

## **THE PROPHET AMOS**

Rt. Rev. George de Charms

*Lessons: Amos 7*

In the days of Uzziah the King of Judah, and when Jeroboam II the son of Joash was reigning in Israel, the Lord had given the Israelites many victories over their enemies. Jeroboam, at the head of a great army, had captured Damascus and Hamath and had defeated the Syrians, taking back from them all the land that they had captured during the reigns of his fathers. But for all this he gave no heed to the kindness and mercy of the Lord in thus helping him. He became proud and thought that he had been victorious by his own might and by the strength of his own armies. He ceased to worship the Lord and caused a palace to be built for himself at Bethel where he began to worship other gods, the gods of the Phoenicians and the golden calf. And the people of Israel, following his example, turned away from the worship of the Lord and became idolaters.

Then the Lord was very angry and He purposed to bring a great punishment upon the house of Jeroboam because of his wickedness. Now there lived at that time at Tekoah, in the land of Judah, about six miles south of Bethlehem, a shepherd by the name of Amos. He was not one of the prophets. He had not gone to school as the prophets did but had spent all his life tending sheep. But although he was not learned he loved the Lord and was very sorry indeed to see his countrymen worshipping idols.

One day the Lord came to him in the field where he was watching his sheep and told him that he must go up to Bethel and prophesy against King Jeroboam. It was a difficult thing the Lord asked of him, and he knew that there was great danger lest the king, becoming angry, should cast him into prison or take away his life. But he loved the Lord more than he loved his own life. He was a brave man and had a great love for his country. He knew that unless his people would turn away from their wickedness the Lord would send a great punishment upon them, and perhaps give them into the hands of their enemies. So he did not hesitate a moment but left his sheep in charge of another shepherd, and walked all the way to Bethel where the king was living and sacrificing to idols.

There the Lord appeared to him and said that He would bring up grasshoppers all over the land to eat up the grass, and to eat the leaves from all the trees and bushes, and to destroy the grain so that there would follow a great famine. And Amos said to the Lord: "O Lord God, Forgive, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? For he is small" (Amos 7:2). He was sorry for his people and he

## Family Talk

wished to turn away this great plague from them, so he prayed to the Lord to forgive the wickedness of the king. Then the Lord turned away from his anger, and said, "It shall not be" (Amos 7:3). So the plague did not come upon them.

But the Israelites knew nothing of the danger that had threatened them and they continued to worship idols and do many things against the Commandments of the Lord.

So the Lord came again to Amos and said He would send a great fire which would destroy many things throughout the land. And again Amos prayed to Him to have mercy on his people, and He turned away from His anger, and sent not the plague of fire. But still the king continued to worship other gods and to break the laws of the Lord.

And again the Lord came to Amos, and this time He said He would not turn aside from His purpose to bring punishment upon Jeroboam. He said He would destroy the high places and lay waste the sanctuaries, where false gods were worshiped, and would send enemies to destroy Jeroboam by the sword. And this word of the Lord Amos prophesied before all the people of Bethel. Then came Amaziah the high priest and said to the king, "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel, for thus saith Amos, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land" (Amos 7:11).

Then was Jeroboam angry, and he told Amaziah that Amos should be driven from the land. And Amaziah came to Amos and said, "O thou seer, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: But prophesy not any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (Amos 7:13). Just think how Jeroboam had forgot ten the great power of the Lord, that he dared to send such a message as that to one of the Lord's prophets! For the Lord could destroy him very quickly. But he thought that he was stronger than the Lord and he believed not the words of Amos. But Amos replied to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a gatherer of wild figs. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.' Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, 'Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.' Therefore thus saith the Lord, 'Thy wife shall be an harlot, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land' " (Amos 7:14-17).

And all these things came to pass according to the word of the Lord.

Now this seems like a story of a people that lived long ago, and in a country very far away. You may wonder why you should learn it and what it should

## Family Talk

mean to you. But the Lord has put It in His Word that you may learn this: Just as surely as Jeroboam, Amaziah and the children of Israel were punished because they refused to worship the Lord and to keep His Commandments, every one who knows about the Lord and who refuses to worship the Lord, who becomes proud and thinks only of himself; who receives great benefits from the Lord every day — food, clothing, houses, friends and playthings, and all that is given by the Lord to make you happy — and who does not give thanks to the Lord for these things in his heart— every one who breaks the Commandments of the Word, who disobeys the Laws of God, and who does what is wicked, unkind, or selfish — will be punished, either here or in the other world.

This Prophet Amos speaks to you in this Book of the Word, or the Lord speaks to you through him, prophesying that you too will suffer in the other life unless you worship Him, and urging you to give heed, to listen, and to try every day to think of Him, to give thanks to Him for all He does to make you happy, and to serve Him as your Lord and King by doing all the things that He has commanded in His Word, that you may not be punished but may come into heaven and enjoy all the wonderful and beautiful things that the angels have there. And it is in order that you may learn to worship the Lord that you come here every Sunday. You must learn to worship Him just as you learn to do everything else.

Those of you who are in the first or second grade cannot do the things that the children can do who are in the eighth grade. And they cannot do the things that the boys and girls in the higher schools can do. You have to learn. And so in the worship of the Lord, when you are very little you do not yet know how to worship Him. You have to learn, if you were never taught you would never know what it is to worship the Lord. And yet it is the worship of the Lord that will enable you to come into heaven, and to be happy there. So you too can pay heed to the words of the Lord through His Prophet Amos, and learn from the wicked Jeroboam not to turn away from the Lord, but hearken rather to those beautiful words of Isaiah: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found: call ye upon Him while He is nigh. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let them return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon them, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6-7).