

# This Is Us

## Introduction

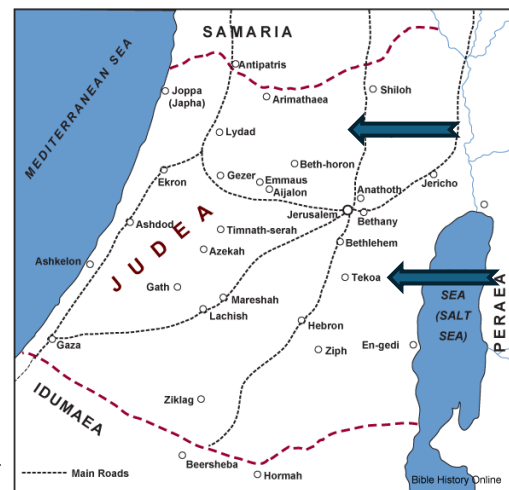
- The **prophet** Amos was a very humble and interesting man. He was the only “writing prophet” with a secular background (commoner). Amos also a **farmer, herdsman**, perhaps wealthy, and **teacher**. **He had a passion for Social Justice**. He focused on the **moral obligation** to protect the poor, weak, and the marginalized.
- **Critique of Hypocrisy**: He taught that religious rituals (sacrifices and songs) are meaningless if they are not accompanied by **personal righteousness** and **just treatment of others**.
- **Righteousness in the Marketplace**: Amos taught that **faith should influence daily life**, extending to **business practices** and **community behavior**.
- **Call to Repentance**: He gave the people of Israel a chance to **turn from their evil ways** and **avoid the divine judgment**.
- **Clarity and Authority**: His messages were direct, focusing on **the character of God** as a righteous ruler who **demands justice within the context of the Law**.

Amos used his role as a prophet to educate people on the necessity of aligning their actions with God's demand for mercy and justice. (Punishment specificity)

## Lesson

Amos was called to prophesy to **Uzziah King of Juda (Judah and Benjamen tribes)** and **Jeroboam II who was King of the other 10 tribes**. He prophesied a great **earthquake** taking place two years before in happened.

*The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen 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.*



**Amos 1:1**

Confirmed in Zechariah when prophesying about the second coming of Christ:

*And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the **earthquake** in the days of **Uzziah king of Judah**: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.*

## **Zechariah 14: 5**

The earthquake was in 750 BC. There is no record in over 4,000 years of history before, or after, of an earthquake of that magnitude in that area. Estimates of the quake are between 7.8 and 8.2 on the Richter scale (Massive extreme damage and loss of life).

Amos' prophecy about the earthquake and his 35 plus other prophecies were rejected by the Priest of Jeroboam II's Temple in **Bethol**. After all, Amos did not have the priestly or prophetic credentials. Amos was considered one of the ignorant of that day.

Additionally, King Jeroboam II had populated the Temple at Bethol, and his region with idols. The people were to worship the idols and **Amaziah the priest** was to preside over them. He had also militarily expanded the Kingdom of Israel farther to the North than anyone before him and the resulting commerce made Israel more successful than ever. Some were living in mansions owning two or more homes for summer and winter lifestyles. We should learn from this that **wealth of the population alone does not necessarily mean God is blessing the way we are living or following Him.**

*Then **Amaziah the priest of Bethel** 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.** <sup>11</sup> For thus Amos saith, **Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.**<sup>12</sup> Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, **go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:** <sup>13</sup> But **prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.***

## **Amos 7:10-13**

Verse 13 – So God's Temple is now "*the king's chapel, and it is the king's court*" according to God's priest? Amos' answer to Amaziah illustrates his humility in my mind. Amos says, I was not a prophet like the others. I was a farmer of "**sycomore fruit**" (used in

medicines or processed into jams and jellies. Too bitter for human consumption) and **a tender of sheep**. His land of **Tekoa** was conducive for Sycamore trees. Some researchers believe his ministry of prophecy lasted about one year. Others say it was longer. However short or long, the account of Amos says to me that God's plan and purpose is to use each one of us regardless of our status or position in life (**This Is Us**).

*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:**  
<sup>15</sup> And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and **the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.***

**Amos 7:14-15**

Amos was not a priest or a trained theologian of the day and yet, Amos is considered a **minor prophet** (1 of 12). Although, some theologians put him as number three in importance behind **major prophets Isaiah** and **Jerimiah** (2 of 4). He is also known as **an accomplished teacher** within his prophetic ministry. Over 30 of his prophecies were fulfilled in less than 50 years. **What is a prophet?**

***I will raise them up a Prophet** from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will **put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.** <sup>19</sup> And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever will not harken** unto my words which he shall speak in my name, **I will require** (**Darash** – pursue, search, seek, explore LUL) **it of him.***

**Deuteronomy 18:18-19**

God will pursue the matter with the one who has not harkened. The prophet has done his work according to all God has spoken through him. The prophet's job is complete.

Did Christ put a **premium on the ignorance** of His followers? **No**, because **from heaven** Christ chose one of the foremost intellects of the day, **Paul**. Yet, although Christ was not encouraging ignorance, these twelve disciples were His first to be chosen.

