

November Teaching Theme: Amos/Advent

讲员 Speaker: Dr. Victor P. Hamilton / Minister Jacob Chen 陈云传道

题目 Topic: Amos: Where Divine Judgment and Divine Mercy Meet / 在神的审判中更深认识神

经文 Scripture: Amos (阿摩司書) 7-9

Monthly Theme: This month, we spend three weeks looking at one of the twelve minor prophets, Amos, before entering Advent season. Amos was a shepherd and fig-tree farmer who lived in Judah, near the border of Israel. In 1 King 12, Israel had split into two different nation-states with different kings - Israel in the North and Judah in the South. About 150 years after this event, in the 8th Century BC, we find Amos, who God compels to confront Northern Kingdom's corruption and their unjust ruler Jeroboam II. Jeroboam II won many battles, took new territory, and generated a lot of wealth for Israel - but the prophets viewed him as one of the worst kings ever in Israel's history. His wealth led to religious apathy allowing idolatry to run wild, and it led him (like wealth and power often do) to perpetuate injustice. Finally, Amos had enough of the evil he was seeing and took up the prophetic role to speak the truth of God to power - thus, he takes the trip north to Bethel and begins his prophetic ministry. Pastor Mark Webe opened up the three-week series examining Amos 1-2: A Message to the Nations. Last week we continued the series looking at the core of the book Amos 3-6, as God calls Israel to repent of their idolatry and unjust practices or face the consequences. And this week, Dr. Hamilton and Jacob Chen examined the closing of the book Amos 7-9.

十一月 **November:** 先知書: 阿摩司書 **Prophetic Book: Amos**

November 7th – 阿摩司書 1-2: 致萬國與以色列的預示 Amos 1-2: A Message to the Nations

November 14th - 阿摩司書 3-6 致以色列與其領導的預示 Amos 3-6: Injustice and Idolatry

November 21st - 阿摩司書 7-9: 阿摩司的異象上帝對以色列的省判 Amos 7-9: Judgment & Hope

November 28th – 對將臨君王的盼望 Hope of the Coming King (將臨節 Advent)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#) (English Service)

[Sermon Slides](#) (English Service)

[Sermon Video](#) (Chinese Service)

[Sermon Slides](#) (Chinese Service)

[Bible Project: Amos](#) (English 7:12)

[Bibe Project: Amos](#) (Mandarin 7:31)

Discussion Questions (Pastor William R. Horne):

- (1) Read Amos 7:1-8; 9:11-15 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage? (Leaders, I suggest sitting down and reading Amos 7-9 in one sitting)
- (2) Amos talks about the “the poor” and “the needy” more than any of the other minor prophet. Amos exposes the growing divide between the rich and the poor in Israel. How should we respond to Amos message concerning the poor? What does it call us to?

- (3) Re-read Amos 7:1-6. How does God respond to Amos prayer? What does this tell us about God and about prayer?
- (4) Re-Read Amos 9:11-15. What “I Will” promises does God give to the people? What hope does God’s mercy and restoration give us? How should it shape us as a people?
- (5) Dr. Hamilton pointed out that the LORD “showed” Amos four things in chapters 7-9 to reveal his message. With this in mind, has God been “showing” you anything throughout our series on Amos? Share this with your group. (As Dr. Hamilton said, whenever God shows you something, you must respond!)

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on Q1: As always, please remind yourself of Amos context [above](#).

Here are some helpful comments from Dr. Douglas Stuart on Amos 7-8:3: “Amos 7:1–8:3 is the account of four prophetic visions and the story of the official opposition that was aroused particularly by the wording of the third vision. In the first two visions (7:1–3; 7:4–5), coming disasters revealed to Amos are canceled by the prophet’s intercession. Yahweh shows himself merciful and compassionate, willing to change his mind about intended harm (cf. Exod 34:6; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; etc.), unwilling utterly to destroy his covenant people (Deut 4:27–31). The third and fourth visions (7:7–9; 8:1–3) revolve on the sound of spoken words that suggest punishments certain to be carried out: “moaning” and the “end” for Israel—not a total obliteration of the people, but a severe conquest, exile, and loss of life.

