

Notes & Outlines

**AMOS
OBADIAH**

J. Vernon McGee

AMOS

WRITER: Amos

Amos was not a graduate of the school of the prophets but was a layman. He was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (Amos 1:1; 7:14, 15). He was a native of Tekoa (Amos 1:1), a village about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. Although born in Judea, his messages were to the northern kingdom of Israel primarily, and to the world in general, as the text indicates.

TIME:

His ministry was during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, and Uzziah, king of Judah. He was a contemporary of Hosea in Israel and of Isaiah and Micah in Judah. The exact time was “two years before the earthquake” (Amos 1:1). This earthquake was of such proportions that Zechariah mentioned it 200 years later (Zechariah 14:5) and identified it as having come during the reign of Uzziah.

THEME:

Amos presented God as the ruler of the world and declared that all nations were responsible to Him. The measure of responsibility is created by the light which a nation has. The final test for any nation (or individual) is found in Amos 3:3: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” In a day of prosperity, he pronounced punishment. Judgment of God awaited nations living in luxury and lolling in immorality.

OUTLINE:

- I. Judgment on surrounding nations, Chapters 1:1 — 2:3**
 - A.** Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2
 - B.** Judgment against Syria for cruelty, Chapter 1:3-5
 - C.** Judgment against Philistia for making slaves, Chapter 1:6-8
 - D.** Judgment against Phoenicia for breaking treaty (selling slaves), Chapter 1:9, 10
 - E.** Judgment against Edom for revengeful spirit, Chapter 1:11, 12

- F. Judgment against Ammon for violent crimes, Chapter 1:13-15
- G. Judgment against Moab for injustice, Chapter 2:1-3

II. Judgment on Judah and Israel, Chapters 2:4 — 6:14

- A. Judgment against Judah for despising the Law, Chapter 2:4, 5
- B. Judgment against Israel for immorality and blasphemy, Chapter 2:6-16
- C. God's charge against whole house of Israel (12 tribes), Chapter 3
(Privilege creates responsibility; the higher the blessing, the greater the punishment.)
- D. Israel punished in past for iniquity, Chapter 4
- E. Israel will be punished in future for iniquity, Chapter 5
- F. Israel admonished in present to depart from iniquity, Chapter 6

III. Visions of the future, Chapters 7 — 9

- A. Vision of grasshoppers, Chapter 7:1-3
- B. Vision of fire, Chapter 7:4-6
- C. Vision of plumbline, Chapter 7:7-9
- D. Historic interlude, Chapter 7:10-17
(Personal experience of prophet)
- E. Vision of basket of summer fruit, Chapter 8
- F. Vision of worldwide dispersion, Chapter 9:1-10
- G. Vision of worldwide regathering and restoration of kingdom, 9:11-15

COMMENT:

I. Judgment on surrounding nations, Chapters 1:1 — 2:3

A. Introduction, Chapter 1:1, 2

v. 1 — Amos does not identify himself as a prophet, but as a herdsman (see Amos 7:14).

v. 2 — “The LORD will roar from Zion” (also Joel 3:16) suggests

the roar of a lion as it pounces upon its prey. This speaks of the near judgment of God upon the nations.

B. Judgment against Syria for cruelty, Chapter 1:3-5

v. 3 — “Three transgressions” means ungodliness in its worst form, according to Luther.

Damascus was and is the capital of Syria (see 2 Kings 10:32, 33 for the fulfillment).

v. 5 — Kir was in Moab.

C. Judgment against Philistia for making slaves, Chapter 1:6-8

v. 6 — Gaza is a city of Philistia.

v. 7 — See fulfillment (2 Kings 18:8).

v. 8 — All these were cities of Philistia.

D. Judgment against Phoenicia for breaking treaty (selling slaves), Chapter 1:9, 10

v. 9 — Tyre was the chief city of Phoenicia. Her commercial merchants did business with all nations.

v. 10 — This was fulfilled by both Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great.

E. Judgment against Edom for revengeful spirit, Chapter 1:11, 12

v. 11 — “For three transgressions” (see vv. 3, 6). Edom came from Esau, the brother of Jacob.

F. Judgment against Ammon for violent crimes, Chapter 1:13-15

See 2 Kings 8:12, 13 for the crimes of Ammon.

G. Judgment against Moab for injustice, Chapter 2:1-3

v. 1 — The incident is not recorded, but it reveals the spirit of injustice that goes beyond death.

vv. 2, 3 — This proud nation was brought to extinction by Nebuchadnezzar.

