

Amos 1:1–2
God's Gracious Roaring

Wednesday, October 2, 2024 • Read Amos 1:1–2

Questions from the Scripture text: Whose words are these (v1)? What was his primary occupation? Where did he raise sheep? How did he get these words? Whom did the words concern? In the days of which two kings of which two kingdoms? At what time? What did he say YHWH does (v2b)? From where? And what else (v2c)? From where? What are the shepherds' pastures doing (v2d)? What is withering (v2e)?

How does God address His people's sin? Amos 1:1–2 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God Himself addresses His people with a powerful, redeeming Word, even through unimpressive men.**

YHWH roars like a lion (v2b) through a sheepbreeder (and sycamore fruit farmer, cf. 7:14e). These are the words of a man ("the words of Amos," v1), but they are ultimately the words of God. They are words not which Amos came up with himself, but "which he saw."

He was not heeded at first (cf. 7:12–13), but two years later, there was an earthquake (end of v1) and drought (cf. v2d–e) of such significance that Amos's claims were verified, and the writing of his prophecy recognized as holy Scripture.

The days of Uzziah in the south, and Jeroboam II in the north, were days of great wealth, military strength, and political influence throughout Israel. But they were also days of great sin. The people of God were a living contradiction. The rest of the nations were under God's judgment, but it was an unique blasphemy to be His covenant people but just as immoral as anyone else.

The north was particularly guilty—not only because of the false worship set up in Bethel and Dan, but because the wealth and power, and corresponding corruption, of Israel exceeded that of Judah. Now, YHWH sends a sheepbreeder from Tekoa (between Jerusalem and Bethlehem) to roar YHWH's Word in the north. Thank God for using such a weak vessel, so that the power of the Word may be shown to be from Him and not from the preacher (cf. 2Cor 4:2, 7).

The location of Zion and Jerusalem doesn't just affirm that the Lord continues to honor the place of His true worship; it reminds us that the One Who is roaring has provided atonement for sinners and a way of drawing near to God in worship. The covenant curse of drought (pastures mourning and Carmel withering) was a consequence of covenant unfaithfulness, of sin against God. But the offer of forgiveness and fellowship remained, and God's Word would call them back to it.

It is a mercy to us, when we drift away, almost carefree, but then the Lord's Word roars into our lives. In His mercy, He proclaims that Word especially within the context of His public worship. The preached Word comes at the intersection of our lives with drawing near to God through the provision of the sacrifice of Christ. Doesn't this urge upon us to be thankful for His Word, and to heed it, even (especially!) when it is correcting and rebuking us?

Through whom has the Lord addressed you with His Word? In what days do you live? What are the particular dangers, sins, and temptations of your days? In what context do you especially hear His Word preached? What other things does the Lord set before you and emphasize in that context? How have you been responding to His worship? How have you been responding to His Word?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for bringing us the treasure of Your Word through the earthen vessels of unimpressive men. Forgive us for when we have responded more to the unimpressiveness of the preacher rather than the roaring of Your Word. And we thank You that You especially send us corrections and rebukes from within Your worship—with the atonement of Christ at the heart of that worship. Forgive us for when we treat such loving correction and rebuke as hostile and offensive. How just You are in all Your doings, and how kind You are in all Your corrections and rebukes! Forgive us our sins for the sake of Christ, Your Son, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP29 "You Sons of the Gods" or TPH141 "O Lord, to You I Call"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)"

Amos one, verses one and two. These are God's words. The words of Amos who was among the Sheep breeders of Toccoa. Which he saw concerning Israel. In the days of retire, King of Judah. And in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel, Years before the earthquake.

And he said, Yahweh Roars from Zion. And others his voice from Jerusalem. The pastures of the Shepherds mourn. And the top of Carmel, The top of sorry. And the top of Carmel Withers. So far, the reading of God. Inspired and inerrant worked. Amos is maybe the earliest of the writing prophets.

Ministry, overlaps a little bit with Isaiah. Of whose prophecy we just finished. We're going to try to take the writing prophets. In something approximating chronological order. It's a little bit difficult. We don't know the exact dates for several of the prophets. But Amos as we read here.

Was from Toccoa To KOA is in the southern Kingdom. It's just outside of Jerusalem in the direction of Bethlehem, so kind of between Jerusalem and Bethlehem and he prophesied during very financially and militarily. Prosperous days in both the northern kingdom and the southern Kingdom. It's a king of Judah.

has a long and stable rain. There are some reformations under him. And Jeroboam II in the northern Kingdom of Israel. With its capital in Samaria. Was not a good King at all, but He was a powerful King in his days. The northern kingdom was very powerful more powerful than the southern Kingdom.

And, Very wealthy. Lots of military influence. These were some golden days, politically and economically. I'm gonna gerbil in a second. Had made Israel. Great again in the Of men. And yet not in the eyes of God. Not only did he make Israel wealthy and Powerful like the Nations?

