and behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.	^{7v4} This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, the Lord GOD was calling for a judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land.	^{7v7} This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand.	^{7v10} Amos Accused by Amaziah, Priest of Bethel	^{8v1} This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit.
² When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, "O Lord GOD, please forgive! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!"	⁵ Then I said, "O Lord GOD, please cease! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!"	⁶ And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them;		² And he said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me, "The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass by them.
³ The LORD relented concerning this; "It shall not be," said the LORD.	⁶ The LORD relented concerning this; "This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.	⁹ the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."		³ The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day," declares the Lord GOD. "So many dead bodies!" "They are thrown everywhere!" "Silence!"

'Embedded Poetic Descriptions of the LORD': 4v13, 5v8-9 and 9v5-6

^{4v13} he who forms the mountains & creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought,	^{5v8} He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night,	^{9v5} The Lord GOD of hosts, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn, and all of it rises like the Nile, and sinks again, like the Nile of Egypt;
who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth –	who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth,	⁶ who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth;
the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!	the LORD is his name; ⁹ who makes destruction flash forth against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress.	who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth the LORD is his name.