

**When Country Comes to Town
The Prophet Amos
Amos 1:1 – 2**

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Amos 1:1

“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he saw in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.” (NASB 2020)

And with that, we are introduced to the 9 chapters that make up the book of Amos. “This book in the Hebrew Bibles is called Sepher Amos, the Book of Amos; and, in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, the Prophecy of Amos.” (Gill 1810, 477)

Minor Prophets

- *Hosea – Israel 748 – 686 BC*
- *Joel – Judah 835 – 796 BC*
- **Amos – Israel 786 – 746 BC**
- *Obadiah – Edom 848 – 841 BC*
- *Jonah – Assyria 771 – 754 BC*
- *Micah – Judah 750 – 686 BC*
- *Nahum – Assyria 661 BC*
- *Habakkuk – Judah 625 – 597 BC*
- *Zephaniah – Judah 640 – 608 BC*

- Haggai – Judah 520 BC
- Zechariah – Judah 520 – 480 BC
- Malachi – Judah 455 – 432 BC

Who is Amos and what is this book about?

Based on this one verse, what do we know?

Name of the prophet – Amos – “Burden; burden-bearer; one with a burden.” (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 15) Scholars argue whether this should be considered present tense or past tense. No matter, his prophecy is indeed a burden since he will be presenting an unwanted message during a time of great prosperity. Yes, just like today.

Vocation before Prophet – shepherder. “Amos is no ordinary shepherd. The Hebrew term used here occurs only one other time in the OT, where it refers to Mesha, king of Moab, as a someone who bred sheep (2 Kgs 3:4).” (Barry, et al. 2012, 2016, Amos 1:1)

Home – Tekoa, “a town situated on the borders of the desert of Judah...to the south of Bethlehem, the ruins of which have been preserved under the ancient name...” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 157)

To put it into modern terms, he was a country boy, a hick who lived about 5 to 10 hours away to the south of Jerusalem.

Tekoa is serious boondocks. The name means “sound of trumpet; blowing a trumpet. Pitching (of tents); (root = to smite; to fix [by smiting]; to fix [one’s tent]). Firm; settlement.” (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 235)

Tekoa is located on a hilly ridge which overlooks a frightful desert wilderness that continues down to the very edge of the Dead Sea. (McGee 1997)

Amos is a country boy from southern Judah and deeply involved in agricultural production prior to the Lord calling him to be a Prophet. He was called to be a Prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, and he delivered a message of judgement against all of the surrounding nations, Israel and Judah in Bethel at the King of Israel’s favorite southern temple about two years before a major earthquake (Zechariah 14:5).

Tekoa from the South



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

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 Arabic village of Tukuu has preserved the name of the biblical city of Tekoa. There is now a modern Israeli village next to it that uses the original name of Tekoa. 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.

The view from the top of the hill is one of the finest in Palestine. Toward the north and the south the ground slopes off into wadys that open into the Dead Sea. Northward, beyond wady Khureitun, rises the symmetrical cone of Jebel Ferdis. Beyond it is Bethlehem. The Mount of Olives also is visible, but Jerusalem is hidden by intervening hills. Toward the east, in the foreground, are the naked, conical mountains of "the desert of Tekoa"; beyond them, about twelve miles distant, and more than four thousand feet below them, glistening like molten silver, lie the waters of the Sea of Salt; while in the background, suffused with a purple light that makes their ragged masses beautiful, the mountains of Moab rise against the eastern sky. The outlook westward is not so grand, but it has a beauty of its own, especially in the foreground, where lies outspread a broad and shallow valley, whose green grain and brown fallow give a charming variety to the prospect. (Mitchell 1893, 2)

A rather unusual place to find someone and call him as a Prophet of God to the northern kingdom. Exactly the way He does things.

Sheep Herding Today Near Tekoa



(Bolen, Sheep finding shade in Nahal Tekoa 2012, Used with Permission)

1 Corinthians 1:26–29

“Think about the circumstances of your call, brothers and sisters. Not many were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were born to a privileged position. But God chose what the world thinks foolish to shame the wise, and God chose what the world thinks weak to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, what is regarded as nothing, to set aside what is regarded as something, so that no one can boast in his presence.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Or someone like Amos.

