

The LORD Roars from Zion: Amos 1's Opening Warning

Scriptures for Today: Amos 1:1-2

Amos 1:1-2 *The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. 2 And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.*

Introduction:

We are starting the book of Amos. It's the 30th book of the Bible. It has 9 chapters. It takes about 22 minutes to read through the entire book. So this is a shorter book. That's why these books are referred to as the minor prophets. Not because they are less important. Every book of the Bible is God's Word. (Imagine saying God's Words are not important. If the creator of the universe was standing in front of you speaking and then you said, "I don't care what you have to say, it's not important." Imagine doing that to the Almighty, all-powerful God of Heaven and Earth. That's how this world treats God. That's how Judah and Israel treated God, and if we're not careful we can treat God like that as well)

The minor prophets are not minor in their message. They are just shorter books. There is nothing minor about what Amos is going to proclaim to a rebellious and sinful nation. Amos opens up with a powerful warning.

Just recently there was a terrible accident that took place here in Louisville. A UPS plane crashed during takeoff and 14 people were killed. Shortly after that crash, an emergency alert was sent out to everyone in the area. Phones lit up. Sirens blared. What's the first thing you do when that alarm sounds?

You stop everything and look. Because warnings demand attention. A Warning mean something serious is happening or about to happen.

Many times when we hear warnings over and over again in our life, but nothing is happening, those warnings start to lose weight and meaning.

That's exactly how the book of Amos opens. God is raising His voice to a people who had grown spiritually deaf. Think about everything that led to this moment: the kingdom had been split for nearly 170 years because of Solomon's sin. The northern kingdom of Israel was steeped in idolatry; the southern kingdom of Judah was following the same path. And yet God, in His patience, kept sending prophet after prophet—calling, pleading, confronting, warning. But the people kept pressing mute on God's voice.

They enjoyed prosperity, comfort, and stability—which made them think judgment would never come. But when a nation repeatedly ignores God, there comes a moment when God says, **“Enough.”** When you tune out God’s voice long enough, you eventually tune yourself into destruction.

And as Amos opens, God is about to roar—shake the land, shake the people, shake the leaders, and shake the false security they were clinging to, but Israel will refuse to listen.

You have that choice as well. Will you listen to warnings from God in your life? Or will you ignore them?

We are going to look at just 2 verses of Amos chapter 1. But these two verses are packed with amazing truth that we can take and apply to our lives.

From these two verses, I want to show you three attributes of God's Warnings.

1. God's Warnings Can Come Through Ordinary Messengers.
2. God's Warnings Get Loud When We Stop Listening.
3. God's Warnings Shake the Places We Think Are Strongest.

1. God's Warnings Can Come Through Ordinary Messengers

Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa...

The very first thing God wants us to notice about this book is **the man who is speaking** is not a priest, not a scribe, not a scholar, not a politician. **He’s a herdsman. A farmer. A blue-collar worker from a tiny town south of Jerusalem.**

In today’s terms?

He’s the guy with dirt under his fingernails.

He’s the guy who fixes fences, bales hay, and smells like livestock.

He’s the guy nobody would invite to a special event to give a speech.

He’s the guy culture would define as “unqualified,” “untrained,” “unimportant.”

And yet **God chose him**. Why? Because God doesn’t need your impressive resume to get His word across. He just needs someone who is willing to obey.

Israel had tuned out every prophet God had sent them. Elijah and Elisha performed amazing signs and wonders through the power of God. Yet, Israel refused to listen and acknowledge the Word of the Lord.

So God raises up a man who smells like sheep and sweat and says, “Go speak for Me.”

And this becomes even clearer later in the book of Amos.

Amos 7:10–15 — The Proof of God Using the Ordinary

Amaziah the priest of Bethel — one of the highest religious officials in the northern kingdom — goes against Amos. He sends a message to the king accusing Amos of conspiracy. He wants him silenced.

Amos 7:10-15 Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. **11** For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. **12** Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: **13** But prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it *is* the king's chapel, and it *is* the king's court.

So Amaziah is telling Amos to go home! Go back to Judah! Don't preach here anymore! Why? Because the message was uncomfortable. Because the nation didn't want correction. But look at Amos' response:

14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: **15** And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

Essentially Amos was saying, this isn't what I initially signed up for, I was just taking care of my flock. But God called me, so I showed up.

