

CONCISE BIBLE NOTES

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET AMOS

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell



The Prophet Amos
Gustave Doré

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

AMOS

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| Date: | 8 th Century BC |
| Themes: | Personal affluence, social exploitation, and religious ritual without spiritual reality |
| Divine Author: | God the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) |
| Author: | Amos, a herdsman |
| Setting: | Ministry in the Northern Kingdom of Israel |
| Time Period: | The Golden Age of Hebrew Prophecy |

A Simple Outline

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| I. Eight Judgments | Amos 1-2 |
| II. Three Discourses of Doom | Amos 3-6 |
| III. Five Visions | Amos 7-9 |

A Prophet to Northern Israel 8th Century BC

The Five Visions of Amos

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| • The Vision of the Locusts | Amos 7:1-3 |
| • The Vision of a Great Fire Devouring the Land | Amos 7:4-6 |
| • The Vision of the Plumb Line | Amos 7:7-9 |
| • The Vision of the Basket of Summer Fruit | Amos 8:1-3 |
| • The Vision of the Lord Standing beside the Altar | Amos 9:1f |

The Oracles Against Eight Nations

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| • Damascus | Amos 1:3-5 |
| • Gaza | Amos 1:6-8 |
| • Tyre | Amos 1:9-10 |
| • Edom | Amos 1:11-12 |
| • Ammon | Amos 1:13-15 |
| • Moab | Amos 2:1-3 |
| • Judah | Amos 2:4-5 |
| • Israel | Amos 2:6-16 |

The Divine Pattern of Amos' Prophetic Utterances

- Each message begins with the words, “*Thus saith the LORD.*”
- There is an indictment.
- The punishment is then set forth.
- Each message concludes with a refrain, “*saith the LORD*”, in order to penetrate the ears of those who hear.

The Transgressions of Eight Nations

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| • The Transgressions of Damascus | Amos 1:3 |
| • The Transgression of Gaza | Amos 1:6 |
| • The Transgressions of Tyre | Amos 1:9 |
| • The Transgression of Edom | Amos 1:11 |
| • The Transgressions of Ammon | Amos 1:13 |
| • The Transgressions of Moab | Amos 2:1 |
| • The Transgressions of Judah | Amos 2:4 |
| • The Transgressions of Israel | Amos 2:6 |

Three Great Fundamental Truths in Amos

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| • The vindication of the justice of God | Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:5,6 |
| • The condemnation of elaborate but insincere worship | Amos 5:21, 23; |
| • The stress upon human responsibility | Amos 3:2 |

AMOS 1



Eight Judgments Amos 1:1-2:16

1 The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

1:1. Amos (burden-bearer) is one of four men who ministered in the Golden Age of Hebrew Prophecy. Hosea and Amos ministered to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, while Isaiah and Micah ministered to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Amos had a good understanding of history and geography. He was skilled in the Hebrew language.

1:1. Amos ministered in The Golden Age of Hebrew Prophecy. In Israel there were the prophets Amos and Hosea; in Judah there was the prophet Isaiah and Micah as well. Amos was a herdsman and a grower of sycamore fig trees (Amos 7:14, 15).

1:1. herdmen. sheep herders. In addition to be a herdsman, Amos was a dresser of sycamore trees, which means he knew a lot about pruning and cultivation of fruit. *Amos 7:14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:*

1:1. Tekoa was located six miles south of Bethlehem, twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and eighteen miles west of the Dead Sea. It was an area well known for herding sheep. Being from Tekoa, Amos was a native of the southern nation of Judah though he ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel.

1:1. Uzziah (792-740 BC) was the ruler in the southern kingdom of Judah.

1:1. Jeroboam (793 – 753 BC), a reference to Jeroboam II, a gifted king of Israel.

1:1. two years before the earthquake. There is nothing known in secular history about this earthquake other than what is recorded in the sacred Word of God. The effects of the earthquake were remembered for centuries afterward. Zechariah speaks of it in his writing. *Zechariah 14:5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.*

2 And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

1:2. And he said. Amos was a man with a distinct message to the northern kingdom of Israel. "At the call of God he left his home in Judea as a mere layman to proclaim a hostile message in the proud capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Without any status as a recognized prophet, he braved the prejudice of the Ephraimite public to carry out faithfully his commission from God. A man of rugged convictions and iron will, he could not be deflected from his purpose even by the highest functionary of the Samaritan hierarchy" (Gleason L. Archer, Jr.).

1:2. LORD. Notice that the word "LORD" is in capital letters. This is the tetragrammaton (lit. four words) which is used as the sacred name for Yahweh (Jehovah) who is the holy, self-existent One, the covenant keeping God. You and I are dependent upon Him, but He is dependent upon no one. He is self-existing. He transcends matter, time, and eternity. He is an awesome God and He roars. Amos says that God is like a lion, a pouncing ferocious lion that has come forth to destroy its prey. It is a terrifying picture that Amos presents and is designed to induce the heart to fear God.

Amos is not the only prophet to present such an image. Joel did the same. *Joel 3:16 The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.* The love of God is never to be subordinated to the justice of God. God is like a pouncing lion that comes forth to destroy His prey. He is the righteous and holy God, and when His Law is broken, there is a terrible price to pay.

1:2. Zion. God speaks from the Holy Temple, from the Holy of Holies, from the place where wrath and mercy meet reflected in the Ark of the Covenant. There is His Word and there is where the blood of wrath is poured out. Life must be carried out according to the known will of God or else there will be judgment. And so the prophet speaks of Zion and of course ultimately of Calvary. There at Golgotha God roared at sin and judged it in the person of His own dear Son. The shepherds mourn and the summit of Carmel dries up.

1:2. Carmel. The reference is to Mount Carmel which is located at one of the heads of the promontories in the northwest part of the land.

The Sin of Barbarity
Prophecy against Damascus
Amos 1:3-5

3 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron:

1:3. Thus saith the LORD. This repeated formula becomes a solemn indictment of those who are named (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13; 2:1, 4, 6, 11, 12; 5:3, 4, 17).

1:3. For three transgressions...and for four. See Amos 1:6, 9, 11; 2:1, 4, 6. This is a figure of speech for a large indefinite number of crimes committed. Each accusation involves someone in the circle of the land. Amos speaks against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phoenicians, and the Edomites. Finally Amos will have something to say about Judah and that will upset the people there.

1:3. Three transgressions. Damascus, the capital of Syria, a city state to the northeast of Israel, was prosperous, pious, and pitiless. A pitiless heart comes from a hardened heart and a hardened heart is the result of the Fall. Due to the Fall the heart of man has become totally depraved. Depravity is the corruption of the total human nature, though not the total corruption of human nature. "We may illustrate it by a beautiful clock, a beautiful antique clock that has the loveliest looking hands, the loveliest frame, a beautiful piece of furniture to put in your hallway. And, furthermore, if you open up the back, the works are outstanding. They look beautiful. They are clean. They are nice. They do everything but keep time. That is a picture of a totally depraved clock, beautiful, lovely. It just won't keep time. So when we say men are totally depraved, we mean that the whole nature has been corrupted but not totally corrupted but our minds and everything else are affected by sin" (S. Lewis Johnson).

1:3. *the punishment* thereof. The prophet is speaking of the punishment that God has determined should come to Damascus. The punishment was fixed in the mind of God and He was resolute it would come to pass.

1:3. threshed Gilead. Located north of the Jordan River, Gilead lay below the northern kingdom. It was this transgression against Gilead that exhausted the grace and longsuffering of God so that He was determined to discipline Syria.

4 But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

1:4. Hazael. According to prophecy, Hazael was a general who was divinely appointed to rule as king over Syria. The prophetic announcement of this was given by Elisha in 2 Kings 8:7-15. All that the prophet warned about Hazael came to pass. He was a cruel man, a self-righteous hypocrite, and a murderer. He killed Benhadad by suffocating him. And then, he threshed Gilead. “If that is a literal threshing, that means that the instrument with which they separated the wheat from the chaff, a wooden fledge-like instrument that had also iron on it and in some cases even had iron spokes upon it. And they took the children of Israel they captured and they ran the sled over them” (S. Lewis Johnson).

1:4. Ben-hadad. There were several “Hadads” for the term is not a personal term. Hadad was the name of a storm god and so Ben-hadad means “son of the storm god”. Hadad was a name given to several people in the Old Testament. Hazael had a son named Ben-hadad and this may be the son referred to, or it may be a later one.