Amos 1:1

“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he saw in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.” (NASB 2020)

How did YAHWEH communicate with Amos? Amos tells us, “The words of Amos...which he saw in visions concerning Israel...”

At one other place in his prophecy Amos provides additional background for us. He did so when the King of Israel became a bit upset about his prophesying in his personal place of worship at Bethel.

Amos 7:12–15

“Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Go, you seer, flee to the land of Judah; and eat bread there and do your prophesying there! But do not prophesy at Bethel any longer, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence.” Then Amos replied to Amaziah, “I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. But the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go prophesy to My people Israel.’” (NASB 2020)

God said go, he did. Because he knew who he was there for, he was fearless.

Beitin (Bethel)



(Bolen, Beitin from south 2012, Used with Permission)

Amos, a country boy from Tekoa in Judah. A breeder of sheep and a dresser of sycamore trees. He is called by the Lord and given a message. Uzziah is the King in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel. More specifically, two years before the earthquake that took place during Uzziah’s reign. What are the conditions in Israel?

During this period, the Silver Age of Israelite history, Israel reached the summit of its material power and economic prosperity as well as the apogee of its territorial expansion, comparable only to the era of David and Solomon, the Golden Age. (Paul and Cross 1991, 1)

Assyria is the big bad just beginning to show up in geopolitical discussions throughout the region, but they had not yet made any overt moves that would take place within another 50 years ending the northern kingdom and sending them into exile.

Israel is at peace, powerful, rich and deep into idolatry. Judah is also powerful, rich and headed that general direction.

Looking at this from the outside, why would a country boy, born and raised in the boonies, suddenly go to another country and give them a message from the Lord? The Lord is the reason, “Go.”

Throughout the whole book of ‘Amôs it is apparent that the northern kingdom stood then at the summit of power, wealth, security, and luxury. But this very pride and security, together with the growing luxury of the magnates who had been demoralized by war (2:14–16; 6:13), was the seductive cause of grievous oppressions in this kingdom. (von Ewald 1875, 145)

This book addresses not only the problem of idolatry, but the problems that arise in a culture that has everything it wants or desires. “There was a great external prosperity. Therefore, we find that the prophet mentions the rich, their great wealth and luxury, their arrogant pride and self-security and the oppression of the poor. Underneath it all was an awful moral corruption, the fruit of the false worship. In this state of prosperity, immorality and false worship they did not dream of any coming calamity whatever.” (Gaebelein 2009, 120)

From Arno’s son, Frank, we see the following about this book. “Since the 1920s I have attended evangelical churches and participated in many Bible conferences. Yet never have I heard at a Bible conference a responsible treatment of Amos’s strong words about the injustices done through the misuse of wealth or an exposition of the great passages in Isaiah and the other prophets that stress God’s concern for the poor and oppressed. Not, in fact, till this year have I heard in a conservative evangelical church any really forthright preaching about these things, which are so important in God’s sight. Prophecy, yes—but only in its predictive, eschatological aspect with little or nothing about the major witness of the prophets against the idolatry of things and the oppression that may be entailed in accumulating them.” (F. E. Gaebelein 1979, 23)

Amos talks about this topic because he is talking to a culture just like ours today. A culture that has all it needs and then more. Many of the social ills that Amos will prophesy against, will sound all too familiar.

During the vigorous reign of Jeroboam II., the kingdom of the ten tribes attained to a high pitch of prosperity and power. As this resulted from energy in the administration, rather than in any deeper moral principle, it only hastened the progress of inward decay. Luxury, oppression of the poor, lewdness, and profligacy in its many varied forms, followed in the train. It was thus to a people at the crisis of their destiny, in the height of apparent, but delusive prosperity, that Amos, the humble herdsman of Tekoa, and gatherer of sycamore fruit, was sent. (Exell n.d., 1)

How did Israel get to this point of peace, prosperity and wealth. It had nothing to do with any of the Kings of Israel, it was the Lord.

