

The Prophets

Lesson #9

Amos

Outline

- I. **Introduction And Judgments (1:1-2:16)**
 - A. Introduction (1:1-2).
 - B. Judgment on Damascus (1:3-5).
 - C. Judgment on Gaza (1:6-8).
 - D. Judgment on Tyre (1:9-10).
 - E. Judgment on Edom (1:11-12).
 - F. Judgment on Ammon (1:13-15).
 - G. Judgment on Moab (2:1-3).
 - H. Judgment on Judah (2:4-5).
 - I. Judgment on Israel (2:6-16).

- II. **The Three Sermons On Judgment (3:1-6:14)**
 - A. The first sermon: Israel's present (3:1-15).
 1. Israel's judgment is deserved (3:1-10).
 2. Israel's judgment is described (3:11-15).
 - B. The second sermon: Israel's past (4:1-13).
 1. Israel's judgment is deserved (4:1-5).
 2. Israel's judgment is demonstrated (4:6-11).
 3. Israel's judgment is described (4:12-13).
 - C. The third sermon: Israel's future (5:1-6:14).
 1. Israel's judgment is deserved (5:1-15).
 2. Israel's judgment is described (5:16-6:14).
 - a) The first woe of judgment (5:16-27).
 - b) The second woe of judgment (6:1-14).

- III. **The Five Visions Of Judgment (7:1-9:10)**
 - A. Vision of the locusts (7:1-3).
 - B. Vision of the fire (7:4-6).
 - C. Vision of the plumb line (7:7-9).
 - D. Historical interlude: Opposition of Amaziah (7:10-17).
 - E. Vision of the summer fruit (8:1-14).
 - F. Vision of the doorposts (9:1-10).

- IV. **Promises Of The Restoration Of Israel (9:11-15)**
 - A. The tabernacle of David (9:11-12).
 - B. The fulness of blessings (9:13-15).

Notes

Amos 1:1-2:16

- Introduction (1:1-2).
 - Tekoa was a village 12 miles southeast of Jerusalem. It was located on the edge of the wilderness of Judah, described as a wild and rough section. Undoubtedly his simple life in the desert led him to see more clearly the evils of city life.
 - Amos indicates that the message was not from himself, but from God. He saw the words as they were revealed to his spiritual eyes.
 - As the lion roars and his voice strikes terror in the hearts of those who hear, so God will roar from Zion, exciting terror in the hearts of the people.
- Judgment on Damascus (1:3-5).
 - From the time of Ahab until the beginning of the eighth century, there were hostilities between Israel and Damascus. The incursion of Syria into Israelite territory during the reign of Jehu was particularly embarrassing (2 Kings 10:32-33).
 - Hazael ruled Syria from about 841 to 806 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 8:13). The Lord had revealed that Hazael would commit monstrous crimes against the Israelites (2 Kings 8:12). When he came to the throne, he fought against Joram and Ahaziah at Ramoth Gilead, seriously wounding Joram (2 Kings 8:28-29).
- Judgment on Gaza (1:6-8).
 - Gaza was a chief city of Philistia near the coast southwest of Jerusalem. The sin of Gaza had been slave trafficking; they had taken the inhabitants of an entire village or group, probably Israelites, and sold them to Edom.
 - For this God would send a fire of divine judgment, bringing destruction to the city and its palaces.
- Judgment on Tyre (1:9-10).
 - Tyre was the chief city of sea traffic, having been forced to turn to the sea for its life because of its limited space between the mountains to the east and the sea to the west. As was true of Gaza, their sin was slave trading with Edom.
 - They had forgotten the covenant between David and Hiram. For this her walls and palaces would be devoured. The fulfillment, by Alexander the Great, was literal as witnessed by the ruins that may be seen today.
- Judgment on Edom (1:11-12).
 - The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob; hence they were kinsfolk of Israel. From the beginning of their history there had been enmity between Israel and Edom.

