

"Go Back To Where You Came From!"

Amos, The Unwanted Prophet: Introduction

Amos was the first of Israelite Prophets of the 8th century whose words were assembled onto a scroll. His contemporaries were Hosea, Micah and Proto-Isaiah. He was a herdsman and dresser of sycamore-fig trees in a village of about 150 in Tekoa, a hilly fortified village southeast of Jerusalem. This prophet was called by God to preach to the Israelites in the North. Needless to say, the North eventually told him to go back to where you came from.

His name probably means "Yahweh has carried," from "Amasiah," or amos-ah. He had no reason to prophesy for money, since he already had an occupation. His only reason, he declared, was because God had summoned him to do so. "Herdsman" means "sheep-master" and refers to owners and managers of a very special kind of dwarfed sheep that were bred and raised from ancient times in the Near East famous for its wool.

This fictitious account is based on facts gleaned from his book, Amos. Enjoy!

"I had a dream last night," Amos said to his wife. They were having breakfast at sunrise to watch as the sun lit up the view below. They were at 2800 feet above sea level, right at the point where the cultivated lands ends and the uncultivated land begin that slope down to the Dead Sea.

"Tell me about it," she asked interested. He rarely talked about his dreams, so this should be interesting. She followed his gaze, since from the Heights of Tekoa the world was spread out before them like a gigantic map. Gilead, Ammon, Moab and Edom to the east, Jerusalem, Samaria and the regions of Damascus and Phoenicia to the north, Beersheba to the south, his own people Jacob, looking so small right below him.

"Go and prophesy to my people Israel," Amos began.

Miriam interrupted him, "The Lord God spoke to you?" she asked shocked.

"I had a vision," he quickly added.

"You had a dream, you said," she corrected.

"Dream, vision," he shrugged, "What's the difference?"

"A big difference," she said. "I had a dream too, thinking I was living in a palace instead of surrounded by sheep."

"Let me finish *my* dream, and then you can decide," he said, emphasizing *my*. "Besides, my love," emphasizing *love*, "the Lord God has blessed us through our sheep, with the best wool around where even King Mesha of Moab would be envious."

"You have to admit," she reminded him, "planting those sycamores have kept the grass greener through their shade."

"That is true," he admitted. "It has been a wonderful pastureland for our sheep." In a more conciliatory tone, "Your suggestion was a double blessing."

"Your vision," she teased.

"Go and prophesy to my people Israel," Amos said with some shock and trembling. "for I am about to send a plague of locust upon Jacob to destroy him."

Miriam was frightened. "Amos, I am sorry to hear this message from our Lord God! That is frightening! What will you do?"

"I will plead with the Lord God for forgiveness." He was thinking, "I have been formulating a response."

Miriam looked at him with fright, "You can't be quiet, Amos. You have to deliver the message."

"Yes, Yes, I will my love," he said. "On the way north, I will deliver my message and ask the Lord God to stop and not carry out his plan."

"Maybe the Lord God will relent before you get there," she said hopefully. "Since House of Isaac may refuse to repent, and then what?"

"Pray for pleasant dreams," Amos could only say.