

# The Minor Profits

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're engaging the minor prophets, and we have arrived at the prophet Amos. We want to remind you that we are not taking these in the order of the canon in which they appear in your Bible, but we are attempting to deal with them in a chronological fashion because there are numerous things that are taking place in both Israel and Judah, and each of these prophets have a distinctive ministry to those twelve tribes, however they may be divided.

The ministry of a prophet is, to be sure, mixed. I do not think that there is any question but what the majority of the prophets who are called upon of God to address the public do so from a negative kind of background, do so from the standpoint of vice and sin and evil, and the prophets are raised up of God to deliver a warning to the people.

God didn't raise up Amos and Hosea and Joel and all the rest of them to go out there and just proclaim to the people, hey, I've got a word from God.

God, everything is great. And it's just wonderful the way you people are conducting your lives and the Lord wants you to know that he really appreciates it and just keep up the good word of living holy lives and everything is going to be wonderful.

Well, that's not the way it is. Any time you have the dynamic and the principle of sin and rebellion against God injected into the picture, you're going to have all kinds of conflict and disease and death and confusion and everything that goes with it because that's the nature of sin.

[ 1 : 5 8 ] That's what it produces. And that's what these prophets, for the most part, are called upon to address. Now, we are grateful. We are grateful that it isn't all bad news because, as Paul wrote to the Romans, how beautiful are the feet of those who announce glad tidings, good news.

And the angel Gabriel told Mary that I bring unto you great tidings of great joy. And he announced the birth of the Messiah and that Mary was to be the mother.

So, bless God, there are good news items to be delivered and we relish and appreciate all of them. But, we have to admit, they are in a minority of instances.

Every one of the twelve prophets and every one of the four called major prophets were raised up of God to deliver warnings.

Judgment is coming. You had better change your ways. You had better repent. And, prophets like Jeremiah, especially difficult, going to undergo all kinds of persecution, rejection, vilification, you name it.

[ 3 : 1 5 ] And, yet, God raised up Jeremiah and said, this is what I want you to preach to the people. And, Jeremiah went out and preached it. And, it wasn't long until the scroll that he had written came to the king's attention.

And, the king read it and promptly threw it into the fire. And, that was the end of that. Or, so they thought. Well, and God told Jeremiah, it's no problem. Sit down and write another.

And, that's exactly what he did. And, we have the prophecy of Jeremiah. And, God told Jeremiah exactly what to tell the people, to warn them about the coming captivity. The Babylonians were going to come.

And, they're going to sack the city. And, they're going to carry you away into captivity. And, the people's response was, rubbish. Who believes that stuff? That's just fake news. We don't want to hear it.

And, Jeremiah had the sorry task of delivering that in the midst of a great deal of opposition and negativity. And, by the way, add this to the mix, if you will.

[ 4 : 18 ] And, try to put yourself in the position of Jeremiah when God said, this is what I want you to tell them, Jeremiah. Now, get on with the message.

Oh, by the way, one more thing, Jeremiah. They're not going to believe you. Huh. Well, thanks a lot. You give me a message to deliver, and then you tell me that they're not going to.

Why am I doing this? I don't need this aggravation. And, yet, it was his responsibility to deliver that message. And, there are multiple reasons involved.

And, one of them is this. One of them is that when God gives more than ample warning about what is to come, and the warning is not heeded, then he is even more justified in bringing that wrath upon them because they were adequately warned.

They were told in advance what the consequences would be if they did not repent. And, we build that into our law enforcement system today.

[ 5 : 21 ] And, you see it everywhere you go. It is warning. And, if you are not supposed to park, and you are not authorized to park there, and you don't have that little thing that says you are handicapped, it says you are subject to a \$250 fine.

They want you to know in advance what the penalty will be if you insist on violating the law. And, that's a built-in factor whereby no one can say, well, I didn't know.

And, that's what gives the law the opportunity to come back with ignorance is no excuse. You saw the warning. It was there. And, you ignored it.

So, this is a principle that is built into the Old Testament as well. God does not bring judgment without warning in advance.

