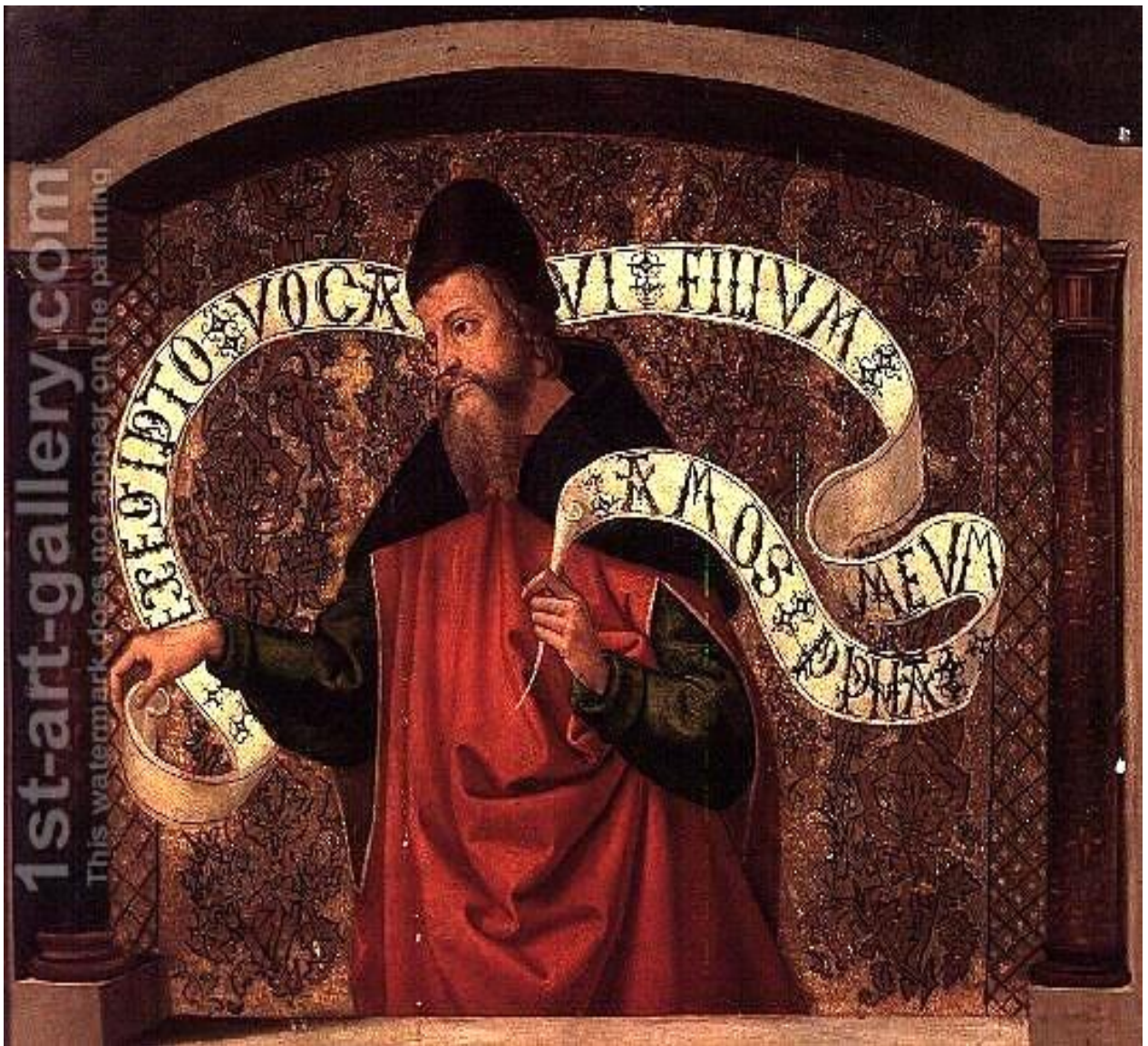


LIVING GODS WILL

Prophet of God

AMOS



The Prophet Amos by Juan de Borgona

Prophet of God **AMOS**

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Born: Tekoa, Judah

Died: 745 BC – Killed in Bethel

Amos was a prophet of **God** from **766-755 BC**.

Amos believed that **God is Lord over all human history**.

Amos authored the **Book of Amos**.

Amos preached justice and righteousness to **Samaria and Bethel**.

In the Hebrew Bible and Christian Old Testament, **Amos** was one of the **Twelve Minor Prophets**.

An older contemporary of **Hosea** and **Isaiah**, **Amos** was active c. **766–755 BCE** during the rule of kings Jeroboam II and Uzziah. He was from the southern Kingdom of Judah but preached in the northern Kingdom of Israel.

Amos wrote at a time of relative peace and prosperity but also of neglect of **God's** laws. He spoke against an increased disparity between the very wealthy and the very poor. His major themes of social justice, **God's** omnipotence, and divine judgment became staples of prophecy. The **Book of Amos** is attributed to him.

Before becoming a prophet, **Amos** was a sheep herder and a sycamore fig farmer. His prior professions and his claim "**I am not a prophet nor a son of a prophet**" (**7:14**) indicate that **Amos** was not from the school of prophets, which **Amos** claims makes him a true prophet.

Amos' declaration marks a turning-point in the development of Old Testament prophecy. It is not mere chance that Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and almost all of the prophets given significant coverage in the Hebrew Bible, give first of all the story of their special calling.

All of them seek to protest against the suspicion that they are professional prophets, because the latter discredited themselves by flattering national vanities and ignoring the misdeeds of prominent men.

The Bible speaks of his ministry and prophecies concluding around **762**, two years before the earthquake that is spoken of in **Amos 1:1**, "**...two years before the earthquake.**"

The prophet Zechariah was likely alluding to this same earthquake several centuries later: **Zechariah 14:5**, "**And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah.**"

Though he came from the southern kingdom of Judah, **Amos** aimed his prophetic message at the northern kingdom of Israel, particularly the cities of **Samaria and Bethel**.

Jeroboam II (c. 781–741 BC), ruler of the Northern kingdom, had rapidly conquered Syria, Moab, and Ammon, and thereby extended his dominions from the source of the Orontes on the north to the Dead Sea on the south.

The whole northern empire had enjoyed a long period of peace and security marked by a revival of artistic and commercial development. Social corruption and the oppression of the poor and helpless were prevalent.

Others, carried away by the free association with heathen peoples which resulted from conquest or commercial contact, went so far as to fuse with the **Lord's** worship that of pagan deities.

Amos is the first of the prophets to write down the messages he has received. He has always been admired for the purity of his language, his beauty of diction, and his poetic art.

In all these respects he is Isaiah's spiritual progenitor. What we know of **Amos** derives solely from the book that he himself authored. This makes it hard to know who the historical **Amos** truly was.

Amos felt himself called to preach in Bethel, where there was a royal sanctuary (**7:13**), and there to announce the fall of the reigning dynasty and of the northern kingdom. But he is denounced by the head priest Amaziah to King Jeroboam II and is advised to leave the kingdom.

There is no reason to doubt that he was actually forced to leave the northern kingdom and to return to his native country. Being thus prevented from bringing his message to an end, and from reaching the ear of those to whom he was sent, he wrote instead.

If they could not hear his messages, they could read them, and if his contemporaries refused to do so, following generations might still profit by them. No earlier instance of a literary prophet is known; but the example he gave was followed by others in an almost unbroken succession.

It cannot be proved that Hosea knew the **book of Amos**, though there is no reason to doubt that he was acquainted with the latter's work and experiences.

It is certain that Isaiah knew his book, for he follows and even imitates him in his early speeches (compare **Amos 5:21–24, 4:6ff, 5:18** with **Isaiah 1:11–15; Amos 4:7ff** with **Isaiah 9:7ff, 3:12**).

Cheyne concludes that **Amos** wrote the record of his prophetic work at Jerusalem, after his expulsion from the northern kingdom, and that he committed it to a circle of faithful followers residing there.

The apocryphal work **The Lives of the Prophets** records that **Amos was killed by the son of Amaziah, priest of Bethel**. It states that before he died, **Amos** made his way back to his homeland and was buried there.

God's omnipotence and divine judgment

Amos saw God as personally in control of all the world(s). **Amos** made clear that, contrary to the view within pagan religious and among the majority of Israelites, **God** was not only the **God** of Israel but of all the world.

While the average Israelite may have remembered with national pride the special place of Israel's exodus from Egypt, **Amos** maintained that **God** was also behind the early movements of the Philistines and Arameans (**Amos 9:7**)

Amos believed that **God is Lord** over all human history and that all men are equal in his sight. By this, he implies that any other nation could stand in the same place of privilege which Israel had known.

