

## Lesson 96

# God Warns Israel

God called Amos to warn Israel of the coming judgment.

# Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

## Introduction

### Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 95 Theme Poster. We've been learning about the prophets Elijah and Elisha, whom God used to deliver his messages to kings and to the people of Israel. They also performed miracles that showed God's power. Elisha was used by God to show his power to the people of Syria, a nation north of Israel. Naaman was a captain of the Syrian army, but he had leprosy. A servant girl from Israel shared her faith in God and told Naaman's wife that Elisha the prophet could heal Naaman.

What did Elisha tell Naaman to do to be healed? Wash in the Jordan River seven times.

Naaman didn't like these instructions and went away angry, but his servants talked him into obeying. Naaman went to the Jordan River and washed seven times. On the seventh time, God healed him of his leprosy and made his skin clean and new. Naaman learned that only the God of Israel is the true God, not the false idols his people worshipped.

Today we'll get started with a question. What does it mean when someone gives you a warning? Allow discussion.

A warning is something we should pay attention to, isn't it? A warning could be something your parents or teachers tell you to do or not do, like, "You'll have a test tomorrow, so make sure you study" or "Don't touch the stove, it may be hot." Warnings can help us do the right thing and keep us safe.

Have the printed Warning Signs cut out and the timer ready. We see and hear warnings everywhere we go. I have four warning signs that you all have probably seen many times. Do not allow the class to see the signs. Let's see how well you've paid attention to them. I need four volunteers to act out what these signs are warning us about. Choose one volunteer at a time and show him one of the printed Warning Signs. Give him a few seconds to think about how he will act it out then set the timer for one minute. Have the students guess what the warning is then show the sign after the time is up and attach it to the board with tape or poster putty.

Refer to the signs on the board. How many of you have seen all these signs before? Show of hands.

Warnings are important, but if we choose not to pay attention to them, there could be horrible consequences. That's what happened in the

northern kingdom of Israel.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. We have learned that Israel was divided into the northern and southern kingdoms and that both nations were ruled by kings. For 250 years, the northern nation of Israel did not have a single king who obeyed God. All the kings did evil in the sight of the Lord. God warned the people to turn away from their sins and turn back to him. Today we are going to talk about one of the prophets who spoke the words of God to the people of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II. His name was Amos.

Pass out the Class Notes.

## God Calls Amos

Although Amos was from Judah, the Lord sent him north to Israel to bring a message of judgment.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to the book of Amos. Is Amos one of the major or the minor prophets? Minor.

Yes, but this does not mean his message wasn't important. The major prophets are called that simply because their books are longer than the books of the minor prophets. Also, these books are not arranged in chronological order. Amos was prophesying earlier than Isaiah, but Isaiah's book comes before his in the Old Testament. Point out these books on the poster.

### Slide #4

#### Amos 7:14-15

Find Amos 7:14. Amaziah was a priest who told King Jeroboam II that Amos was conspiring against him by pronouncing judgment on Israel. Amos answered Amaziah in verses 14 and 15. Who will read that? Assign a reader.

What was Amos doing before he became a prophet? A herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs.

Amos is one of the few prophets who tells us what he did before God called him to be a prophet. He was a shepherd and farmer who worked with fig trees.

Have any of you ever eaten a fig? Allow answers.

Have fig pictures or snack ready to show/share.

Figs were an important fruit in Israel. Figs could be dried to preserve them. Show pictures of figs or fig trees or pass out samples of dried figs or another fig snack for students to sample.

Who took Amos from his flock of sheep? The Lord.

And where did the Lord send him? To the people in Israel.

God sent Amos to prophesy to the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos was a shepherd, but he was also a prophet of God.

Before we read more, let me give you some background on Israel at that time. The Bible says that the people of Israel had become greedy and mean. They were cruel to the poor and disobeyed God's instructions for worship. Then God sent his prophet Amos to Israel. God's message for them was to repent, to turn away from the sins they were committing against God. And Amos had to warn them that a disaster would come if they ignored him and did not repent.

