



Restorer

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Amos 4-6

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

Amos continued to speak to Israel, pointing out times the people did not return to the Lord. Over and over again, the people did not return to the Lord. God boldly, clearly, and simply spoke to the House of Israel: *Seek me and live. Seek Yahweh and live.* And yet what did the people continue to do? Walk away from the Lord.

The Lord desires an intimate relationship with you—His chosen, beloved people to whom He sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem. God commanded you to love Him above all else—with all your heart, soul, and mind. The Word of God states over and over: *Seek and you will find God. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Ask God and you will receive. Knock and the doors will be open. Seek first God's kingdom, and all things in life will be added to you.* God longs for you to pursue a relationship with Him. Pray, read His Word, have fellowship with other believers, and look for the Lord working in your life. When you seek Him, when you love Him with everything, *He will be found, and you will live.* He promises that as you seek Him, you will live abundantly in the love He desires to lavish on you.

"For the LORD says to the house of Israel: Seek Me and live!"

— Amos 5:4

FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *Deuteronomy 4:29* — "But from there, you will search for the LORD your God, and you will find Him when you seek Him with all your heart and all your soul."
- *Jeremiah 29:13* — "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."
- *Amos 5:14* — "Seek good and not evil so that you may live, and the LORD, the God of Hosts, will be with you, as you have claimed."



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Teaching Notes

INTRO

Remember Amos was from Tekoa, where he was most likely taking care of sheep. Amos was writing to the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos' words addressed two primary sins: the lack of true worship and the lack of justice. In the previous chapters, we have read about the judgment that the Israelites would experience.

TEACHING

Amos 4:1-13: J. Vernon McGee wrote, "In verses 1-3 [Amos] directs his scathing judgment against the Northern Kingdom. In verses 4-5 [Amos], with biting sarcasm invited the people to transgress. They called it worship of the golden calf. In verses 6-13, [Amos pointed out that] they had been judged by scant harvests, plagues of insects, pestilences, war, and destruction. None of them had deterred them from sin."¹ I think it's fair to say that when weather or other troubles come into play, the Lord wants us to turn to Him. No matter what devastating things happened to the Israelites, they never cried out or returned to God.

Amos 5:1: Chapter five gives a description of the judgment the Israelites would discover. I would be kind of nervous to hear these judgements, after hearing a list of all the things I didn't do! The Israelites were having to face their consequences. This chapter starts out as a funeral dirge.

Amos 5:2-3: It's important to understand that as a young nation, God said to the Israelites, "I am cutting you off." The Israelites had taken God's gift of land and turned it into a place of death. MacArthur wrote, "Most [of the soldiers] were to be killed in battle or taken captive (a 90 percent casualty vote); only a handful would return."² This was not a good song.

Amos 5:4-5: These verses were a praise to God. Amos' song began to change. "Seek Me and live!" is a much better song! Wiersbe writes, "To seek the Lord means first of all to change our thinking and abandon the vain thoughts that are directing our wayward lives."³ Basically, to seek God is to pursue Him.

Amos wrote a warning to the Israelites to stay away from certain regions. People from the north had crossed over borders in order to worship false gods. Seek the Lord and have life. Wiersbe explains, "The prophet gave three reasons [to seek God], the first of which is that we might have life (v. 4) . . . The second reason we should seek God is because there is no other way to experience spiritual blessing (v. 5) . . . The third reason for seeking God is because judgment is coming (v. 6)."⁴ The Israelites had not only failed to pursue God, they were pursuing false gods and idols.

Amos 5:6: A lot of people struggle with verse six where Amos wrote that God's judgment "would spread like fire throughout the house of Joseph." Fire was going to consume the house of Israel—everything. There are many evangelists and Christians that argue you shouldn't talk about hell when you share Jesus. This language that Amos used would be an incredibly helpful point for why people should trust Christ. Why should we trust Christ? Because we will experience eternal life and spiritual blessing through Him! There is no other way to experience God's goodness except through Christ. I have no problem saying, "If you don't trust Christ you are going to hell." That is the reality. Judgment is coming, if you don't seek God. Fire is coming. It is a unique foreshadowing of what is to come.

