

8. Israel (the Northern Kingdom) – “Woah! Wait a second! Eight!?!?” That was probably the feeling that Israel’s readers had when they read this part of the prophecy. Over and above the unlucky 7 spot, now Israel is implicated with God’s judgment.

Do you think Christians are ever “surprised” by God’s Law being applied to them? Should we expect to know that when and where we have broken God’s Law? Or should we expect to be surprised when He points it out from time to time?

The Judgment on Israel

Ten verses serve as the “sentence” for Israel. God recounts what He has done for them and how they have turned away from His graciousness.

- *Where does God tell Israel what He has done for them?*
- *Where does God tell Israel what they have done?*

Homework for Next Time:

Please read chapters 1-6 for next time (they’re pretty short). Consider these questions:

- *Where can you find God’s “Law” in these chapters?*
- *Where can you find God’s “Gospel” in these chapters?*



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Please don’t throw this away. Take it home and use it devotionally or leave it for others to use.

University Lutheran Presents:



God’s Prophet to Israel

A Surprising Introduction

The prophetic book of Amos begins with a sly teaser. As the book opens, its hearers think that God is going to stroke their egos and tell them how their enemies will be defeated. Instead of comfort, God begins with terror and reminders of His Holy Law which Israel had left behind.

Ever since Martin Luther, the Lutheran tradition has taken the proclamation of the two poles of God’s Word to heart, especially in preaching. C.F.W. Walther (an early Lutheran father from the 1800’s) claimed that “Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all of the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but also distinguishes from each other Law and Gospel.” (Law & Gospel, Thesis II).

The place of the Law is to lay God’s discomfort the self-righteous sinner, to point out their sins and foolish actions. It is “**disturbing the comfortable**”. Unfortunately, none of us can ever say that we do not need the Law laid upon us.

The place of the Gospel is to cure and heal the sin sick heart of a penitent sinner. It gives life through the assurance of Christ’s sacrifice. It is “**comforting the disturbed**”. Thanks be to God that all of us have the Gospel to cure our sin daily.

The prophet Amos paints in stark colors the Law and Gospel of God in His relationship with Israel (the Northern Kingdom) in the 8th Century.

Your homework:

There was no homework for today.

He's "Not So Famous", so why are we studying Amos?

Amos is one of the "minor prophets" of the Bible. Despite common notions to the contrary, the term "minor" does not mean "unimportant" or "lesser". The term simply reflects that these are the shorter prophetic writings (and are normally poetry). Unfortunately, these short gems catalogued at the end of the Old Testament are often ignored (by simpletons and Philistines, not you of course – because you know the beauty of these brief books). *What are some of the impressions that you have of the minor prophets?*

Amos' Supporting Cast

Verse 1:1 tells us that Amos is "among the shepherds of Tekoa," but that's not the only people that he was among. As an 8th Century prophet, Amos' contemporary prophets would have been:

- Hosea (minor – bet you couldn't find his book in a hurry, could ya?)
- Micah (another minor)
- Isaiah (you might know this guy)
- Possibly Jonah (it depends on which date you choose for the writing of Jonah, we haven't found the fish to carbon date it...yet)

His Name in the Marquis

Amos' name comes from the Hebrew root word "ahmas" which depending on how it is used can mean either "to carry a load" or "to burden with a load". Some Jewish rabbis point back to a tradition that interprets Amos' name as meaning "heavy of tongue," (not able to speak well). If he wasn't able to speak well – he at least wrote well. His book is lifted as one of the most poetic prophets out of his contemporaries.

Reflect – How does "carry a load" act as a metaphor for the Gospel? How does "burden with a load" act as a metaphor for the Law? Amos had both meanings in his name, Jesus had both meanings in who He was.

About how far is Tekoa from Jersey?

Tekoa was about 20 miles south of the Israel/Judah border. At this time in Jewish history (about 760 BC), the once unified nation of Israel had split into Israel (Northern Kingdom) and Judah (Southern Kingdom). Tekoa was a town built in a rocky wilderness on a cliff that was thousands of feet tall and looked out

over a body of water (the Sea of Arabah or the Salt/Dead Sea) and the vast wilderness of Judah. *This would have looked probably something like the mountainous areas of Colorado or Alaska. Have you ever visited those places? Why would God speak to someone from the mountain wilderness?*

The Oracles

An "oracle" is a part of a prophecy that deals specifically with one group or nation. In Jewish oracle prophecies, each oracle acts as a stepping stone to a greater/more intense message. Typically, there were 7 oracles in such a prophecy and the 7th was the oracle that was the most severe and was assumed to be the worst enemy of God at the time. Check out what happens in Amos' prophecy (watch the numbers):

1. Damascus (Syria) – Syria was the most distant and most rival nation to Israel at the time. Beginning with this nation seemed to indicate something backwards. They would have normally been in the "unlucky 7" spot.
2. Gaza (Philistia) – The Philistines were Israel's old enemies from a while back. Remember Goliath?
3. Tyre (Phoenicia) – David and Solomon both had established treaties with this nation, but the Phoenicians had double crossed the deal and betrayed their "brotherhood" to Israel.
4. Edom (descendants of Esau) – Now it's getting personal. These descendants of Esau have been typical enemies of Israel since Jacob and Esau had it out over a birthright.
5. Ammonites (descendants of an incestuous "night" between Lot and his youngest daughter – Genesis 19) - These descendants of Lot had used harvesting equipment to mow down civilians during a battle in the Israelite city of Gilead.
6. Moab (descendants of an incestuous night between Lot and his oldest daughter) – These descendants had committed war crimes that would have been unspeakable at the time – burning the bones of a king and turning the dust into mortar.
7. Judah (the Southern Kingdom) – This "unlucky number 7" spot would have normally been where the prophet would talk about the height of God's displeasure. Judah is implicated for not following the Law that God has given them and for walking away from God.

...but wait....there's more....flip the sheet over.