From a purely human point of view, the priest Amaziah’s actions were reasonable. He wanted to silence Amos, a prophet not (officially at least) welcome in the region where he had been preaching, whose doomsaying was critical of persons not using their power to bring Israelite society back into conformity with the Sinai covenant. But in trying to silence a prophet, one may actually be trying to silence God. Some in NT times, whose “fathers killed the prophets” (Luke 11:48), similarly thought that they could silence Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul, and many others, not having learned from the story of Amaziah and Amos. **Indeed, religion may nearly always seek peacefulness and harmony above the truth that God demands justice and faithfulness and has appointed a day when he will judge the world. Ignorance is not bliss. Refusal to consider the reality of God’s wrath against evil amounts to willingness to condone evil.** [Stuart, D. (1987). Hosea–Jonah (Vol. 31, pp. 379–380).]

Notes on Q2: As Dr. Hamilton noted, “The Poor” occurs six times and “The Needy” occurs five times in the book of Amos. (A helpful Bible study tip - if something is repeated its probably important!) Amos is speaking to people who like their religion as long as it in no ways curbs or places any sort of restrictions on their lifestyle. Their lifestyle was characterized by accumulating wealth at the expense of the poor. As stated last week, a real relationship with God will transform a person’s relationships and social ethics. True Worship of the living God should always lead to a life of justice, righteousness, and love of neighbor. As we have seen throughout the Scriptures, the Christian life must be characterized by generosity, righting what is wrong, and empowering the marginalized.

Notes on Q3: In Amos 7:1-6, God relented and decided to take a different course of action in response to Amos cry for help on behalf of the people (twice!). At minimum, this surprising response reveals to us that God listens and responds to our prayers and concerns. He is not an absentee father or a distant deity, but a God who cares for and is active in the lives of his people and his creation. This is beautiful and reassuring news. This passage also reveals to us the power of interceding prayer. We can go to God in prayer in the good and when our backs are against the wall and he will respond (maybe even change courses!). So often, our prayer lives remain shallow because we do not believe nor understand the power of prayer and the care of God. A life grounded in prayer - a real dynamic relationship with the God of the Universe - "avails much" as the King James Translation of James 5:16 states. "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." (NRSV). Amos relationship show this to be the case even when facing rightly deserved judgment. When we are in trouble, we have a merciful and caring God we can turn to!

Notes on Q4: The "I Will" promise of the LORD in Amos 9: (1) "I will restore..." (9:11); (2) "I will repair..." (9:11); (3) "I will build..." (9:11); (4) "I will bring back..." (9:14); (5) "I will plant..." (9:15). These "I Will" promises reveal a God who longs for and is working for restoration of his people and his creation. Sometime along the way, this will require judgment to purge evil from his people, but God is bringing about a future of full redemption, where all of creation is restored! This is where the Christian hope and vision is grounded. These "I Will" promises tie well with Dr. Hamilton's "5 Truths from Amos 9":

- (1) Anybody that has experienced God's judgment can experience God's mercy.
- (2) Anything/anybody that has been damaged, God can restore.
- (3) Anything/anybody that is broken, God can repair.
- (4) Anything/anybody that is lost, God can find.
- (5) Anything/anybody that has been uprooted, God can plant in his own life-giving soil.

As we reflect on the good news of God's mercy and restoration, we ought to be formed into people who are merciful and working for restoration. That we would give the world a taste of the Kingdom of God through our lives. Amos gives us a balanced picture of the need for truth-telling in the face of evil (especially when it involves unjust power), and the hope for God's restoration that we point people to in King Jesus. God is a God who will restore his good creation and cleanse it of evil and it's effects - he has started this work through Jesus. That is beautiful, good news.