

From the Garden to Glory

Amos

Author: Amos

Timeline: c. 758 B.C. (2 Kings 15)

Location: Northern Kingdom of Israel

Category: Prophetical, Minor Prophet

Theme: Judgment of Sin

Overview:

Amos, whose name means *burden*, had been a shepherd in Tekoa, a town in the hill country of the Southern Kingdom of Judah before God called him to prophesy. Amos prophesied against the Northern Kingdom of Israel while Jeroboam II was king of Israel. Although it was a time of prosperity and peace, Jeroboam "did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin." (2 Kings 14:24). Sadly the people followed in that sin. God used Amos to try and rouse His people to a sense of their danger.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Amos, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. The name *Amos* is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "to carry, to lift a burden." Who has been a "Burden-Bearer" in your life? What burden did this person help you carry? Name a person to whom the Lord is directing you to be a "Burden-Bearer". List one specific thing you can do to help lift or carry this person's burden.

2. Amos was a farmer-turned-prophet. Consider this quote from Harry A. Ironside, "It is ever God's way to prepare His servants in secret for the work they are afterwards to accomplish in public...It is important to observe that he who has thus learned of God in the school of obscurity is likely to shine in the blaze of publicity." Why is it important for the Lord to instruct his children "in the school of obscurity?" How has He done this in your life?

Judgment Against Nations

Read Amos 1 and 2

1. Amos was from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but he prophesied against the Northern Kingdom of Israel; this was during the reign of Jeroboam II and it was a time of great prosperity. According to The New Open Bible, "Business (was) booming and boundaries (were) bulging. But below the surface, greed and injustice were festering." It sounds very much like the world in which we live today. What are some of the opportunities for God's church during times of prosperity? What are some of the potential dangers?
2. Look at 1:1. What was Amos' occupation? Henrietta Mears said, "In Amos, we find one of many instances in the Bible of God calling a man when he was occupied in his daily work." What is your "daily work"? What character qualities is the Lord building into your life on a daily basis?
3. Summarize each of the eight judgments found in Amos 1 and 2:
 - Judgment on Damascus (1:3-5)
 - Judgment on Gaza (1:6-8)
 - Judgment on Tyre (1:9-10)
 - Judgment on Edom (1:11-12)
 - Judgment on Ammon (1:13-15)
 - Judgment on Moab (2:1-3)
 - Judgment on Judah (2:4-5)
 - Judgment on Israel (2:6-16)

Judgment Against Israel

Read Amos 3 and 4

1. Look at 3:2a. According to John MacArthur, "This word *knowing* refers to an intimate relationship, not just awareness." In what way(s) are you experiencing the intimacy of your relationship with the Lord today?
2. Look at 3:2b. God's love for His people did not preclude Him from punishing them for their disobedience. Read Hebrews 12:5-11. What do you learn about the Lord's discipline of His children?
3. What phrase is repeated in 4:6, 4:10 and 4:11? Is there an area of your life where the Lord is trying to get *your* attention? How has He warned you? What do you need to do in order to "return" to Him?

Visions Regarding the Future

Read Amos 8 and 9

1. Look at 8:11-12. God's people rejected the Lord during their time of prosperity. During their captivity, they would seek the "word of the Lord" but not find it. As a woman living in a very prosperous nation, how do you insure that the Word of the Lord has a place of high priority in your life?
2. Look at 9:11. According to Walvoord and Zuck, "Previous references in Amos to 'that day' had spoken of it as a day of darkness and destruction...But when Israel's ordeal is finally over, 'that day' will also become the day of her renewal." How has the Lord turned darkness and destruction into a time of renewal in your life?
3. Summarize 9:11-15, concentrating on verse 12. It was God's plan to provide salvation to the Gentiles from the beginning. Read Acts 15:6-17 and note the fulfillment of this prophesy.

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Amos consider the following questions and write your answers:

- 1.** What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
- 2.** What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?
- 3.** List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord:

Hosea

Author: Hosea

Timeline: c. 755-725 B.C. (2 Kings 15-18)

Location: Northern Kingdom of Israel

Category: Prophetical, Minor Prophet

Theme: Israel's Unfaithfulness to God, God's Faithful Love to Israel

Overview:

Hosea, whose name means *Salvation*, ministered to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Outwardly, the nation of Israel seemed to be living in prosperity; but inwardly, there was moral wickedness, sin and unfaithfulness to God.

God instructed Hosea to marry a harlot who would prove her unfaithfulness to her husband thus depicting the nation of Israel's infidelity to God.

Hosea's message was thus: God hates the sins of His people; judgment is certain; but God's faithful love stands firm. The severity of judgment was meant to turn Israel back to God.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Hosea, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. During the time of Hosea, the Northern Kingdom was experiencing a time of growth and prosperity; at the same time immorality and spiritual adultery were rampant among the people. In what ways can

times of economic prosperity be spiritually dangerous? Living in the affluence of the United States, how do you protect yourself and your family from these dangers?

2. The book of Hosea depicts a story of one-sided love and faithfulness. Read 2 Timothy 2:13. What does it mean in this verse that, "He cannot deny Himself?" How has the Lord been loving and faithful to you at a time when you were unfaithful to Him? Praise Him for His faithfulness in your life!!