This tells us something huge:

God often uses the voice you don't expect to deliver the warning you desperately need.

Israel wanted a soft-spoken, politically correct, polished religious leader that prophesied lies, but God sent a shepherd with no training, no rank, no pedigree. Just an ordinary working man that was willing to step up and obey God's call and speak the truth.

We need more men like Amos, who are willing to get their hands dirty. Willing to work hard, provide for their families. Who are willing to answer the call that God has given to all of us. To *go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*.

So God chose Amos, who was a herdsman and a farmer, God chose Elisha, who was plowing the fields with his oxen, God chose Peter, James, and John who were fishermen.

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

These unlearned and uneducated men, Amos, Elisha, Peter, James, John and many others throughout scripture. They all had something in common. They all dropped what they were doing and become bold preachers of the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: **27** But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; **28** And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: **29** That no flesh should glory in his presence.

God chooses ordinary people so that the message, not the messenger, gets the glory.

God may send a warning to you through someone you're tempted to dismiss.

A spouse.

A child.

A friend.

A sermon you didn't expect.

Another believer that is younger than you.

Someone you think you're "ahead" of spiritually.

It doesn't matter who it is, if they are speaking truth from God's Word, you better hear what they have to say.

And that's one of the reasons why it's so important to read God's Word daily, so you can recognize when you are hearing truth. Because you are going to have bad days, and you will make bad decisions. You will find yourself straying from the things of God.

And you need to be ready for when God sends that unexpected messenger into your life to give you that warning. God will use someone to bring those things to remembrance that you have already learned from His Word.

And if you're obedient and you seek the Lord in your life, maybe you will be that ordinary messenger that God will use to bring an extraordinary message to someone else.

2. God's Warnings Get Loud When We Stop Listening

Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

When Amos steps onto the scene, the very first thing that God tells us is who this message is for. These are the things he saw concerning Israel.

He is preaching to people who *claimed* to know God, *claimed* to worship God, and *claimed* to be blessed by God... while living in rebellion against Him. Not only do we see who Amos is being sent to, but we see the time period in which he is being sent.

"...in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake."

This tells us a lot about the spiritual condition of Israel and Judah when Amos was preaching. Uzziah was a king that started out strong... Maybe in your life you are at a place where you're feeling strong. Hey, be careful. I want to show you what happened to Uzziah.

2 Chronicles 26:3-5 Sixteen years old *was* Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jecoliah of Jerusalem. **4** And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. **5** And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

King Uzziah was a young man that actually listened and he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. He was a good king. God was blessing him and allowing him to prosper.

2 Chronicles 26:7-8 And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Mehunims. **8** And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly.

God gave him victory. God gave him influence. Even his enemies respected him.

2 Chronicles 26:9-13 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall*, and fortified them. **10** Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry. **11** Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. **12** The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred. **13** And under their hand *was* an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.

Everything was booming—military strength, agriculture, construction, wealth.

2 Chronicles 26:15-16 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he *was* marvellously helped, till he was strong.

Who marvelously helped Uzziah? God helped him till he was very strong. But what happened?

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

Uzziah forgot who made him strong. He forgot the hand that prospered him. When everything was going well he was lifted up with pride and destruction followed. God struck him with leprosy and he was a leper until the day of he died.

While Judah was sliding into pride, the northern kingdom of Israel was swimming in prosperity.

Under Jeroboam the borders expanded, the economy grew, luxury increased, people felt secure. But spiritually, they were rotting from the inside out.

They worshiped idols, oppressed the poor, loved entertainment, lived in immorality, and performed empty religious rituals to make themselves feel righteous.

Doesn't that sound familiar? Sounds a lot like our country. They looked blessed, but they were spiritually bankrupt.

This is when God sends a shepherd with a message:

Amos 1:2 And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem...

God is done whispering. He's done speaking softly. He's not sending anymore gentle nudges. He's roaring from Zion.

Think about a lion's roar. It's the loudest roar among land animals. It can be heard from miles away.

It announces his presence, it shakes everything around him, it's a warning signal that judgement is near.

When God roars, you can't confuse it for anything else.

Think about how things work in your own life. God whispers to us when our hearts are soft... But when we drift, when pride creeps in, when comfort makes us lazy, sin becomes normalized — **His warnings get louder.**

At first, God nudges your conscience.