Both **God's** concern in love and his concern in judgment are without discrimination. Neither geographical limitations nor race matter in the least when **God** seeks to accomplish **His** purpose.

No modern interpreter has denied that he taught that **God** is ethical to the extent that he cannot be affected by ceremonial as such. "**For Amos ... religion consists not in ritual but in righteousness. YHWH, God of justice, demands right living not oblations.**"

Amos thus proclaimed an ethical **God** so clearly that only ethical relations between men could assure divine favor; and nothing in his words indicates that he recognized any other approach to **God**.

Such an approach naturally involves worship – a term that includes the whole process of man's communion with his **God**; even in ancient Israel worship was never confined to sacrifices and offerings, as witness Jacob at Bethel, Moses before the burning bush, Elijah on Mt. Horeb. Man, also has never failed to devise new forms of approach to **God** to accord with his changed conceptions of Deity.

Some of his main teachings are:

Prayers and sacrifices do not make up for bad deeds. "**Practice of religious acts is no insurance against the judgment of God**" and that "**privilege involves opportunity, or escapism... Immunity cannot be claimed simply because of past favor of God, irrespective of deeds and the measure of faithful service.**"

Behaving justly is much more important than ritual (**Amos 5:21–24**). "**Ceremonial worship has no intrinsic value...the only genuine service of God consists in justice and righteousness (5:24)**".

Amos believed in economic justice, the conviction of **Amos** that economic justice was necessary to preserve the nation (whereas his opponents asserted that sacrifices and offerings were preserving it) forced him to conclude that a **God** who wanted the nation preserved must want justice and want it always, and could never therefore want sacrifices, which abetted and condoned injustice.

Amos was an uncompromising monotheist. There is not a verse in his writing that admits the existence of other deities.

The relationship between the people of Israel is articulated to be a moral contract. If the people of Israel fall below the moral requirements of **God**, then their relationship will certainly be dissolved.

Dependence on **God** is a requisite towards fulfillment. One will live if he seeks the **Lord (Amos 5:4)**

Author: **Amos 1:1** identifies the author of the Book of Amos as the Prophet **Amos**.

Date of Writing: The **Book of Amos** was likely written between 760 and 753 B.C.

Purpose of Writing: **Amos** is a shepherd and a fruit picker from the Judean village of **Tekoa** when **God** calls him, even though he lacks an education or a priestly background.

Amos' mission is directed to his neighbor to the north, Israel. His messages of impending doom and captivity for the nation because of her sins are largely unpopular and unheeded, however, because not since the days of Solomon have times been so good in Israel. **Amos'** ministry takes place while Jeroboam II reigns over Israel, and Uzziah reigns over Judah.

Brief Summary: **Amos** can see that beneath Israel's external prosperity and power, internally the nation is corrupt to the core. The sins for which **Amos** chastens the people are extensive: neglect of **God's Word**, idolatry, pagan worship, greed, corrupted leadership and oppression of the poor.

Amos begins by pronouncing a judgment upon all the surrounding nations, then upon his own nation of Judah, and finally the harshest judgment is given to Israel. His visions from **God** reveal the same emphatic message: judgment is near. The book ends with **God's** promise to **Amos** of future restoration of the remnant.

Foreshadowing: The **Book of Amos** ends with a glorious promise for the future. **"I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God" (9:15).**

The ultimate fulfillment of **God's** land promise to Abraham (**Gen. 12:7; 15:7; 17:8**) will occur during Christ's millennial reign on earth (see **Joel 2:26,27**). **Revelation 20** describes the thousand-year reign of **Jesus** on the earth, a time of peace and joy under the perfect government of the Savior Himself. At that time, believing Israel and the Gentile Christians will be combined in the Church and will live and reign with **Jesus**.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the sheep-breeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, King of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Amos 5:6 Seek the Lord and live, Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, And devour it, With no one to quench it in Bethel.

Amos 5:24 But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.

Amos 4:1 Hear this word you cows of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, "Bring wine, let us drink!" The Lord God has sworn by His holiness: Behold, the days shall come upon you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with fishhooks.

Amos 7:14 Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheep-breeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'

Amos 7:16 Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel and do not spout against the house of Isaac.' Therefore, thus says the Lord: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by survey line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.'



The Prophet Amos by Girolamo Lombardo