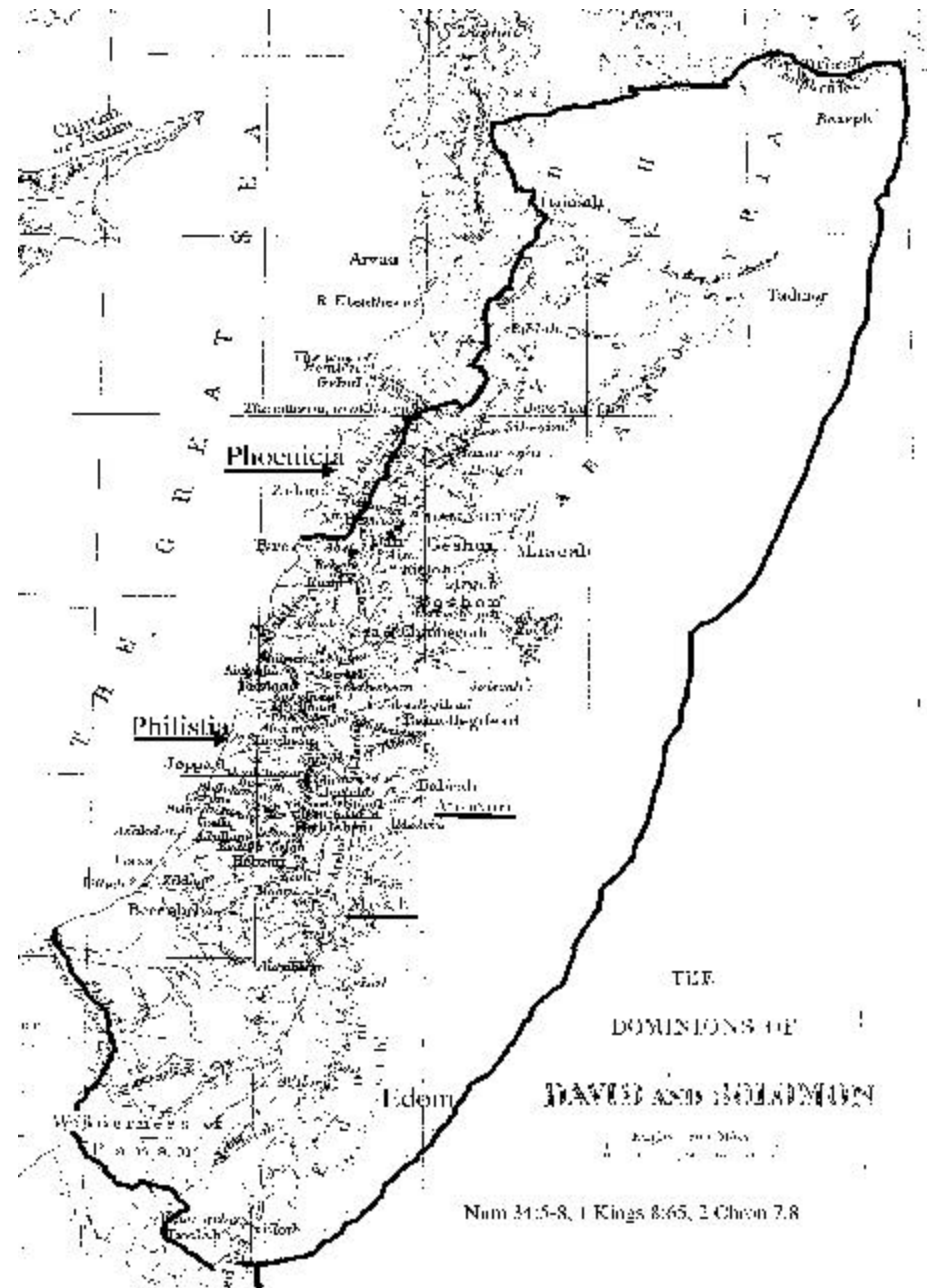


Amos: Blue-collar Prophet  
Amos 1:1, 7:14–15

January 8, 2006

SERMON NOTES

- A. Introduction      Scripture reading, 14:23–29
- B. Amos: His Times
1. the three alien nations were ...
  2. the three related nations were ...
  3. the sister nation was ...
  4. History of Israel
    - a. God warned that a king over His people would ...
    - b. Solomon and his son Rehoboam did this; as a result ...
    - c. Jeroboam's problem was ...
    - d. To solve this problem he ...
  5. The Character of Israel ... they were alienated from God by
    - a. 6:4 A \_\_\_\_\_      5:12 A \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. 2:8 A \_\_\_\_\_      6:8 A \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Amos: the Man — his name means ...
1. his occupation was ...
  2. in the face of opposition he ...