He also led Israel in becoming more and more wicked. Becoming morally and socially. Like the nation. So the exact opposite. Of what the gods? What God's people were supposed to be, they were supposed to be different. Than the Nations and their Prosperity, then was supposed to come in the context of Covenant blessing.

But here they were being providentially blessed and they were provoking God to his face. And so Amos is going to come And he's going to prophesy especially against the northern kingdom. The words, which he saw. Concerning Israel. He's going to Pronounce some judgments against many kingdoms we'll see in next week's portion.

Lord willing. Where the rest of chapter one, he pronounces judgments on Nations. Surrounding. Israel and Judah and then on Judah itself, which of course, the Northerners would cheer for all of that and perhaps especially for the Judgment pronounced on the southern Kingdom. But as he does, so he's going to be zeroing in on.

The northern kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel. Of Jeroboam the second. And it's not just Amos's words, although It starts the words of Amos, it is the words of a mere man. He is not from a prophetic school. He's not from a prophetic family. He's going to say in chapter seven.

I wasn't the prophet or the son of a prophet, God calls him. From an agricultural life. Probably not lower class. The work that's used for separating. Here is not the ordinary. Word, for Shepherd. It's a less commonly used word, and it means the one who's in charge of the flock is in charge of the herd.

And New King James here. translates it sheep breeder. He was also. A breeder or a tender oversaw. Raising and harvesting of Sycamore fruit, we find out in chapter seven. so it's not like he needed a job and he certainly wasn't in the business of being a prophet, nor had that been his trade, but The Lord lays hold of an unlikely and weak

subject.

So that although they are his words we see in the beginning of verse one, they're his words, which he saw. We see a little further into verse one, the words of Amos, which he saw concerning Israel. In other words, their, Or to put it a different way. They are words that were given to him.

And we find out whose words in particular, they are by the great introduction to the book in verse two, it says, Yahweh Roars. Now, Yahweh is roaring here from Zion, not from Samaria. He's roaring here from the southern Kingdom. It reminds us that the northern kingdom. Is not. Under the Davidic line of King, Zion is especially the name that is given to Jerusalem.

As David's City. And so they have diverged from the Davidic line of the line of kings and Jeroboam II's namesake. Jeroboam the first Jeroboam, the son of Nebat had been offered by God. To lead the northern kingdom in faithfulness. And of course, had rejected God and set up, his alternative worship sites, and his alternative worship leaders and his alternative worship calendar.

And the northern kingdom has. Has never never does recover from that all the way until the Assyrians are used by God to expel them from the land. And so just the fact that the word is coming from Zion, That the word is coming from Jerusalem, is a reminder that their great problem is not just the wicked, oppression of the poor and the corruption of morals and values.

in the Society of the northern kingdom. But they're great problem, is that they're alienated from God and that they are against God and that God here is roaring against them, but he's also roaring to an extent for them. They have cut themselves off from Jerusalem, choosing instead to worship at Bethel and Dan using that ancient form of worship invented by Israel at the base of Sinai.

Well Moses, Was on the mountain. They used calves to worship Yahweh and Dan and Bethel and there. Therefore of course are styled by the second commandment. As them that hate me, they may have chosen Bethlehem, Dan, but the Lord is still ministering to them from Zion. He's still ministering to them from the place, where is the temple?

He's still ministering to them from the place where there are the Lord's appointed feasts, and the Lord's appointed sacrifices and the Lord's appointed priests, where there are still those Shadows, that point forward to Christ. And so, even the place from which the prophecy comes, reminds them, that there is opportunity to repentance there is invitation and command, and welcome to repentance.

And so, they are going to resent. Amos, in fact, in chapter seven, Priests or I guess maybe we would call them the chief priest although we don't want to use that language with their false Priestly cult is going to be employed by the crown to expel Amos. And send him back to the southern Kingdom where he came from, but they are missing that.

It's a mercy of God that he sends his word. He could have just destroyed them, he didn't have to tell them in advance. And it's a mercy of God that he sends his word from Zion from Jerusalem. Where he has made his name and his presence to be known to his people in saving and redeeming Grace.

And we need to remember that too when we come and especially in the preaching of the word and the public worship we sit under it and it comes sometimes with correction and rebuke. Reminds us that the chastenings that we receive in this life are often designed to grab our attention and call us to repentance.

But when we receive the correction and the rebuke and the preaching of the word and the constant context of the public worship, we're receiving it as it were from Zion from Jerusalem. Because not only are we receiving it in the context of the Assembly that we are not to forsake on the Sabbath, keeping that remains.

In the Lord's Day assemblies, where we come in the Name of Christ. We come professing faith in Christ and we pray through him. And we have the Lord's supper which shows forth declares to us, proclaims his death until he comes. And all of those things, when we receive the word in public worship, it is the Lord who Roars from Zion in glory.