1:4. the palaces. the citadels.

5 I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD.

1:5. the plain of Aven (valley of iniquity).

1:5. Eden, or Beth-eden, was a name of an ancient city.

1:5. Kir. The people of Syria will return from exile to Kir, the place from which they originally came. The prophecy is that the people of the northern kingdom, called Israel, will go back to the place from which they had migrated to their present place of dwelling.

Special Note.

It is possible that Kir should be identified with Ur of the Chaldees.

1:5. saith the Lord. Here is the end of the first prophecy.

Prophecy against Gaza
Amos 1:6-8

6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom:

1:6. Gaza (stronghold) was one of the five principle cities of the Philistines. The southernmost city of Canaan, Gaza was situated on the great caravan route between Mesopotamia and Egypt, at the junction of the trade route from Arabia. This location made Gaza an ideal rest stop and a commercial center for merchants and travelers.

Gaza was originally inhabited by the Avim, a people who were replaced by the Caphtorim (Deuteronomy 2:23). Gaza was allotted to the tribe of Judah by Joshua (Joshua 15:47); but it was not immediately occupied (Judges 1:18), because the Anakim were still present in the city (Joshua 11:22; 13:3). Soon afterwards the Philistines recovered Gaza (Judges 13:1). Here the mighty Samson was humiliated by being forced to grind grain as a blinded prisoner (Judges 16:21). In a final victorious performance, Samson brought down the house of the pagan god Dagon, destroying many Philistines (Judges 16:23-31).

Although Solomon ruled over Gaza, not until the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, was the decisive blow dealt to the Philistines (2 Kings 18:8). Through the prophet Amos, God threatened Gaza with destruction by fire for its sins (Amos 1:6-7). This prophecy was fulfilled by the army of Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., when Gaza was destroyed and her inhabitants massacred (Zephaniah 2:4; Zechariah 9:5). In the New Testament the evangelist Philip was directed by God to preach the gospel along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26). On this road the Ethiopian eunuch professed faith in Jesus and was baptized (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

1:6. For three transgressions...and for four. This was a favorite expression of the prophet.

- Amos 1:3
- Amos 1:6
- Amos 1:9
- Amos 1:11
- Amos 2:1
- Amos 2:4
- Amos 2:6

1:6. the whole captivity. the entire population. This does not mean that every person without exception was taken into captivity, but that every type of person was forced into exile, men, women, children etc.

7 But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof:

8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

1:8. Ashdod...Ashkelon...Ekron were cities of the Philistines. While God raised up the Philistines to discipline His people, God also held the Philistines responsible for their actions. When they went farther than they should have in warring with other nations, God judged the Philistines.

Prophecy against Tyre
Amos 1:9-10

9 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:

1:9. transgressions of Tyrus. It is instructive to note that most of the nations whom Amos addressed [the Phoenicians, the Syrians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines] did not have Moses, the Law, or the prophets. They did not have gospel privileges. Nevertheless, they had responsibility. “Every person upon the face of this earth is responsible to the Lord God. The very fact that God has created you in his image and the very fact that, in this creation about us, displayed his glory, his mightiness, majesty, and even though your conscience, and your mind, and your emotions, and your will, have been affected by the Fall, there still is enough of the divine light given to you so that you are guilty before God. The Apostle Paul plainly states that in the New Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament assume it. Amos assumes it here. These kingdoms were guilty before the Lord God” (S. Lewis Johnson).

1:9. the whole captivity. the entire population.

1:9. the brotherly covenant. The reference may be to the trade agreement that existed between Syria and Israel. The Phoenicians broke the trade agreement by trading in human flesh. Because they did not honor their agreement, they came under the judgment of God. God expects people to honor contracts: financial contracts, marriage contracts, and political contracts.

10 But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.

Prophecy against Edom
Amos 1:11-12

11 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:

1:11. Edom. The Edomites were descendants of Esau which hated the Israelites. The Edomites rejoiced at the plight of Israel (Psalm 137), and beyond that, tried to kill them. The modern day conflict between the Arabs and the Israelites is rooted in history. Today, eighty million Arabs still want to exterminate Israel and take from them a place to live. The Arabs have an unnatural and persistent hatred of the Jews in their hearts.

Their hearts are poisoned by bitterness and inflaming bile that can only be attributed to Satan. Truly it can be said of them, in relation to their desire to commit genocide on Israel, “*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*” (John 8:44). Another spiritual reason for the Arab-Israeli hostility is found in the doctrine of divine election. Only to Israel, and not to Esau, was it said, *Amos 3:2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*

“*Ye are of your father the devil and the lust of your father you will do*”

12 But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

1:12. But I will send a fire upon Teman. It is possible that this prophesy was fulfilled when the Maccabees, in the years 150 BC, destroyed the Edomites.

Prophecy against Ammon
Amos 1:13-15

13 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:

1:13. they ripped up the women with child. The Ammonites had no compassion for others, including the unborn child. In 1973, America, legally, stopped having compassion for the unborn child when *Roe v. Wade* became the law of the land. The slaughter of the innocent began in earnest in America. Over one million babies are killed each year. Now the reason *why* the Ammonites assaulted the women and children was “they might enlarge their border.” Their will always be a rationale for the evil that is done to others. In *Roe v Wade* the rationale was to free women of the burden of an unwanted pregnancy.

14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind:

15 And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD.

1:15. “The assumption underlying these messages is these nations are accountable to God for their social actions. Nazi Germany’s actions are not something committed a generation or so ago. They are today before the Lord God. Russia’s actions of the past, Stalin’s purges, things like this, as well as perhaps the events which led to the overthrow of the czars, all of the evil of that particular era is present to the Lord God.

The things that have happened in the United States that are crimes and many have happened because our nature is just like the nature of the Russians. Our nature is just like the nature of all men. We are all depraved. They are today before the Lord of God" (S. Lewis Johnson).

Special Note.

If you go out over these nations around Israel, you will discover this about them. Every one of these nations had a religion. Every one of these nations worshipped a god. They all had their local deities. They are religious people. But the prophet says they are all guilty of sinful worship. Why? Because their gods were false gods, and false worship always leads to sinful acts.

And that, unfortunately, is the problem with the professing Christian church in the United States of America. We have a great deal of profession of Christianity, but the gods of religious men today have nothing to do with the triune God of the Bible, manifested in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And God the Son, who is co-equal with God the Father, has offered an atoning sacrifice for sinners through the shedding of His blood in His incarnate life. Salvation only through Christ.

May God, in His marvelous grace, enlighten you as to your own sinful condition, and also point you to the love and mercy of the true God in the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ through whom you may have eternal life. I, as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, call upon you to believe in Him, trust in Him, acknowledge your lost condition, flee to Him for the redemption and the forgiveness of sins which He freely offers. Come to Christ. Believe in Him. Trust in Him. May God give you grace to come (S. Lewis Johnson).

AMOS 2

Prophesy against Moab Amos 2:1-3

1 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:

2:1. because. There is a divine cause and effect for the punishment of sin. When the Moabites opened the tomb to burn the bones of the king of Edom in lime, they sealed their own doom.

Special Note.

By way of personal application, remember this. The Lord does not forget sins. He did not forget the sins of Edom, Ammon, or Moab and He will not forget the sins of America. He will not forget your sins or mine. “The worst is yet to come for those who enter into eternity apart from the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One can see a thread that follows through which is very, I think very clear. There is, first of all, unbelief, unbelief issues and rebellion against God and rebellion against God issues in the specific immoralities that are found in our society. People like to say to us, sin is desiring to be autonomous. Sin is selfishness. Sin is immorality. No, no. No, fundamentally sin is unbelief. Unbelief, that is unbelief in the revelation of God and unbelief in the revelation of God leads to rebellion. That rebellion may manifest itself in different ways. It may manifest itself in selfishness, self-pleasing, the desire to be autonomous. These are manifestations of fundamental unwillingness to rest one’s being for time and eternity upon the word of God and ultimately as in the case of Cain and Abel, it issues in acts of immorality” (S. Lewis Johnson). Come to Christ and rest on Him for the cleansing that He alone can give.

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord,
And He shall sustain thee.
He never will suffer the righteous to fall;
He is at thy right hand.

Thy mercy, Lord, is great
and far above the heav’ns;
Let none be made ashamed
that wait upon Thee.”

