

Analysis of Amos

General

“A powerful and profligate wealthy class had developed in Samaria; it was the abuse of wealth, power, and privilege by the wealthy in Samaria that formed the focus of so much of Amos preaching” (Dillard and Longman, p. 375). The southern prophet preached a message of divine punishment to the north.

Authorship

Authorship of the Minor Prophets seems to be straightforward. Since the book bears the prophet’s name, this analysis will side with tradition, which recognizes Amos as the author of the book.

Date

Internal dating puts Amos’ revelation “two years before the earthquake (1:1), and during the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam. With this information Lasor (et. al.) dates Amos’ message somewhere around 760 BC (p. 244).

Key Issues

Key issues in Amos are: 1) to recognize that Israel’s manner of life was to reflect social justice, 2) to understand the significance of the Day of the LORD as judgment and not salvation (5:18-20), 3) to recognize the sure punishment of God on all nations who do evil, 4) to understand the relationship between Amos 9:11 and the New Testament (i.e. Acts 15:16-18), 5) to appreciate God’s desire for social justice among his people.

Subject/Purpose Statement¹

Amos’ message consists of oracles against the nations, judgments against Israel and a group of visions that vividly picture Israel’s coming divine punishment. Although God’s punishment was sure and there was no escape, there would be a remnant that would once again enjoy God’s blessings in the land. Amos’ message was designed to drive the prosperous nations, especially Israel, to its knees in repentance. Since repentance was unlikely, the book was designed to provide hope after judgment.

¹ I am indebted to Dr. Mark McGinniss for his thoughts and insights given throughout this O.T. study.

Outline of Amos

- I. God pronounced judgment on the nations for their sins against Israel and against Israel (1:1-2:16).
 - A. God pronounced judgment on Damascus (1:1-5).
 - B. God pronounced judgment on Gaza (1:6-8).
 - C. God pronounced judgment on Tyre (1:9-10).
 - D. God pronounced judgment on Edom (1:11-12).
 - E. God pronounced judgment on Ammon (1:13-15).
 - F. God pronounced judgment on Moab (2:1-3).
 - G. God pronounced judgment on Judah and Israel (2:4-12).
- II. God's word of punishment against Israel, his people (3:1-6:14).
 - A. God's promise that whatever punishment they experience will be from him (3:1-15).
 - B. God's promise to punish the prosperous (4:1-13).
 - C. Punishment is sure because the people loved evil and hated good (5:1-27).
 - D. Punishment is sure even to those who believe they are secure in their prosperity (6:1-14).
- III. Amos's visions that confirm the impending punishment of God and future restoration (7:1-9:15).
 - A. The vision of the locust (7:1-17).
 - B. The vision of the basket of summer fruit (8:1-14).
 - C. The vision of the Lord himself at the altar (9:1-10).
 - D. The vision of future blessing in the land (9:11-15).

Theological Issues

Amos contains the following areas of theological discussion: God's holiness, judgment of sin, covenant-keeper, grace; man's disobedience, essential to care for those in need.

Theological Application

"God's holiness required that he respond in judgment on the sins of the nation, but his commitment to Israel meant there would always be a remnant, those who had undergone divine judgment and survived to become the nucleus for the continuation of the people of God" (Dillard and Longman, p. 383). God will chasten and restore his people.