

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Amos the Prophet

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: June 15

IN BRIEF

Saint Amos the Prophet

Third of the twelve minor prophets of the Bible, herdsman of Tekoa and prophet of justice.

Feast day	June 15
Born	8th century BC, Tekoa, kingdom of Judah
Era	8th century BC

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Amos, Prophet of Justice

Novena to Saint Amos

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Amos the Prophet

Saint Amos is a prophet of the Old Testament, the third of the twelve "minor prophets" of the Bible. A herdsman and farmer from Tekoa, in Judah, he was sent to the northern kingdom of Israel around the middle of the 8th century BC to denounce social injustice and worship without conversion. The first prophet whose words were gathered into a book, he remains the great biblical voice of justice. The Roman Martyrology remembers him on June 15.

Who was Saint Amos?

Everything we know about Amos comes from the book that bears his name. He presents himself as a countryman: "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees" (Amos 7:14). He did not belong to any guild of professional prophets. His authority came from a personal call: "The Lord took me from following the flock."

The book places him in the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel, "two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1). That earthquake remained so famous that the prophet Zechariah still mentions it centuries later. Historians date his mission to around 760-750 BC.

Key dates in the life of Amos

- **8th century BC**: Herdsman and dresser of sycamore figs in Tekoa, south of Bethlehem, in the kingdom of Judah.
- **Around 760-750 BC**: Called by God, he preaches in the kingdom of Israel, especially in Bethel and Samaria.
- **At Bethel**: The priest Amaziah accuses him of conspiracy before the king and orders him to go back to Judah.

- **Afterward**: His oracles are collected in writing and form the Book of Amos.
- **722 BC**: Samaria falls to Assyria, as he had foretold for the northern kingdom.

A prosperous and unjust kingdom

In the time of Amos, the kingdom of Israel enjoyed a period of peace and wealth. Jeroboam II had extended its borders, trade was flourishing, and the rich built themselves winter houses and summer houses decorated with ivory. But this prosperity benefited only a few. The poor were crushed by debt and sold "for a pair of sandals" (Amos 2:6); the courts were corrupt; merchants cheated with false scales.

At the same time, the sanctuaries were full. People offered sacrifices, sang and celebrated feasts. This is precisely what Amos denounced most forcefully: worship that excuses itself from justice. In the name of God, he declared: "I hate, I despise your feasts" (Amos 5:21). And he added what would become one of the most quoted verses of the Bible: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

English speakers know this verse well: Martin Luther King Jr. quoted it in his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963.

The prophet of Bethel

Amos preached at Bethel, the great royal sanctuary of the North. The priest Amaziah sent word to the king that Amos was conspiring against him, and ordered the prophet to leave the kingdom and go prophesy in the land of Judah (Amos 7:10-13). Amos answered with the story of his vocation: he had not chosen this calling himself; the Lord had taken him from behind his flock.

The book does not say what became of him afterward. An ancient Jewish tradition, recorded in the *Lives of the Prophets*, says that he died from violence he had suffered and was buried in his hometown of Tekoa; this account cannot be verified.

The message of the Book of Amos

The Book of Amos is short, only nine chapters, but it has great poetic power. It opens with oracles against the neighboring nations, then turns suddenly against Israel itself: the chosen people is not exempt from justice; on the contrary, it is more responsible. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

Amos also describes five visions: the locusts, the fire, the plumb line, the basket of summer fruit, and the Lord standing beside the altar. He announces a new kind of famine: "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). And the book ends with a promise: God will raise up "the booth of David that is fallen," and his people will rebuild the ruined cities.

The New Testament remembers him. In the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Stephen quotes the Book of Amos in his speech, and Saint James, at the Council of Jerusalem, takes up the promise of the rebuilt booth of David to show that the Gentiles too are called to salvation (Acts 15:16-17).

A prophet for our time

The Catholic liturgy reads Amos several times during the year, especially on the Sundays when the Church reflects on money and the poor. His criticism of the careless rich, who "lie upon beds of ivory" (Amos 6:4), and of dishonest merchants remains strikingly relevant. The social teaching of the Church, which recalls that faith cannot be separated from justice, stands in the line of prophets like him.

Why is Saint Amos invoked for justice?

Amos is not the official patron of any group, but Christians naturally turn to him as the prophet of social justice. He reminds us that God is not indifferent to the way we treat the weakest. He does not condemn prayer, but a prayer that changes nothing in our lives. A simple herdsman, he dared to speak before the powerful because he knew he had been sent.

You can pray to him for all who defend the poor, for judges, for business and economic leaders, and for the courage to speak the truth yourself. To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Amos and the novena to Saint Amos.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Amos in art

Like the other prophets, Amos usually appears as a bearded man holding a scroll, the sign of the word of God he received. In Russian icons, he is shown as an old man with an unrolled scroll. Western art, especially stained glass, often depicts him as a shepherd with a staff, recalling that the Lord called him while he was following his flock.

Where to pray to Saint Amos

- **Tekoa** (West Bank): the site of his hometown, southeast of Bethlehem.
- **Bethel**: the place where he preached, north of Jerusalem.
- In any church, by meditating on his book, especially at the Masses where it is read.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Amos, Prophet of Justice

The most beautiful prayers connected with the prophet Amos are his own words, which the Church proclaims every year in the liturgy. You will find two of them below with their biblical reference, followed by an original prayer to Saint Amos for justice, honesty at work and care for the poor.