So, there is always the opportunity and the demand for a change in behavior before the curtain comes down. And, sometimes there is with Jonah when he delivered 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

[ 6 : 36 ] People repented. And, the text says that God relented from the doom that he was going to bring upon Nineveh. Unfortunately, I guess it was about a hundred years later that the axe did fall because they obviously slipped back into their old ways.

So, Amos has a commission of God and he is delivering it. He is not what you would call at all a professional prophet. He is not schooled in the school of prophets.

He does not have the theological training. He says, I am a fruit picker. I am a herdsman. I am a keeper of the sheep. I pick fruit. And, I do not have any credentials for this.

Who am I that I should go and deliver this kind of warning? But, as we pointed out before, God is far more interested in your availability than he is in your ability.

He will make up for your lack if you are available. But, he will not override your volition if you are not. However, there are some exceptions to that.

[ 7 : 39 ] And, we saw Jonah is one of them where God did override his volition. And, then Jonah repented. And, then he delivered the message and so on. So, there are a number of principles that are involved here.

And, we are in Amos chapter 3. I don't want to spend a great deal of time in Amos because, you know, we have 11 out of 10 other prophets that we need to consider as well.

But, in chapter 3, we have, Hear this word which the Lord has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which he brought up from the land of Egypt.

Now, that was hundreds of years earlier that he brought their ancestors up from Egypt into the promised land. And, he is delivering this message to the whole of the nation of Israel.

And, in verse 2, he reminds them of the coveted position that they enjoyed that nobody else in the world did.

[ 8 : 45 ] And, he tells them in verse 2, You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth. That means, you enjoy a peculiar position of privilege and responsibility.

And, the principle is, Unto whom much is given, from him shall much be required. And, God is reminding Israel, You are a nation that has been given more than any other nation in the world.

Therefore, you have a degree of accountability and responsibility that the pagans who live around you don't have. You have the inside track.

You have the history. You have the demonstration of miracles and all that went along with it. You, of all people, are more responsible and more to be blamed than anybody.

Now, this is tough love. This is tough love in the Old Testament. When you love somebody enough to tell them the truth. And, God has a special place in his heart for the nation of Israel.

[ 9 : 58 ] And, it is, he develops a love affair with this nation. And, we will see when we get to Hosea, how he characterizes the nation of Israel as a wife who became unfaithful to him, the husband.

And, it is a very sordid picture. It is one that has continued all throughout history and has characterized the history of the nation of Israel. And, you know what, fellas? It still does to this day.

But, the time is coming. The tide will be turned. And, Israel will return. Albeit, it will be that small remnant at the end of the tribulation period.

When, as Zechariah says, and we will get to Zechariah eventually, maybe in this lifetime. Zechariah says, they will look upon him whom they pierced, and they will mourn.

And, that will be Israel's real repentance. So, you only have I chosen among all the families of the earth. Therefore, in other words, because of that, because of that coveted choice position, therefore, that is why I will punish you for all your iniquities.

[ 11 : 17 ] And, this punishment is always born out of love. Actually, it is a discipline. Israel is delivered unto discipline. Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Paul reminds us in Romans chapter 12, chapter 11 and chapter 12. And, here he is laying out the case against them. I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Do two men walk together unless they have made an appointment? In other words, they are not going to get together unless they have an agreement. Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey?

No! Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something? No! Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground when there is no bait in it? No!

Does a trap spring up from the earth when it captures nothing at all? No! If a trumpet is blown in the city, will not the people tremble?

[ 12 : 14 ] Yes! If a calamity occurs in the city, has not the Lord done it? Surely, the Lord God does nothing unless he reveals his secret counsel to his servants, the prophets.

And, that's what I'm warning you. God has warned me to warn you. And, that's what I'm doing. So, it isn't like this judgment is just coming out of the blue.

Whoa! Where did this come from? What did we do to deserve this? Amos is going to tell them what they've done to deserve that. And, they will be warned well enough in advance.

A lion has roared. Who will not fear? And, this line, of course, goes back to the Lord. Roy, in an earlier chapter that we looked at.

