

What On Earth Is Happening? Hopeful Insights From Amos and Obadiah

Women, Worship, and Tough Love

Amos 4:1–13

Sunday Evening Bible Study, October 1, 2017

Attendance Watch for Amos:

9.10.17	241
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Review of Amos 1:1–2:3

About 760 years before Christ was born, God’s people were divided into the Southern Kingdom (Judah) and the Northern Kingdom (Israel). Both kingdoms were disobedient and rebellious, but Israel’s corruption was greater. God raised up Amos, a businessman living in Judah, to take a message to the nation of Israel. The message starts with good news: God is going to judge their enemies for their violation of the moral law of God which is written on their hearts (Ro. 2:15; the second table of the Ten Commandments: murder, theft, false witness, coveting). These six pagan nations surround and threaten them. To Israel, this sounds like good news of imminent victory, health, and wealth. Peace and prosperity is just around the corner!

Review of Amos 2:4–16

Amos begins with what sounds like good news to Israel. Their surrounding enemies will soon be judged and destroyed. Historically, that meant that God was going to use Israel as an instrument of judgment on evil nations, so they are expecting to experience victory, health and wealth, peace and prosperity. But when Amos indicts Judah, their brothers to the south, they begin to worry. Then God, saving the worst news for last, lists seven specific indictments against Israel herself. For these sins, God will destroy their nation.

Review of Amos 3:1–15

Israel’s numerous sins revolve around two main offenses: First, they didn’t love God so they abandoned sound doctrine. Doctrinal compromise always leads to moral compromise. Second, they didn’t love their neighbor. Injustice thrives when bad theology flourishes. Severe judgment is coming because of their sins of commission (exploiting the poor and accumulating wealth at their expense) and omission (remaining silent and doing nothing to stop the injustice).

Amos 4:1–13

1. Self-serving women with indulgent lifestyles will lose everything (4:1–3).
 - 1.1 Cows of Bashan: Well-fed wealthy women who give greater attention to sensual beauty than good theology.
 - 1.2 Oppress the poor: Women obsessed with an indulgent lifestyle at the expense of the poor.
 - 1.3 Drink: Women of leisure with drinking time on their hands.
 - 1.4 Husbands: Women who should be a godly influence on their husbands but encourage injustice.
 - 1.5 Hooks: Women who will lose their protective walls and be led into captivity as a slave or dragged away as a corpse.
2. Self-serving worship that seeks to manipulate God and ingratiate political leaders will lead to disaster (4:4–5).
 - 2.1 A corrupt method of worship: Incorporate the trendy religious and cultural fads of the day.
 - “Come...and transgress:” A sarcastic call to worship. Your worship is sinful! (1 Kings 12:25-33).

- 2.2 A corrupt motive of worship: Manipulate God to get his gifts and justify greed.
 - “Offer a sacrifice:” Empty religious rituals without holy lives (see also Amos 5:21).
- 2.3 A corrupt message of worship: This is all about me and what I want.
 - “Publish them:” You love to brag and boast about your religiosity (see also Mt. 6:5; 23:6)

- 3. Stubborn and foolish people of God will always face his tough love.
 - 3.1 The Love Part: “Yet you have not returned to me” is repeated five times; God’s goal.
 - 3.2 The Tough Part: Seven Calamities to Warn Israel
 1. Famine (4:6)
 2. Drought (4:7,8)
 3. Plant disease (4:9)
 4. Locusts (4:9)
 5. Plague/epidemics (4:10)
 6. War/terrorism (4:10)
 7. Sudden disaster--earthquake or military assault; international threats (4:11)
 - 3.3 Therefore, prepare for your day in court before the sovereign Judge of the universe (4:12).

The Liberal Left	The Conservative Right
Expansive government is the best way to protect the poor.	Limited government is the best way to protect the poor.
Raise taxes to relieve the poor.	Lower taxes to incentivize the work ethic and create jobs for the poor.
Redistribute wealth by legal coercion.	Redistribute wealth by voluntary generosity.
People are poor because of systemic injustices in the social structure that help the privileged rich get richer and oppressed poor get poorer.	People are poor because they have made foolish, immoral, and irresponsible decisions.
Women are historically oppressed, so we should let them abort babies who will only keep them poor.	Children are historically oppressed, so we should protect them from their mothers by banning abortion.
Pride issue: I am entitled to the fruit of another person’s labor because the system is not fair. I will blame everyone else for my problems.	Pride Issue: I earned and deserve everything I have and nobody ever gave me anything. I will take credit for all of my accomplishments.
Political danger: The church is not allowed to influence the state (unless it agrees with my liberal policies).	Political danger: This is a Christian Nation and the church must influence the state to promote Christianity.
Intellectual Danger: I will remain safely in my echo chamber and avoid the intellectual effort required to listen to and understand conservatives (Pr. 18:17; Jas. 1:19).	Intellectual Danger: I will remain safely in my echo chamber and avoid the hard intellectual effort required to listen to and understand liberals (Pr. 18:17; Jas. 1:19).