

Date: 13 Nov 2022

Scripture Passage: Amos 1:1-5

Title: Amos, A Prophet Of God

Introduction

- This message is an introduction to the book of Amos. We consider the time, the man, and the book.
- Amos was one of three “minor prophets” to the northern nation of Israel, after the nation split into two. The other two prophets were Jonah & Hosea.
- Every age needs the right men to preach the right message. We need men like Amos for our days. Scripture is complete and there are no more prophets who foretell God’s word. But all who are called should be able to preach a message from Scripture that is from God.

The time

- This book was written at around 760 BC. It was a time when the kingdom of Israel had split into the northern nation of Israel and the southern nation of Judah.
- Amos actually from the southern nation of Judah, but prophesied in the northern nation of Israel. Judah was ruled by the ungodly king, Uzziah. The nation was at peace. In his time, a major earthquake occurred.
- The northern nation of Israel was ruled by an ungodly king, Jeroboam II. Israel was at the height of political and economic power. Assyria was tamed due to the revival by Jonah’s preaching and did not cause trouble to Israel. However, Israel went from bad to worse morally and spiritually. They were filled with self-sufficiency and were smug with complacency. Idolatry, hypocrisy, moral corruption, social injustice were all happening in Israel.
- As Amos was ministering, the nation of Israel was on the brink of God’s judgement. In about 30 years (722 BC), it will be destroyed by the Assyrians.

The man

- His name Amos means “burden-bearer”. He most likely came from a humble home. He was from Tekoa, 6 miles south of Jerusalem, not far from the Dead Sea. Tekoa was a rural place known to produce wool.
- Amos was a shepherd by profession. He took care of sycamore-fig trees, whose seeds are known to produce oil. It was likely that during business trips to Israel that he saw decadence of Israel. His burden for Israel grew, and he desired to preach God’s word. We have seen similar examples in missionaries such as William Carey who had a burden for India. It is therefore important for ministers to be informed of the spiritual state of the mission field that they are called to.
- Amos was called to be prophet while he was a shepherd. He must have been used to hard work, which cultivated spirituality in difficult circumstances. He was not trained in the school of the prophets (7:14). God’s calling is in the midst of a normal job. He can call any of us to labor for His kingdom.

The book

- The book of Amos contains a message of denunciation. It has been criticized as a “dark book”. But Amos’s purpose was to stir up conviction of sin and repentance, so that they may know God (5:4).
- The book may be divided into three categories of messages:
 - (i) Oracles (Chs. 1 & 2). “Thus says the Lord” (e.g. 1:3). Judgements against the nations.
 - (ii) Sermons (Chs. 3-6). “Hear this word” (e.g. 3:1). Judgements against Israel.
 - (iii) Visions/Revelations (Chs. 7-9). “The Lord God showed me” (e.g. 7:1). Visions of judgement, culminating in the Messianic promise (9:11-15).
- Amos shines not only for what he said, but how he said it. There was vigor, vividness, and simplicity in his speech. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel (a place of false worship) got upset with Amos (7:10-17).

This is a lesson for preachers. How one delivers a message, why one preaches, has to be filled with vigor but yet simple for the layman to understand.

- We ought to value faithful preaching. Heed faithful preaching. We are citizens of God's kingdom, and therefore ought to do kingdom work.
- Pray for men to be called by God, equipped by Him, sent forth to do His work. We need men like Amos to serve here in the greater Boston area.