About a decade or so before Jeroboam II came to power, we see the following in 2 Kings.

2 Kings 13:1–5

“In the twenty-third year of the reign of Judah’s King Joash son of Ahaziah, Jehu’s son Jehoahaz became king over Israel. He reigned in Samaria for seventeen years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. He continued in the sinful ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat who had encouraged Israel to sin; he did not repudiate those sins. The LORD was furious with Israel and handed them over to King Hazael of Syria and to Hazael’s son Ben Hadad for many years. Jehoahaz asked for the LORD’s mercy and the LORD responded favorably, for he saw that Israel was oppressed by the king of Syria. The LORD provided a deliverer for Israel and they were freed from Syria’s power. The Israelites once more lived in security.” (NET 2nd ed.)

That deliverer was Assyria. Geopolitically, Assyria under Adad-Nirari III defeated Syria stopping the incessant fighting between Syria and Israel.

“A new and energetic king arose in Assyria, Adad-nirari III, who once again turned his face westward. The Eponym Chronicle (list of the years, named after Assyrian governors, with significant events) records the following: (805 B.C.) “against Arpad,” (804 B.C.) “against Hazazi,” (803 B.C.) “against Ba’ali,” (802 B.C.) “to the Sea.” The next campaign in the west was: (796 B.C.) “against Mansuate,” a province just north of Damascus. It must have been during that conflict that Damascus itself was besieged; “Mari” (the Ben-hadad III of 2 Kings 13:3) of Damascus was forced to pay a heavy tribute.” (Aharoni, et al. 2011, 108)

Assyria solved one of Israel’s problems, the Lord used them to do so.

“...and then, having unwittingly served Israel’s interests, Assyria entered a decline from which it did not awaken until the accession of Tiglath-Pileser III in 745 B.C. Jeroboam used this period profitably, effecting conquests that restored the older, Solomonic boundaries for the one and only time since the great king’s death (cf. 2 Kings 14:23–29). By this he ushered in a period of materialistic prosperity such as Israel had never before known. Wealth accumulated. Leisure became possible. Most people said that God was evidently blessing the nation. Indeed, they had a state religion to say this formally. The state religion was popular—at least with the wealthy classes. The only difficulty was that the blessings for which the rich were thanking God had come at the expense of the poor and, as a consequence, the religion was no true religion but a sham.” (Boice 2002, 163)

Any of that sound familiar? We live in a country that also believes it has been blessed by God. Materialistic prosperity, military might and a relative peace. In God we trust, yet most of our nation does not live that way, just like Israel.

In Israel, it was the ruling elites and the rich who had the power, and they exercised economic tyranny on those who did not have power.

The King made sure his buddies got what they needed in order to help line his pockets as well. Of course, we do not see anything like that take place in our culture today, right?

Ecclesiastes 1:8–11

“Everything leads to weariness—a weariness too great for words. Our eyes can never see enough to be satisfied; our ears can never hear enough. What has happened before will happen again. What has been done before will be done again. There is nothing new in the whole world. “Look,” they say, “here is something new!” But no, it has all happened before, long before we were born. No one remembers what has happened in the past, and no one in days to come will remember what happens between now and then.” (GNB)

It is into this environment of riches, and the accompanying issues it brought, that YAHWEH calls Amos to head north and do something that he would have never done on his own.

Since no one in Israel appears to be willing to take the job, YAHWEH calls the humble and simple herdsman, Amos, to go north and be His spokesman to a culture that is at the pinnacle of wealth, power and military might.

They believe God is with them, but God has a different assessment.

