



**Southwell  
Minster**

*The Cathedral and Parish Church  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



**GROWING  
DISCIPLES**

Wider Younger Deeper

# Amos

*James Halstead • November 2020*

## Welcome, Introduction & Recap: Hosea, Joel

*Q: What difficulties did you find in reading Amos – or what question to you hope to answer?*

## Reading the Prophets

Fierce

Poetic

Context-Specific

...so questions to ask:

### Context

- » When did the prophet speak?
- » What was the political, social, spiritual context?
- » Who was in the prophet's audience?
- » Why did this audience need this message?

### Medium

- » How did the prophet speak? (Address, metaphor, poetry, acts...)
- » Why was that suitable as a vehicle for this message?

### Message

- » What's the shape of the book as a whole?
- » What's the theme of the book – how does that develop?
- » Any especially significant passages?

*Q: Can that framework (Context-Medium-Message) help?*

*Q: What were your first impressions, when you read Amos?*

## **Amos: Context**

### **Context - When?**

1:1; 7:10-17 - kings: Jeroboam II (Israel), Uzziah (Judah): ~785-750BC

Earthquake ~765-760BC

### **Context - Who is Amos?**

1:1 Tekoa

*Peasant shepherd, social outcast?*

But...

Knowledge of geo-politics:

- » 1:3-23
- » 1:5, 8, 12, 14
- » 1:3; 2:1

Knowledge of Israelite theology:

- » God, 4:13; 5:8; 9:5
- » Salvation History, 5:9; 9:6; 4:11; 2:10; 3:1; 9:7
- » Wilderness, 2:9-10
- » Law, 2:4, 6, 8; 4:4-5; 5:10, 12, 15, 21-24; 8:5, 11-12
- » Day of the LORD, 5:18-20
- » Covenant Curses, 4:6-11
- » Davidic Promise, 9:11-14

His job?

7:14

*“Speaks the language of the powerful in the terms & worldview of the lowly shepherd...”*

## Context - Nation?

Egypt - weak

Syria (Aram) - was strong: Hazael & Ben-Hadad (2Kings 10:32; 12:17-18; 13:7)  
...then defeated by Assyria (801BC)

So Israel & Judah - been left in peace:

2Kings 13:25

2Kings 14:25

2Chr 26.1-15

## Context - Society?

Wealth

3:15; 6:4

Morality

2:6-8; 6:4-6; 8:4-6

The Wealthy...

5:11; 6:8; 3:15; 6:4-7

...and the Wealth-less

4:1; 5:10-12; 6:1, 6, 8

*“Simple man of the land, coming into the city, seeing these palace-fortresses & the behaviour within them...”*

*Q: How does all this ‘context’ data shape the way you think about the overall message of Amos? What of that message do we need to hear today?*

## Context - Spiritual?

What’s there?

4:4-5 - worship & obedience, but...

5:21-24; 8:5-6 - sabbath, but...

5:4-6 - no seeking after God

4:4; 5:5 - temples, but...

4:6-13 - ...no return to God

2:11-12; 7:10-17 - outright opposition

What do you know?

2:10; 3:1; 9:7 - grace (Exodus)  
2:10; 9:15 - grace (Giving of Land)  
3:1-2 - election  
5:14 - promised presence  
9:10 - promised protection  
5:19-20 - promised salvation (on the Day of the LORD).

...but...

## **Amos: Medium (shape of the book)**

### **Ch 1-2 - 'Oracles Against the Nations'**

\*Formula

\*Pattern

1:3 - NE

1:6 - SW

1:9 - NW

1:11 - SE

1:13 - E

2:1 - E

» God has seen the sins of the nations & will judge on every side...

2:4 - Judah

2:6...

### **Ch 3-6 - Indictments against Israel**

» Sarcastic - 4:4-5

» Shepherd language - 3:8, fire, 3:12...

### **Ch 7-9 - Visions**

7:1-3 - Locusts

7:4-6 - Fire

7:7-9 - Plumb Line

8:1-3 - Basket of Fruit

9:1-10 - YHWH at the Altar

Progression - of extent, scale

*"The God who is God over all comes and finds his presence on earth being abused, so his judgement will bring destruction at every level..."*

**9:11-15 - Promise of Hope** ...but not until the very end.

*Q: How has all this exploration this evening shaped your understanding of Amos? Think back to the 'difficulty' or 'question' you raised in the first breakout room – are you closer to an answer now?*

## **Amos: Conclusions?**

YHWH the main character:

- » LORD
- » LORD God (1:8; 3:8)
- » LORD God of Hosts (3:13)
- » LORD of Creation (4:13)
- » LORD of Cosmos (5:8)

**...LORD your God (9:15)**