



**“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!” (Amos 6:1).**

### **Misplaced Confidence**

**Central Truth:** The prophet warned the people against false trust.

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Meet Amos, prophet of God. We moderns call him a “minor prophet,” but his ministry was minor only in the sense that he wrote a short book instead of a long one.

Amos lived and ministered around 750 B.C. He was contemporary with Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. That period has been called “the golden age of Hebrew prophecy” because of the ethical emphasis of those great men of God.

Amos' home was Tekoa, a city for defense located five miles south of Bethlehem and ten miles from Jerusalem. It was on a hill that was 2,700 feet high. Its remote and exposed position made it vulnerable to attack. Its purpose was to watch against invaders and “*blow the trumpet in Tekoa*” in case of an attack (Jeremiah 6:1).

Amos was a herdsman. He had a flock of a peculiar kind of sheep which were uncomely in appearance but produced much wool. He said, “*The LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel*” (Amos 7:15).

This man of God showed a remarkable insight into the person of God for one untrained in theological studies. Such an insight could not have come by human searching, but was the result of divine revelation. That means Amos was a man who lived in the personal presence of God and communed much with Him.

The message of the text chosen for this study is a call to confidence in God. Trusting any other is a false trust.

## I. TRUST GOD (Amos 3:1, 2)

**A. God calls us to hear Him and respond in faith.** *“Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken”* (verse 1). Micah calls for all the people, even the whole earth, to be witnesses to what God speaks. *“Let the Lord GOD be witness”* (Micah 1:2).

No one would be so rash as to ignore the words of God, would he? *“The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?”* (Amos 3:8). The message of God made a herdsman into a preacher in the case of Amos.

God's message is an indication of loving concern. Why would He speak if there was no need? Why would He warn if repentance was impossible? His message is an invitation to seek Him and know His blessings.

**B. God extends His personal choice toward us.** *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth”* (verse 2).

What a privilege it is to be known of God! It does not mean that He is merely aware of us. It means that His knowledge is personal and intimate. The same word is used in Genesis 4:1, *“Adam knew Eve his wife.”* It is used throughout the Old Testament to mean personal involvement and intimate knowledge. God knew Israel in a more intimate way than He knew any other nation on earth. He said, *“Thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth”* (Deuteronomy 14:2). What a privilege!

**C. God warns us against unbelief and disobedience.** With increased opportunity comes increased responsibility. The *“you only have I known”* is followed by *“therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities”* (verse 2). He sets before us blessings and cursings and invites us to choose (Deuteronomy 30:19). His judgments on sin are terrible (Leviticus 26:14-20). His blessings on faithfulness are wonderful.

## II. SHUN UNBELIEF

Some people seem to enjoy doubting God. They look on their doubts as crosses to be borne rather than sinful rebellion against God. They tend to report how hard it is for them to trust, as if it were a merit. To trust God is wisdom and to doubt Him is the extreme of foolishness.

**A. The discipline of God is to turn us to Him.** God reminded Israel of how He had punished her for sin: *“I have overthrown some of you, . . . and*

*ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning*” (Amos 4:11). He had given them famine, drought, insect invasion, and pestilence. Why did God do that? Did He not love the nation? He sent the judgments because of His love!

“*Yet ye have not returned unto me,*” God lamented (Amos 4:6, 9, 10, 11). That indicates that all the judgments He sent were disciplines intended to turn sinners from their way. “*The LORD your God . . . is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil*” (Joel 2:13). He did not enjoy punishing His people. But He made them suffer in their sins to turn them from worse suffering ahead. Our God of love wounds to heal and always disciplines in love.

**B. The wicked unbelief of humanity flies in the face of the loving invitation of God.** “*Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*” (Amos 4:12).

There is mercy in God's warnings of judgment. He sent Jonah to preach to Nineveh a message of coming judgment, but for the purpose of sparing the city if she repented. He sent Isaiah to Hezekiah with the message, “*Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live*” (II Kings 20:1), because He was willing to spare the monarch's life. He has sent warnings of hell and eternal judgment to you because He is willing to forgive and save you.

**C. The majesty of God calls people to humility before Him.** Amos 4:13 is a beautiful description of the great God with whom we have to do.

1. He is a God of power. He has formed the creation! “*Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, . . . the earth, . . . the seas, . . . and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee*” (Nehemiah 9:6). All that exists is the work of His hands (Psalm 102:25). We know that by faith and we trust Him who has made all (Hebrews 11:3).

2. He is a God of knowledge who “*declareth unto man what is his thought*” (Amos 4:13). He sees our ways and counts our steps (Job 31:4). He numbers the stars and names each one (Psalm 147:4). He knows our position, observes every act, understands each thought, hears each word, and holds us in His hand (Psalm 139:1-6). How foolish is unbelief! How wise is humble faith in such a God of knowledge.

3. He is a God of sovereignty who “*treadeth upon the high places of the earth*” (Amos 4:13). He inhabits eternity and His name is Holy (Isaiah 57:15). “*The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength*” (Psalm 93:1). Majesty belongs to Him, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is His alone (I Chronicles 29:10-13). He is God!

4. He is a God whose name is “*the LORD, the God of hosts.*” His name reflects His nature. As “*LORD,*” He loves us and saves us. As “*God of hosts,*” He governs us and preserves us. We bow in humble faith before such a God.

### III. UNBELIEF CURSES

Amos 6:1-6 lists five evils which arise from a heart of unbelief. Those principles are as true today as they were in any day.

**A. Unbelief produces false religious security.** “*Woe to them that are at ease in Zion*” (verse 1). All kinds of religious observances are but increased sin without faith (Isaiah 1:10-20; Hosea 6:6).

**B. Unbelief places confidence in human beings** (verses 1, 2). Look at the nations who trusted in people. They fell! “*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man*” (Psalm 118:8).

**C. Unbelief results in an approval of sin** (verse 3). “*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*” (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

**D. Unbelief produces an emphasis on sensual pleasure.** Delighting in leisure, wealth, music, and drinking while ignoring the plight of the needy is a sign of apostasy (verses 4-6).

**E. Unbelief results in unconcern for injustice and suffering** (verse 6). Interest is centered on oneself and personal privileges. The love of God produces benevolence.

God loves us and wants the best for us. He calls us to fellowship with Him in holiness. The discipline we receive from Him is always to turn us to holy and profitable ways.

Let us stand in awe at such a majestic God, having confidence in no other person or thing. Confidence in Him is a safe foundation. Confidence in man to the neglect of God is a sure way to stumble.

### Questions

1. Who was Amos?
2. How did he become a prophet?
3. How can we hear what God has spoken (verse 1)?
4. How does spiritual opportunity increase responsibility (verse 2)?