- For their enmity, God would send fire upon Teman, the chief city of southeast Edom and probably its capital, and upon Bozrah, another chief city and sometime capital of the nation.
- Judgment on Ammon (1:13-15).
 - The origin of the Ammonites (and the Moabites) was an incestual relationship between Lot and his two daughters (cf. Genesis 19:30-38). The Ammonites frequently sought to enlarge their territory, sometimes with the help of Moab and Syria (cf. Judges 10:6-9).
 - The described crime evidently took place in one of their attempts to expand their territorial holdings at Israel's expense (cf. 2 Kings 8:12) -- a crime that went far beyond the necessary acts of war and is attributed to the Ammonites' insatiable desire for Israelite territory.
- Judgment on Moab (2:1-3).
 - As his brother Ammon had demonstrated a spirit of cruelty in destroying the unborn, Moab demonstrated his spirit by burning the bones of the dead and making them into lime.
 - The palaces of Kerioth, of which she had boasted, would be no more. Her judges and princes would perish in the havoc and ruin to come. The judgment would be so severe that two later prophets wept as they contemplated its terribleness (cf. Isaiah 15:5; 16:11; Jeremiah 48:36).
- Judgment on Judah (2:4-5).
 - Judah is condemned for rejecting the "law of the Lord." This is the first time this expression occurs in these prophecies, and its significance is obvious. Those who stood in relationship to the covenant were judged on the basis of the light they possessed in God's law.
 - They had acted as heathens, and now God would treat them as heathens by sending the same judgment on them as He would send on the heathen. However, through the efforts of Isaiah and Micah, prophets in Judah, and the influence of King Hezekiah, the judgment was averted for 135 years after the fall of Samaria.
- Judgment on Israel (2:6-16).
 - At this point Amos begins the real burden of his prophecy. The sin of Israel was apostasy, a departure from God that had led to injustice, hardness of heart and immorality, with no feeling for the poor or regard for moral conduct.
 - Idolatry, rejection of the law of God, hardness toward the poor, greed and immorality are the charges that summarize the sins of Israel. Against these the prophet continued to cry throughout his ministry in Israel.
 - Having declared Israel's sins to her, the prophet now announces judgment. As the heavy forces of war roll over them, they will be pressed down. The people will be unable to escape, regardless of how

strong or swift they thought themselves. The terribleness of the judgment would paralyze the strongest of them.

Amos 3:1-6:14

- The first sermon: Israel's present (3:1-15).
 - Israel's judgment is deserved (3:1-10).
 - Of all the families of the earth, Israel had been God's chosen people. They were His by right of choice and redemption; He had redeemed them from bondage. Because of this relationship and their sins, He must punish them; He could not be true to Himself if He let them go uncorrected.
 - They had not walked with Him in agreement with His will; therefore, judgment must be visited upon the iniquities of the nation. Before announcing judgment, the prophet declares his right to speak.
 - "The lion hath roared" sounds an alarm. There is indeed cause for fear -- not from any lion or blast of a trumpet, but from the Lord's voice through His prophet. The Lord has spoken, and no one can contravene His word.
 - Israel's judgment is described (3:11-15).
 - Though the enemy who would overrun the land is not identified by Amos, historically we know it was Assyria.
 - The prophet also announces judgment against Bethel, the center of worship, and against the luxury of those dwelling there and in Samaria. Those who had been called to witness the violent wickedness of the nation are now urged to witness the judgment to be imposed upon it.
- The second sermon: Israel's past (4:1-13).
 - Israel's judgment is deserved (4:1-5).
 - The region of Bashan was known for its excellent cattle (Psalm 22:12; Ezekiel 39:18), to which Amos sarcastically likens the women of Samaria. He accuses these rich women of oppressing the poor, just as he had accused the male leaders of his society.
 - These lovers of luxury would be among the first taken away captive, helplessly torn away from their luxurious, extravagant life, as fishes are haplessly taken by the hooks of fishermen.
 - Israel's judgment is demonstrated (4:6-11).
 - In time past, God had chastened the people in an effort to bring them to repentance, but the chastisements had gone unheeded. First, they were given famine. Second, they were given drought. Third, they were given blasting and mildew. Fourth, they were given pestilence. Fifth, they were given the overthrow and burning of their cities.

- Amos has proceeded from the lesser to the greater visitation of judgment, none of which had accomplished the desired effect.
- Israel's judgment is described (4:12-13).
 - In charging them to prepare to meet God, the Lord is insinuating that there is a final judgment more terrible than the chastisements sent in years gone by awaiting them.
 - God's judgment brings darkness to the nation's day as He treads upon the high places of the earth. The prophecy is strengthened by an appeal to the eternal One who speaks -- God.
- The third sermon: Israel's future (5:1-6:14).
 - Israel's judgment is deserved (5:1-15).
 - Because of the sin of Israel and the judgment to come, the prophet takes up a lamentation over the nation. Amos speaks of the nation as already fallen, though the actual fall was several years in the future.
 - Unless God made the decision to turn away there will be none to quench the devastating flame. The ruling class had turned "justice to wormwood." Their righteousness failed to meet the divine standard in their judgments.
 - Because of the prevailing moral corruption, Amos seems to sense the futility of going on with his preaching or warning. However, he has a divine commission and will continue to speak (cf. Isaiah 6:11-12).
 - Israel's judgment is described (5:16-6:14).
 - The first woe of judgment (5:16-27).
 - "God of hosts" points to His rule in the affairs of judgment as He leads the armies in battle, and "the Lord" indicates His sovereign rule.
 - The people yearned for the "day of the Lord." Yet it would not be as Israel thought, a day of darkness and judgment on their enemies and of blessing on themselves!
 - Amos then reveals to the people that their worship has been empty and that they have never been completely faithful to God. They had essentially been idolaters since the time of the wilderness wanderings.
 - The second woe of judgment (6:1-14).
 - By now false worship had produced the fruit of depraved character and false standards of conduct. The rulers of Jerusalem and Samaria were guilty of a false sense of ease and security. Neither realized the imminence of danger.
 - The coming ruin of the nation, as it was being heralded by the rising power of the conquering Assyrians and by the warnings

