

Amos

Let Justice Roll

Amos is not a mythic person or a legion from the deep past. He is a real human being whose written words we still have—words that have been copied all these centuries since before 800 BCE. Amos is the first of the major prophets that include Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah. These religious figures, according to the philosopher Karl Jaspers, lived in an “Axial Age” along with other mature religious revolutionaries that included the Buddha, Lao Tzu, Zoroaster, and others. These major Hebrew prophets brought the religion of Israel and Judea to its mature state we find in these Old Testament writings.

Amos viewed himself as a messenger of Yahweh bringing Yahweh’s address to the northern kingdom of Israel, just before the Syrian conquest of that nation. Amos addressed their delusions of safety and their delusions of righteousness. He pointed out their unrighteousness along with that of the nations around them in their international scene. He began his speech asserting Yahweh’s judgement on those surrounding nations for whom judgement was easy to hear by the people of Israel, Then Amos moved his attack to Judea, their sister nation to the south, and then to the unrighteousness and vulnerability of the northern kingdom of Israel to whom Amos was speaking

If we were giving an Amos-like address to the people of the United States in our historical situation, it might sound something like this:

“Hear the message of Truth from Profound Reality: For three estrangements and for four of the terrorist networks of global scope, I will not withhold my wrath, for they have taken the lives of innocent men, women and children, bombed embassies and flown commercial airlines into occupied buildings. I will hound them and chase them until their networks are broken to pieces, their training camps are laid in waste, and their bank accounts emptied. Suicidal terrorism will become the butt of jokes about moronic behavior. This is the Truth, the speech of Profound Reality.”

And then the Amos-like prophet today would move to Putin’s Russia and other places of obvious estrangements that US citizens can easily judge. Then he would focus his attack on Canada and Mexico, and finally on the United States of America. Amos would present to the United States some understanding of their vulnerabilities and their estrangements. Here is how that might sound:

“For three estrangements and for four of the United States of America, I will not withhold my wrath. Decade after decade the US has assisted in the overthrow of legitimate and popular elected national leaders, replacing them with dictatorial thugs who were willing to do the bidding of greedy corporations. In pursuit of these ends the US has directly or indirectly caused the deaths of millions of innocent men, women, and children.

“You, the US, have spent billions of your tax dollars on costly wars to preserve your oil addictions, while refusing to invest strongly in moderating the climate emergency. You have promoted and allowed in the US and the planet drastic racial and economic inequities. The women of the world, you have been unwilling to liberate from their second state status. Your media, educational, and religious institutions have reduplicated the failures of racism, homophobia, patriarchy, triviality, sloth, insane addictions, and needless violence.

“Therefore, will I increase the anger against you in the more hopelessly poverty-stricken places. There will be further terrorism. The oceans will arise and drown your coastal cities. The weather patterns will turn your crop lands into deserts, Your rivers will become sewers I will push your economy to the worst recession it has ever known,

“Do you indeed long for the day of justice, the day of Yahweh, the day of Truth. That Grand Day will be darkness and not light for you. It will be as when a man runs from a lion and has a bear meet him. He turns into a house and leans his hand against the wall and has a snake bite him. The day of Justice will indeed be darkness and not light for you, a day of gloom with no dawn.

“I hate your prayer days and your flag waving ceremonies. Spare me the noise of your patriotic songs. I cannot stand another verse of America the Beautiful. But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

A paraphrase of Amos 5:24 to. 6:17

Hopefully, some of the disasters suggested in the above hastily written poetry will not come to pass, for choices remain to be made that may evoke a different response from Reality. The words of a possible prophet may not be accurate predictions of the future. The intent of the prophet is to move listeners to an awareness of the choices that we face in the present. Amos gives us a sense of how that is done.

In future months of Realistic Living Pointers, I will share something of the spirit of Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah.