

## Amos: A God Who Roars

### Introduction

What kind of God do you believe in? Critics of religion have sometimes charged that religious people believe in a God created in their own image, a God they have fashioned for themselves to satisfy their desires. When the prophet Amos looked at the religion of the people of Israel in the mid-eighth century BC, Amos would have agreed with this assessment. Amos saw much in the culture of his day that indicated that the god the people of Israel worshiped was not the true God. The people were greedy for luxury, prejudiced against the poor, and hungry for power. Thus they worshiped a god who did not mind whether they lived that way as long as they paid him proper homage in regular, beautiful worship services.

Such a god, however, was not the God who had taken Amos from ***"following the flock"*** and had commanded him to prophesy God's message (Amos 7:15). For Amos, God could not be tamed to fit with human desires. The God whose message Amos delivered would not put his stamp of approval on the greed, prejudice, and power plays of human culture in exchange for elaborate sacrifices and regular attendance at the worship services. Amos's God was not a tame God. Indeed, the God whom Amos served was a God who "roars" (Amos 1:2). Amos said (3:8) that, like a lion, this God ***"has roared."*** Thus, ***"The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?"***

The whole Book of Amos is about the roaring of this God against his people—God's own people. Amos, the first of the writing prophets, burst upon the eighth-century scene with a powerful and powerfully unpopular message from God. God was fed up with the people's mistreatment of the poor and the powerless, fed up with the luxurious living of some of the people at the expense of others, and fed up with these people's thinking they could get away with it if they just sprinkled a few grains of religion on their behavior. God's attitude was not based on whim, either. When God had entered into covenant with Israel, God had made clear the kind of behavior expected. Israel had simply disobeyed and had done so flagrantly. God's message was, the end. Because of their evil behavior, the end was coming upon the nation of Israel. Israel could not count on some presumed special relationship with God to forestall it, either. So Amos cried (4:12): ***"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"*** These words were not a call for repentance but a warning of the end.

So how do you think the God of Amos would relate to us and our culture? Do you see any parallels? If we ever understand Amos's message and see how it applies to us, we may also want to tell Amos, Go back where you came from and prophesy there (paraphrase from 7:12). Frankly, we tend to want a god just like Israel had. We want to feel that God thinks a whole lot like us. We also want to feel that this God is for us and our ways. The idea that God may be against us because of our sins has never been popular, and today is no exception.

These desires of ours mean that the prophet Amos has a thing or two to say to us. Maybe we should pay attention if we truly want to know and serve the God of the Bible.

©2001-2010, Eternal Interactive, LLC, All Rights Reserved. [www.homechurchonline.com](http://www.homechurchonline.com)

1

**Amos: A God Who Roars—Introduction – 17-44-00-en**

Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

Five Bible studies and worship sessions comprise this study of the Book of Amos. **Session one** deals with Amos 1—2, which record Amos's magnificent sermon that came to a point on Israel itself. **Session two** considers Amos's message about the economic injustices that brought God's judgment on Israel. **Session three** treats the people's attempt to use worship services to fulfill their religious obligations when what God wanted was justice. **Session four** is on Amos's encounter with the religious leadership of the day who, allied with the government, rejected God's message. **Session five** focuses on the certainty of God's judgment on Israel plus the hope of restoration that God offered.

**Note:** Please see the photo of Tekoa on the following page.

The book begins with the words “***The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa***”. Tekoa was a small village located 12 miles south of Jerusalem and about 5 miles southeast of Bethlehem, at the edge of the Judean desert. The surrounding area consists largely of barren hills, but some fertile valleys exist between the hills. The word translated *shepherders* is found only one time in the Bible. It is related to an Aramaic word that means “a keeper of a kind of small sheep”.



## Tekoa

### The Birthplace of Amos as It Appears Today

(on the hill in the centre of the photo with Bethlehem in the far background)

Description: Views from Herodion (Herodyon, Herodium) – Tekoa    תקוע - מבט מהרודיון

Date: 9 April 2010

Source: Own work

Author: [Deror avi](#)

Permission: ([Reusing this file](#)):

The copyright holder of this file allows anyone to use it **for any purpose, provided that** the copyright holder is properly attributed. Redistribution, derivative work, commercial use, and all other use is permitted.