

# AMOS

SEEK THE LORD AND LIVE

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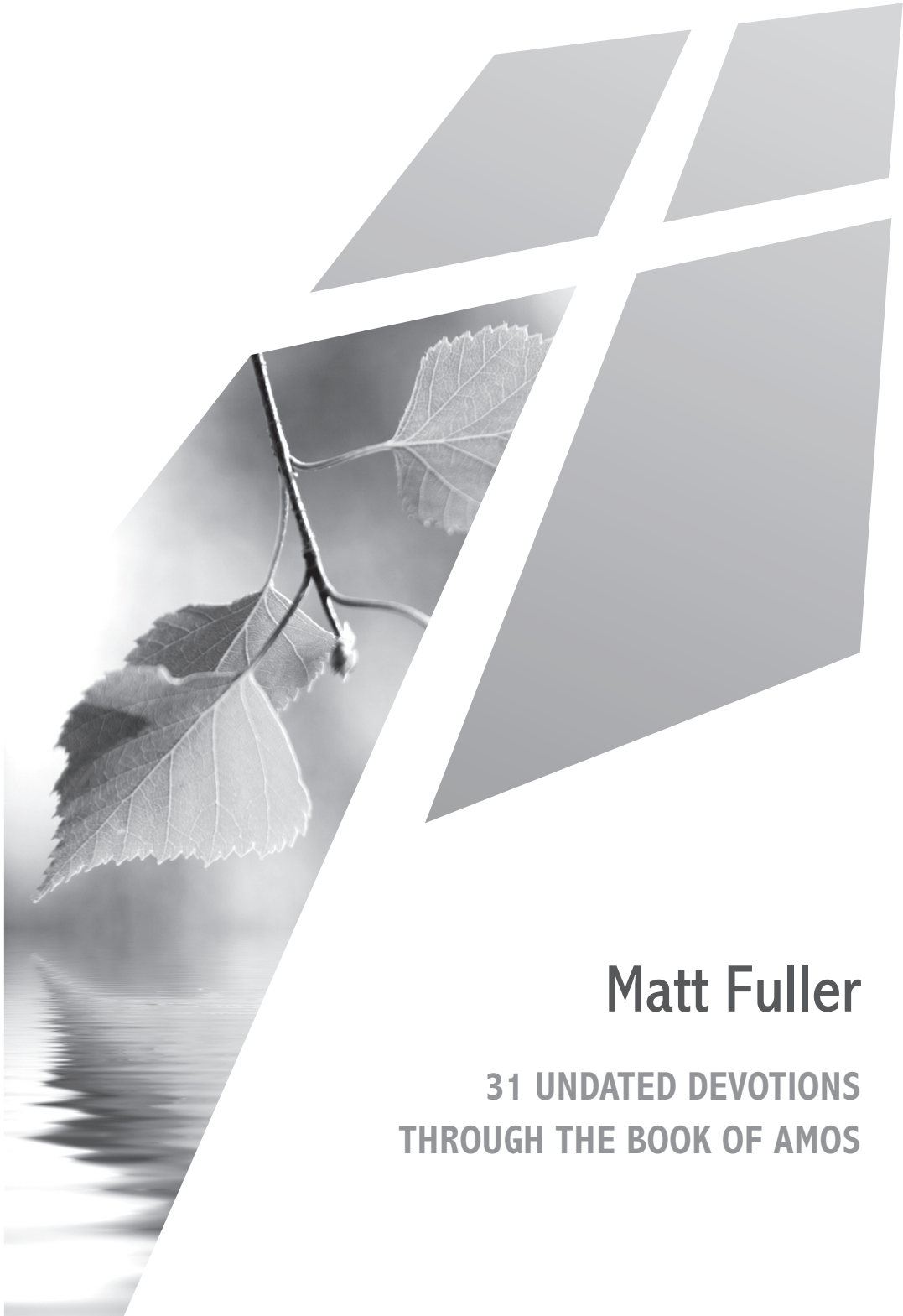
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**31 UNDATED DEVOTIONS  
THROUGH THE BOOK OF AMOS**



If you go to a modern zoo, lions are one of the most impressive creatures to see. Normally they're lying around in the sun, not doing a lot. Yet if you get to see them tearing away at some raw meat with their enormous teeth, it's a magnificent sight.

However, if you somehow found yourself *inside* the enclosure with nothing between you and a hungry lion, then 'magnificent' might not be the thought running through your head. If an adult male lion shook its mane and let out a full-throated roar, then more likely it would be 'Uh-oh' or some more terrified equivalent that you would utter.

The book of Amos reveals the Living God as a roaring lion (v. 2), a picture that sets the tone of the book (also see 3:8). It's an uncomfortable image because He is roaring *against His own people*. Amos is a book designed to shake believers out of their moral complacency. Amos reminds us that the Lord is not a domestic cat who purrs when we bother to meet with Him; He is a lion who roars.

Even though it is placed third in the 'minor prophets', Amos was the first prophet of Israel who had his words written down in a book. 1:1 reveals that he was preaching around 760 BC to the northern kingdom of Israel. You can read what was going on at the time in 2 Kings 14:25–28. The headlines were that Israel had a popular monarch, Jeroboam II, who had ruled for nearly 40 years and brought great prosperity to them. They were wealthy and also one of the strongest military powers of the day. The people had every reason to feel comfortable with life. But they therefore neglected the Lord.

## REFLECTION

*Do you find that it's easy, when things are going well, to shrink God down to a convenient size for you?*

**E**ven though the Lord's complaint is against Israel, He starts off by proclaiming that He will judge every nation. God's throne was located in Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah, but He's the sovereign ruler over *all the earth* and wants all to recognise that.

The repeated drumbeat is obvious when you read this passage:

- 'For three sins of ... even for four, I will not turn back my wrath'
- 'Because ...'
- 'I will send fire ... that will consume'

'For three ... even for four' probably is an equivalent expression to our 'this is the final straw'. The Lord is saying, 'Enough! The time has come for justice to fall.'

The sins of these pagan nations are what we would call 'crimes against humanity'. Damascus has 'threshed' humans (v. 3), that is dragged heavy iron rollers over people to crush them. Gaza 'took captive whole communities' and

sold them as slaves (v. 6). You can almost imagine the screaming mother saying, 'Please leave the children.' Tyre and Edom are similarly culpable (vv. 9, 11). Ammon 'ripped open' pregnant women (v. 13), and so killed two people, merely 'to extend his borders.' Moab burned alive Edom's king (2:1).

Here is comfort the next time you see some horrific crime against humanity described on TV: the Lord sees; the Lord knows; the Lord will bring justice. That's an enormous relief.

## REFLECTION

*Praise God that  
He will judge all  
wickedness. The  
dictators of history  
who have died in luxury  
and comfort, having  
slaughtered thousands,  
will receive their  
punishment.*