And, he says, The Lord God has spoken. Who can but prophesy? In other words, Amos is saying, You need to be reminded. What I am telling you, Not my idea.

[ 13 : 19 ] I ain't having anything to do with this. God has raised me up and given me this message. It is his message. It isn't mine. It's his. I'm just a vehicle. Like John the Baptist is going to say.

Are you the Messiah? No! No, I'm not the Messiah. I'm just a voice. Crying in the wilderness. That was John the Baptist. And, that's Amos' position as well.

Proclaim, On the citadels in Ashdod, And on the citadels in the land of Egypt, And say, Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria, And see the great tumults within her, And the oppressions in her midst.

But they do not know how to do what is right, Declares the Lord. These who hoard up violence, And devastation in their citadels.

That's an interesting expression. Hoard? Hoard violence? Store up violence? So they'll have a ready supply of it to administer?

[ 14 : 21 ] Wow! What a situation. Therefore, says the Lord God, An enemy, Even one surrounding the land, Will pull down your strength from you, And your citadels will be looted.

Thus, says the Lord, Just as the shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth A couple of legs or a piece of an ear, What's left of the animal, So will the sons of Israel dwelling in Samaria, Be snatched away, With the corner of a bed and the cover of a couch.

This Samaria, Samaria is the city, That is the capital, Of the northern ten tribes, That pulled away from the union. Jerusalem remains the capital in the south, Of Benjamin and Judah, But when the ten tribes seceded, They established a new capital in the north, And it's the city of Samaria.

Hear and testify against the house of Jacob. And this house of Jacob, of course, Refers to the nation Israel. declares the Lord, The God of hosts, For on the day that I punish Israel's transgressions, I will also punish the altars of Bethel.

And Bethel was the area, Or the city, Where the calves of worship are going to be set up, That the people of Israel are going to worship.

[ 15 : 55 ] This is going to be a pagan worship. They are going to adopt the idolatry of those around them. It hearkens all the way back to Egypt, And Aaron, And the golden calf, That nonsense.

These are the bulls, The bull calves that are going to be established. And they are going to be entrenched there, In the city of Bethel. And this is to be a replication, Of the temple, In Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. So, When they pulled out of the north, They knew they were leaving all of the religious foundation behind in Jerusalem. So, we've got to do something.

We don't want people in the north, Running back down to Jerusalem, To keep the feasts. Because they'll be taking their money with them, For one thing. And that will affect our economy. We've got to find a way to keep them here in the north.

So, they establish a false worship, A false priesthood, A false altar, And all the rest of it. And Bethel is the principal place, At least one of the two, That's going to establish that. I will punish the altars of Bethel.

[ 17 : 01 ] And they are pagan altars. The horns of the altar will be cut off. They will fall to the ground. I will also smite the winter house, Together with the summer house.

These are the houses of royalty, And of the well to do. This is the summer palace, And the winter palace. One was of lower elevation, Where they lived most of the time, And then when it really got hot, They would resort to the higher elevation, That was cooler in temperature.

That was the place where you went, If you could afford it, Of course. And this is exactly what he's talking about. There was a lot of affluence. There was a lot of wealth, In both the north and the south.

This is the overflow, That resides in Jerusalem, And in the north, From the accomplishments of Solomon. Because he had raised the whole kingdom, To a level of prosperity, That was incredible.

And these people were still feeding on that, In the north and in the south. But the injustice, Is going to be very dynamic, So he's going to address that. I will smite the winter house, Together with the summer house.

[18:10] The houses of ivory, Will also perish. These were the estates, Of the very wealthy, Who had beautiful pieces, Of artwork, And things, Embedded in their wall, Out of solid ivory.

They were obviously beautiful, To look at. They were show pieces, People would come through, And look at it, And just be amazed. Just like people do today, When they go to certain kinds of mansions, And see demonstrations of architecture, And all the rest.

This is exactly what was taking place then. The houses of ivory, Will also perish, And the great houses, Will come to an end, Declares the Lord. Hear this word, You cows of Bashan, Who are on the mountain of Samaria.

