

November 14–20: Amos; Obadiah, “Seek the Lord, and Ye Shall Live”

Warning to Israel

Amos was a prophet serving in the Southern Kingdom (Judah). He predates Isaiah by about 50 years. So, like Isaiah, his is a voice of warning to Judah that they will be destroyed if they do not repent.

Obadiah also served in the Southern Kingdom. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah (and Lehi) and was probably taken captive (as was Daniel) when the Babylonians defeated Judah.

The Lord promises that the people will be warned before destruction is upon them

Amos 3:1-2,7-8

1 Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,
2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

What does the Lord promise He will do to make sure Israel knows of any approaching destruction?

(Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets)

Milton R. Hunter

“Another distinctive characteristic of a prophet of God is that he is chosen, appointed, and called by the Lord. He draws his knowledge from the divine fountain of truth; therefore, he speaks in the name of the Lord and as one having authority. Let us give a few examples. The Prophet Amos, in his masterful discourse at Bethel, prefaced each of his predictions by ‘Thus saith the Lord’ (Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13).” (CR, April 1948)

N. Eldon Tanner

“There are many scriptures which assure us that God is as interested in us today as he has been in all his children from the beginning, and thus we believe in continuous revelation from God through his prophets to guide us in these latter days. The Prophet Amos said, ‘Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.’” (CR, April 1975)

Just warning Israel was not enough so the Lord tries something more drastic

Amos 4:8-12

8 So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

10 I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

11 I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

What did the Lord do to try to get Israel to repent and turn to Him?

Plagues, pestilence, wars, etc.

(ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me)

George Q. Cannon

“There is a passage in the book of Amos on this subject, which shows the Lord pleading with Israel, to bring them back to the consideration of [the] law....

“These are the calamities which God sent upon Israel with the intention to have them return to him; but notwithstanding they were poured out and pestilence visited the land, the people hardened their hearts against him, broke his laws and violated his ordinances, and his anger was enkindled against them, and they were driven out from the face of the land.” (JD, 15:145)

Amos warns that the Lord will no longer accept their temple ordinances and sacrifices

Amos 5:18-24

18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.

19 As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.

20 Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no

brightness in it?

21 ¶ I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

22 Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Why will offering the Lords ordinances and sacrifices bring the people darkness rather than light?

They do not offer them with their hearts set on being obedient to the Lord

Pride

Israel thinks that they are safe and protected regardless of the warnings of the prophets

Amos 6:1-8

1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?

3 Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7 ¶ Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

8 The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

Why do you think that the people believe that “all is well in Zion”?

(Ye that put far away the evil day)

2 Nephi 28:21,24,28

21 And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

24 Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!

28 And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God! For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth lest he shall fall.

Orson Pratt

"The purposes of God must be fulfilled; and we are the people who have to do the work; and to those who do not take part in it, I will apply the words of my text—'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.' And this woe will find them out; it will surely come upon them, and sorely afflict them... until they learn by sad experience that there is no such thing as being at ease in Zion until Zion has travailed in pain and brought forth her children." (JD, 9:174)

This attitude also comes because of pride

Amos 6:12-14

12 ¶ Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:

13 Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

14 But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness.

In verse 12, what do you think Amos means when he compares Israel to a rock?

(Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?)

Sidney B. Sperry

“Amos next turns his invective on the careless and reckless rich of Israel, on those who are at ease, on the self-satisfied and the arrogant—in short, on those who, having plenty, take no thought of the sad social and religious state of their country.... The nation is to be destroyed because its inhabitants pervert truth and righteousness and trust in their own strength.” (Voice of Israel’s Prophets, pg. 313)

Obadiah also states that the downfall of Israel was brought about in part because of pride

Obad 1:2-4

2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.

3 ¶ The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?

4 Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the

stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.

The Last Days

Amos states that in last days, before the restoration, the word of the Lord will not be available

Amos 8:9-12

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

11 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

What results from the people not being being able to find or know true doctrine?

“tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine”

Joseph B. Wirthlin

“There is a gnawing hunger in the human heart that, if not fed by the truths of the gospel, leaves life empty and devoid of peace.... Such empty nostrums have led mankind to seek worldly goods and symbols of material power, blinding humanity to the truth that only the righteous life firmly established in the daily living of God’s commandments brings true happiness. Anything less leaves the heart unfed, with a yearning inner hunger—a hunger which it is our mission to identify and define and of which we should make the people aware. I have seen... the fulfillment of the words of Amos, that there would be ‘a famine in the land, not a famine of bread... but of hearing the words of the Lord.’” (CR, Oct. 1975)

Amos prophecies about the scattering and gathering of Israel

Amos 9:8-10

8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.

9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

10 All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

What do you think he means when he states that the Lord will “sift the house of

Israel among all nations”?

Wilford Woodruff

"All that [Christ] said concerning them and all that Moses predicted concerning their dispersion and about their being driven, as corn is sifted through a sieve, among the nations... has been fulfilled.... They have been trampled under foot by the whole Gentile world for the last eighteen hundred years. In their affliction and persecutions they have had to suffer almost beyond the endurance of man." (JD, 13:156)

Amos 9:11,14-15

11 ¶ In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

What did the Lord promise He would do for Israel in the last days?

(I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen... and I will build it as in the days of old:

I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them)

Perhaps verse 11 is referring to the building of temples in the last days which, we know from the teachings of Joseph Smith, is essential to gathering Israel

Obadiah teaches more about the role of temples in the gathering

Obad 1:17-18,21

17 ¶ But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

18 And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.

21 And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

In verse 21, what does it mean that “saviours shall come up on mount Zion”?

Joseph Smith

"The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to

be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion.

“But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts... and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah.” (TPJS, pg. 330)

Perhaps this helps us to understand the statement in verse 17, “upon mount Zion shall be deliverance”. And in verse 18, “and the house of Joseph a flame.”