Outline of Amos

- A. Judgement on the Nations
 - a. Amos 1:1 – 2
 - i. The man 1:1
 - ii. The message 1:2
 - b. Judgement on the nations 1:3 – 15
 - i. Judgment on Damascus 1:3 – 5
 - ii. Judgment on Gaza 1:6 – 8
 - iii. Judgment on Tyre 1:9 – 10
 - iv. Judgment on Edom 1:11 – 12
 - v. Judgment on Ammon 1:13 – 15
 - vi. Judgment on Moab 2:1 – 3
- B. Judgment on God’s People
 - a. Judgment on Judah 2:4 – 5
 - b. Judgment on Israel 2:6 – 16
 - i. The sins of Israel 2:6 – 8
 - ii. The ingratitude of Israel 2:9 – 12

- iii. Coming judgment on Israel 2:13 – 16
- C. Why God Judges
 - a. It is unavoidable 3:1 – 2
 - b. Logic demands it 3:3 – 6
 - c. Amos declares it 3:7 – 8
 - d. The nations are told of it 3:9 – 10
- D. What Judgment Looks Like
 - a. Israel will be conquered and exiled 3:11 – 12
 - b. Judgement will fall on those places the culture cherished. 3:13 – 15
- E. Why Israel Remains Distant to YAHWEH
 - a. The Women of Israel 4:1 – 3
 - b. Ritual but no relationship 4:4 – 5
 - c. Judgement past, present and future 4:6 – 13
- F. Crimes=Indictment and Coming Judgement
 - a. The pending fall of Israel 5:1 – 3
 - b. It is all about YAHWEH, not ritual 5:4 – 6
 - c. The crime 5:7
 - d. Who the crime is against 5:8 – 9
 - e. The indictment 5:10 – 13
 - f. How to stop the proceedings 5:14 – 15
 - g. The results of a corrupt culture 5:16 – 20
 - h. False religion will not help 5:21 – 27
- G. Your prosperity and comfort will end
 - a. Bad times are coming for Israel 6:1 – 7
 - b. Israel will be destroyed 6:8 – 14
- H. Visions of Warning
 - a. Locusts 7:1 – 3
 - b. Fire 7:4 – 6
 - c. The plumb line 7:7 – 9
 - d. You're not from around here are you, Amos? 7:10 – 13
 - e. Amos' Testimony 7:14 – 15
 - f. YAHWEH responds 7:16 – 17
- I. A Basket of Ripe Fruit
 - a. Summer fruit 8:1 – 3
 - b. Sowing dishonesty in the culture 8:4 – 6
 - c. Reaping is coming 8:7 – 8
 - d. What that will look like 8:9 – 10
 - e. Getting what you wanted 8:11 – 14
- J. The Coming Destruction of Israel
 - a. No escape 9:1 – 4
 - b. Discipline among the nations 9:5 – 10
- K. Israel Will Be Restored
 - a. Restoration back to the land is coming 9:11 – 12
 - b. Abundance will be restored 9:13 – 15

Amos' message is predominately for the northern kingdom, but he will address Judah and the surrounding nations as well. He will communicate his prophecies in Bethel, just as instructed. "He gives us a splendid example of inspiration. The Lord called him, gave him the message, filled the simple herdsman with the wisdom from above so that he burst out in these eloquent utterances. At the same time the Lord in using him as His mouthpiece did not set aside his personality, he uses his shepherd idiom, and the Truth of God is expressed through him in the terms of nature, with which he, as a child of nature, was so familiar." (A. C. Gaebelien 2009, 120-121)

In Israel, the ruling elite know they have a powerful military. They also know they are at the top of the cultural heap and intend to stay there by oppressing others in their kingdom. "It was at such a time as this

that the plain shepherd of Tekoah was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes, to announce to the careless sinners the approach of the divine judgment, and the destruction of the kingdom.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 158)

We will see how YAHWEH takes a simple plain talking herdsman from the Podunk town of Tekoa and sends him to Bethel to deliver a prophecy that not only threatens the continuation of that kingdom, but all of those nations in the immediate area as well.

He will be threatened for the message he is asked to deliver. Because of his message, he will be made persona non grata in Israel and kicked out, but not before he completes what YAHWEH asked him to do.