of Amos, struck no responsive chord in their hearts that were satiated by revelry and carousing.

- By two completely absurd questions, Amos introduces the scathing rebuke that follows in vss. 13-14. One expected the courts to dispense justice, but the rich and powerful dispensed poison instead and made bitter the fruit of righteousness.

Amos 7:1-9:10

- Vision of the locusts (7:1-3).
 - This probably was not a literal locust invasion as in Joel, but was symbolic of threatened destruction.
 - In the vision, when the locusts had finished eating the grass, a complete devastation of the land is averted by the intercession of the prophet.
- Vision of the fire (7:4-6).
 - The devouring of "the great deep" was a symbol of total destruction by the fire of God, and "would have eaten the land" indicated the threatened destruction of Israel.
 - Again the calamity is averted and the people are saved by the intercession of the prophet. The appeal is on the same ground and with the same result.
- Vision of the plumb line (7:7-9).
 - Israel had been formed by the plumb line of the Lord, His law, and the principles of right by which He had sought to build the nation.
 - Now, with His plumb line in His hand, He is going to show how far out of line the nation is, how far it is from being upright and how completely crooked and unbalanced it has become.
 - They gave lip service to the covenant of the Lord but ignored the social concerns woven into its fabric. The coming judgment would fall on the pagan sanctuaries of Israel and on the dynasty of Jeroboam. Thus the two major influences in Israelite life would perish.
- Historical interlude: Opposition of Amaziah (7:10-17).
 - With this threat against the house of Jeroboam, Amaziah the priest of Bethel sprung into action.
 - He sought to show strong loyalty to the king by sending word to Jeroboam that Amos had conspired against him in the midst of the people; his words upset the status quo. Amaziah did not misrepresent the prophet, for Amos had said what was reported by Amaziah.
 - Amos's encounter with Amaziah ends with a prediction of dire judgment, despite the latter's insistence that Amos stop his preaching against Israel.

- Vision of the summer fruit (8:1-14).
 - The word for "summer fruit" is similar to another word that Amos uses in the response of the Lord: "The end is come upon my people." The basket of summer fruit, ordinarily associated with the joys and provisions of the harvest, becomes a mockery. The good memories of past harvest festivals are shattered by the decisive words that the end is near.
 - The merchants could not wait for the end of the holy days so that they could increase their wealth by giving short measure and raising prices. They even sold the sweepings to increase the weight!
 - Added to the extreme terribleness of the judgment described is a famine of the word of God. As they had now rejected and trampled underfoot His word, in the hopelessness of their future condition God will not respond to their cry for a message from Him.
- Vision of the doorposts (9:1-10).
 - At the command of the Lord the house of Bethel is smitten from the top, the capital crumbling and crashing on the heads of the people. The "capital" is the uppermost member of a column and crowns the shaft.
 - The people had enjoyed the manifold favors of God and had received His word, His love and His chastisements, but all to no avail. Now there was nothing remaining but judgment that was appropriate to the holiness of God and the sins of the people.
 - Vs. 8 is a plain and positive declaration by God that the kingdom of Israel would be destroyed, cease to exist and be brought to an end. If it is destroyed from the face of the earth, it could never again be restored. However, as a people the house of Jacob would not be destroyed.

Amos 9:11-15

- The tabernacle of David (9:11-12).
 - Although the preceding has been gloomy, Amos ends on a positive note with an optimistic promise of future glory.
 - The "tabernacle of David" was the house or tent of David, the rule of David's house which will have long since fallen into decay, or have become a mere "hut." The rule of David's house had ended for Israel when they carried away by Assyria; it ended for Judah with the carrying away of Coniah into Babylon (Jeremiah 22:24-30).
- The fulness of blessings (9:13-15).
 - This declaration is clearly Messianic, fulfilled under Christ (cf. Acts 15:14-18; 3:18, 21, 24-27; Luke 1:67-69).
 - In this period of time, the fullness of spiritual blessings would be enjoyed by those who obey the Messiah. The misery which the peo-

ple have suffered will be repaired; the blessings will compensate for the punishments inflicted.