2 But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kirioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, *and* with the sound of the trumpet:

3 And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD.

Prophesy against Judah
Amos 2:4-5

4 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked: .

2:4. commandments. statutes. The reference is to God's individual perceptive regulations.

Four Transgressions of Israel

- They had despised the law of the LORD.
- They had not kept His commandments.
- They lied causing them to go astray.
- They had not learned from the transgressions of their fathers.

Special Note.

The truth is the safeguard of the church. When the truth is abandoned individuals go astray doctrinally, morally, and socially.

The sins of Israel multiplied. One sin unfolded into another so that the Law of the Lord was hated, His commandments were not honored, social lying was acceptable, and the negative example of previous generations were not avoided. The Spanish philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist, George Santayana (1863-1952) noted that, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

5 But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

2:5. But I will send a fire. In divine fury the LORD vowed to destroy the palaces of Jerusalem. Greed will destroy a nation as surely as any plague or natural disaster. A great nation that cannot externally be conquered by a superior military force can be destroyed internally by moral rot. What is true on a national level is true on a personal level. Consider the case of Leona Helmsley.

She owned a string of hotels. She owned the Empire State Building. She was a billionaire. Yet, in September 1989 Leona Mindy Rosenthal Helmsley was convicted of 33 counts of tax evasion, for which she spent time in prison. According to *Time* magazine, Ms. Helmsley emerged as a penny-pinching tyrant who tried to stiff just about everybody. No amount of money was too small to fight over. After the sudden death of her only son at age 40 in 1982, she sued and won the lion's share of his estate, \$149,000, leaving his four children with \$432 each and his widow with \$2,171 (Source Unknown).

Prophecy against Israel
Amos 2:6-16

6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;

2:6. I will not turn away. The judgment of God is just. The people are without excuse.

2:6. the poor for a pair of shoes. "Concurrently with the increased wealth there was an associated rise in those social evils which characterized the prosperity of Solomon's reign; the rich became very rich and the poor became even poorer" (New Layman's Bible Commentary). "As their economic well-being and national strength continued to foster their security, an internal decay was eating at their vitals" (Expositor's Bible Commentary).

7 That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name:

2:6, 7. to profane my holy name. There was great immorality in the days of Amos. There was slavery, social injustice, and prostitution (the word "*same*" is not in the original text). "Back of all moral, social, and political corruption there lies a basic cause: Religious decay and apostasy" (Homer Hailey).

2:6. to profane my holy name. This is not a result clause, but a purpose clause. The rebellious men of Israel deliberately went to a maiden, probably a temple prostitute associated with Baal worship, in order to profane the name of God. Sexual sins can cause the heart to not care what God thinks, and even to not care if one lives or dies, as long as the moment of pleasure is fulfilled. But it is not just sexual sins that have this strength of influence upon the mind. The same can be said of drug addiction, alcoholism, or greed. When a person abandons themselves to evil, they deliberately profane the holy name of God. They no longer care about right and wrong. Adam deliberately sinned when he ate the forbidden fruit. Moses deliberately sinned when he struck the rock twice. David deliberately sinned when he went to Bathsheba. He deliberately sinned when he ordered the murder of Uriah. Is it any wonder that, in 1912, James Rowe confessed to sinking deep into sin and wrote the following words.

"I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,
 Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more,
 But the Master of the sea, heard my despairing cry,
 From the waters lifted me, now safe am I."

Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
 When nothing else could help
 Love lifted me!"

Those who will not accept the love of God and His forgiveness must endure His holy anger.

8 And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

2:6-8.

Four More Transgressions of Israel

- First transgression they sold the righteous for silver (money)
- Second transgression and the poor (needy) for a pair of shoes (sandals)
- Third transgression That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek:
- Fourth transgression and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name.

Where Sin Abounded, Grace did much more Abound

Amos 2:9-11

9 Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

10 Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. *Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel?* Saith the LORD.

2:9-11.

Three Acts of God's Great Grace

- God destroyed the Amorites.
- God led Israel from Egypt to the Land of Promise over a forty year period.
- God gave to Israel prophets and Nazarites.

12 But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

2:12. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink. This was a terrible abuse of the grace of God.

An Evil Response to the Grace of God

- The Nazarites were encouraged to drink wine which was prohibited to them.
- The prophets were told to be silent and not to engage in prophecy lest their words cause people to be discouraged and despair with threats of impending divine discipline.

13 Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves.

2:9-12.

God's Five Divine Works

- I destroyed the Amorites v. 9
- I destroyed the fruit of the Amorites v. 9
- I brought you up from Egypt v. 10
- I raised up prophets v. 11
- I gave you the Nazarites for an example v. 12

14 Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself:

2:14. neither shall the mighty deliver himself. Native ability will not save them (S. Lewis Johnson).

15 Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall not deliver *himself*: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself.

2:15. Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow etc. All the skills Israel has gained will not save them from the wrath of God and the impending judgment.

16 And *he that is* courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

2:16. And *he that is* courageous. As important as personal courage is in the face of adversity, this great quality of life will not save Israel, or any wicked nation, from the judgment of God in the day of divine visitation.

Three Discourses of Doom
Amos 3:1-6:14

AMOS 3

The Responsibility of National Election

1 Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

3:1. Hear this word. Amos speaks to men because the LORD has spoken to him. Those who preach the gospel must do so under a sense of divine motivation and divine necessity.

2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

3:2. You only have I known. Only you have I known. The word for “known” is an exclusive word. It is an intimate word. It is the word used in Genesis 4:1. *“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.”* God does express distinguishing love. He expressed it to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, David, Bathsheba, Ruth, Esther, Jeremiah, and you and me. God sets His love on individuals of His own will. The principle is established. God loves sovereignly.

Deuteronomy 7:7 The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

2:2. therefore I will punish you. It is because Israel was an elect people that they would be judged. Their privileged status as God’s people became the basis for divine discipline. “The greater the privilege, the greater the understanding, the greater the insight into spiritual truth, the greater the responsibility. The Apostle Peter sets that forth in his first letter in the fourth chapter. Judgment begins at the house of God. Judgment does not begin with the world. It begins with the house of God. God’s judgment begins with those who know truth but who do not respond to the truth” (S. Lewis Johnson).

Therefore, let every Christian pray, “O God, keep me, preserve me. I understand that great gospel advantages and privileges invoke great responsibilities. Let me not profane thy name. For Jesus sake. Amen.”

Seven Questions
Amos 3:3-8

3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

3:4. be agreed? have an appointment. The answer to this question is, “No. Two cannot walk together unless they have agreed to an appointment to be together. The public ministry of Amos was opposed by people who resented someone from the southern nation of Judah lecturing the northern kingdom of Israel. This is not surprising because men and women of God have always been opposed.

4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

3:4. Will a lion roar. The answer is no. A lion will be silent when he has no prey for he is on the prowl and does not want to warn or scare his prey away. The prophet Amos, like other teachers, liked to ask rhetorical questions to engage his audience. Here, a series of inquiries are asked, not for the purpose of receiving an answer, but for the purpose of making a point.

5 Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin *is* for him? Shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

3:5. no gin. no trap. The answer is no. A bird will not be ensnared where there is no trap to capture it.

3:5. a snare. a trap. The answer is no. A person who has nothing in a trap will tend to leave it alone until the prey is captured.

Special Note.

“Unexpectedly indeed calamity comes and it is commonly ascribed to chance, but the prophet here reminds us that God stretches his nets in which men are caught. Though they think that chance rules and observe not the hand of God. They are deceived for the bird foresees not the ensnaring prepared for him but yet he falls not on the earth without fowler” (John Calvin).

6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*?

3:6. Shall a trumpet be blown...and the people not be afraid? The answer is no. Trumpets often sounded an alarm of impending danger.

3:6. Shall there be evil in a city and the LORD hath not done it? The answer is no. The LORD does not hesitate to take sovereign responsibility for the evil that befalls man, as well as the good. God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11). This does not mean God is the author of moral evil for God cannot sin, nor can God tempt anyone to sin.

3:6. evil (*ra’ah*). The word can mean “bad”, or “evil” (natural or moral). Evil speaks of injurious behavior to self or others. Calamities do not happen by accident but proceed from the secret purposes of God.

Special Note.

These questions were raised by Amos in order to picture the concept of an event and then its cause. The ultimate goal of the prophet was to elicit a repeated response from the people of Israel saying, “Amos is right!” Therefore, using illustrations from his own life’s experiences Amos tried to get the people to come to an understanding that the events he predicts are about to come true.