The theme of this book is simple, to go along with the man God called. “A careful study of the book itself as well as an examination of the various articles on the theology of Amos reveals three main and very simple themes: God, sin, and judgment.” (Bell 2010, 397-398)

Let’s dig in.

Amos 1:1–2

“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he saw in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. And he said, “The LORD roars from Zion, And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds’ pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up.”” (NASB 2020)

Because Amos was commissioned by YAHWEH, when he would communicate what he saw in his visions, he was confident it was the very word of God. He said what he saw and what he saw was revelation from YAHWEH.

‘Word’ is used here in the technical sense of ‘saying’, what is spoken by a prophet in one oracle; as elsewhere in the Old Testament the plural is simply a title for a collection of sayings, e.g. Eccles. 1:1; Prov. 30:1; 31:1; Neh. 1:1; Job 31:40. The term is an accurate classification of the book’s contents, for it is made up primarily of a collection of speeches in which Amos delivered the message sent to Israel by their God. (Mays 1969, 19)

We first heard the term “the Lord roars from Zion” for the first time in our study of the book of Joel. There, it was used to indicate that the Lord was roaring as the lion of the tribe of Judah and doing so in judgement. That is also the sense being used by Amos. Amos is bringing a message of judgement to Israel.

Amos 1:2

“And he said, “The LORD roars from Zion, And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds’ pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up.”” (NASB 2020)

When Israel split from Judah, they established two alternative centers of worship, in direct violation of the Torah, in Bethel and in Dan. Right at the very top of this prophecy, Amos is letting it be known to Israel, who he is going to be speaking to, just where the official center of worship for all Jews really is. It is in Jerusalem at the Temple. Not in front of a golden calf at an alternative worship location which also incorporates elements of fertility worship and Baal worship.

The worship of YAHWEH takes place on His terms, not theirs. The Temple is in Jerusalem and His edicts proceed from there.

The culture may say that God is no longer relevant. The culture may say He has changed the way He does business and no longer holds to the ways He always has, and He no longer adheres to His word. Right at the very beginning of his prophecy, Amos is making it crystal clear that YAHWEH is still the same as He always has been. The culture means nothing.

Some of this same thinking, that God has changed, is reflected today in what is called progressive Christianity, which is heresy. Unfortunately, it is becoming a more popular form of “Christianity” these days.

Revelation 3:15–17

“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” (ESV)

Jesus said this was to be a characteristic of the church of the last days.

Those who call themselves “progressive Christians view the Bible as primarily a human book and emphasize personal conscience and practices rather than certainty and beliefs. They are also very open to redefining, reinterpreting, or even rejecting essential doctrines of the faith like the Virgin Birth, the deity of Jesus, and his bodily resurrection.” (Childers 2020, 8)

Paul attacked this problem head on.

Galatians 1:6–9

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are following a different gospel—not that there really is another gospel, but there are some who are disturbing you and wanting to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be condemned to hell! As we have said before, and now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be condemned to hell!” (NET 2nd ed.)

This implies (a) that the gospel embodies a core of fixed tradition which is normative so that no preaching deviating from it can be called “gospel” in the proper sense of the word, and (b) that the authority of the gospel resides primarily in the message itself and only secondarily in the messenger. (Fung 1988, 46)

The problem today are those who simply do not believe the message of the Gospel, the message of the Bible so they change it and manipulate it to become more palatable to their sinful sensibilities. They make Jesus into who they want Him to be, rather than who He truly is.

Progressive Christianity isn’t. It is nothing more than rewarmed syncretic religion ala Israel of the time of Amos.

The problem in Israel was progressive Judaism. A rejection of Torah and the requirements of holiness from Leviticus in favor of a combo religion made up from elements of the world. A syncretic religion of Judaism, fertility cults and Baal. They went down a rabbit hole with Jeroboam I that they never came out of.

Here is the thing, we see syncretism today. It is what most people who say they are Christians, believe today. Let me be clear, it is heresy.

