

Key Passages	Amos 5:20-24 Amos 9:11-15
9 th October 2002	THE FAILURE LOVE & JUSTICE
Main Points	<p>Amos preached to the kingdom of Israel about their lack of justice and loving-kindness, which would bring the judgement of God on the nation.</p> <p>WHO WAS AMOS?</p> <p>The name Amos means 'burden-bearer'; in this case the burden of delivering judgement to the rebellious nation of Israel. He was a shepherd from the southern kingdom of Judah and a dresser of sycamore figs, a fruit eaten by the poor. He was therefore unlikely to be a wealthy man.</p> <p>In terms of religious training, unlike his near contemporary Isaiah, who was a priest, he probably had no religious qualifications.</p> <p>TO WHOM DID AMOS PREACH?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His first six messages concerned the sins of the surrounding Gentile nations. This must have been pleasing to his listeners. • Amos then goes on to condemn Edom and Moab, Israel's 'cousins' descended from Esau or Lot. This is nearer to home, but his listeners would probably still have been nodding in agreement. • Next on the list is Israel's sister nation, Judah. This is still acceptable to his audience. • Finally, he comes to Israel itself (Amos 2:6); judgement is coming on them for repeated and flagrant cruelty and injustice. It is strong stuff and would have taken much courage to preach. <p>WHAT DID AMOS PREACH?</p> <p>Even though Amos' message was preached over 2,000 years ago it is still relevant because it is spoken to God's chosen people, the 'church' of his day (Amos 3:1-2). The key points of his message include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who speak up for God are being gagged. • The luxurious lifestyle of the wealth is condemned (Amos 3:15-4:1). • People loved making money so much, they couldn't wait for services or festivals to end so they could get back to business (Amos 8: 4-6). • People are being cheated and enslaved. • Their worship had become obnoxious to God because of the hypocrisy of their lifestyle. • As a result of all this, the day of the Lord will come on them. • However, there is light in the midst of all the darkness; there will be a future for the people of Israel. In Amos 9:11-15 God makes three promises; 'I will raise up', 'I will restore' 'I will plant'. These promises come to those who seek good and seek God.

Discussion questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Hebrews 12:6. It's easy to point the finger to judge others, but no-one likes being judged. Discuss what this might mean for us as individuals and as a church. 2. In hard economic times, we all want to buy at the cheapest possible price. Discuss the impact this might have on producers in this country and abroad. 3. Does your Monday to Saturday life reflect your worship in church on Sunday. Discuss any areas where you feel there might be a discrepancy. 4. Read Amos 9:11-15. What areas of hope do you feel there are for us individually, as a church, as a nation. Can you give any instances of where God has 'raised up', 'restored' or 'planted'.
This week	Reflect on how you might 'seek good and seek God' in your everyday life.