

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 the people of Israel and their kings and to perform miracles that showed God's power.

Elisha was also used by God to show his power and mercy to the people of Syria, an enemy 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, and God healed him.

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, timer, and tape or poster putty ready.

We see and hear warnings wherever 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 many evil kings.

Slide #4

Refer to the Lesson 91 Theme Poster. The northern nation of Israel did not have a single king who obeyed God. They all did evil in the sight of the Lord. But God was very patient. For 250 years, God sent warnings to the people to turn away from their sins and turn back to him, or punishment would come. Today we are going to talk about some of those warning signs God sent and hear what the prophet Amos told the people of Israel when he took God's message to them.

God Calls Amos

Although Amos lived in the southern kingdom of 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.

Slide #5

Amos 7:14–15

Find Amos 7. We'll read verses 14 and 15. Here, Amos is telling someone about himself. Who will read that? Assign readers.

What jobs did Amos do 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 a farmer who grew 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. They could be preserved by drying them so they could be eaten later. Figs are usually sweet and have an interesting texture inside—kind of sticky or gooey but with crunchy seeds. Show pictures of figs or fig trees or pass out samples of dried figs or another fig snack for students to sample.

Look back at verse 15 now. Who took Amos from farming figs and herding his sheep? The Lord.

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

Amos was a shepherd, but he was also a prophet of God. God sent Amos to prophesy, which means he brought God's message to the northern kingdom of Israel.

Before we read more, let me give you some background on Israel at that time. The king was Jeroboam II. He did evil like the other kings of Israel and did not follow God. The people weren't any better. The Bible says they had become greedy and mean. They were cruel to the poor and disobeyed God's instructions for worship. Then God sent his prophet Amos with a message for them 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.

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

Slide #6

Pass out the Class Notes.

Take a look at your Class Notes. What word from the bottom of the page will complete #1? Who will read that? Assign a reader. Shepherd. Have students complete #1.

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

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

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

Slide #7

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 Amos talking about? The people of Israel.

Yes, this was a message of judgment against the nation of Israel.

At the end of verse 2, what did God say he was going to do to the people of Israel? Punish them for their iniquities.

Iniquities are sins, or disobedience to God. God was warning them that he would punish them for their sins.

How can God punish people if he's a God of love? Allow discussion.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. This is an important question. God is loving! But he wants what is best for his children. He didn't want his people to be living in sin. He showed his love to Israel by waiting patiently for 250 years, warning them over and over.

Israel Ignores God's Warnings

Let's take a look at some of the things God used as warning signs to Israel over the years to get them to turn back to him.

Slide #8

Slide #9Slide #10

Amos 4:6–10

Turn to Amos 4:6–10. We'll see what some of those 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? The verse also says they lacked bread. To lack something means you don't have enough. So, this verse explains that God had sent a famine to get the people's attention.

What's a famine? What did we just say the people didn't have? Bread. Food.

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.

What would happen if there was no rain? Allow discussion. No water would lead to dry lakes and rivers; kill the fish, animals, crops; people would have no food or drink.

Did the people return to God when he held back the rain? Verse 8. 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. These things ruin plants and food crops and can cause mold and rottenness to set in. On top of that, the Lord sent locusts to eat their gardens, vineyards, fig trees, and olive trees—and these insects can eat A LOT!

As bad as this was, did the people pay attention to these warnings? Did they 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.

God showed that he is loving and patient by waiting so many years and warning Israel so many times. But God is also just.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What does just mean? Someone read that from our poster. God is fair according to who he is and must punish sin.

God must be fair. And in his fairness, he must punish sin. The time had come for God to punish the people of Israel. God's message to Israel was very clear. Although they were God's special, chosen people, they had turned away from God and disobeyed him. The rulers were wicked, and they were cruel to the poor. God warned the people through Amos that the time for judgment would come because of their sin against him.

Slide #11

Let's fill in some more Class Notes. The next two talk about God's attributes. 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.

Amos Declares God's Judgment

Slide #12

Amos 3:10-11

Now let's go back to the third chapter of Amos and find out what this judgment would be. Who will read Amos 3:10-11? Assign readers. What did the Lord say about the people in verse 10? They did not know how to do right.

The people were constantly sinning against God doing terrible things. They had ignored God's warnings, and now it was time for judgment.

What was God going to do about their sin? Send an adversary to the land.

Slide #13

Slide #14

What is an adversary? Allow answers.

Adversary: an enemy

An adversary is an enemy. So Amos told Israel that God would send an enemy who would come and surround their land, bring down their defenses, and plunder their strongholds. Plunder means to steal and destroy, and Israel would not be strong enough to fight back. This was a very serious warning from the Lord! God was finally going to bring judgment on them. He told them, "Prepare to meet your God!" They had to prepare now for the punishment they deserved because they stubbornly refused to turn back to God.

Will someone read #6 on the Class Notes? What did Amos say would happen to Israel? Assign a reader. Enemy. Have students complete #6. Let's do #7. Who will read it? Assign a reader. Famine. Have students complete #7.

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

God was going to send an enemy to take over the land of Israel. He would destroy Israel and move the people away to another land. God had warned them, they ignored him, and now they had to prepare to meet him and face his judgment.

But God did not leave his people without hope. The end of the book of Amos describes a time when Israel 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 #15

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Amos was a shepherd from Judah, but he spoke to Israel for the Lord. He told of the judgment God would send because of the evil things they were doing. Amos 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. We'll see in a later lesson how God sent the adversary we read about to capture Israel.

We may think the Israelites' sin doesn't matter to us today since it happened so long ago. But the Bible says that God must judge all sin—including yours and mine.

Slide #16

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, so the Lord will judge all of us. So, what can we do?

There is an answer! Because God is merciful, he sent Jesus Christ to be the Savior for sinners. 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 sin. Now anyone who will turn from their sin and turn to him in faith can become a child of God!

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 getting the punishment we deserve for our sin, we can have eternal life through Jesus.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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