**The Apostle Paul** was quite the opposite of Amos, the farmer and shepherd. He was also different from the disciples who were **fisherman, zealots, a farmer, a merchant** a **tax collector** (aside from **Matthew**, who was considered an accomplished historian)

and two or three unknowns. Many unbelievers viewed the disciples as **ignorant, uneducated, and non-intellectuals**, unworthy of trust or leadership. Yet, this diversity of laymen enriched the early Christian community and its mission. Inspired by the holy Spirit, **Paul reminded us of Isaiah's prophecy.**

*Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: **for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.***

**Isaiah 29:14**

*For it is written, **I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.** <sup>20</sup> *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the **disputer** (Sugetetes – seeker, mystical interpretation of scripture includes Greek philosophers, Jewish rabbis) of this **world** (Alon – A period of time)? **hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?****

**1 Corinthians 1:19-20**

**Sugetetes and Alon** - This “period of time” was an “age” of speculations by intellectuals constantly advocating in their consideration of questions and idol suppositions about scripture and philosophy.

I believe Christ was fulfilling prophecy selecting the perceived “**foolish**” disciples to bring to nothing the “**wisdom**” of this world. From heaven, He chose the “wise and “**prudent**” (Paul, Dr. Luke, Apollos etc.) and others who would believe and join the diverse believers. He still is. Why? **None could or can boast of themselves.**

*Though I might also have **confidence in the flesh.** If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, **I more:** <sup>5</sup> *Circumcised the eighth day, of the **stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;** <sup>6</sup> *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, **blameless.** <sup>7</sup> **But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*****

**Philippians 3:4-7**

Paul had recently come from **Athens** where he had dialog with the brightest and most intellectually elite in the world on **Mars Hill**. He even quoted some of **their philosophers and poets** here and in other epistles. These were the most educated Gentiles of the day. Some of them were converted at this time.

*And when they heard of the **resurrection of the dead**, some **mocked**: and others said, **We will hear thee again of this matter**.<sup>33</sup> So Paul departed from among them.<sup>34</sup> Howbeit **certain men clave unto him, and believed**: among the which was **Dionysius the Areopagite**, and a woman named Damaris, **and others with them**.<sup>1</sup> **After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth**;*

**Acts 17:32-18:1**

**Dionysius the Areopagite** (Vs 34) was a member of the great court of Athens. This position required one to be the **governor of the city** and of **the highest reputation** among the people. These Gentiles had looked upon Christians as ignorant or stupid. They know nothing. They are the servants, slaves and commoners of the world. After hearing Paul they could not help to conclude, well, maybe not all of them are ignorant.

Paul had also confronted others who would put their own selfish priorities ahead of the leading of the Holy Spirit in order to transition their leadership roles in Judaism into the new early church by integrating their old requirements of perceived law. These are earlier verses in Philippians.

*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.<sup>2</sup> Beware of **dogs** (**Kyon** – evil doers were like unruly dogs hurting people), beware of **evil workers**, beware of the **concision** (**Katatome** – a cutting off, those of the circumcision).<sup>3</sup> **For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh**.*

**Philippians 3:1-3**

Paul was anticipating, the problem of evil people coming into the Church at Philippi. He called them “**dogs**” and “**evil doers**” in verse two. Later he confessed that he was once one of those “**dogs**”. He injured families and ministers in the early church. Worse,

he even confessed to killing Steven and others. He knew they would come into the church. He had seen it before. **Paul had confronted the enemies without;** and later **with** those who were in the church itself. His **fourfold teaching** in verse three was:

1. Believe that **true** circumcision is the circumcision of the **heart**.
2. Be worshippers in the **spirit**.
3. Rejoice only in **Christ**.
4. **Have no confidence in the flesh**.

He also wrote in Romans.

*But he is a Jew, which is one **inwardly**; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God**.*

**Romans 2:29**

Since the earliest of days man has chosen to place his own intelligence above God's. Masquerading as any other name through the ages, they were and are the **Gnostics** of this world who attach themselves to the Church and then begin to change the truth of God's Word into their own ideas of what God's Word **should** have said - or **meant** – or how it needs to be **updated** for the today's society.

**I believe to glory or take credit within oneself about what God has done in ministry is the first step off the narrow path.** We must guard against feeding the **small spec** of the enemy of our souls called **pride**, because this small spec will one day be fed enough to become the **giant** that makes people do unspeakable things.

*For ye see your calling, brethren, how **that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:**<sup>27</sup> 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**;<sup>28</sup> 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:**<sup>29</sup> That **no flesh should glory in his presence.**<sup>30</sup> **But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and***

*redemption: <sup>31</sup> That, according as it is written, **He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.***

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31**

## **Conclusion**

Do you and I have our own fleshly credentials? Our own skins on the wall? Do we collect our diplomas, credits, awards or post our own proof proclaiming how accomplished we are or how far we have come in life - risen in our own professions? Or, do we not have these things because we have not proven ourselves in these tangible ways but **we have** proven ourselves in other ways and take pride in those?

Do we live for the praise of our peers, friends, or children? **Some** of these accolades can be good if achieved wholesomely, properly or as part of our Christian walk and way of life and yet, **none** of these things alone will matter to the saving of our souls or to the hearing of “**Well done, thou good and faithful servant.**” Because, only what is done for Christ will last.

*Wherefore lay apart all **filthiness** (**Rhyparia** - anything contrary to purity) and **superfluity** (**Perisseia** - Superabundance) of **naughtiness** (**kakia** - malice, wickedness, badness), and **receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.** <sup>22</sup> But be ye **doers of the word**, and not bearers only, deceiving your own selves. <sup>23</sup> For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: <sup>24</sup> For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, **he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.***

**James 1:21-25**

Are you **smart?** **Not smart?** Or, **not particularly either one?** (**This Is Us**) It doesn't matter to the **saving of our souls** or the **ministry** to which we have been called. God is looking for those who will **partner** with Him and will be **faithful** to stay on the narrow path which **CHRIST WILL WALK WITH US.**