Who are these? These are women. These are ladies. They are called the cows of Bashan. And they are the wives, Of the well-to-do, Who gather themselves together, And hold their hen parties, And compare notes, And brag about their husbands, And their accomplishments, And their families, And their wealth, And all the rest of them.

This Bashan, Bashan is an area, That is located, Very close to what, To what today is known as, The Golan Heights.

[19:32] It is the northeast area, And Israel has regained control, Of the Golan Heights, And they will not give it up, Because Syria was using, The Golan Heights, To launch rockets over into Israel, And this went on for a long time, And then finally, In one of the wars, I think it was the, I don't know if it was the 67, Maybe it was the 73 war, Yom Kippur, That the Israelis, Took the Golan Heights back, And they maintained that.

And this is an area, That is rich in pasture land, And it is abundant, For crops and things like that, And there was a certain breed, Of cattle, Called the Bashans, And just like we call them, Kerfords, Or, Black Angus, Cattle, This Bashan, Was a breed of cattle, And it was very well known, And it was the top line, Of the breed, And only the wealthy, Could have the Bashan cattle, Keep your place here, In Amos, And come back if you will, To Psalm 22, For just a sec, I want to just make a comparison here, Psalm 22, A very famous psalm, This is a psalm of crucifixion, It is a psalm written by David, That is a graphic description, Of someone dying, From being crucified, And of course it is a messianic psalm, And it relates to our Lord Jesus, Who would suffer,

What the psalmist is writing about, A thousand years later, And if you will look at, Psalm 22, Let's just, I can't read the whole thing, Let's just jump in with, Let's just jump in with verse 6, This is prophetically speaking of our Lord, I am a worm, Not a man, A reproach of men, Despised by the people, All who see me, Sneer at me, They separate with the lip, They wag the head, Saying, Commit yourself to the Lord, Let him deliver him, Let him rescue him, Because he delights in him, These were taunts, That some of the elite people, In the upper circles of Israel, Taunted and shouted at Jesus, When he was on the cross, Ah, yes, The Son of God, If you are the Son of God, Save yourself now, Come down from the cross,

And we will believe, And blah, blah, blah, He trusted in God, Let him trust in God, These kind of taunts, They yelled at him, Verse 9, Thou art he who didst bring me forth, From the womb, Thou didst make me trust, When upon my mother's breast, Upon thee I was cast from birth, Thou hast seen, Thou hast been my God, From my mother's womb, Be not far from me, For trouble is near, For there is none to help, Many bulls have surrounded me, Strong bulls of Bashan, Have encircled me, Who are these?

I can assure you, These are not four-legged animals, These are people, And they represent, The elite ruling class of Israel, These, You've all heard of, You've all heard of people, Who are down and out, We call them, People that live in the gutter, People that are homeless, People that are down on their luck, People that are, Well, Not only are there down and outers, There are up and outers, Up and outers, Are those who have all this world's goods, And the prestige, And everything that goes with it, But they do not have, A relationship at all to God, They are evil people, They are evil people of means, Evil people of wealth, Evil people of connection, Evil people of ability, They are these bulls of Bashan, That he's talking about here, And they represent, The elite ruling class, We would call them, The up and outers, And this is prophetic here,

[ 23 : 36 ] Because these are the kind of people, That were around the cross, That were issuing the taunts, And the jeers at Jesus, As he hung there upon the cross, And these, These despicable individuals, Are the same ones, That Jesus had in mind, When he said, Father forgive them, They don't know, What they're doing, Amazing, Well, These bulls of Bashan, Are found in other places as well, But let's hasten back to our text, If we may, Back to Amos chapter, Chapter 4, You cows of Bashan, Who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, Bring now, That we may drink, These are women, Who are influential, We would call them shakers and movers, I'm sure they were very responsible in society, I'm sure they would have made all of the fashion columns,

And the society pages of the local newspaper, And all the rest, These were they who were part of this elite group, To whom Amos is going to preach this message, And you know what their response is going to be, How dare you, How dare you refer to us like that, Blah, blah, blah, And of course they are insulted, And they are going to retaliate, Let's go on, You oppress the poor, And crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, Bring now that we may drink, The Lord God has sworn by His holiness, Behold the days are coming upon you, When they will take you away with meat hooks, And the last of you with fish hooks, And you will go out through breaches in the walls, What's that saying?