Simply put, Amos is a true prophet of God who must be believed or the people will perish in their sins without any hope of repentance or delivery. So the people must learn to say, “I believe the prophet.” By way of application, the same is true today. Individuals must believe those who preach the gospel or they shall be lost forever.

Special Note.

It is instructive to observe that divine inspiration of *Scripture* does not negate the human experience. Though the *Scriptures* are given by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit, men were not mere robots. Amos knew about men walking together. He knew about lions. He knew the meaning of the sounding of a trumpet. And so what we find is that the message of God, and the experiences and thoughts of Amos merge, so that, at the same time, both Amos and the Lord speak, resulting in *Holy Scripture*.

The Prophets: “God’s Storm Birds”

(Vilhausen, a student of the Old Testament)

7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

3:7. but he revealeth his secret. There is a principle found in the divine economy which is that grace always precedes judgment. Before God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden, He warned them of the consequences of disobedience. Before God sent the Flood, He gave them 120 years to repent. Before God places a person among the damned, He warns them of the wrath to come and tells them to flee for refuge in Christ. Grace always precedes judgment. (Study Jeremiah 23)

Special Note.

When the prophets spoke about social concerns, they did so in light of the divine judgment to come. That is far different from Liberal ministers and social commentators of today. They speak about modern social concerns but make no reference to an ultimate day of accountability. As a result, modern day Liberal ministers have no spiritual power and no lasting effect upon society. Men cannot get men to change. Only God can change hearts which is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, “*You must be born from above*” (literally, John 3:7).

8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

3:8. The lion hath roared. In chapter 1 the Lion will roar. In chapter 3, “*the Lion hath roared.*” The only question is this: “Will Israel hear the roaring lion?” By way of application, “Will Israel hear the LORD GOD who has spoken through His prophet Amos?” The modern day question is this: “Will men hear Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God?” The royal command comes, “*This is my beloved Son; hear him*” (Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). That is the message that we must tell people. “Hear Him!” “Hear Christ!” “Listen to His words, repent and believe!” The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is still roaring.

Special Note.

“There is a time of opportunity. There is a time of possibility. There is a time of potential and then there is a time of impossibility a time of regret a time of failure. There is a time in which we say I must do this. I ought to do this. I have time to do this and then there’s a time, I’m in that stage of life in so many ways, there is a time which we say I would have liked to have done this but I cannot do it now. There is a time of fading opportunity and there is time of lost opportunity” (S. Lewis Johnson). The exhortation is to come to Christ. Listen to His prophets. Repent. Believe. Live for the Lord. Be afraid of the judgment to come. Redeem the time. Do not waste the years. “We live for such a short time and we are far too long dead” (*The Little Drummer Girl*, John le Carré).

“Wasted years, wasted years, oh, how foolish
 As you walk on in darkness and fear
 Turn around, turn around, love is calling
 Keeps calling me from a life of wasted years.

Have you wandered a lot on life's pathway?
 Have you lived without love, a life of tears?
 Have you searched for a great higher meaning?
 Or is your life filled with long wasted years?

Wasted years, wasted years, oh, how foolish
 As you walk on in darkness and fear
 Turn around, turn around, love is calling
 Keeps calling you from a life of wasted years.”

Red Foley

The God who is Sovereign is the God of Judgment
Amos 3:9-12

National Declination
Amos 3:9-11

Social Failure

9 Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof.

3:9. Publish in the palaces. Proclaim on the citadels. The Hebrew word for “citadel” conveys the idea of a large dwelling place, one or two stories high.

3:9. Ashdod...Egypt. The strongholds of Ashdod and Egypt, the ancient enemies of Israel, are going to judge the strongholds of Samaria, the northern kingdom of Israel. Amazing! This is not the way it was supposed to be. The people of God should have been judging, in righteousness and by the Law, the nations of the world.

Special Note.

By way of application, the modern world often stands in judgment on the church, and rightly so, when the church exposes herself to be corrupt in doctrine and in practice. In recent years the Catholic Church has paid out several billion dollars worldwide to settle with families’ over the practice of pedophilia by so many Catholic priests. One major cause for this sin in the church is the unbiblical doctrine of celibacy. Paul calls this teaching a doctrine of demons (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

3:9. Assemble yourselves. When Ashdod and Egypt assembled upon the mountains of Samaria, they would witness in the holy nation tumult, violence, oppression, and devastation. The point that Amos is making here is that Ashdod and Egypt, no strangers to violence and tumult, would discover that the people of God had become worse than the nations of the earth!

Special Note.

Is it possible for the righteous to be more violent, more unjust, more lawless, more oppressive, and more evil, than those outside the covenant? Indeed it is. The truth of this is found in part when, in 1985, Richard Yao founded Fundamentalists Anonymous. A former fundamentalist, a Wall Street lawyer, and a Yale Divinity School graduate, Yao became disenchanted with the church. Like a diabolical Moses he led the way out of Christianity for multitudes. His book, “There is a Way Out” encouraged multitudes to abandon the church. Yao believed the church was worse than the unbelieving world.

10 For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.

3:10. who store up violence. these store up violence.

11 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; An adversary *there shall be* even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled.

3:11. An adversary. The devil is the adversary of the saints, but God is the adversary of the unrighteous. Sinners are in the hands of an angry God. *Isaiah 63:10 But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.* God will discipline His people. *Psalm 78:58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. 59 When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: 60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; 61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. 62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. 63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. 64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.*

Special Note.

The church, like Israel of old, stands in a special relationship to the Lord. Therefore, she is subject to discipline. *Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 1 Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?* “To profess and live below the level of divine grace is in the sight of God a crime” (S. Lewis Johnson).

Personal Failure

12 Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch.

3:12. Thus saith the LORD. The background for this passage is Exodus 22:10-13. *“If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: 11 Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. 12 And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. 13 If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn.”*

In Israel if the shepherd came home and said to the owner that one of the sheep was taken off by a lion he had to bring some evidence of that. He had to bring a piece that the lion left. That's the background of this statement in Amos 3:12.

3:12. in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch. with the corner of a bed and the cover of a couch!

Special Note.

The word rendered Damascus is *demesheq* (dem-eh'-shek), and refers to a damask (as a fabric of Damascus), a reversible figured fabric of silk, wool, linen, cotton, or synthetic fibers, with a lovely pattern formed by weaving.

Amos is saying that the ones who relax in Samaria on splendid beds, and beautifully patterned couches from Damascus, are going to be snatched away by the lion. A luxurious lifestyle is coming to an end. Idleness, indolence, and indulgence shall be vanished from God's people in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Special Note.

What is your spiritual resume? What is your character reference? Is there anything in it about prayer, Bible study, self-discipline, and holiness?

Religious Failure

13 Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,

3:13-14. testify in the house of Jacob. 1 Kings 12:25-33 for the background for understanding this verse.

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the [northern] kingdom return to the house of David [the southern kingdom]: 27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast [of Tabernacles] in the eighth month [instead of the seventh month], on the [same day, the] fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."

Jeroboam counterfeited the true worship of God with a false worship. He did because he rebelled against the Word of God, and the will of God. Jeroboam sought to establish a kingdom with a king other than from the tribe of Judah and the house of David. Jeroboam was a religious rebel when he established a form of worship that was not of the tribe of Levi. He was a theological rebel when he justified that which God had not authorized. Therefore, there was to be a testimony against the northern kingdom, there was to be a condemnation of Jeroboam and what he had done in Israel.

Special Note.

“Intellectual darkness comes because of ignorance. Spiritual darkness comes because of something I do not intend to obey” (Oswald Chambers).

3:13. testify in the house of Jacob. What was to be testified to? It was to be made known that the LORD GOD, the God of hosts would judge the northern kingdom for social and religious transgressions. There was to be a spiritual D-Day, a Divine Day of Reckoning. On that day, the day of divine visitation, the LORD GOD would visit the transgressions which Jeroboam had established, and his son Jeroboam II had maintained. The altars, the idols of Bethel, would be destroyed. “Oh Northern Kingdom of Israel, believe it! The Lion has roared.”

14 That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground.

3:14. in the day. on the day.

3:14. the horns of the altar. The horns were a place that a person could go for refuge to find divine mercy. What Amos is saying is that God will destroy any kind of sanctuary once judgment begins for “*the horns of the altar shall be cut off.*”

A Time of Affluence

15 And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

3:14. great houses. While there is nothing wrong with the gifts of God and the temporal blessings of time, there is something wrong when a person’s affluence leaves them cold and heartless to the needs of others. Notice the prophet’s words in Amos 4:1; 6:4, 6.

Doctrine of Satanic Counterfeit

1. To counterfeit means to imitate or copy something closely, especially with intent to deceive. Satan is a master at religious counterfeiting. The close parallelism between the basic tenants of Zoroastrianism and Judaism reveals this truth.
2. The Bible warns of Satan's counterfeit
 - *2 Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.*
3. Consider what Satan has counterfeited.
4. Satan has a counterfeit Bible. The Book of Mormon, the New World Translation of the Scriptures and every occult and cultist bible has its ultimate origin in the mind of Satan.
5. Satan has a counterfeit doctrine. Specific doctrines of demons include celibacy and forbidding eating certain meats.
 - *1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*
6. Satan has a counterfeit trinity.
 - The Unholy Father: *Revelation 12:3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*
 - The Unholy Son: The Beast out of the Sea: *Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*
 - The Unholy Spirit: The False Prophet: *Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*
7. Satan has a counterfeit temple.
 - *2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

8. Satan has a counterfeit religion or system of beliefs. It is recognized by casting doubt on the Word of God followed by a denial of the simplicity of God's word and / or by misusing it.
 - In the Garden of Eden Satan cast doubt on God's word before denying it. *Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*
 - In the wilderness, while tempting Christ, Satan twisted Scripture to make it mean something it was never intended to mean. *Matthew 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*
9. Satan has a counterfeit morality. For those with a bent towards lasciviousness it is called hedonism, Epicureanism or in modern terms, the Playboy philosophy. For those with an inclination to religious asceticism it is called legalism or Pharisaism. All forms of morality not rooted in faith with the glory of God as its objective is sin.
 - *Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*
10. Satan has a counterfeit objective, which is to be glorified as God. Isaiah 14:14 explains. Said Lucifer, "*I will be like the most High.*"
11. The Christian should not be surprised to find many Biblical concepts and stories embedded in the belief systems of other world religions, for Satan takes the truth to copy it before using it to deceive others. Nor should they embrace the other world religions simply because there is an element of truth in them. There is only one true truth and that is Christ. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6).

AMOS 4

1 Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

4:1. Hear this word. Amos spoke these words to be heard in the northern kingdom of Israel in the eighth century BC. Along with others of his generation, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, these four great prophets were men with a message from the LORD God. Leaving his home town of Tacoah in the south, Amos ministered to the northern kingdom after the division that took place under Jeroboam who led the northern kingdom away and established idols to be worshipped.

4:1. kine. cows. The cows of Bashan were highly prized for they were well fed. In context, Amos is speaking to the women of Samaria who were leading others into sin. Women are sinners, just like men, and need to be confronted with a view towards repenting.

4:1. Say to their masters. Say to their lords.

Three Sins of Women

- Women oppress the poor.
- Women crush the needy.
- Women demand items of personal pleasure and self-interest, such as wine or strong drink.

4:1. Bring, and let us drink. Excessive wealth can cause the heart to grow callous and indifferent to the needs of others.

“Others, Lord, yes others,
Let this my motto be,
Help me to live for others,
That I may live like Thee.”

2 The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.

4:2. sworn by his holiness. God is swearing by His character. What God swears to do, He will do.

4:2. your posterity. the last of you.

4:2. he will take you away with hooks. Not only does Amos refer to the women of the northern kingdom as cows, he compares them with fish for he speaks of them being deported with hooks, and with fishhooks. Here is a message of judgment that would never be said to the modern woman. No preacher would compare women today with cows and fish.

Special Note.

There are two types of women. There are women who are influential in leading others into sin, such as Jezebel (1 Kings 21:5-15). There are women who are influential in leading others in the path of righteousness, such as Lois and Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). In modern days, one of the greatest acts of evil that women have led others to commit is the smothering of babies in their womb. Women agitated until society gave them what they wanted, abortion on demand. This means mostly, abortion no restrictions. And millions upon millions of children have died as a result.

Seven Forms of Divine Discipline

- Deportation Amos 4:2-3.
- Saturation of sin Amos 4:4-5
- Famine Amos 4:6
- Drought Amos 4:7-8
- Pestilence Amos 4:9-10a
- War Amos 4:10b
- Social disintegration Amos 4:11

Sin in the Sanctuary

3 And ye shall go out at the breaches, every *cow at that which is* before her; and ye shall cast *them* into the palace, saith the LORD.

4 Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, *and* your tithes after three years:

4:4. Come to Bethel. Over a one year period, most of the ministry of Amos, if not all, took place in the city of Bethel where he was denounced by Amaziah the priest. Forbidden to speak further in Israel, Amos communicated his message to northern Israel and then was silent.

4:4. Come to Bethel...at Gilgal multiply transgression. Sin has a saturation point in every nation, and then the judgment of God falls. The northern kingdom of Israel is no exception. In Amos 5:5 we read that people are told not to go to Bethel and not to go to Gilgal for the inhabitants there are in trouble and shall go into captivity.

4:4. after three years. after three days. "Extravagant religious ceremonies and rites were manifested on every hand. Tithes were offered every three days; free-will offerings were abundant and the amounts advertised (Amos 4:4-5). Religious fervor was high, but true spiritual devotion to God was utterly lacking" (Homer Hailey). "It was a religion which was empty in content, though full of ritual. Amos insisted that God had no time for ritualistic religion without heart" (New Layman's Bible Commentary).

5 And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

4:5. the free offerings. the free will offerings.

4:5. with leaven. Leaven was not to be used in the thanksgiving offering. However, when people are in emotional revolt against the Lord they will introduce forbidden facets of worship.

4:5. and proclaim and publish. The people in the Northern Kingdom were bragging about their religious life, despite how inappropriate it was.

The Theme of this Message of Amos to Northern Israel
“Ye have not returned unto me”

6 And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

4:6. yet have ye not returned unto me. This phrase is used in verse 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

7 And also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.

4:7. I have withholden the rain. The LORD asserts His sovereignty over nature with the result of bestowing blessings or hardships.

8 So two *or* three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

4:8.yet have ye not returned unto me. It is not to religion that the LORD wants people to return to, it is to Himself.

9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured *them*: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

4:9. I have. Time and again God declares that He is the ultimate source for the calamity and hardship which has fallen on individuals. God's sovereign control, as opposed to man's freedom of human causation, is declared in the words, “I have.” “*I have smitten you*” (v. 9). “*I have sent among you the pestilence*” (v. 10). “*I have overthrown some of you*” (v. 11). The sovereignty of God is absolute.

- *Amos 3:6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?*
- *Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.*
- *Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

4:9. palmerworm. caterpillar.

10 I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

11 I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

4:12. *and* because. The word ‘because’ is an explanatory word. It introduces the reason for something. God is not an irrational or capricious God. He is holy, wise, and just. Therefore, when He acts, it is for a reason. Through Amos, God communicated to the nations the rationale for His judgments.

- Damascus, you had no sensitivity to the suffering of others. *Amos 1:3 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron:*
- Gaza, you engaged in genocide. *Amos 1:6 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom:*
- Tyre, you failed to keep your word. *Amos 1:9 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:*
- Edom, you showed no pity to others. *Amos 1:11 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever:*

- Ammon, you murdered women and children. *Amos 1:13 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:*
- Moab, you showed disrespect to the dead. *Amos 2:1 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:*
- Judah, you have despised the Law of the Lord. *Amos 2:4 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked:*
- Israel, you engaged in human slavery and were greedy. You will now meet Him in judgment. *Amos 2:6 Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; Amos 4:12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

4:12. prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. This expression speaks of an encounter with God that cannot be survived.

13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what *is* his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, *is* his name.

4:13. and declareth unto man what is his thought. God knows every thought of man. *Psalm 139:2 Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*

4:13. The LORD, The God of hosts, *is* his name.

AMOS 5

A Tale of Three Hallowed Shrines in Bethel, Gilgal, and Beer-sheba

1 Hear ye this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel.

5:1. Hear ye this word...even a lamentation. The words of Amos form a funeral sermon. This is a sad dirge about the demise of the Northern Kingdom.

Special Note.

“The one great lesson that Israel had failed to learn was this. It is one thing to know the promises of God, and it is another thing to possess them. As the Lord Jesus said in the upper room discourse to the apostles, ‘If you know these things you are blessed if you do them’” (S. Lewis Johnson).

