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AMOS: A SIMPLE MAN

"The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake,"

Amos 1:1. What kind of person does God use? We sometimes think God uses the brightest and the best. He must choose the most holy and talented to deliver His message or to advance His kingdom. The writings of the prophet Amos show us that this isn't true. The name Amos means "burden" or "burden bearer." Since most of the prophecies of Amos concern coming judgment on either the nations surrounding Israel or judgment on Israel itself, he was a man with a "burden." The man God chose to carry this burden was among the shepherders of Tekoa. Amos

had no formal theological or prophetic training. Amos was a simple man, a farmer, who had been called to serve God. He was not a priest, a Levite, or a trained minister, but rather just a simple shepherd. In fact in one instance, he is told he doesn't belong in the pristine, fancy rich palaces where he went to prophesy, and he states he is just a simple farmer who was called by God. "Then Amaziah said to Amos, 'Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying! But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence.' Then Amos replied to Amaziah, 'I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. But the LORD took me from following the flock and the LORD said to me,

'Go prophesy to My people Israel,'" Amos 7:12-15. God gave this simple man a big job to do. Amos was a prophet to the 10 northern tribes, the kingdom of Israel. In the days of Amos Israel had one wicked king after another and was a time of great peace and prosperity. God called a simple farmer to preach to a prosperous nation who had forgotten Him. We might think that the success of those times needed a sophisticated preacher or a smooth talker. The humble simplicity of Amos shines in the way he used his own familiar illustrations taken direct from the natural world he labored in to speak in his own way the broad condemnation from the Lord. "Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something? Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground when there is no bait in it? Does a trap spring up from the earth when it captures nothing at all? If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it? Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not

fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?...Thus says the LORD, Just as the shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth a couple of legs or a piece of an ear, so will the sons of Israel dwelling in Samaria be snatched away...As when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against a wall and a snake bites him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?" Amos 3:4-8,12;5:19-20. Not only can God use humble people like Amos, He specializes in it. "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus," Acts 4:13. - Daniel Ruegg

King Solomon Said "King Solomon said in the Bible, 'It's better ta eat poke salad and turnip greens, and drink branch water out of a gourd dipper and live in a shotgun house and be dirt poor but have Godly love in the home, than it is to be rich and live in a mansion with charbroiled ribeye steaks three times a day, a wash hole in ya backyard, all the money you can spend, big cars. but ya broilin'

and bickerin' and arguin' and gripin' all the time and there's no Godly love in the home. He'd better ta be poor and love one anotha' than it is to be rich and all ya got's yer cotton-pickin' riches. You don't believe King Solomon said that? Yes he did! It's in the Bible. In the book o' Proverbs. He said, 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stall fed ox and hatred therewith.' And I just told ya in Route 4 Liberty Mississippi talk exactly what that means!" -

Jerry Clower **I Will Not Lose** *"They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the LORD, 'to deliver you'" (Jeremiah 1:19). Today, I will not lose.* Any honest Christian will recognize that they are in a constant battle. Jesus warned His apostles that the *spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak*. With that in mind, we must go into every day refusing to allow the world to prevail. God brings deliverance. With every challenge there *is* a way of escape (*1 Corinthians 10:13*). The world, with Satan at the helm, will wage a war against us every day this week. When we are weak, the Devil will work all the more diligently. That is why we must be ready at every moment to win the

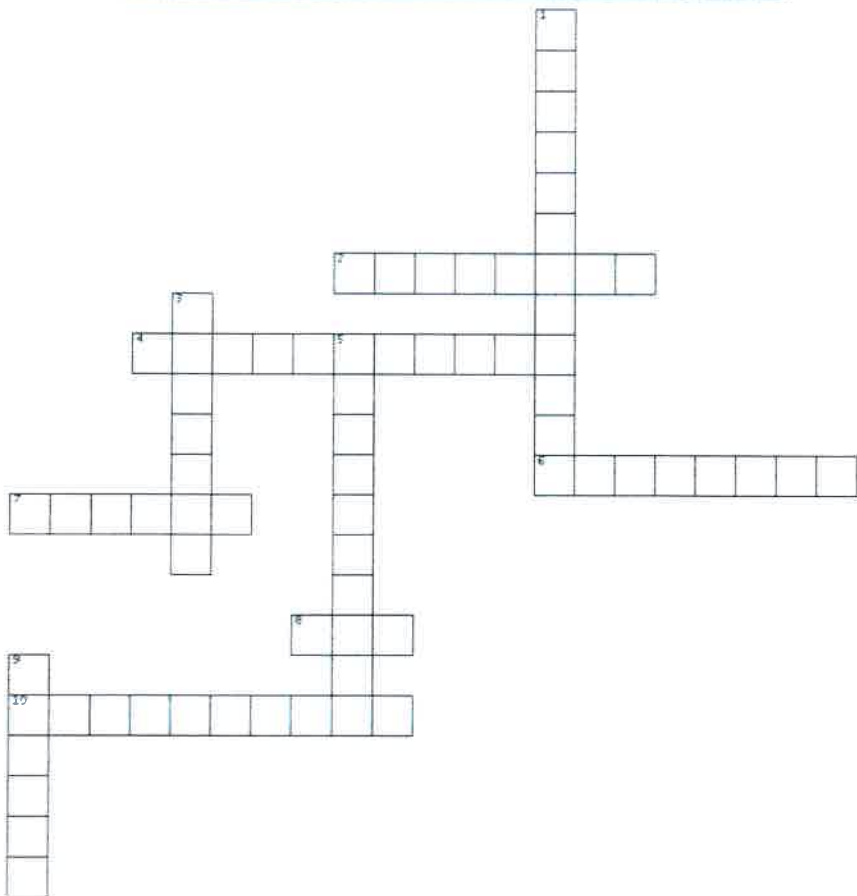
victory over sin. **Remember these words today:** "If I walk with God and allow His Word to guide me, I can and will prevail." Trust in your God today. Be determined that the world will not prevail. You are His child. – Brian Price

"With All Readiness" The Berean Jews were noted as "more fair minded" than the Jews in Thessalonica *"in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11). The key detail is that they received **with all readiness** the word preached by Paul. The word "readiness" (Gk. *prothumia*) has the meaning of eagerness, willingness. This describes an attitude of mind that each of us should want to imitate. Others receive the word with *weariness*. They have lost their interest in gaining spiritual knowledge and are more interested in worldly learning and fleshly recreation. Personal Bible study is avoided and Bible class time is spent daydreaming. Similarly, others receive the word with *apathy*. They listen and learn, but no significant change is observed in their lives. "Readiness of mind" is an attitude that pleases God and bears fruit in our lives.

– Marc Gibson

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ACROSS

- The "day of the LORD" would be " _____ instead of light." (Amos 5:20)
- To Tyre, Amos said they did not remember the covenant of _____ (Amos 1:9)
- Amos said he was a grower of _____ figs. (Amos 7:14)
- Amos said the LORD spoke as a lion that had _____. (Amos 3:8)
- Amos said Judah rejected the _____ of the LORD. (Amos 2:4)
- Amos said God would punish Israel for all their _____. (Amos 3:2)

DOWN

- Amos was among the _____ from Tekoa. (Amos 1:1)
- Amos told Amaziah "I am not a _____". (Amos 7:14)
- Amos prophesied two years before the _____. (Amos 1:1)
- Amos said Ammon _____ open the pregnant women of Gilead. (Amos 1:13)