

SERIES: DON'T CALL ME MINOR PART 11 - PROPHET AMOS

SERIES FOCUS

The books written by the 12 Minor Prophets may have been shorter, but their messages had a major impact on the New Testament. Many of their prophecies are dual, with an initial fulfillment as well as an end-time fulfillment. This series will seek to answer the question, “what do the Minor Prophets mean for you today?”

FOCUS VERSES

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

Hebrews 1:1-2 ESV

Rom. 15:4...“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

BIBLE LESSON

1. The Small Town Prophet (Tekoa)



Sitting at an altitude of 2,700 feet (825 m), Tekoa is located at Khirbet Tequ'a, about 10 miles (16 km) south of Jerusalem. The site is located exactly on the border between arable land and the desert. East of the city extends the wilderness of Tekoa (2 Chr 20:20). To the west there is an area once known in the Talmud for its olive trees.



Tekoa is a city on Jerusalem's protective perimeter (Jer 6:1). The city was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:6). Later, Jehoshaphat's army passed by Tekoa, and Jehoshaphat stopped nearby to pray (2 Chr 20:20). Tekoa is also the hometown of several named figures in Scripture. Ira, one of David's mighty men, was from Tekoa (2 Sam 23:26; 1 Chr 11:28; 27:9). The “wise woman” who convinced David to allow Absalom's return was also from Tekoa (2 Sam 14:1-20).

And most notably, the prophet Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa (Amos 1:1).

“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.” Amos 1:1 ESV

There were only 30-40 years between the ministries of Elisha and Amos, but in that short span of time, the whole world had changed. The new superpower of the Middle East, the Assyrians had come onto the scene with their form of psychological warfare and obscene cruelty, replace the traditional superpower from antiquity, Egypt.

While there had been occasional war faring Pharaoh's at the beginning of each dynasty, Egypt was more of a lumbering giant who ruled by influence, culture, science, agriculture and wealth. In the face of the new and terrible world power, Israel and Judah are forced to admit that they have become lax

in their walk with God and it was on the verge of costing them their freedom.

Commentator John Phillips writes, “There is a cold logic in the book of Amos that is altogether missing in the book of Hosea. Hosea spoke the language of love; Amos spoke the language of law. Hosea spoke from the heart; Amos spoke from the head. Hosea thought in terms of God’s outreach. Hosea expressed fervor and fire; Amos stated causes and conclusions.

2. For three Transgressions and for Four

There is a calm and calculated logic to a prophesy that reads like this...”**“Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions...,and for four, I will not revoke the punishment...” Amos 1**

Too many people won’t hear the cry of God until judgement is own their doorstep...until tragedy is sinking in...then they cry where are you lord.

Hosea pleads for the bride to return home, and Amos must record what befalls the bride who does not return...he reminds The great cities of the world, not once, not twice, not even three times as a common parent would allow, but for four or more times you have transgressed against your God.

It’s a Hebrew idiom for fullness or completeness of sin that means, “Your sins have multiplied and reached their limit — now judgment will fall.” This may come as a shock to us Christians, but God had reached a limit on their abuse of his relationship with them and with those who were innocent.

- **Damascus (Syria)** – Amos 1:3-5 - Sin: Cruelty toward Gilead, threshing people with iron sledges (brutal warfare)
- **Gaza (Philistia)** – Amos 1:6-8 - Sin: Capturing and selling entire communities into slavery to Edom.
- **Tyre (Phoenicia)** – Amos 1:9-10 - Sin: Betrayed a covenant of brotherhood and sold captives to Edom.
- **Edom** – Amos 1:11-12 - Sin: Pursued his brother (Israel) with unending anger and vengeance.
- **Ammon** – Amos 1:13-15 - Sin: Ripped open pregnant women in Gilead to expand their borders (atrocious cruelty).
- **Moab** – Amos 2:1-3 - Sin: Desecrated the bones of Edom’s king, burning them to lime (disrespect for the dead).
- **Judah** – Amos 2:4-5 - Sin: Rejected the law of the Lord and followed lies/idols.
- **Israel** – Amos 2:6-16 - Sin: Social injustice, moral corruption, misuse of the things of God and turning to other Gods

Each would be punished by fire in a not so fortuitous look into end-time judgement.