Do you think that's a good idea or a bad idea to ignore a warning, especially one from God? Bad idea!

#### Slide #5

Take a look at your Class Notes. What missing word will complete #1? Who will read that? Assign a reader. Shepherd. Have students complete #1.

Who will read #2 about where God sent Amos? Assign a reader. Israel. Have students complete #2.

And what's the answer for #3? Who will read that? Assign a reader. Repent. Have students complete #3.

### **Amos Warns Israel**

We know who Amos was and why God sent him. Now let's find out what he said.

#### Slide #6

Amos 3:1-2

Turn to Amos 3. Who will read verses 1-2? Assign a reader.

The prophet Amos was speaking. Who was Amos speaking for? The Lord. Amos said, "The Lord has spoken against you." Who was the Lord speaking against? The people of Israel.

Yes, this was a message of judgment against the nation of Israel. What did God say he was going to do to the people of Israel? Punish them for their iniquities.

What are iniquities? Allow discussion.

Iniquities refer to sins and disobedience to God. God was going to punish them for their sins.

Can he do that? Does God punish? Isn't God a God of love? Allow discussion.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. This is an important question. Some people only talk about God's love. And yes, he is loving! He wants what is best for his children. And he showed his love to Israel by waiting patiently for 250 years, warning them to turn back to him. But they would not!

That brings us to another attribute of God. He is just, so he must punish sin. The time had come for God to punish the people of Israel for their sins.

#### Slide #7

Let's fill in some more Class Notes. Who will read #4? Assign a reader. Love. Have students complete #4.  
And what attribute is described in #5? Assign a reader. Just. Have students complete #5.

### Slide #8

Amos 3:10–11

Now let's go back to the book of Amos. Who will read Amos 3:10–11? Assign a reader.

What did the Lord say about the people? How were they acting? They did not know how to do right.

They were sinning against God with violence and robbery. And Amos 3:11 tells us what God's punishment was going to be. What was God going to do about their sin? Send an adversary to the land.

### Slide #9

### Slide #10

What is an adversary? Allow answers.

Adversary: an enemy; one who opposes

An adversary is an enemy. Could someone read Amos 3:11 using the word enemy instead of adversary?

Assign a reader.

An enemy or adversary would surround their land, bring down their defenses, and plunder their strongholds. Plunder means to steal and destroy. This was a very serious warning from the Lord!

Who will read #6 on the Class Notes and give the answer? Assign a reader. Enemy. Have students complete #6.

## **Israel Does Not Repent**

God's message to Israel was very clear. God sent Amos to warn them of his coming judgment. The people of Israel were God's special, chosen people. But they had turned away from God. They no longer obeyed him. The rulers were wicked, and they were cruel to the poor. God warned the people through Amos that he was going to send an enemy to take over the land. God warned that his judgment would come because of their sin against him.

These people were very stubborn. They did not want to listen. In fact, God had already sent several disasters or punishments to the people of Israel. God had already warned them.

### Slide #11

### Slide #12

### Slide #13

### Slide #14

Amos 4:6–10

Turn to Amos 4:6–10. We'll see what those first warnings were! Assign readers.

Amos 4:6 says God gave the people cleanness of teeth and lack of bread. What do you think that means? Allow discussion.

Cleanness of teeth is a way of saying there was no food. If you don't have any food, your teeth won't have any food stuck in them, right? If you look at that verse further, you'll see it says they lacked bread—they had no food! This verse explains that God had sent famine to get the people's attention.

But did the people return to God when they were hungry? No. Now look in Amos 4:7. What did God withhold from the land? Rain. Did the people return to God when he held back the rain? No, they did not return to him.

Let's move on to Amos 4:9. There are several punishments mentioned there. Can you tell me what they are? Blight and mildew and locusts. What did the locusts do? Devoured the crops.

God sent blight and mildew that caused mold and rottenness to set in. On top of that, the Lord sent locusts to eat their gardens, vineyards, fig trees, and olive trees. What a terrible situation!

