

## *Majoring on the Minors*

Week 3: Amos

9 June 2024

So all good things must come to an end. The fact is, Life Groups take a break over the summer, so this is the last set of questions for this series. That does not mean that you should not pay attention to the remaining Minor Prophets. Instead, I challenge you to create your own self study guide to use for each of the remaining books. You will be richly rewarded if you do! For now, Amos.

Pastor Eric

Opening Up: Have you ever been stunned by an expression of overt apathy?

Since Amos is nine chapters long, reading it through is a greater challenge. If you can read it, pay attention to its often-repeated phrases.

Jumping right into Amos 1.1, what do you learn about Amos? If you look at Amos 7.14, you'll get even more biographical information. As 7.14 indicates, there were "professional prophets" in Israel, but Amos is differentiating himself from them. Since Amos was really an agricultural worker, how might that have given him a perspective different from these professionals? Which nation is Amos most focused on?

To get oriented to the book's outline, it's helpful to see it in three chunks. In the first two chapters, eight nations are indicted. What nation is seventh? Which one is eighth? The heart of Amos is chapters 3-6. What phrase is repeated at the beginning of chapters 3, 4, and 5? Finally, the great series of five visions constitute chapters 7-9. What are those visions?

Imbedded in the second section are two "woe oracles." Woe oracles are warnings. The first begins in Amos 5.18. Read 5.18-19. What do you know about the "day of the LORD?" What is Israel's attitude toward that day? Considering their spiritual condition, does it make sense that they are looking forward to that day?

"They take their own accomplishments as the sign of God's favor and presence with them and boast that misfortune will never be their lot."

James Mays

The second woe comes in Amos 6.1. Read through verse 7 and try to discern what are the issues at hand. Some translations say they are "at ease." Others say they are "complacent." They feel secure. Why does that come across as so negative? What's their problem? Also note the last line of verse 6. What are they neglecting?

Taking a moment for some free-thinking, what conditions do you think lead to apathy, to indifference toward the needs and concerns of others? Interact with what Charles Taylor says below about the general mentality of our times. Do you agree with him? If he's correct, how can that create an attitude of apathy?

"Everyone has a right to develop their own form of life, grounded on their own sense of what is really important or of value. People are called upon to be true to themselves and to seek their own fulfilment. What this consists of, each must, in the last instance, determine for him- or herself. No one else can or should try to dictate its content."

Philosopher Charles Taylor

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The church at Laodicea also suffered from indifference, what Jesus called being *lukewarm*. They don't even seem to think they *themselves* need anything! They are very satisfied with the way things are. How does Jesus respond to them in Revelation 3.15ff? What's the solution to their listlessness?

Do your own temperature check. Have you grown apathetic? How much passion do you have about your spiritual condition and the needs of others? Take Revelation 3.20, some time, and respond to Jesus.