Almost nine out of 10 U.S. adults (88%) have an impure, unrecognizable worldview that is nothing more than a customized, personal blend of disparate ideas adopted from multiple philosophies of life. This worldview is called Syncretism. (Barna 2022, 18)

Welcome to the Kingdom of Israel after the split with Judah. How can you reconcile going to an alternative location that has a golden calf with what you learned about the God of the universe. Simple, stop teaching it.

How can you reconcile being a follower of Jesus Christ yet follow your horoscope in the paper daily and embrace eastern mysticism in the form of Yoga and the ideas surrounding Karma. “In contrast, the Bible teaches that a personal, engaged Creator uniquely and predictably rewards and punishes every individual based upon His explicit life principles, leaving nothing to chance. In other words, in a world driven by karma, man determines his own future; in God’s universe, everyone’s future is in His hands.” (Barna, American Worldview Inventory 2021, Release #5: Top 10 Most Seductive Unbilical Ideas Embraced by Americans 2021)

Surely this issue of eastern mysticism creeping into the church is not a problem in here locally? Right? I wish I could say that it isn’t. After a recent teaching where Yoga was referenced as a gateway into eastern mysticism and the occult, many of those who were involved in Yoga doubled down on the practice. I overheard more than one person discussing how, even in the face of documentary proof, the one giving the teaching was just simply wrong. He wasn’t.

Let me add a couple more nails to the coffin.

Meditation and yoga, for example, are both predicated on the assumption that there is a fundamental field of consciousness (God) that lies at the foundation of the natural world. The word “yoga” literally means “union” and refers to the unification of the personal self (Atman) with the universal Self (Brahman). Yoga cannot properly exist definitionally or in practice without its commitments to pantheism, and mediation loses spiritual context if there is no ultimate reality available in nature that one can access. (Bancarz and Peck 2018, Kindle Location 2531)

The following from Subhas R. Tiwari, a professor at the Hindu University of America with a master’s degree in yoga philosophy from Bihar Yoga Bharati University should help to end that idea of Yoga being harmless exercise.

“In the past few months I have received several calls from journalists around the country seeking my views on the question of whether the newly minted “Christian Yoga ” is really yoga. My response is, “The simple, immutable fact is that yoga originated from the Vedic or Hindu culture. Its techniques were not adopted by Hinduism, but originated from it.”

These facts need to be unequivocally stated in light of some of the things being written to the contrary by yoga teachers. The effort to separate yoga from Hinduism must be challenged because it runs counter to the fundamental principles upon which yoga itself is premised, the yamas (restraints) and niyamas (observances). These ethical tenets and religious practices are the first two limbs of the eight-limbed ashtanga yoga system which also includes asana (postures), pranayama (breath control), pratyahara (sense withdrawal), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (contemplation/Self Realization).

Efforts to separate yoga from its spiritual center reveal ignorance of the goal of yoga. (Tiwari 2006)

The goal of all types of yoga is moksha, a state of union with the spirit of Brahman, the Universal Supreme Self. (Bancarz and Peck 2018, Kindle Location 5464)

2 Timothy 4:1–5

“I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the message, be ready whether it is convenient or not, reprove, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and instruction. For there will be a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. Instead, following their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves, because they have an insatiable curiosity to hear new things. And they will turn away from hearing the truth, but on the other hand they will turn aside to myths. You, however, be self-controlled in all things, endure hardship, do an evangelist’s work, fulfill your ministry.” (NET 2nd ed.)

And Eastern Mysticism is part of that mythology being embraced by many today.

Thanks to the internet and Christian television, turning away from the truth is now easily done.

You might think most Christians can clearly distinguish the claims and practices of the New Age from biblical Christianity. If that's you, it's time to look beyond your own immediate circle of friends and family. Times have indeed changed. So has the average Christian's ability to think with theological clarity. Translation: Clear theological thinking is on life support in many congregations. (Heiser 2018, Kindle Location 92)

We live in that time Paul warned of. "One hallmark of contemporary Christianity is heresy, for that is essentially what the prevailing worldview in America—Syncretism—represents. The blending of elements from numerous, unbiblical worldviews along with a few biblical views is now embraced as the popular, accepted expression of Christian faith." (Barna, American Worldview Inventory 2022, Release #3: A Detailed Look at How the Worldview of Parents of Preteens Misses the Mark 2022)

Because we are moving in the same direction as Israel moved to over 2000 years ago, is there a way to change the downward trajectory?