Saying the enemy is coming, And they are going to use their siege instruments, And they are battering rams, And they are going to batter down your walls, And enter your city, And take you captive, And they are going to march you out through the holes in the walls, That they have created, And these will be they, Who are going into Assyrian captivity, They will later be referred to, With an unfortunate title, Because it has no meaning at all in history, But they will be later labeled as the lost ten tribes, But there isn't anything lost about them, They are absorbed into Assyria, And those who remain are going to intermarry with the Assyrians, Who occupied the north, And they will beget children, And their children, And they will become known later, As the Samaritans, They will be half-breed Jews, Who intermarried, Those living in the north,

Were Jews, Who intermarried with those occupying troops, The Assyrians, And they became the Samaritans, Remember Jesus met the woman at the well in Samaria, And everybody was amazed that he was even talking to her, And she says, Why is it that you are talking with me?

You are a Jew, I am a woman and a Samaritan, Why are you talking with me? She was amazed that he was even talking with her, So, let's read on, You will go through the walls, The breaches in the walls, Each one straight before her, And you will be cast to Harmon, Declares the Lord, Enter Bethel and transgress, And Gilgal, Multiply transgressions, And this is sarcasm, This is sarcasm that Amos is delivering, It is tongue-in-cheek stuff, And it is actually an insult, He is saying, Enter Bethel, Go ahead, Enter your shrines, Enter your temples, And transgress there, In Gilgal, Multiply transgressions, Yes, Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days, Oh yes, You do it all, You dot all the I's and cross all the T's, You are so proper, You bring your sacrifices to your altars, Offer a thank offering also from that which is leavened, And proclaim free will offerings,

[ 27 : 46 ] Make them known, For so you love to do, You sons of Israel, Declares the Lord God, This is not a compliment, This is a put down, This is a jeering that he is delivering to them, And then, The Lord God says, But I gave you also, Cleanness of teeth, In all your cities, Well it's one thing to have your teeth clean, Especially if they're done professionally, By a hygienist or a dentist, But it's another thing, If your teeth are clean, Because you don't have anything to eat, That's one way to have clean teeth, Nothing to eat, Lack of bread in all your places, And I saw to it, That you went without for a time, But did it work?

Did you repent? Yet, You have not returned to me, Declares the Lord, And furthermore, I withheld the rain from you, While there were yet still three months, Until harvest, Then, I would send rain on one city, And on another city, I would not send rain, One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on, Would dry up, So, Two or three cities, Would stagger to another city, To drink water, But would not be satisfied, Yet, Did that cause you to repent?

Did that make you turn around? Yet, You have not returned to me, Declares the Lord, I smote you with scorching wind and mildew, And the caterpillar was devouring, Your many gardens and vineyards, Fib trees and olive trees, Yet, You have not returned to me, Declares the Lord, I even sent a plague among you, After the manner of Egypt, I slew your young men by the sword, Along with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your camp, Rise up in your nostrils, Did that do it?

Nope, All of these warnings, All of this judgment, Still, You have not returned to me, I overthrew you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand, Snatched from a blaze, Yet, You have not returned to me, He declares the Lord, Therefore, Thus, I will do to you, O Israel, Because I shall do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel, The curtain is coming down, You have turned a deaf ear, To warning, After warning, After warning, And now, God's cup of grace, Is empty, His indignation is full, His long suffering, Is not going to suffer any longer, Prepare to meet your God, Behold, He who forms mountains,