I think Amos' message to the Israelites is applicable to Christians today. God gave the Israelites (and us) multiple chances to seek Him and to pursue Him. We should constantly seek the Lord in everything. It doesn't have to be due to sin. It can come about through any decision in our lives.

Amos 5:7-8: MacArthur wrote, "Justice was so perverted that it was like wormwood, an herb known for its bitter taste (Revelation 8:11)."⁵ The Israelites were taking things that were good and just and turning them bad. In verse 8, Amos mentioned Pleiades and Orion. MacArthur wrote, "Pleiades, part of the constellation Taurus, and Orion, depict God's creative power and wisdom. Israel was guilty of worshipping the stars instead of the creator."⁶

¹ J. Vernon McGee, "Outline for Amos"; available at https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mcgee_j_vernon/notes-outlines/amos/amos-outline.cfm.

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005, p.997.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Exposition Bible Commentary* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2002), p. 356.

⁴ Wiersbe, pp. 356-357.

⁵ MacArthur, p. 997.

⁶ MacArthur, p. 997.



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Teaching Notes

Amos 5:10-13: God's judgment was coming, and the Israelites sought to avoid it. Anyone who spoke against them or spoke with integrity was disliked and rejected. Amos started to list many of the bad behaviors of the Israelites. These were habitual sins that Amos was pointing out. The days were so evil that Amos wrote that a wise person would keep silent.

Amos 5:14-15: Seek God; seek good. How much clearer could Amos be?

Amos 5:16-17: There would be mourning and wailing after God's judgment. MacArthur wrote, "At the Exodus, the Lord 'passed over' Israel; here He 'passes through,' much like He did to the Egyptians in Moses' day."⁷ God was not sparing His people this time.

Amos 5:18-20: These are some pretty harsh words. God was done with the fakeness of their religion. MacArthur wrote, "Even the wicked wanted the Day of the Lord to come, mistakenly thinking that it would bring victory/blessing instead of certain judgment (Zephaniah 1:14-18)."⁸

Amos 5:21-24: The Israelites were going through the motions of worship. When done with the wrong heart, worship, sacrifices, and even sacred festivals displease the Lord.

Amos 5:25-27: *Nelson's Commentary* states, "After dismissing Israel's empty worship as noisy and tumultuous, God called for the rolling waters of justice and the perennial stream of righteousness, the only foundation for true praise and worship of the Lord."⁹ This is a picture of what God wants.

Amos 6: Magee writes, "Israel was taking it easy, sitting in the lap of luxury in a day of affluence."¹⁰ Throughout this chapter, Amos discussed the three national sins of the Israelites: gluttony, heathen music, and drunkenness. Amos pointed out how God hated the actions of the Israelites and that their actions would be punished. The chapter ends with another warning of the captivity to come to the nations.

CLOSING

God gave the Israelites multiple opportunities to seek Him. Even though this is ominous chapter in an already dark season, we can take hope and be thankful that God is the *Restorer* and He always looks to restore.

⁷ MacArthur, p. 997.

⁸ MacArthur, p. 997.

⁹ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), p. 1054.

¹⁰ Magee, N.A.



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Reading Guide Questions

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1. Who did Amos refer to and what did he mean when he used the phrase “cows of Bashan” in Amos 4:1? (Isaiah 3:16-26; 32:9-13; Jeremiah 4:30)
 2. In Amos 4:4-5, what did Amos accuse them of while using sarcasm? How does the Lord feel about hypocrisy (Luke 6:46; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:16; 1 John 4:20)? Why would Amos tell them to do just the opposite in Amos 5:5?
 3. What kind of message was given in Amos 5:1? What was the only way for Israel to live? (Amos 5:4, 6, 14)
 4. What does it mean to hate evil and love good (Amos 5:15)? What did that look like for the Israelites? What does that look like for you today? (Psalm 119:163; Proverbs 6:16; 8:13; Isaiah 5:20; Mark 12:30; Romans 12:2, 9)
 5. Why would the Lord not listen to the worship of the Israelites in Amos 5:23 (Leviticus 26:27, 31; Psalm 51:16-17, 19; 66:18)? When your heart or the heart of the Church is in sin, consider that this would be the Lord’s response. How does this change how you approach God in worship?
 6. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Amos 4–6 through the reading or the teaching?