A. Introduction

1. our scripture reading this morning from 2 Kings 14:23–29 gave a quick look at the historical setting of this book, Amos, from which will be bringing the messages for some weeks
2. by way of an introduction to that book this morning, we will begin by looking at
  - a. Amos: his times
  - b. Amos: the man

B. Amos: His Times

1. The Nations around Israel (a map is in your handout)
  - a. the Jews divide their Bible roughly into three parts, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings although these are used somewhat interchangeably (with, for example, the term Writings or Scriptures being applied to the entire Old Testament in some examples); the part they term the “Prophets” are divided, in turn, into
    - (A) Former Prophets (which we call the books of history)
    - (B) Latter Prophets (being principally Isaiah to Malachi
    - (C) and it is well said that to study the Latter Prophets you must first master the Former Prophets, History
    - (D) and it is from that history that we find in Amos time
  - b. the nations surrounding Israel comprised
    - (A) three alien nations
      - (1) to the north, Syria or Aram, ruled from Damascus
      - (2) to the south-west, the Philistines, an indigenous Hebrew-speaking nation, ruled from five cities, and from which Palestine gets its name
      - (3) to the west, the Phoenicians, with their cities Tyre and Sidon, ranging far by sea to trade
    - (B) three closely related nations
      - (1) Edom in the south in the land of Seir given by God to the descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother

- (2) Ammon, to the east bordering on the Arabian desert, semi-nomadic descendants of one of Lot's sons, Lot being Abraham's nephew
- (3) Moab, to the south-east, also by that desert, the descendants of another of Lot's sons
- (C) and their sister nation, Judah, to their south
- (D) and concerning these nations we shall have more to say on another day, for God has a message for each
- (E) next, let us look at

## 2. The History of Israel

- a. we should take a moment or two to refresh our memory as to why there are two nations, Judah and Israel, when there was only one nation that entered the promised land
- b. well, this dates back to the days of Solomon
  - (A) when Solomon inherited the throne
  - (B) he also inherited a united kingdom that his father, King David, who ruled from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates river in the north, from the Mediterranean Sea to over the Ammonites on the east
  - (C) from the many alien nations that he ruled, Solomon exacted tribute to construct the public works that are described in the books of the Kings and Chronicles as well as in Ecclesiastes, and, as well,  
...
- c. just as God had said in 1 Samuel 8:10–17 (NAS): 10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the Lord to the people who had asked of him a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 And he will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. 16 He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys, and use them for his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. 18 Then you will cry out ..."

(A) Solomon, did; and they did

- d. so that when Rehoboam, Solomon's son, came to the throne, they begged that the taxes be decreased, but this foolish son instead said he would make them worse still
- e. and the 10 northern tribes revolted under Jeroboam the first, which left Jeroboam with a problem

### 3. Jeroboam's problem and solution

- a. The problem: if people worshipped at Jerusalem, they would soon return to being part of Judah
- b. The solution: discontinue the Jehovah ordained worship to one that would help Jeroboam to keep the kingdom
- c. 1 Kings 12:26–30 (NAS): *26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, even to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." 28 So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt." 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.*
- d. and he built high places like the pagans for worship
- e. and he appointed his own priests at Bethel
- f. and he appointed a full moon feast in month 8, day 15

### 4. The Character of Israel

- a. our scripture reading, 2 Kings 14:23–29, gave us an outline of the times of Amos ...
- b. now it was two centuries later, Jeroboam the second rules over Israel, who, we read, 2 Kings 14:24 (NAS): *"did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin."*
  - (A) the golden calves which Jeroboam the first made for them as gods were still at Bethel and Dan
  - (B) the high places are still there
  - (C) the false priests and the false feasts are still there
  - (D) and the nation is headed for destruction

- c. let's look at four A's that Amos preached against, four things that demanded that Israel should repent
- (A) 1. Affluence, Amos 6:4 (NAS): *Those who recline on beds of ivory And sprawl on their couches, And eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall.*
    - (1) these were good times in Israel (if you were rich)
    - (2) the borders had been restored from Hamath to the Sea of Arabah (the Dead or Salt Sea)
    - (3) so they approximated that which had existed in Solomon's day; with tribute coming into the land
    - (4) and when we are rich, self-sufficient, independent and comfortable, then God takes a far, distant, second place in our lives
  - (B) 2. Amorality, Amos 5:12 (NAS): *For I know your transgressions are many and your sins are great, You who distress the righteous and accept bribes, And turn aside the poor in the gate.*
    - (1) this people saw nothing wrong in the way they lived, felt no sorrow nor regret for their deeds
    - (2) there were their overtly sinful acts, their stepping across the bounds of behaviour set by the law
    - (3) and there was their treatment of others, acts of cruelty and injustice and oppression
  - (C) 3. Apostasy, Amos 2:8 (NAS): *And on garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.*
    - (1) their very religion had become corrupt
    - (2) the so-called religious leaders – along with the people – in their very religious acts flaunted the spoils of their wrong-doings and revelled while at the same time profaning Jehovah's holy name
  - (D) 4. Arrogance, Amos 6:8 (NAS): *The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself, the Lord God of hosts has declared: "I loathe the arrogance of Jacob, And I detest his citadels; Therefore, I will deliver up the city and all it contains."*
    - (1) how exalted were these Israelites
    - (2) after all, the Lord had given great victories to them, recovering all the lost territories
    - (3) but, they forgot that God did this out of pity because he saw their affliction was very bitter