Two words from the Book of Amos to meditate on

> *"I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"*

Source: Book of Amos, chapter 7, verses 14-15, read at Mass on the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B).

> *"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."*

Source: Book of Amos, chapter 5, verse 24.

Prayer to Saint Amos, prophet of justice

Saint Amos, herdsman of Tekoa, whom the Lord took from following the flock, help me to hear his call in the middle of my everyday work.

You denounced those who crushed the poor and cheated with false scales: give me an upright heart in my work, in what I buy and in how I use my money. Make me attentive to those who are forgotten.

You reminded the people that God does not want worship without justice: may my prayer transform my life, and may my life become a prayer.

Support those who defend the weakest, judges, leaders and all who must speak a hard truth. I entrust to you my intention: (name it in silence).

Obtain for us a hunger and thirst for hearing the words of the Lord, and let justice roll down among us like waters. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

The Roman Martyrology remembers the prophet Amos on June 15. His words take on special weight on the Sundays when the liturgy reads his book, and on days devoted to the poor or to justice, such as the World Day of the Poor in November.

You can also pray to Saint Amos:

- before an important decision at work or about money;
- when you have to speak a difficult truth;
- for those who work in courts, government or business;
- for people living in poverty or crushed by debt.

To go further, pray the novena to Saint Amos or read the life of the prophet Amos.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Amos

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the Book of Amos. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on the eve of his commemoration on June 15, begin on June 6. You can also pray it at any time of year, especially when you are facing a question of justice, money or honesty in your own life.

How to pray this novena

Each day, entrust your intention to God, read the short meditation and, if you can, the passage of Amos it refers to. Then say the prayer of the day, followed by an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. The small act suggested for each day helps you carry the prayer into your life. If you miss a day, simply continue.

The Book of Amos is short: you can read it in full during these nine days, one chapter a day. Let the prophet's strong words shake you gently, and let them lead you to concrete acts of justice and mercy.

Day 1: Called from behind the flock

Amos was neither a priest nor a professional prophet. He was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs when the Lord called him (Amos 7:14-15). God does not wait for us to be important before he speaks to us.

Prayer: Lord, you called Amos in the middle of his daily work. Call me too, right where I am, and give me a ready heart. Saint Amos, pray for me. Amen.

Today: Offer your work of the day to God in the morning.

Day 2: The Lord roars from Zion

The Book of Amos opens with a strong image: "The Lord roars from Zion" (Amos 1:2). The word of God is not a soft background noise; it can wake us up and shake our habits.

Prayer: Lord, wake me up from my spiritual sleep and let your word reach the depths of my heart. Amen.

Today: Read the first chapter of the Book of Amos.

Day 3: Sold for a pair of sandals

Amos denounces those who "sell the needy for a pair of sandals" (Amos 2:6). Behind every injustice there is a person whose dignity is trampled. God sees each one.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the people around me whose dignity is ignored, and give me the courage to respect and defend them. Amen.

Today: Greet with attention someone you usually pass by without seeing.

Day 4: Honest scales

The merchants of Israel cheated with false scales and could not wait for the Sabbath to end so they could start selling again (Amos 8:5). Honesty in everyday life is already a form of faith.

Prayer: Lord, make me honest in my work, my words and my use of money, even in small things. Amen.

Today: Check that you owe nothing to anyone, and settle any small debt or promise.

Day 5: Beds of ivory

Amos warns those who "lie upon beds of ivory" and are not grieved over the ruin of their people (Amos 6:4-6). Comfort is not a sin, but indifference is.

Prayer: Lord, free me from the indifference that closes my heart to the suffering of others. Amen.

Today: Give something to a charity that helps people in poverty.

Day 6: Let justice roll down

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). God does not reject our prayer, but he wants it to flow into justice in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, may my prayer and my life become one, and may your justice flow through my actions. Amen.

Today: Ask yourself what injustice in your surroundings you could help to repair.

Day 7: The plumb line

In one of his visions, Amos sees the Lord holding a plumb line (Amos 7:7-8). God measures our lives not to crush us but to set us upright again.

Prayer: Lord, look at my life with your truth and straighten what is crooked in me. Amen.

Today: Make an honest examination of conscience, and if you can, go to confession.

Day 8: A hunger for the word

Amos announces a famine "not of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). Our world, so full of words, often hungers for the one Word that gives life.

Prayer: Lord, give me a real hunger for your word and the joy of feeding on it every day. Amen.

Today: Spend fifteen minutes in silence with the Gospel of the day.

Day 9: The booth of David raised up

The Book of Amos ends with hope: God will raise up the fallen booth of David, and his people will rebuild the ruined cities (Amos 9:11-14). Saint James saw in this promise the call of all nations to salvation.

Prayer: Lord, raise up what is fallen in my life and in our world, and make me a builder of your Kingdom of justice and peace. Amen.

Today: Do one concrete thing to restore a relationship or a situation that is broken.

Closing prayer

Saint Amos, prophet of justice, you dared to speak the truth before the powerful because you knew you had been sent by God. Intercede for me and for the intention I have entrusted to you during these nine days. Obtain for me an upright heart, a prayer that changes my life, and the courage to defend the weakest. May justice roll down among us like waters, for the glory of God and the good of all. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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