It is clear that the faith realm is in turmoil. In 2005, two-thirds of American adults said their religious faith was very important to them. Just ten years later that had slipped to only half. While millions of Americans contend, often defensively, that they are "spiritual but not religious," their notion of being spiritual is typically tied more to their sense of self-determination and spiritual independence than to a historic faith steeped in truth, tradition, or orthodoxy. In fact, the number of adults who label themselves "deeply spiritual" has declined by almost 40 percent since 2005. (Barna, America at the Crossroads: Explosive Trends Shaping America's Future and What You Can Do about It 2016, Kindle Location 287)

Israel will be compared to Sodom and Gomorrah by Amos. That's bad enough, but in the United States, morality has dipped below even that standard.

I am reminded of the words of Peter.

2 Peter 2:4–9

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment," (ESV)

Amos will not just be addressing Israel, but he will also address our culture today. The Lord is roaring, and this is a message of judgement to Israel, a message they ignored to their own peril.

Israel needed to do as Judah did when they were warned by Joel. They need to repent and return to the Lord. Judah did, Israel will not.

What we need today in the church is revival. The prophets were called to those who were God's people, and they were the ones being called to repentance. This is the same message He has for us in the church today. We love Jesus, but for many, other stuff has been added in and it no longer looks like the Bible or a biblical worldview, but looks like a mish mash of Christianity, Eastern Mysticism and psychobabble.

Our contemporary "gospel" says, "This is who I am, this is how I feel, and God is here to please me." This is a form of idolatry. The biblical gospel says, "This is who God is, this is how He feels, and we are here to

please Him.” The difference between these two messages is the difference between heaven and hell. (Brown 2019, 35-36)

Isaiah clearly stated the need.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” (ESV)

1 John 1:6–10. “If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (NRSV)

For Israel, the Lord roars in the present tense. More than that, “our translation also has the present tense and interprets it in an “incipient present non-perfective” sense. That is, the actions are beginning even as Yahweh speaks. The voice of God and the roar are the announcement and commencement of the following judgments.” (Carroll R. 2020, 122)

God sends His voice, and it sounds like thunder. He gives a warning before He acts. Hearing that voice elicits a response from the shepherds’ pasture ground, mourning. The Hebrew word used here can also mean to dry up.

The message of Amos, the country boy from southern Judah, is one that he would have never gone to deliver to Israel to deliver all on his own unless he had been called by YAHWEH. Why travel to a foreign country only to be yelled at then kicked out unless God was in it.

Yahweh himself does not come but rather sends out his voice. He roars like a lion. His roar resounds like thunder, and he comes not to deliver but to judge his people (cf. Isa 31:4; Hos 5:14–15; 13:7–8; Jer 25:30). The roar, therefore, portends violent death (cf. 3:4, 8, 12; 5:19). There is reason to mourn. The lion imagery also adds an element of fright to the declaration. Further details of how this judgment will work itself out in Israel’s future will unfold progressively in the text. With this roar come wailing and withering. (Carroll R. 2020, 123)

For those of us in the church today, the call is similar, He is roaring, and we need to be listening. We are in a culture like that of Israel, rich yet wandering. Many have created their own version of Christianity by mixing together those things they like and rejecting those things in the Bible that they do not like. Jesus calls out to those who are being caught up in the lies of the churchianity of this age and the culture creeping into our daily lives.

Revelation 3:17–21

“You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. So I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.” (NLT)

The God who forgave Judah and restored them is still on the throne today. His desire is still to show grace to us by calling on us to repent. But Amos will be giving a message of the time beginning to become short. Jesus is returning and soon. Today is the day for action.

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