As bad as this was, did the people return to the Lord? No. Sadly, the people still would not turn back to God. Look in Amos 4:10. God brought another punishment on the nation. What was it? A pestilence. A pestilence is a plague. What happened to the young men? They were killed with the sword.

God brought the sword, or war, on the nation, killing the young men and taking away their horses. God was warning them to return to him! But they wouldn't.

With all these punishments from God, did the people return to the Lord? The Bible tells us at the very end of Amos 4:10. No.

God warned Israel in many different ways, through famine, drought, mildew, locusts, and war. Yet the Bible tells us that they did not return to the Lord.

God warned Israel again through the prophet Amos. God had sent many judgments on them in the past. Yet they still would not repent and turn from their sins. Because God is just, he had to judge them. God finally told Israel to prepare to meet him! His judgment had come.

### Slide #15

#### Amos 4:12

Someone read Amos 4:12. Assign a reader.

God's patience had run out. What did he tell them at the end of verse 12? Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!

The people continued for YEARS to ignore God. They worshipped in their own way instead of obeying God's instructions and lived very sinful lives.

And God was finally going to bring judgment on them. They had to prepare for the judgment they were due because they refused to turn back to God.

Who remembers what God would do to the nation of Israel because of their sin? We talked about it earlier in Amos 3:11. God would send an enemy—an adversary—to destroy the nation of Israel.

Because of their stubborn hearts, they would now have to face the punishment of Lord God Almighty! He would destroy the nation and move the people away to another land.

#### Slide #16

What punishment is missing from #7 on the Class Notes? Who will read that? Assign a reader. Famine. Have students complete #7.

What did the people refuse to do after all these terrible punishments? Assign a reader. Return. Have students complete #8.

But God did not leave his people without hope. The end of the book describes a time of restoration for Israel when they will have peace. We have this promise too! The Consummation, the final C of the Seven C's of History, describes a time when Jesus will return and create a new heaven and a new earth where those who are God's children will live forever in peace with him.

### **Application**

#### Slide #17

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Amos was a shepherd from Judah, but God called him to be his prophet in Israel. Amos spoke the words of the Lord, pronouncing judgment on the evil practices of the Israelites. He warned the people that if they didn't turn back to the Lord, they would be destroyed by an enemy. God is a just God, and he must punish sin.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. God's justice did finally come on the people of Israel. We'll see that God sent more prophets to warn Israel. But, in the end, after 250 years of turning away from God, the northern kingdom was finally judged. God sent the adversary that we read about in Amos 3:11—the Assyrians—to capture Israel in 721 BC. We'll learn more about that in another lesson.

We may think the Israelites' sin doesn't matter to us today, but the Lord must judge our sin, too. The Bible says that God must judge all sin.

#### Slide #18

Psalm 7:11

Listen to Psalm 7:11. Read the verse.

This verse says that God is a righteous judge, and he is indignant with the wicked every day. That means he is angry with all sinners—because all sin goes

against his holiness. We all sin, and the Lord will judge all of us because of our sin. So, what can we do?

There is an answer! Because God is merciful, he sent Jesus Christ to be the Savior for sinners. If we love Jesus, he promises to send the Holy Spirit to change our hearts, and with his help we can turn away from our sins and obey and trust in him. Then we can be saved from God's judgment—because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. He has already taken the punishment for anyone who will turn to him in repentance and faith!

Have you repented to God of your sins? Have you turned away from your sins and turned to Jesus Christ? Have you humbly asked him for forgiveness? Do you believe that Jesus died and rose again to conquer sin and death? These are important questions.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. God sees everything that we do and say. He is omniscient; he knows everything. He knows those who have trusted Jesus as their Savior, and he knows those who continue to turn away from him. One day, just like the Israelites, we will all be judged by God. But Jesus promises that if we call on his name, we will be saved from God's righteous judgment against sin. Instead of receiving the punishment we deserve for our sin, we can have eternal life through Jesus.

## **Lesson Review**

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



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