2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there is* none to raise her up.

5:2. The virgin of Israel is fallen. Like a virgin who loses her life before she reached full potential and maturity, so Israel lies neglected on the Promised Land. There is no one to save Israel.

A Military Catastrophe

3 For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.

5:3. shall leave ten. Divine discipline is severe. Sin always results in death and sometimes death is premature due to the evil that is done (1 Corinthians 11:29-30).

The God who can Make a Difference

4 For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live:

5 But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought.

5:5. Bethel. Amos is speaking about the sacrifices the people were carrying out and how they were carried out in a spirit that violated the known will of God as per Amos 5:21-23.

Special Note.

Proper worship was to take place in Jerusalem, not in Bethel, Gilgal, or Beer-sheba. However, being a clever politician, Jeroboam established places of worship for those in the Northern Kingdom to prevent them from having to go to Jerusalem, in the southern kingdom, to worship. Golden calves were set up as objects of worship.

A Spiritual Heritage

- Bethel was associated with the history of Jacob.
- Gilgal. It was at Gilgal the Hebrew people crossed the Jordan to come into the Promised Land. Here the covenant was renewed as the men of Israel were circumcised.
- Beer-sheba. From Genesis 21, 26, and 46 it is found that Beer-sheba was a prominent place in the life of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for here God appeared to each of them and made promises. Beer-sheba was associated with the compassion, presence, and companionship of God.

It was no accident that these places of worship were chosen by Jeroboam. But the reality is that the king, and the people, were in open and personal rebellion against God. There is a geographical will of God for every life.

6 Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Bethel.

5:6. Seek the LORD. The believer is to seek the LORD and to seek Him in the right way and in the right place.

Various Ways to Seek God

- God can be sought through proper acts of worship.
- God can be sought through the hearing of His Word.
- God can be sought through prayer and meditation.
- God can be sought through the reading of Scripture.
- God can be sought in the fellowship of the saints.
- God can be sought through faith in Jesus Christ and by staying in fellowship with Him.

5:6. in the house of Joseph. A reference to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

7 Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,

5:7. Ye who turn judgment to wormwood.

“There is a story about Sunday morning and a church service was going on and the devil is supposed to pass the church and pause to listen to the songs coming from within. And the congregation was singing, *Where He Leads me, I will Follow, I Surrender All*, and *My Jesus I Love Thee*. A passerby asked the devil why he did not go in and disrupt the service. ‘Doesn’t worship like this frighten you?’ he asks. And the devil assured him he was not at all disturbed and as he left he was heard to say, ‘They are praising God on Sunday, they will be all right on Monday. It is just a little habit they have acquired.’” (S. Lewis Johnson).

The Hymn of a Transforming God
Amos 5:8-9

8 *Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:

5:8. *Seek him.* By nature the natural man will not, cannot, seek the Lord. *Romans 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.* Nevertheless, man is still responsible. So when in grace God commands men to seek Him, they may very well find the LORD. Herein is a glorious truth. God commands what He gives, and He gives what He commands. An illustration of this is found in Matthew 12 in the story of the man with a withered hand.

Matthew 12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? That they might accuse him. 11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. 13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

A man with a withered hand has no power to stretch it forth. But when the Lord commands it be done, and a man willing makes that effort in gospel obedience, a miracle happens. So when the LORD says that men must seek him, and they turn to do that in gospel obedience, a miracle of grace takes place.

Special Note.

“I call upon you. Seek the Lord that you may live. Seek to know him that you may have eternal life. Trust in Christ and receive forgiveness of sins. Something you cannot do of yourself but if God has implanted within your heart the desire to come to him you come to him. You’ll find forgiveness of sins. Come to him. Believe in him. Trust him. Seek him that you may live” (S. Lewis Johnson).

5:8. the seven stars and Orion. “The pagan worship of the stars and the gods associated with them, as practiced in the false religions of the land, was foolish, for the true Creator God had made the stars and their constellations. He had even named them (Isaiah 40:26). The “seven stars” was a popular name for the Pleiades” (Creation Research Institute). The Hebrews were commanded to “*Seek him*” that maketh all things.

5:8. Orion. The name refers to a prominent constellation located on the celestial equator and visible throughout the world. It is one of the most conspicuous and recognizable constellations in the night sky, being named after Orion, a hunter in Greek mythology.

5:8. seven stars.

The Seven Stars of Orion

- Betelgeuse
- Bellatrix

The Three Stars Forming Orion’s Belt

- Alnitak
- Alnilam
- Mintake
- Saiph
- Rigel

5:8. The LORD is his name. The LORD makes the seasonal changes. He makes the daily changes too for He changes deep darkness into morning. If God can change nature he can change the religious person and make him righteous.

| | |
|--|----------------|
| • Amos believed God is the Creator | Amos 5:8 |
| • Amos believed God is Sovereign | Amos 9:1-4 |
| • Amos believed God is the Lord of History | Amos 2:4; 4:11 |
| • Amos believed God would judge human sin | Amos 5:12 |
| • Amos believed God has a sovereign choice | Amos 3:2 |
| • Amos believed God could forgive sin | Amos 5:4 |

9 That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.

10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

5:10-12. They hate him. So rebellious were the people of the northern kingdom of Israel they hated anyone who tried to arrest the bad behavior of society. The people wanted to be free to hurt the righteous, accept bribes, and trample upon the poor.

5:10. speaketh uprightly. speaketh with integrity. The people did not want anyone to testify who spoke the truth.

11 Forasmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

5:11. treading upon the poor. The poor were being exploited in the rents paid, and in the taxes on products produced.

5:11. but ye shall not drink wine of them. Amos was not wrong. In AD 722 the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Lovely homes were occupied by foreigners or destroyed. Illicit monies were confiscated. The fruit of pleasant vineyards was enjoyed by others.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate *from their right*.

5:12. they take a bribe. Legal injustices characterized the days of Amos, as they characterize our time as well, by way of application.

5:12. in the gate. The gate of the city was the place where justice was rendered. The place where justice was to be meted out, the poor were turned aside from that which was rightfully theirs.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it *is* an evil time.

5:13. Therefore the prudent shall keep silence. These words may indicate wisdom. The wise man knows when to speak and when to keep silent. These words may also be taken in a negative way in that those who should have spoken out against injustice did not do so when they should have.

The Divine Remedy for Sin

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

5:14-15.

How a Nation Can Survive

- Seek good
- Do not seek evil
- Hate evil
- Love the good
- Establish judgment

A Land Filled with Funerals

16 Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas! And they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.

5:16. they shall call the husbandman. they shall call the professional mourners.

17 And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the LORD.

5:17. And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing. Those who were oppressed shall bury those who oppressed them.

5:17. I will pass through thee. On the night of the Passover the LORD passed through the nation in judgment. The LORD passed over those who were covered by the blood.

Assurance vs. Complacency

18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! To what end *is* it for you? The day of the LORD *is* darkness, and not light.

5:18. Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! There was a false sense of security in the people of the northern kingdom of Israel. The church must be careful not to let divine assurance become the basis for spiritual complacency.

5:18. the day of the LORD. The Jews welcomed the day of the LORD believing it was to be a day of vindication of themselves and a day of harsh judgment for those who were not in a covenant relationship. Amos declares that the people's hopes were misplaced and the day of the LORD was misunderstood. A modern parallel would be those who look forward to the second advent of Christ, not realizing that the LORD's coming is a day of judgment for those who believe as well as those who reject Christ. The apostle Paul wrote, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences"* (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

19 As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.

5:19. or went into the house. then went into the house. There is one illustration, not two.

Special Note.

“We can imagine a man being out in the woods, wandering along, reflecting upon life, and suddenly, as he turns past a tree or two, there confronts him a mountain lion.

And, of course, he is petrified. He stops, hesitates, cannot hardly move, but finally, his legs begin to speak before his mind does and he begins to run. He turns and runs and he runs as fast as he can and wonders if he is going to be able to keep ahead of the lion. He begins to perspire and finally looks back and the lion is no longer there. He stops. Turns around and there confronts him a bear. And the bear is obviously after his blood and starts lumbering after him. The man starts running.