II. Judgment on Judah and Israel, Chapters 2:4 — 6:14

A. Judgment against Judah for despising the Law, Chapter 2:4, 5

Judah had the Law of God and despised it. God judged them according to the Law. The other nations did not have God's Law and were therefore not judged according to it.

B. Judgment against Israel for immorality and blasphemy, Chapter 2:6-16

Israel (ten tribes) likewise had the Law, but they were committing the same sins as the Amorites. God had put the Amorites out of the land. Israel will go into captivity before Judah.

C. God's charge against whole house of Israel (12 tribes), Chapter 3

(Privilege creates responsibility; the higher the blessing, the greater the punishment.)

vv. 1, 2 — The nation Israel occupied a unique relationship to God; she was chosen for a definite purpose. This privilege created a greater responsibility than any other nation had.

v. 3 — This is a great principle by which God must judge all nations and individuals. Israel knew God's way. They disagreed with it and departed from it. By this they will be judged.

vv. 4-15 — Judgment upon the entire nation will be severe. The northern kingdom will be judged first (vv. 14, 15).

D. Israel punished in past for iniquity, Chapter 4

vv. 1-3 — Amos directs his scathing judgment against the northern kingdom.

vv. 4, 5 — With biting sarcasm he invited the people to transgress. They called it worship of the golden calf.

vv. 6-13 — They had been judged by scant harvests, plagues of insects, pestilences, war, and destruction. None of these had deterred them from sin.

E. Israel will be punished in future for iniquity, Chapter 5

vv. 1-15 — God pleads with them to seek Him so that judgment could be averted (see vv. 4-6, 8, 14, 15).

vv. 16-20 — Warning of approaching judgment — “the day of the LORD.” The day of the LORD opens with the Great Tribulation (not light, but darkness — vv. 18, 20).

vv. 21-26 — The people were going through the forms of religion. They also worshiped other gods — idols.

v. 27 — They must go into captivity (Assyrian).

F. Israel admonished in present to depart from iniquity, Chapter 6

v. 1 — Israel was taking it easy, sitting in the lap of luxury in a day of affluence.

v. 3 — There were three national sins:

v. 4 — Gluttony

v. 5 — Heathen music

v. 6 — Drunkenness

} They were engaging in all of this apart from God.

v. 8 — God hated all of this. They had become a godless nation.

v. 14 — This is another warning of the coming captivity for both nations.

III. Visions of the future, Chapters 7 — 9

A. Vision of grasshoppers, Chapter 7:1-3

vv. 1, 2 — Grasshoppers were a judgment from God.

v. 3 — God withdrew this judgment because of His tender mercy.

B. Vision of fire, Chapter 7:4-6

v. 4 — Fire was a judgment from God.

vv. 5-6 — God put out the fire because of His tender mercy.

C. Vision of plumbline, Chapter 7:7-9

vv. 7, 8 — When God begins to measure with a plumbline, action is imminent (Isaiah 28:17; Jeremiah 31:38, 39; Zechariah 2:1, 2).

v. 9 — Jeroboam is marked out for judgment.

D. Historic interlude, Chapter 7:10-17
(Personal experience of prophet)

v. 10 — Amaziah, priest of Baal at Bethel, goes to King Jeroboam with a charge against Amos.

v. 11 — This is the charge.

v. 12 — Now Amaziah has the king on his side, and he goes to Amos to order him to leave. He is sarcastic. He says in effect, “Get lost. You are a country preacher; go back to the country.”

v. 13 — He continues his sarcastic tirade, reminding Amos that Bethel is where the king worships and that Amos is no longer welcome there. Amos is not a preacherette with sweet talk; he is not a mealy-mouth giving out saccharine sweetness in little meaningless verbiage.

v. 14 — Amos’ answer is reasonable. He confesses he is a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (wild figs).

v. 15 — But he was called of God.

vv. 16, 17 — Amos turns on Amaziah with a fearful prophecy.

Apparently Amos did not leave town.

E. Vision of basket of summer fruit, Chapter 8

The goodness of Israel was like the summer fruit. It was perishable and soon deteriorated. God must judge them now.

v. 10 — Dark days would come.

v. 11 — God would withdraw His Word from them.

v. 12 — They would become “the wandering Jew.”

F. Vision of worldwide dispersion, Chapter 9:1-10

v. 8 — Israel would not be utterly destroyed.

v. 9 — Israel would be dispersed throughout the world.

v. 10 — The wicked would be judged by the sword at that time. This has been and is being literally fulfilled.

G. Vision of worldwide regathering and restoration of kingdom, Chapter 9:11-15

v. 11 — This was quoted by James at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:16, 17). This is yet to be fulfilled.

vv. 12-15 — This is the setting up of the millennial kingdom.