5. This, then is the nation to which Amos was sent; and went

## C. Amos: The Man

1. on this subject let's look at 3 verses from this book of Amos

- a. the first is that which introduces the book, Amos 1:1 (NAS): *The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned 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.*
    - (A) that earthquake was recalled over 2 centuries later by Zechariah (14:5) as happening in Uzziah's reign
    - (B) these words place Amos' time in the history of Israel
    - (C) the time of the ten northern tribes as described in our Scripture reading, 2 Kings 14:23-29
    - (D) to which we will return in a few moments
  - b. the second two verses are found later in this book in chapter 7 after Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, speaks evil of Amos to king Jeroboam and then tells Amos to go back to Judah; 7:14–15 (NAS): *Then Amos answered and said 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.'"*
    - (A) which tell us a little about Amos' background
    - (B) and how he became a prophet
2. the name Amos means "he carries a burden or load"
- a. an appropriate name to give to one who was born of poor circumstances to be a common labourer, although some would make him out to be a rich owner of sheep, which is quite at variance with where Amos lived, ...
  - b. *Tekoa which was a small village about twelve miles in the hills south of Jerusalem. It was located "on the edge of the desert that breaks down toward the Dead Sea. A more desolate place is hard to imagine. The soil around the little town itself was and is very scant and shallow. It was and is a hard place to secure a livelihood." Amos was a herdsman, and he supplemented his income by dressing an almost worthless fruit produced by sycamore trees. Robinson says the vegetation in the area was evidently not very luxuriant, and he probably had very few sheep. He raised a peculiar breed of stunted, fine-wooled sheep, a breed small in size, and ugly in appearance, but highly esteemed on account of their wool.* —<sup>{2}</sup>.
  - c. if these sycamore figs are the same as Egyptian figs, then indeed only the poorest had any use for them for they were sickly sweet and ripened only when scraped and then had to be picked 3 or 4 days later

or they rotted.

3. thus, on the surface, Amos appears an unlikely candidate for service as a prophet, particularly to speak to rulers in the now very affluent northern kingdom of Israel
  - a. unlike his contemporary, Isaiah, who seems to have been educated at court, if not part of the royal family, Amos was a man of the land: yet his language, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is pointed and powerful
  - b. nor was he trained, like some of his successors Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as a priest
  - c. nor was he one of sons of the prophets, those who were trained by Elijah and his successors
  - d. yet God calls unlikely people to momentous tasks
    - (A) the twelve disciples were a motley crew
    - (B) William Carey was a shoe-maker
    - (C) Robert Moffat who ran away to sea
    - (D) David Livingstone, age 10, worked in a cotton factory
    - (E) John G. Paton, age 12, as a stocking-maker
4. but a man who was not deterred
  - a. by the threat of man: Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, was a man of considerable power, with the ear of the king and the power of organized religion on his side
  - b. yet Amos' words were, "the Lord said to me, 'Go and prophesy to My people Israel'"
  - c. what a model for the disciples who would later say, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." (Acts 4: 19)
  - d. what a model for us!

#### D. Amos: The Message

1. in about 25 short years after Amos proclaimed the messages found in the book which bears his name
  - a. the Assyrians, who up to that time had not been much of a factor to the nations of Judah and Israel
  - b. under Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:29, 16:7, 10)
  - c. came and began to carry men from the northern 10 tribes away into captivity

2. there still remains time in God's plan for people to change
  - a. Amos was but a blue-collar worker; settled down in life as a herdsman; each year gathering sycamore figs for food; but, when God called he obeyed the call
  - b. Amos, in turn, was sent by God to tell this sin-hardened nation that there was still time to repent
  - c. and the message of Amos 4:12 is still a message for you and me and the people around us today (NAS):  
"Therefore, thus I will do to you, O Israel; Because I shall do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel."
  - d. today you may feel you are past the point of stepping out to obey God in the matter of salvation or baptism or in some avenue of service or so on
  - e. yet, if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you this morning, while He is still warning and wooing and calling, then heed His call, and obey as we sing "Only One Life"



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AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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