Then you might hear a sermon that cuts your heart. Then He sends someone to confront you.

Then He shakes your life through circumstances. Then He starts removing things you were leaning on.

And if you still refuse to listen... **He roars. You do not want to get to that point where God has to roar.**

Many people mistake God's patience for God's approval.

But prosperity is not proof that God is pleased — Israel was prospering when they were at their WORST spiritually.

Some of the loudest warnings from God come during seasons when everything feels "fine."

- Your job is stable.
- Your bills are paid.
- Your life is predictable.
- You feel secure.

On the flip side, maybe your life is utter chaos but you're comfortable in the chaos. You're comfortable living in misery. Either way that's when God often needs to roar...
Because comfort will kill you faster than hardship.

Comfort puts you to sleep. Sin blinds you. Prosperity deceives you. Pride destroys you.
Just like Uzziah. Just like Israel. Just like America.

So When God's people fall asleep, God's warnings get louder. The LORD roars from Zion.

Don't let it get to that point. Wake up before it's too late.

Recap:

- 1. God's Warnings Can Come Through Ordinary Messengers**
- 2. God's Warnings Get Loud When We Stop Listening**

3. God's Warnings Shake the Places We Think Are Strongest

Amos 1:2 And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

When God roars, He doesn't just speak to the weak places...
He targets the places we feel the most secure.

Amos mentions **two powerful images**:

— “the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn”

These were quiet, stable places — peaceful hillsides where shepherds lived, worked, and felt safe. That was their comfort zone. Their normal. Their everyday life.

But God says even those peaceful places will shake.

— “the top of Carmel shall wither”

Mount Carmel was the pride of the land — fertile, green, prosperous, strong.

If you lived anywhere near Carmel, you assumed things would *always* be good.

But God says even Carmel — the strongest, greenest, safest place — will dry up.

Mount Carmel was a place where Israel thought they could hide and be safe. There is no hiding from God...

Amos 9:3 And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:

Here’s the point:

God knows exactly where your false security is... and He knows how to shake it. He wants to wake you up before you sleepwalk into judgement.

Whatever you’re most confident in...

whatever you’re most sure “could never be touched”...

that’s usually the first place God aims His warning.

Why?

Because **God loves you enough to shake what’s temporary...so you’ll cling to what’s eternal.**

Hebrews 12:25-27 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: **26** Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. **27** And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Remember, the only things that will remain in your life are the things that are grounded in truth and standing on the foundation of God’s Word. God will tear down everything you lean on so you’ll finally lean on Him alone.

I want to encourage you to take action before that happens.
Ask yourself what is the Mount Carmel in your life?

What carnal things are you trusting in? Are you finding comfort in the vain things of this world? Make sure you shake those things out before God has to do it for you.

Conclusion

When we look at Amos 1:1-2, we see God uses an ordinary working man, a Herdsman, to cry out to a proud and complacent nation. He raised His voice when people stopped listening. And He shook the very places that looked the strongest so that every heart would know: **God will not be ignored.**

God's warnings are an act of mercy, they are a call to turn before it's too late.
God has not changed. He still warns today. He still uses ordinary people. He still raises His voice when hearts grow cold. He still shakes everything we lean on so we will lean on Him.

Every time we go out soul winning, we are doing the exact work that Amos did. We are not just soul winning, we are soul warning.

Every door we knock. Every person we hand an invitation to. Every conversation we have about Jesus Christ, we're saying Judgment is real. Hell is real. But Jesus Saves.

We are sounding the alarm that God has already given. This is one of the loudest warnings that will ever be sounded, the preaching of the Gospel.
We are delivering the warning God wrote in His Word. All have sinned. The wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus absorbed the roar of God's wrath so you wouldn't have to.

And now He sends us — ordinary people, unlikely messengers — to go into our city with the same urgency Amos had, proclaiming:

"Believe on Jesus while there's still time."

As we close I want you to remember these three attributes of God's warnings.

- 1. God's Warnings Can Come Through Ordinary Messengers**
- 2. God's Warnings Get Loud When We Stop Listening**
- 3. God's Warnings Shake the Places We Think Are Strongest**

Remember to evaluate your life, every day. Think about how you can make changes. Meditate on these things throughout the week. Don't ignore God's warnings in your life. Let's Pray.