

Old Testament Survey

Amos

The Meaning of Amos

The meaning of Amos is likely “burden-bearer.” His prophecy was a series of “burdens” or prophecies of judgment against various heathen nations followed by a prophecy regarding God’s faithfulness to his covenant.

General Outline of Amos

- I. God’s Judgment Upon the Nations - Amos 1:1-2:16
 - A. Prelude: The Day of Wrath is at hand - Amos 1:1-2
 - B. Judgment of God upon the heathen nations - Amos 1:3-2:3
 1. Damascus - Amos 1:3-5
 2. Gaza - Amos 1:6-8
 3. Tyre - Amos 1:9-10
 4. Edom - Amos 1:11-12
 5. Ammon - Amos 1:13-15
 6. Moab - Amos 2:1-3
 - C. Wrath upon the covenant nations for neglecting God’s word - Amos 2:4-16
 1. Judah, having turned to false teachers, will experience fire and destruction - Amos 2:4-5
 2. Israel, having exploited the poor and tolerating incest, will be judged as well - Amos 2:6-16
- II. Offenses of Israel and Warnings of God - Amos 3:1-6:14
 - A. Judgment is unavoidable because of Israel’s complete depravity - Amos 3:1-15
 1. The greater the privilege, the greater the accountability - Amos 3:1-3
 2. Amos’ credentials as God’s messenger - Amos 3:4-8
 3. Israel’s crimes of oppressing the poor - Amos 3:9-15
 - B. God’s challenge to the stiff-necked pleasure-seekers - Amos 4:1-13
 1. Their pursuit after pleasure and wealth and their carnal forms of worship to seal their doom - Amos 4:1-5
 2. The unheeded warning of the plagues; judgment will surely come - Amos 4:6-13
 - C. Lamentation and final appeal - Amos 5:1-27
 - D. The doom of exile for the pleasure-seeking upper-class - Amos 6:1-14
- III. Five Visions of Israel’s Fate - Amos 7:1-9:10
 - A. Locusts - restrained - Amos 7:1-3
 - B. Fire - restrained - Amos 7:4-6
 - C. Plumbline - all to be leveled - Amos 7:7-17
 - D. Late summer fruit - the end is at hand - Amos 8:1-14
 - E. The smitten temple - Amos 9:1-10
- IV. Promises of Restoration - Amos 9:11-15
 - A. Preliminary: the New Testament age - Amos 9:11-12
 - B. The millennial consummation - Amos 9:13-15

The Author

1. Amos’ father is not named, thus supporting the idea that Amos was from a humble family.
2. Amos’ occupation was that of a farmer and fig-picker.

3. Amos appeared to be a student of the law since he shows definite Mosaic influences in his prophecies.
4. He left his home in Judea to minister to Northern Israel without the imprimatur of the priests. In spite of his "unauthorized" ministry, he remained bold for the Lord.

Date of Composition

1. Old Testament scholars agree that Amos' ministry should be dated between 760 and 757 B.C.
2. Amos prophesied against Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.), who enjoyed prosperity along with the upper classes in Northern Israel at the expense of the poor.
3. Amos states in Amos 1:1 that his mission to Bethel was two years before the earthquake in the reign of Uzziah. We do not know the exact date of that earthquake, however.

Integrity of the Text

1. Liberal critics allow that Amos indeed wrote most of this book.
2. Fifteen verses, however, are assigned to a later author (Amos 1:9-12, 2:4-5, 4:13, 5:8-9, 9:5-6, and 9:11-15).
3. All of the above passages have been rejected on some supposed theory of evolutionary religious development in Israel.

Amos and the Mosaic Law

1. Religious prostitution - Amos 2:7 cf. Deuteronomy 23:17-18.
2. Garments kept overnight as pledges - Amos 2:8 cf. Exodus 22:26, Deuteronomy 24:12-13.
3. Consecration of the Nazarites - Amos 2:12 cf. Numbers 6:1-21
4. Tithing - Amos 4:4 cf. Deuteronomy 14:28, 26:12.
5. Offering leavened bread - Amos 4:5 cf. Leviticus 2:11, 7:13.
6. Song and sacrifice - Amos 5:23 cf. David.