Israel's Unfaithfulness

Read Hosea 1 and 2

1. Hosea had a very long period of ministry, spanning over several decades. What character qualities would Hosea have needed to remain faithful to his call over such a long time? How are these same qualities being built into your life?
2. Look at 1:2. Hosea is instructed to take a "wife of harlotry." Israel had not remained loyal to the Lord. Hosea's role was to expose Israel's breach of her covenant with the Lord. How is idolatrous behavior similar to unfaithfulness in marriage?
3. According to John MacArthur, "The Lord's true love for His people is unending and will tolerate no rival." Ask the Lord to search your heart. Is there any rival vying to draw *your* love away from the Lord? If so, flee from this rival, and run into the loving arms of the lover of your soul.

Israel's National Sin and Chastisement

Read Hosea 4:1-6:3

1. Speaking of the book of Hosea, Henrietta Mears said, "It is not more liberty we need today, but more loyalty." What characterizes loyalty? What characterizes disloyalty? In what ways are you a loyal person? How could you improve in this area?
2. Look at 4:1. Read the following verses and note what you learn about the specifics of the Lord's "charge" against His people:
 - Hosea 4:1
 - Hosea 4:11
 - Hosea 4:16
 - Hosea 6:9
 - Hosea 7:1
 - Hosea 7:4
 - Hosea 7:7
3. Look at 6:1-3, concentrating on verse 3. According to Walvoord and Zuck the word *pursue* can mean "chase" and suggests the intensity of Israel's newfound devotion. In what specific way do *you* "pursue the knowledge of the Lord"? How devoted are you to this pursuit?

Israel's Hope

Read Hosea 11 and 14

1. Look at 11:1. According to Henrietta Mears, "(God) did not choose Israel for His people because they were the greatest or richest of the nations of the world...He rather chose a weak, unattractive slave child to be the object of His love and care and blessings." In what way(s) were you a "weak, unattractive slave child" when the Lord chose you to be the object of His love, care and blessings? How has your life been enriched since then?

2. Look at 11:2. Although they were the object of God's love, the Israelites became increasingly idolatrous. They took God for granted and turned to "other lovers". How do you make sure that you never take the Lord or His blessings for granted?

3. Read Hosea 14:1-7. Commenting on these verses, the New Believer's Bible says, "The only real and effective way to remove our guilt is to confess our sin before God and ask His forgiveness. This is exactly what the Lord was asking of the Israelites in this passage, and He expects no less of us when we have fallen into sin." Sit before the Lord today and ask Him to search your heart. Confess any sin(s) He reveals and ask for His forgiveness. Read 1 John 1:9. Thank God for being "faithful and just" and for cleansing *you* from all unrighteousness.

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Hosea consider the following questions and write your answers:

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2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?

3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord:

Micah

Author: Micah

Timeline: c. 725 B.C. (2 Kings 15 -17)

Location: Judah & Israel

Category: Prophetical, Minor Prophet

Theme: Judgment & Hope

Overview:

Although his primary ministry was to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Micah warned both Judah and Israel of the coming judgment of their sin. Micah also offered them hope of God's mercies.

Micah was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah.

Introduction:

As we begin our study of the book of Micah, consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. The name *Micah* means "Who is like Yahweh?" Read Micah 7:18-19. Make a list of five things which cause you to be in awe of the Lord.
2. Micah was a country preacher who lived about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. From this comfortable setting, he was called to declare God's judgment on the children of Israel and Judah. Has the Lord ever called you to do something difficult when you were in a comfortable situation? How did you respond? What was the result?

Israel's Sin

Read Micah 1

1. Look at verse 1. During whose reigns did Micah prophesy? Although these were kings of Judah, the prophesy concerns the capital cities of both Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah). Why would the condition of the capital city be important to an entire nation?
2. Look at verse 2. Henrietta Mears said that the theme of the book of Micah is, "Hear Him!" What might the Lord say as a "witness against" our world today? Is there anything He might say as a "witness against" you personally? If so, how can you change this area of your life? Be specific.
3. Look at verse 8. What causes you to "wail and howl"? Are the things that break your heart the same things that break the Lord's heart?

The Coming Christ

Read Micah 4 and 5

1. Look at 4:2. Which of the Lord's ways and paths would you like to learn today?
2. Look at 4:5. What does it mean in your own life to "walk in the name of the Lord your God"?
3. Look at 5:2. How is this prophesy fulfilled Luke 2:4-7? Remember, the book of Micah was written over 700 years before the birth of Jesus. How does fulfilled prophesy contradict the belief that Christians follow Jesus based on "blind faith"?

A Message to the Chosen People

Read Micah 6

1. Look at verses 4-5. Make a list of instances of the Lord's faithfulness in your own life.
2. Look at verse 8. What does the Lord require of His people? List at least one way you are fulfilling each of these requirements.
3. Look at verses 13-15. Although the life of a person who rejects the Lord may be materially prosperous, how is it one of emptiness and disappointment? What do Proverbs 15:16 and 16:8 say about this?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Micah consider the following questions and write your answers:

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2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?
3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

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