

## **The Church of the Servant King**

### **Prophecy Series**

(Proph14k\_Prophecy in the Prophets\_Amos\_Part 2 of 5)

#### **Outline<sup>1</sup>**

- Introduction (1:1-2)
- Oracles Against the Nations (1:3-2:16)
  - Against Damascus – Aram (1:3-5)
  - Against Gaza – Philistia (1:6-8)
  - Against Tyre – Phoenicia (1:9, 10)
  - Against Edom (1:11, 12)
  - Against Ammon (1:13-15)
  - Against Moab (2:1-3)
  - Against Judah (2:4, 5)
  - Against Israel (2:6-16)
- Israel's Imminent Judgment (3:1-15)
- Israel's willful stubbornness (4:1-5:27)
  - Israel's spoiled women (4:1-3)
  - A sarcastic invitation to sin (4:4, 5)
  - Five calamities from God (4:6-11)
  - God's sovereignty over all (4:12, 13)
  - A lamentation over Israel (5:1-3)
  - An invitation to seek the sovereign God (5:4-9)
  - An urgent plea to repent (5:10-15)
  - The coming universal mourning (5:16, 17) #
  - The coming day of the Lord (5:18-20) #
  - Israel's insincere and unfaithful worship (5:21-27)
- Warning to the callously unjust (6:1-14)
- Three visions of Israel's coming disaster (7:1-9)
- Amos' confrontation with Amaziah, priest of Bethel (7:10-17)
- Amos' vision of Israel's end (8:1-14) #
- A vision of the sovereign God at the altar (9:1-10)
- A promise of future restoration (9:11-15) #

# - These verses have eschatological or prophetic aspects as well as more immediate historical application.

#### **Introduction (1:1-2)**

In our previous introductory study to this book, we noted several points that were derived from these verses. For instance, we noted that Amos was a sheep breeder, an agriculturalist, and a rancher. He was from Tekoa, a small town located in the hill country of Judah, about 10 miles south of Jerusalem. He was a prophet to Israel even though he was from Judah. This makes him fairly unique and would have been a reason for the Israelites to pay even closer attention to his message. He ministered to Israel during the reign of Jereboam II (reigned ca. 793-753 B.C.) and during the reign in Judah of Uzziah (reigned ca. 790-739 B.C.). This period of Israel and Judah's history was very prosperous, yet the prosperity was associated with spiritual reversionism and blindness. The prosperity of the "haves" came at the price of oppression and injustice toward the poor of Israel thereby resulting in a dichotomous society consisting of the

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<sup>1</sup> I chose to use the outline found in *The Nelson Study Bible* – Earl D. Radmacher, gen editor, *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1474. There are certainly other good outlines of this book.

“haves” and the “have-nots” without a middle class. The polarization of a society is characteristic of a nation or state on its way toward (or already in) economic and political distress. This prosperity resulted in a false sense of security and a sense of immunity to disaster and calamity. (There will be more to say about this issue as we examine Amos’ book.) Israel (and Judah’s) enemies were preoccupied with other threats and endeavors; however, that was about to change and God would use Assyria to discipline Israel severely.

In verse 2, Amos uses the roar of a lion which terrorizes its prey before the attack as an illustration of Israel’s present condition. Israel was poised on the verge of attack and the lion (God) had roared from His rightful temple and home – Jerusalem – in contrast to the false home in the Northern Kingdom of Bethel.<sup>2</sup> God is pictured in Amos in His warrior-king role. As the cycles of discipline (see Leviticus 26) against God’s own began to take effect, even Judah would be affected as the pastures near Jerusalem located around Bethlehem would be withered. In the north, the slopes of Mt. Carmel would also be affected. They contained some of Israel’s most lush pastureland and farmland.

**Suzerain/Vassal Treaties** – In ancient Near East societies, it was common for one nation to be in subjection and under the protection of another nation. This relationship was enforced by a covenant or treaty. In exchange for the suzerain’s protection and provision, the vassal would pledge loyalty and obedience. The terms of the covenant were binding upon both parties. If the vassal failed to adhere to the covenant provisions, then the punishments specified in the treaty would be executed against them by the suzerain. In our passage, the people who heard Amos’ message would have understood Yahweh to be the suzerain while they were the vassals subject to the covenant provisions. In exchange for God’s promise as suzerain to never again destroy the earth with a flood (Ge 9:11), the vassal peoples were to refrain from shedding blood because disregard for human life was tantamount to complicity with God’s spiritual enemy Satan in his attempt to destroy freedom (through slavery), truth (God’s revelation) and even the very existence of the human race. One can readily see the connection between the Noahic covenant and the Angelic Conflict.

In our next lesson, we will conclude our study of Amos’ important prophetic announcements to include those that have eschatological overtones.

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<sup>2</sup> See Eugene H. Merrill, *A Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), 325-29 for a **good summary and analysis** of Jeroboam’s establishment of a rival system of worship with headquarters situated in Dan and Bethel.