Now, he is really tired and perspiring. He thinks he is going to end his days in the mouth of the bear. He sees a little shack over in the midst of the trees and he rushes over to the shack. The man gets in it. He slams the door shut and he is wet with perspiration. He is tired. It is warm. So he thinks I will take off my clothes and lie down and rest for a while. As he takes off his clothes, he puts his hand up against the wall. There is a crack in the wall and there is a poisonous snake in the crack. And seeing the hand of the man the poisonous snake strikes him. The man looks down horrified. His face and hand begins to swell. His face suddenly turns gray and he dies a miserable death having escaped the lion and the bear, but the poisonous snake is the means of his death.

That is what Amos is talking about. You see Israel had escaped the Egyptians, the lion. It escaped the Syrians. It escaped the Philistines, the lions and the bears, the big things, and God had given them a marvelous Northern Kingdom, very successful very prosperous. Everybody had money and everybody was enjoying life. But there was an unsuspecting snake ready to strike. The snake still comes to individuals today at an unexpected time. What shall we call this snake that will be the cause of death? The snake is greed, oppression, materialism, indifference to the relationship to the Lord, personal relationship to the Lord. The snake is all those things that characterize a society that is outwardly prosperous and affluent, but inwardly is corrupt, decaying, and really dead. That is the snake” (S. Lewis Johnson).

20 *Shall not the day of the LORD be* darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?

21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

22 Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

5:21, 22. I hate, I despise your feast days. God was so disgusted with the disobedience and rebellion that characterized the hearts of the people of northern Israel at this time that He said He hated all of their festivals and Sabbaths.

Doctrine of Hatred

1. It is possible for one person to hate another as Ahab hated Micaiah.

1 Kings 22:8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

2 Chronicles 18:7 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imlah. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

2. The Psalmist hated those who would turn away from the Lord.

Psalms 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

3. It is good to hate every false way in life.

Psalms 119:104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

4. The heart of the righteous will hate the following.

Vain thoughts. *Psalms 119:113 I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.*

Lying lips. *Psalms 119:163 I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.*

The Enemies of the Lord. *Psalms 139:21 Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?*

Those who hate the Lord. *Psalms 139:22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

Evil. *Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

False oaths. *Zechariah 8:17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.*

The principle of sin. *Romans 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

5. There are many things which the Lord hates.

The Lord hates those who rob Him of authentic worship. *Isaiah 61:8 For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.*

Idolatry. *Jeremiah 44:4 Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.*

Hypocritical acts of worship. *Amos 5:21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.*

False doctrine. *Revelation 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

5:21-23. the melody of thy viols. the melody of thy harps. It is interesting that many Christians believe that New Testament worship should exclude the use of musical instruments. The Church of Christ, in particular, has made a great issue of being non-instrumental. While they allow the singing of songs, they reject using instruments even though the use of instruments was authorized in the Old Testament and is part of the worship of the Lord in the book of Revelation.

- *Psalm 150:3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. 4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. 5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*
- *Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.*

24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

5:24. But let judgment run down as waters.

“But let justice roll down like waters
And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

New American Standard Version

25 Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years,
O house of Israel?

26 But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

5:26. But ye have borne. But ye will bear.

5:26. Moloch (Malkkem, Sikkuth), the chief deity of the Ammonites.

5:26. Chiun (Kiyuwn [kee-yoon]), an idol. The worship of the star Saturn.

27 Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name *is* The God of hosts.

5:27. beyond Damascus. God will make the Hebrew people go in captivity to Assyria. The people shall be forced to take their false gods with them.

AMOS 6

Retribution!

Exodus 21:23, 24 * Leviticus 24:19, 20 * Matthew 5:38

1 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!

6:1. and trust. And feel secure.

6:1. *which are* named chief of the nations. Amos speaks to those distinguished individuals who had become famous and popular in Israel and to whom people went to for help. Woe to them!

2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: *be they* better than these kingdoms? Or their border greater than your border?

6:2. In verse 2 Amos presents the arrogance of the Northern Kingdom as the people compare themselves to other cities and feel superior.

6:2 Calneh (kal'-neh; fortress), a city in Mesopotamia whose exact location is unknown. Amos includes Calneh in a list of cities in Northern Mesopotamia. There may have been two places with this name, or perhaps the northern town was later named after the earlier settlement.

6:2 Hamath (ha'-math; fortress), a city-state in Syria, N of Israel. Hamath fought with Israel against Shalmaneser III of Assyria, but was conquered in the days of Hezekiah. The Hebrews were dispersed (Gen. 10:18; 2 Kings 18:34). Hamath was not a great city. Amos was using sarcasm.

6:2. Gath (gath; winepress), located eight miles N of Lachish. It was a major Philistine city and the home of Goliath. Uziah conquered Gath and destroyed its wall (2 Chron. 26:6).

6:2. Philistines (fil-is'-tin; wandering). The Philistines were a non-Semitic people from Crete which lived along the coast of S Palestine. The Philistines were people of commerce (Joel 3:4-8).

3 Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

A Life of Excessive Luxury Amos 6:4-6

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

6:4. beds of ivory. The theme of excessive luxury is returned to by Amos. While there is nothing wrong with having great wealth, it is wrong to depend upon wealth for health, happiness, or eternal salvation. The Lord's parable in Luke 12:16-21 reminds the Christian to think more soberly about one's wealth. There is wisdom in the exhortation to, "Measure wealth not by the things you have, but by the things you have for which you would not take money" (Anonymous).

Special Note.

"If God exists everything is possible. If there is no God everything is permitted" (Dostoyevsky).

5 That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;

6:5. That chant to the sound of the viol. In verses 1-7, Amos reveals that the rich were getting richer, and the poor were getting poorer.

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

6:6. That drink wine in bowls. That drink wine in sacred bowls.

6:6. they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. The reason why these individuals were not "grieved for the affliction of Joseph" was because they were enjoying their position of wealth and privilege without regard that others were not so fortunate. Blessed is the person who has developed not only sympathy for the afflicted, but empathy as well.

6:6. the affliction of Joseph. When used by Amos, the reference to the breakup of Joseph is a reference to the Northern Kingdom not having any compassion on others. The people did not care about others. The people were as cruel as the brothers of Joseph who sold him into slavery and sat down to eat, not caring about the cries they heard him utter from the pit (Genesis 37:23-25; 42:21).

Special Note.

Originally people did not recline when eating. That was a custom developed during days of prosperity. However, reclining to eat was established and practiced during the days of the New Testament era so that we read of John lying on Jesus' breast and speaking to him (John 13:25-26).

Charges Made Against the Northern Kingdom
Amos 6:3-6

- Individuals did not repent or prepare for divine judgment. They "put away the evil day."
- Violence was promoted.
- A luxurious lifestyle was embraced.

- Wine was drunk to excess.
- Self was pampered with perfumes and ointments.
- There was no compassion for the affliction of others.

7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

6:7. Therefore. Whenever Amos used the word, “therefore”, the hearts of his listeners learned to tremble for something terrible was coming. Based on the previous catalogue of bad behavior, the Lord announced that the distinguished, and the highest echelon of society, would be the first to go into captivity.

The Abasing of the Northern Kingdom

8 The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

6:8. I abhor. God hates every form of false worship (Isaiah 61:8; Jeremiah 44:4; Amos 5:21). He hates evil imaginations and lying tongues (Zechariah 8:17). And God hates the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans which encourages lives of unrestrained indulgence and idolatry (Revelation 2:15).

9 And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die.

10 And a man’s uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that *is* by the sides of the house, *Is there yet any with thee?* And he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.

6:10. And a man’s uncle. And a man’s undertaker.

6:10. and he that burneth him. Among the Jews, the burning of bodies was an abomination, but now it was a necessity in order to prevent the spread of disease.

6:10. *Is there yet any with thee?* The image is that of a person who has gone into a house to inquire if anyone is left. A conversation takes place.

Undertaker: “*Is there yet any with thee?*”

Lone weak Survivor: “*No.*”

Undertaker: “*Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.*”

Special Note.

By not wanting to hear the name of the LORD, the people of God embraced the philosophy of the heathen. The heathen believed that if the name of a god was mentioned, that god would pay attention and take account of the situation. It is better to leave god alone. Do not have anything to do with him. So, do not mention the name of Yahweh. The people were terrified.

Special Note.

Worldly wisdom gives counsel that is diametrically contrary to the known will of God. In the day of calamity, people are commanded to call upon the name of the LORD, to repent and plead for mercy. *Psalm 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

But the wisdom of the world is to let Yahweh alone. Do not talk to Him. Do not call upon Him.

