

AMOS

GOD IN THE RUINS | AMOS 1-9, WITH FOCUS ON 5:24 | FEBRUARY 1/2, 2020 |
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*"But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream!"
(Amos 5:24)*

Introducing Amos

Prophecies about the Nations and Israel (Amos 1-2, esp. 2:6-16)

The Call to Justice and Righteousness (Amos 5:21-24)

An Aside about Justice, the Gospel, and Amos 5:24

A Vision of Restoration (Amos 9:11-15)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We continue our series, "God in the Ruins: The Message of the Minor Prophets," this week by looking at the prophet Amos. Before you begin this study, ask God to speak to you through His word.
2. Read Amos 1:1. *Background:* Unlike many other minor prophets, Amos has a clearly-defined vocation as a shepherd and one who cares for sycamore-fig trees (7:14). He was likely a wealthy land-owner who does not serve as a prophet beyond a short period of time. Even though he was from the southern kingdom of Judah in the vicinity of Tekoa, just south of Jerusalem, Amos prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel at the height of its economic prosperity and political power around 760 BC.
3. Read Amos 1:2-2:5, which is a series of prophetic oracles against Israel's neighbors, including the southern kingdom of Judah. As you read through these verses identify the sins and punishments Amos highlights within each of these people groups. It may be helpful to consult a map to help you place each of these neighbors.
4. Now read Amos' prophecy against Israel (2:6-16). This is the concluding and longest of the prophetic oracles. What is God's case against Israel? What is the promised punishment?
5. Why do you think it is important for the prophets to remind the people of their history and the work of God in the past (see 2:9-11)? Has this sort of remembering been important in your own faith?
6. Now skip ahead and read Amos 5:18-24. Why would people long for "the day of the Lord" (5:18)? What does God say that day will bring instead?
7. Why does God hate the religious activity of the people (5:21-24)? What does God desire instead?
8. Sometimes we lose focus in our life with God, like the Israelites in Amos' day. Take some time to reflect on this question: in what ways might you have lost focus on God's desires for your life?
9. Later, Amos' relates five visions of God's judgment. Read and describe the meaning of each of Amos' visions:
 - 7:1-3 – a vision of a swarm of locusts
 - 7:4-6 – a vision of consuming fire
 - 7:7-9 – a vision of a plumb line
 - 8:1-2 – a vision of a basket of overripe fruit
 - 9:1-10 – a vision of God by the altar
10. The final section of Amos (9:11-15) offers a glimmer of hope at the end of the book. What is the content of this hopeful prophecy? Why might this sound like good news to those listening to Amos?
11. What is one thing God is speaking to you through our study of the prophet Amos? If you are on your own, write that down. If you are in a small group, discuss your answers with one another. Close in prayer. Choose one person in your life with whom you will share something you have learned about God through Amos.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

This week, take God's message through Amos to heart by memorizing this verse: *"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"* (Amos 5:24)