Israel, the most privileged nation (with God’s law and blessings), faces the severest judgment because, while others may sin in ignorance, their sin is a form of hypocrisy and obstinate behavior.

“And I raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?” declares the Lord. “But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, ‘You shall not prophesy.’”

Amos 2:11-12 ESV

A generation of adults who ignore holiness, and coax God’s future generations to sin against holiness, must beware that God judges this behavior the hardest, not just for the sin but because you are robbing him of future generations of ministers who treat holiness carelessly.

We are living in a generation where religious leaders mock abstinence, absolute sobriety, modesty with distinction, and humility of spirit. They teach future ministers to avoid the parts of God's Word that bring distinction between those who follow his commandments concerning the things of salvation and those who don't...

This robs God of a generation of ministers who have the fortitude to stand up to the culture of the world and many will fall to personal temptation and sin. God will judge these types of cultures.

3. Judgement Because God Expected More From His People

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. “Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?” Amos 3:2-3 ESV

God expected and expects today more out of the people he calls his own than he does others who are living in the world. This world is not without its judgements, he will judge their sin, but to whom much is given, much is required.

““Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob,” declares the Lord God, the God of hosts, “that on the day I punish Israel for his transgressions, I will punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground.” Amos 3:13-14 ESV

He calls them by their past name, House of Jacob, as an indication that they have returned to their stubborn ways from before he blessed their patron and named them Israel. We find the altar at Bethel prophesied against (1 Ki. 13:2), and immediately rent (v. 3), and that prophecy fulfilled with Josiah burnt men's bones upon it, (2 Ki. 23:15, 16).

“The Lord God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks.” Amos 4:2 ESV

This chapter is scary when you hold it up alongside our Christian world today. They have offended Holiness and think that they should be good because they kept all the religious processes...sacrifice, tithes, good will offerings. God wanted obedience with relationship, and they just wanted to do the church stuff and ignore living a Holy life.

4. Five Judgements

Amos had a vision of five woe's or judgements that were coming from God in the way of what would seem to most to be natural disasters...

- Devouring Locust
- Devouring Flame
- The Probing Plumbline
- Basket of Summer Fruit and
- The Lord Standing upon the Altar

Some of these judgements we just read past because they don't make sense to our way of life but what you need to know is that these judgements were directed at their way of life.

- The devouring locust came after “the king's mowing”...The first mow or harvest went as a tax to the king and the second mowing the farmer could keep. God began to place his judgement on their portion and Amos had to intercede with prayer for God to spare the people.
- The devouring flame or heat would be so great as to consume even the deep waters,

abundant waters, and so the people would face a great drought.

- The plumbline which the Lord held in this part of the vision was God's word...it is always level and always just and he expected to measure his people by his word. The next words from God let Amos know he could not push God's hand away from everyone and every indiscretion. So God marks the end for the House of Israel by prophesying the ending its line of Kings.

“Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, “Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.”””

Amos 7:10-11 ESV

- Jeroboam II was king and it only took 30 years for God to end the house of Israel and its line of kings as they were taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC
- The Basket of Summer Fruit was an ominous look at their readiness to be devoured because their sin had ripened them for the takers. And Israel would indeed be devoured.

““Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “when I will send a famine on the land — not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” Amos 8:11 ESV

- Lastly he saw the Lord standing upon the altar....of it, Matthew Henry writes, “He is removed from the mercy-seat between the cherubim, and stands upon the altar, the judgment-seat, on which the fire of God used to fall, to devour the sacrifices. He stands upon the altar, to show that the ground of his controversy with this people was their profanation of his holy things”

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the surface of the ground, except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,” declares the Lord. “For behold, I will command, and shake the house of Israel among all the nations as one shakes with a sieve, but no pebble shall fall to the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, ‘Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.’”

Amos 9:8-10 ESV

We must not be so arrogant as to think that God will not judge sin, and the way we treat Holiness and the things of his Kingdom he considers Holy. God will maintain for himself a people but in doing so he will shake them until the sinners fall out.

And so we see this echoed in the words John the Baptist...“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:11-12 KJV

Being Baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost is God's way of separating the wheat from the chaff. It is the plumbline that he is judging his New Testament church by.

