

1. Hoshea is the last king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
2. The startling rapidity with which the Northern Kingdom unraveled and destabilized:
 - a. Jeroboam - 931 B.C. - first dynasty - Nadab, his son, lasted 2 years as king
 - b. Baasha overthrew Nadab - second dynasty - his son Elah lasted only 2 years
 - c. Zimri overthrew Elah and lasted 7 days - third dynasty
 - d. Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram - Ahab was the key figure of this dynasty - fourth dynasty
 - e. Jehu, Jehohaz, Jehoash (warred against Amaziah of Judah), Jeroboam II, Zechariah (lasted 6 months) - the fifth dynasty
 - f. Shallum - sixth dynasty - lasted one month
 - g. Menahem (paid tribute to Pul, King of Assyria), Pekahiah - seventh dynasty
 - h. Pekah - eighth dynasty (20 years) - overthrew Pekahiah; during his reign the first deportation of people from the Northern Kingdom to Assyria happened
 - i. Hoshea - ninth dynasty, 19th king - final deportation occurred
3. The Northern Kingdom (sometimes called Ephraim, which rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam and formed an independent nation) lasted from 931 B.C. to 722 B.C. (209 years).
 - a. 9 different bloodlines and 19 different kings. All the kings were "bad" - they did not follow the Lord.
 - b. The 7 most important to remember:
 - 1) Jeroboam - set up the kingdom; perverted the worship of the true God
 - 2) Ahab - the most evil king of Israel; Elijah was God's prophet - the great contest at Mt Carmel
 - 3) Jehu - gained some favor by eliminating the worship of Baal
 - 4) Jeroboam II - reestablished some of the prominence of Israel
 - 5) Menahem - paid tribute to Pul of Assyria
 - 6) Pekah - invaded by Pul and the first Israelites were deported to Assyria
 - 7) Hoshea - Israel fell and the 10 northern tribes went into captivity and never returned
4. Pul is Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria. He ruled Assyria and a large part of the Middle East.
5. The Southern Kingdom of Judah:
 - a. Amaziah's son Azariah succeeded him as king. He is also called Uzziah.
 - b. Uzziah starts well, keeps going and finishes badly.
6. The dates of both kingdoms and the length of time each king reigned do not add up to the same numbers. This is because of the practice of co-regencies in Near Eastern practice, so the years overlapped at times, as was the case with Uzziah. He was crowned while his father Amaziah was still king, and his son Jotham was crowned while he was still king. Jotham had his son Ahaz crowned while both he and his father Uzziah were alive!
7. Uzziah's reign had been blessed by God - the most prosperous time since Solomon.
 - a. "After Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall."
 - b. He took the priestly function upon himself (the same act which had cost Saul the kingdom) and was confronted by Azariah, the chief priest at the time. Uzziah did not respond well and God immediately struck him with leprosy.
8. James 5 - If sickness is a result of sin, healing will come when there is repentance.

1. Joel is one of the “Minor Prophets” - so called because their books are shorter than those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.
2. The Book of Joel is directed against God’s people, not other nations.
3. “The Twelve Prophet Book” was the name of the scroll that contained the writings of all the Minor Prophets. (12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 Minor Prophets)
4. Joel was most likely written during the time of Joash, in the 9th century B.C., when Phoenicia, Philistia, Egypt and Edom were prominent. Amos seems to have borrowed from Joel, and he comes later.
5. There is a plague of locusts and Joel finds a clear connection between this natural disaster and the wrath and judgment of God upon Israel.
6. Key passage - Joel 2 - a call to repentance: “Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing...”
7. God does use nature to both bless and judge societies.
8. Repentance:
 - a. It is the state of the heart that God looks at.
 - b. Fasting is associated with repentance and mourning for sin.
 - c. Although God has sent judgment, Joel emphasizes God’s compassion and love, not His wrath and anger.
 - 1) God is getting their attention.
 - 2) His love and His holiness, His mercy and His wrath are inextricably connected.
9. Two more things to remember from the Book of Joel:
 - a. “The day of the Lord”
 - 1) It is the first book which uses this phrase and it points to God’s judgment.
 - 2) Jesus was borrowing the language of Joel when He was describing the events surrounding His return in the Olivet Discourse.
 - b. The prophecy that before the great day of the lord, God would pour out His Spirit on all people
 - 1) Acts 2 - Peter says that prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost
 - 2) The end times began at the time of the crucifixion and the establishment of the New Testament church and will continue until the return of Jesus Christ

1. The Book of Amos divides easily into 3 parts - today's part is Chapter 1 through 3:8.
2. The Book of Amos was written to the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II, and while Uzziah was King of the Southern Kingdom. He prophesied about 40 years after Elisha's death.
3. Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, about 6 miles south of Bethlehem.
4. Amos gets the attention of the people of Israel by first prophesying against their traditional enemies:
 - a. Against Syria and Damascus - God had seen the evil they perpetrated against the Israelites
 - b. Against Philistia and Gaza - God's judgment is specifically against them as slave traders
 - c. Tyre - it had broken its word to Israel and also was involved in slave trading
 - d. Edom - because of their implacable hatred of Israel and the fact that they were the recipients of the slaves from Philistia and Tyre
 - e. Ammon and Moab - war crimes do not go unnoticed by God
5. Next Amos turns to God's judgment of Judah:
 - a. Because of their disobedience to God
 - b. Because of their worship of false idols
6. He finally turns to the judgment of Israel:
 - a. Because of their greed, coupled with oppression of the poor and weak
 - b. Because of sexual immorality
 - c. Because of drunkenness and idolatry
7. God, in His anger, is compared to a roaring lion. Judgment is coming to Israel.
 - a. The sins for which Israel was being judged are common to our times.
 - b. This book is a message to our country, for our time.
8. Amos' literary formula, used to introduce each set of judgments:
 - a. "For three sins...and for four..."
 - b. It put Israel in the same category as the other nations being judged.
 - c. J.A. Motyer, The Day of the Lion:

"As Amos perceived the character of His God, he saw that the lion roar of condemnation and judgment came only when the patience of mercy had long, but vainly, waited for repentance and amendment of life. This is the significance of the repeated phrase for three transgressions...and for four...One way of expressing this truth about God is to say that He never punishes the sinner except after prolonged personal observation and ample opportunity for repentance..."

1. The Book of Amos divides easily into 3 parts - today's part is 3:9 through 6:14.
2. The Book of Amos was written when Israel was prosperous:
 - a. They had affluence and opulence.
 - b. They lacked concern for the poor.
 - c. They lacked respect for the truth and for justice. They took bribes.
 - d. They oppressed the righteous.
3. But they are not pagans and they are not irreligious!
 - a. They proclaimed themselves to be worshippers of the God of Israel - "lip service".
 - b. They were fairly conscientious about religious "duties".
 - c. They worshipped at Bethel and Gilgal, not where God had said, which was Jerusalem - "The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem" are the words that begin this prophecy against Israel.
 - d. They sacrificed and tithed and gave free-will offerings.
 - e. They sang hymns and songs of praise.
 - f. In all of it, they displeased God, because they did not "live" as His people.
4. God wanted them to:
 - a. Practice righteousness...live holiness.
 - b. Treat the weak and the poor and oppressed with love and concern and righteousness.
 - c. Then come worship Him.
 - d. In the Book of James we read that "pure religion" meant taking care of orphans and widows in distress and not being polluted by the world.
 - e. Again, Amos' message is very contemporary:
 - a. Let justice roll on like a river.
 - b. Let righteousness roll on like a never failing stream.
5. God had sent many "wake-up" calls to the nation of Israel (as we saw in the Book of Joel), but they had not paid attention.
6. Two magnificent passages about God:
 - a. "He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals His thoughts to men, He who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth - the Lord God Almighty is His name."
 - b. He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns blackness into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land - the Lord is His name."
7. "The day of the Lord"... "Prepare to meet your God".
8. Interspersed with warnings of judgment, there is always another word - an urgent and valid invitation - "Seek Me and live." We have a choice.

1. The Book of Amos divides easily into 3 parts - today's part is Chapters 7 through 9. The books of the Minor Prophets are not irrelevant - they are very contemporary.

2. 3 visions: Locusts, fire, plumb line: "Sovereign Lord, forgive. How can Jacob survive? He is so small."

3. Again we are confronted with "anthropomorphic" language:

- a. God does not ever change His mind.
- b. He has all the information and is conscious of all the evidence at all times.
- c. He never loses control of His emotions.
- d. The final action was the one He intended all along:
 - 1) He wanted to move Amos to intercede for His people.
 - 2) He wanted to underscore His mercy and His commitment to spare a remnant of His people.
 - 3) God's plan, then, was always to bring a judgment that would devastate but not utterly destroy His people - and Amos' prayer was part of the plan. "Prayer is a means by which the Lord of all brings His determined purposes to pass."

5. Amos' prayer is a model for effective praying: Prayer starts by seeing things and people as God sees them. ("How can Jacob stand? He is so small.") Prayer then looks to God's mercy and His "almightiness".

6. The confrontation between Amos and Amaziah the priest of Bethel: Amos was not a prophet by choice, but because God had specifically called Him to this task. Prophets are not popular or wanted or welcome. Even today, if you bring the Word of the Lord, your harshest critics will be found among the ranks of other professing Christians.

7. Chapter 8 - the "famine" of hearing the Word of the Lord happened between the prophet Malachi and John the Baptist - a 400-year period of silence where no prophet arose to say, "This is what the God of Israel says".

8. The 5 visions in today's reading:

- a. Locusts - to which Amos replied "Forgive".
- b. Fire - to which Amos replied "Stop".
- c. Plumb line - to which Amos did not reply.
- d. The basket of ripe fruit in conjunction with the famine of hearing the Word of the Lord
- e. The Lord beside the altar - the destruction of Samaria is foreseen and declared

9. "Disaster will not overtake or meet us" - they were just as wrong as people in our day who think, "it can't happen here".

10. The Book of Amos ends on an unexpected note of hope and promise: "Even though Israel is about to be judged in an unparalleled way, a day of restoration is coming - a day when 'I will restore David's fallen tent and repair its broken places and restore its ruins.' A day when 'I will bring back my exiled people in Israel. They will build their ruined cities and live in them...never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them.'"

This prophecy has been fulfilled in our own lifetime - more than 2500 years after Amos spoke it!