OBADIAH

WRITER: Obadiah

Obadiah means *Servant of Jehovah*. He is one of four prophets about whom we know absolutely nothing, except that he wrote prophecy. The other three prophets are Habakkuk, Haggai, and Malachi. Obadiah is like a ghostwriter — he is there, but we do not know him. He lived up to his name. A servant boasts of no genealogy, neither exploits nor experiences. Dr. Edward Pusey said, “God has willed that his name alone and this brief prophecy should be known to the world.”

DATE:

There is a great difference of opinion as to the date of this prophet. There are some who give the date of 887 B.C., which fixes the time during the reign of Jehoram and the bloody Athaliah (cp. 2 Kings 8:18 with 11:1-16). Dr. Pusey placed him during the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17:7). If this is accurate, we have one isolated reference to Obadiah in history. Nevertheless, this name was as common in that day as the name John is today. Canon Farrar gave the date as 587 B.C. Dr. William Moorehead concurred in this, as he suggested that Obadiah was probably a contemporary of Jeremiah. The whole question seems to hinge on verse 11. Is this verse historical or prophetic? The natural interpretation is the historic one, which would give it the late date. Most likely it was written subsequent to the Babylonian captivity.

KEY: Edom

How are the things of Esau searched out! How are his hidden things sought out! (Obadiah 1:6)

FEATURES:

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament — only twenty-one verses. But the brevity of the message does not render it less important or less significant for us today. Like the other Minor Prophets, the message is primary, it is pertinent, it is practical, and it is poignant. It is a message that can be geared into this day in which we are living.

Obadiah tells us immediately, bluntly, and to the point, “Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom....” It is the prophecy of judgment against Edom.

BACKGROUND:

The Edomites were those who were descended from Esau, just as the Israelites are those who are descended from Jacob.

The story of Esau and Jacob is that of twin brothers, sons of Isaac and Rebekah. They were not identical twins; actually they were opposites (see Genesis 25:24-34).

Esau despised his birthright. The man who had the birthright was in contact with God — he was the priest of his family, he was the man who had a covenant from God, the man who had a relationship with God. In effect Esau said, “I would rather have a bowl of soup than have a relationship with God.”

Having seen Esau in the first book of the Old Testament, look now at the last book of the Old Testament and read this strange language:

I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, In what way hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.... (Malachi 1:2, 3)

This is a strange thing for God to say — “I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau.” The explanation is in the little Book of Obadiah.

COMMENT:

Verse six is translated by Ginsburg, the Hebrew scholar, thus: “How are the things of Esau stripped bare!” They are laid out in the open for us to look at for the first time. Obadiah puts the micro-

scope down on Esau; and when we look through the eyepiece, we see Edom. As we inflate a tire tube to find a leak and cannot find that leak until it is inflated, just so Obadiah presents Esau inflated so that we can see the flaw in his life. What was small in Esau is now magnified 100,000 times in the nation. God did not say at the beginning that He hated Esau — it was not until he became a nation and revealed the thing that caused God to hate him:

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou who dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, who saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (v. 3)

It was pride. “Pride hath deceived you,” God says to Edom.

Esau, like Jacob, had become a great nation. The children of Israel had come into the promised land; the children of Esau had gone to the south and east, in the rocky fastness, where in 1812 archaeologists discovered a city, Petra, actually hewn out of solid cliffs of rose-colored rock. It was an impregnable fortress, so safe from attack that Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria deposited money there. Just a handful of men could guard the narrow canyons which form its approaches.

They were living in a false security. In their pride they felt that they did not need God anymore, and they bowed Him out of their civilization. When a mere man, a little creature down here, gets to the place where he says, “I don’t need God,” God says, “That’s what I hate.”

OUTLINE:

I. Edom — destruction, vv. 1-16

- A.** Charge against Edom, vv. 1-9
- B.** Crime of Edom, vv. 10-14
- C.** Catastrophe to Edom, vv. 15, 16
(Poetic justice — *lex talionis* — law of retaliation)

II. Israel — restoration, vv. 17-21

- A.** Condition of Israel, v. 17
- B.** Calling of Israel, v. 18
- C.** Consummation of all things, vv. 19-21
(“And the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.”)

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Cohen, Gary G. and H. Ronald Vandervev. *Hosea and Amos*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.
- Feinberg, Charles L. *The Minor Prophets*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1976.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. 1917. Reprint. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1971.
- Ironside, H. A. *The Minor Prophets*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Minor Prophets of Israel*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1975. (Obadiah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.)
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Amos & Obadiah*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991.
- Tatford, Frederick A. *The Minor Prophets*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock, n.d.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1982.

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