And creates the winds, And declares to man, What are his thoughts? He who makes dawn into darkness, And treads on the high places of the earth, The Lord God of hosts is his name, Hear this word, Which I take up to you as a dirge, That's a funeral song, Swan song, I'm playing a song for your last rites, O house of Israel, She is fallen, She will not rise again, The virgin Israel, She lies neglected on her land, There is none to raise her up, For thus says the Lord God, A city which goes forth a thousand strong, Will have a hundred left, And the one which goes forth a hundred strong, Will have ten left to the house of Israel, That's ninety percent casualties, That's pretty high isn't it, For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel, Seek me, That you may live, But do not resort to Bethel, That's the altar of pagan idolatry,

[ 31 : 46 ] Don't go there, Stay away from there, Nor cross over into Beersheba, Do not come to Gilgal, For Gilgal will certainly go into captivity, And Bethel will come to trouble, Seek the Lord, That you may live, Lest he break forth like a fire, O house of Joseph, And consume with none to quench it for Bethel, For those who turn justice into wormwood, That's bitterness, And cast righteousness down to the earth, He who made the Pleiades, And Orion, These are star constellations, That God thrust out there in space, And changes deep darkness into morning, Who also darkens day into night, Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the surface of the earth, The Lord is his name, It is he who flashes forth with destruction upon the strong, So that destruction comes upon the fortress, They hate him who reproves in the gate,

And they abhor him who speaks with integrity, Like I said last week, Anyone who is committed to pleasing the Lord, And living a life that is pleasing to the Lord, Is going to be appreciated, Only by those, Who want to live for the Lord, Everybody else is going to see them in a negative light, And they will ridicule, And they will deny, And they will reject, And they will poke fun at, And everything else, Nothing has changed, This is the principle, This is the way good and evil functions, Always has, Always has, They abhor him who speaks, With integrity, Why?

Because they don't like the message, And when he speaks with truth, It is convicting, And it angers them, And they become defensive, And they ridicule, And like I said, Nothing has changed, Therefore, Verse 11, Because you impose heavy rent on the poor, This is the injustice against which Amos is proclaiming, The exact attribute of grain from them, Though you have built houses of well-hewn stone, These are fine residences, Yet you will not live in them, You have planted pleasant vineyards, Yet you will not drink their wine, For I know your transgressions are many, And your sins are great, You who distress the righteous, And accept bribes, This is corruption, Now aren't you glad, We don't have anything like that, In Washington,

Yes, No corruption, Wow, And corruption just goes with the territory, I know your transgressions are many, And your sins are great, You distress the righteous, And accept bribes, And turn aside the poor in the gate, Therefore, At such a time, The prudent person keeps silent, For it is an evil time, Seek good and not evil, That you may live, And thus may the Lord God of hosts be with you, Just as you have said, Hate evil, Love good, Establish justice in the gate, And the gate, The gate was the place, Where the city's business was conducted, The gate, Is what we would call, City hall, That's the place of official contact, And conduct, That's where people went to air their cases, And their grievances, And so on, That's where the judges of the city, Held court, And made their decisions,

And that's exactly what he's talking about here, And, Hate evil, Love good, Establish justice in the gate, Perhaps the Lord God of hosts, May be gracious to the remnant of Joseph, And that is simply saying, God's coin of the realm, Always has been, Always will be, Repent, Repent of your sin, God is, Welcoming with open arms, And he wants to receive the sinners, Even more than they want to come, But, You've got to repent of your sin, That means acknowledge it, Own up to it, Deny it, And embrace righteousness, As it comes from God, Wow, This is just, Hey, Someone says, Oh, This stuff in the Old Testament, It's just for a long, People long, Long ago, Doesn't have anything to say to us, Ha, Ha, Ha, Well, You know what, Fellas, People haven't changed, The situation hasn't changed, Corruption hasn't changed, Evil hasn't changed, This book is as up to date,

[ 36 : 36 ] As your morning newspaper, And, It's a lot more accurate, Okay, To quote, To quote Will Rogers, Who's once said, If you do not read the newspaper, You are uninformed, And if you do read the newspaper, You are misinformed, So, We've got this thing called, Fake news has been around for a long time, And Amos had to deal with it, Thousands of years ago, Hey guys,