

**The Sunday School Lesson**

SUNDAY, APRIL 16th, 1950

**THE PROPHETS SPEAK AMOS SPEAKS FOR GOD**  
 Golden Text—Seek the Lord, and ye shall live. Amos 5: 6.  
 Lesson Text—Amos 7: 7-15; 8: 1-3.  
 Exposition—I. God's Method of Messianic Prophecy.

The name "Amos" means burden, which appears to be a fitting name for the prophet who uttered the sad, burdensome messages contained in the book which bears his name. His native place was the hill village of Tekoa, about six miles south of Bethshalem and twelve of Jerusalem (v. 1). He lived in the days when, Uzziah was king of Judah (v. 1), which was about the time Josiah went to Nineveh and Jeroboam II was king over Israel. Amos was a farmer, and his possessions consisted of a few sycamore trees and a flock of sheep, which he pastured in the Judean wilderness in the neighbourhood of Tekoa. Amos was not ashamed either of his descent or his own occupation. He was not a farmer but a farmer-laborer. While he was doing his farm work, and attending to his fruit, a message from God smote down and into his inner consciousness, and he stood up a prophet of the Lord. God finds and brings forth His prophets just as He pleases and from whatever place He chooses.

Amos was a prophet appointed to

announce God's judgments and condition of mercy. The vision of the plumb-line is that of a builder of a wall. Into it has gone the wisest planning and the best material. The rest depends on the workman. A line with a plummet at its end is let down to see if the wall is true. If not, it is condemned to be pulled down. Now God lets down his plumb-line into Israel and finds that favoured nation has built wrongly. Suppose God were to let down His plumb-line into His Church? How would He find it had been built—straight and true to His Holy Word and Divine purpose (Rev. 2: 7, 11, 26; 3: 6, 12, 20-22)? And as for the human heart and life how hopeless it is of proving it is straight and upright.

II. Amos' Message and Denunciation, 10-15.

Amos begins where all energetic minds begin—in denunciation. He issues judgment in the name of the Lord against Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, Israel. Again and again his word is "I will send a fire" (ch. 1: 4, 7, 10, 12, 14). The time came, of course, when Amos' message began to offend some of those who sat in high places and who occupied exalted religious rank. Amosiah was the chief priest of the royal sanctuary of the calves at Bethel, and in close intimacy with the king. Amosiah stands here for what may be regarded as state controlled religion and he resents the presence of a teacher independent of influence and patronage and seeks to have him expelled from the kingdom.

(1) He makes an appeal to the king by bringing against Amos a groundless charge of treason. By a base slander he endeavours to influence the king against the true teacher. (2) He does his best to alarm the prophet. "Prophecy not again any more at Bethel," he cries, "for it is the king's chapel and the king's court" (ch. 7: 13). It does not appear that Jeroboam took any notice of the message Amosiah sent him concerning Amos in order to give effect to his purpose he addressed the prophet, saying, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away" (v. 12). But Amos does not flee away at the word of Amosiah. Instead, he tells the officious priest that he is not a prophet nor the son of one, but, the fact notwithstanding, he was prepared to prophesy against Bethel and against Amosiah. The great point taught here is indicated by Amos' candor. He spurs neither manners nor scholastic qualifications which are not his. He had

not studied in any prophetic school, and said so (v. 14). No true prophet is ever ashamed of his origin, however humble. Amos is thoroughly conscious of the divinity of his mission. Amos had no doubt whatever as to the fact that the Lord had called (v. 15). When God calls a man to work, that man knows it, and no argument will convince him to the contrary. Amos denounces the conventional priest in the name of the Lord. In return for this rebellion against Jehovah and His messenger, Amos foretells for the priest the punishment that will fall upon him when the judgment shall come upon Israel.

III. Fruit That Falls, 8: 1-3.

The lesson of these fatal words is that God's judgments are irrevocable. It is not easy to impress this fact upon sinners. But the lessons of history and experience are definite. Israel did go into captivity. The anguish of two thousand years repeats that verdict. Men should be taught that the soul that sins, dies. Nothing is more certain than the judgment of God (1 Pet. 4: 18; Rev. 20: 11-15).

**David Cohen**  
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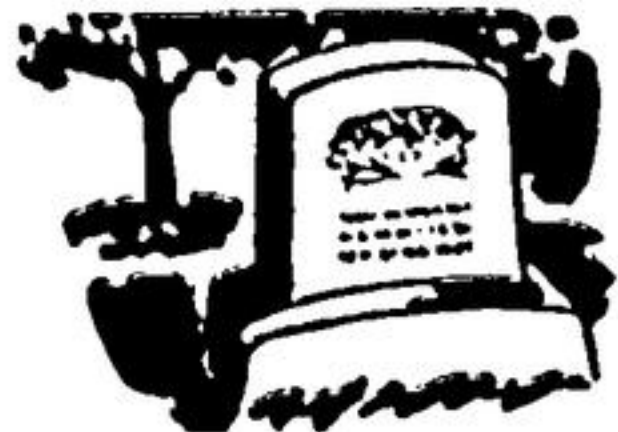
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