He who is shaking Heaven and Earth and who addresses us the one who died and rose again, and descended and passed through the heavens. And now always lives to intercede for us, is the same one who once spoke on Earth at Sinai in the terrifying way. And now Roars from Heaven, but Roars in a way, that speaks better things, Than the blood of Abel and in a better and more effective way than the blood of Abel.

And so, just in identifying the source from which Of the Lord's voice. As it were as coming here as Amos prophesies We see that there is Grace intended in this. Call to repentance or at least Grace offered and extended. For those who will repent and believe. in in this roaring from Zion.

And apparently. It took a while for them to recognize Amos as a real Prophet. They like we said earlier, they did not like what he had to say. They rejected him, they sent him packing back. To the South and then something happened. Two years later. And you can see it in verse one, There was an earthquake.

This earthquake is probably combined with a drought. Because you see at the end of verse 2, the pastures of the Shepherds mourn and sometimes when it hasn't rained for a long time, you can look out into a field that would ordinarily be green, and grown up is instead Brown and limp and dead, and the pasture is morning.

This point the top of Carmel. Sorry, I keep saying caramel but it's Carmel the top of Carmel that mountain in the northern kingdom. Looks like it's withering instead of Being flush with the green. There are even Evergreens that are dying for the lack of moisture. So the drought has been great and in case they had Having difficulty or resisting connecting that with God's judging and rebuking word, he also comes with a great earthquake.

that literally Shakes them out of their resistance against his word. And at that point, The spoken prophecy of Amos is recorded in the form that we have here. No, that says two years before the earthquake, it's recognizing that this is being written. This is being taken down into writing.

as a consequence of or at least subsequent to and it's implied, that it's a consequence of the earthquake, we should not need things. Like droughts and earthquakes. The word of God when IT addresses us, we ought to receive and be tender. That's something to ask God for. That we wouldn't just kind of sit there and survive worship services and sermons.

Make it to the end. Oh good. It's time to To close in prayer and stand up and sit down and do other things. you know, pretty soon we can go potty. And after that, there's going to be lunch and that we would not that we would not be sermon, critics as it were sitting under preaching in a way that is questioning do.

I agree with this or even worse. Do I like this? And they didn't like Amos's preaching. And they said, you know, we don't like your preaching go home, you Southerner and Sent him back to. to the southern Kingdom in chapter seven. we should pray God that he would give us attentiveness and tenderness to his word.

And if we have tenderness to his word, then we will. Be more ready to respond to his Providence, to interact with him and what he's doing in our life. Hour by hour, day by

day, training us in dependence, upon him, sometimes with difficulty, that isn't necessary. A chastening for any particular offensive sin, but is still being used by him to train our hearts to train our minds.

And receiving it that way and responding to him. training us to be devoted to him and to Delight in him. And so forth. So, the Lord uses this. Unlikely man to speak so that it will be clear. That the words are from God and not from man, the Lord speaks From the place where he has put his name and where there are the sacrifices and the worship that look to the atonement and the mediation of the Lord Jesus, so that, even this word of Correction and rebuke will be taken in the way of Grace.

And the Lord verifies his word causes it to be written down. Urging us to take his word as his very own, and to respond to it with tender Hearts that we also need to receive from him. And this isn't just, of course, Uh,

People in. The northern part of what we ordinarily think of as Israel. Psalm 27. And change. Years ago. Those things were written down for us. because the Lord. Has his whole plan and purpose in mind, including bringing you into the world creating you, redeeming you and you too are Going to have times when you need the correction and rebuke of his word especially if You come into a season of being.

Comfortable in how things are going from an Earthly standpoint. The way the northern and southern kingdoms at this point under Isaiah in the South and Jeroboam II in the north had come to a place. Of Earthly Comfort but they needed to be made spiritually uncomfortable. which God being merciful to us, we hope That he will do for us whenever we need to be made spiritually, uncomfortable, Yahweh Roars.

From Zion. Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven. We thank you for this book. We thank you for Your call on this man who Was minding his own businesses. and yet your grace not to leave Israel in their sin or even just judge them. But to address them with your word, We thank you for addressing us with your word.

now just now in the family Workshop for the way you do. So especially from Zion from Jerusalem. From where? Our Prophet priest and King sits upon the throne at your right hand week by week in the assembly. We pray. Lord that you would give us. A tender heartedness under the preaching of your word.

To respond to. We pray that when we need to be made uncomfortable spiritually, that in the kindness and love in, which you chose us to be yours and in which you gave Christ for us, That you would give us. Whatever discomfort we need and that you would make us tender and in response to it and not resentful.

Against it. Please help us Lord, you know, our character, you know what we are like and how easily We respond wrongly to your word, but make us to see it rightly and make us to respond to it. Rightly, by the ministry of your spirit to us. Please help us.

We ask In Jesus name. Amen.