In one of the death camps of World War II, a German guard was heard to ask, “Do you think that God will forgive us for what we have done to the Jews.” And an inmate responded, “Do you think we will forgive God for what He has allowed you to do to us?” (Elie Wiesel, a survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps).

Such is the thinking of the hardened heart. Individuals stand in judgment on God. Individuals express the counsel of their hardened heart. “God is cruel. Do not have anything to do with Him.”

11 For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

The Absurdity of National Boasting

12 Shall horses run upon the rock? Will *one* plow *there* with oxen? For ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:

6:12. ye have turned judgment into gall. Ye have turned justice into poison.

6:12. and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock. and the sweet fruit of righteousness into bitterness.

13 Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

6:13. Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought. Ye brag about your conquest of Lo-debar (a place in Palestine).

6:13. Have we not taken to us horns. Have we not by our own strength taken Karnaim for ourselves. The people were rejoicing in their military victories.

14 But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness.

6:14. I will raise up against you a nation. That nation was Assyria. Economics, a free and liberal social life, military defense, none of these things could prevent the judgment of God. He is stronger than all which nations depend on for personal happiness and security.

6:14. and they shall afflict you. From north to south the Northern Kingdom of Israel was to be afflicted. In 722 BC this prophecy came to pass.

The Five Visions of Amos
Amos 7:1-9:15

AMOS 7

The First Vision
The Locusts
Amos 7:1-3

1 Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings.

7:1. the latter growth. the spring crop.

7:1. and, lo, *it was*. That is, the locust swarm.

7:1. after the king's mowings. There were two cuttings of the grass crop for animals. The first cutting took place in early spring when the grass was very tender. The king took this for himself. The second mowing of grass was the final mowing of grass. So, if the king took the first mowing and the locust ate the second mowing then there was no further growing. The economic hardship imposed was devastating.

2 And it came to pass, *that* when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? For he *is* small.

7:2. Amos pleaded with the Lord GOD saying, "Lord GOD, please pardon! How can Jacob stand, for he is small?"

3 The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

7:3. The LORD repented. The LORD changed His mind. There would not be a second mowing after all.

The Repentance of the Lord

- Genesis 6:1. The Lord repented that He had made man on the earth.
- Exodus 32:14. The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.
- 1 Samuel 15:35. The Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel.
- 2 Samuel 24:16. The Lord repented over the calamity the angel of death wrought upon Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah 6:19. The Lord repented of the evil which He had pronounced against Judah during the days of King Hezekiah.

The Second Vision
The Great Fire
Amos 7:4-6

4 Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part.

7:4. and it devoured the great deep. The Lord GOD sent a fire to consume the farmland. People must learn, they are not immune from divine discipline, especially if they are a covenanted people such as those found in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

7:4. the great deep. A reference to the cosmic sea under the earth that is the source for springs and waters, according to the ancient belief. Spiritually, the reference is to the deep doctrines in the worship of false gods in the Northern Kingdom. One such god was Rahab, a mythological sea monster representing the evil forces of chaos whom God conquered by His creative power. With a flash of humor Amos declares that God will burn the false god and his home up.

5 Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? For he *is* small.

7:5. Then said I. There is a time to pray an intercessory prayer. Amos prayed for the nation Israel as Christians must pray for their nation today. Individual petitions are also acceptable to God.

Special Note.

“Some people say, ‘I do not know what I should pray when I pray.’ Get down on your knees and open the Bible and look at the things in the word of God, when you come to a promise lift up your heart to the Lord and pray that that promise may be fulfilled with your life” (S. Lewis Johnson).

6 The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

7:6. The LORD repented.

Question: “Of what does the LORD repent?”

Answer: “The LORD repents of those things which He has ordained should be changed by prayer.” The theology of the Bible is that the LORD God is sovereign. He has ordained all that shall come to pass. Moreover, “*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*” (Numbers 23:19).

From a human perspective, man prays and God changes His mind. From a divine perspective, the secret things belong to the LORD (Deuteronomy 29:29), and, one of the “secret things” is what the LORD God has ordained shall be changed by prayer.

Special Note.

“I have always thought the analogy of a thermometer is useful. Is the thermometer changeable or unchangeable? Well the superficial observer might say it is changeable. The mercury moves in the tube according to the heat and cold. It is up. It is down. It is very changeable. Now, in another sense the thermometer is unchangeable. It moves according to the fixed law. It invariably responds to the temperature. So the thermometer is an unchanging instrument. Unchangeable instrument, if it were a perfect instrument. So repentance in God is not change of will or change of his attributes or his being. It is a will to change” (S. Lewis Johnson).

The Third Vision
The Vision of the Plumb Line
Amos 7:7-9

7 Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand.

7:7. a plumb line. This carpenter’s instrument is used to measure for accuracy and straightness. Amos declares that the Northern Kingdom of Israel is being measured for straightness of character, and accuracy in righteousness. The divine conclusion is that the people were not upright in character, or conduct.

8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumb line. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

7:8. And the LORD said unto me. A very profitable study of the Bible is to examine the conversations of individuals with God. Here is a brief conversation between the LORD and Amos.

The LORD: “Amos, what seest thou?”

Amos: “A plumb line.”

The Lord: “Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people: I will not pass by them any more” (i.e., “I will not spare them any more”).

Special Note.

Amos had no response after the LORD spoke on this occasion. There is a time to speak, and there is a time to keep silent.

9 And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

7:9. Jeroboam. Jeroboam II (jer-o-bo-am; the people contend; the people become numerous), was the son of Joash and the 14th king of Northern Israel. During his reign there was unnecessary poverty despite much wealth (Amos 4:4; 5:5; 8:14). The prophets Hosea, Joel, Jonah, and Amos ministered during his reign. The prophet Amos foretold his destruction. Zechariah his son succeeded him as king (2 Kings 14:29).

Religious Opposition to the Man of God

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

7:10. Amos hath conspired against thee. One of the great burdens of the righteous is to endure the slings and arrows of slander. The heart of Amos was to bring the people in the Northern Kingdom of Israel to repentance so that the nation would not be destroyed. But his words are deliberately misinterpreted and mischaracterized in order to advance a vile personal religious and political agenda by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel.

11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

7:11. For thus Amos saith. While the message of Amos was hard and difficult to bear, it was the truth. In like manner, many years later, the apostle Paul asked the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16).

12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

7:12. Amaziah. Though spiritually blind, Amaziah calls Amos a “seer.” Amaziah is mocking Amos. When people cannot refute an argument they often engage in *ad hominem* (Latin, “to the person”), or personal attacks.

7:12. flee thee...into the land of Judah. Amaziah wants Amos to leave the Northern Kingdom of Israel and return to the Southern Kingdom of Israel. Having insulted Amos, having questioned his loyalty, having passed judgment on Amos to declare the prophet was acting only in self-interest, God’s man is told to leave. In the Southern Kingdom Amos would find people who would listen to him. He would find money, and there he could eat bread. In other words, Amos, go where it is easy to live, and the ministry is personally profitable.

13 But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it *is* the king’s chapel, and it *is* the king’s court.

7:12-13. O thou seer, go...prophesy not again. There is nothing the world wants more than for the ministers of righteousness to go away and be quiet. People are constantly trying to get rid of those whose message they do not like.

14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdman, and a gatherer [puncturer, snipper] of sycomore fruit:

7:14. no prophet. Amos is not renouncing his prophetic mantle. Rather, he is probably saying that he was not a member of the prophetic guild. He was not a trained prophet in the School of the Prophets (1 Samuel 10:5, 10) or numbered among the "sons of the prophets" (1 Kings 20:35). He would be like a modern day minister, such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who has not attended a theological seminary.

7:14. gatherer. There were sycamore trees in Tekoa that bore a small kind of fruit, and if you punctured the skin of the fruit at a certain time, the insects that were in those pieces of fruit could come out. It is said the fruit is much sweeter when this is done. The composite picture of Amos is that of a man who was a shepherd, a man who was in business for himself, a man who was acquainted with agriculture and horticulture and made his living that way, and a man called of God to preach.

Special Note.

The sycamore is a huge evergreen tree growing to a height of about 40-50 feet with a trunk circumference of over 20 feet. The trunk forked near the ground, and the branches grew outward. The leaves of the sycamore, sometimes called the sycamore fig, were heart-shaped, resembling the leaves of the mulberry. The fruit was similar to the true fig but was inferior in quality. These yellow figs grew in clusters close to the branches (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

15 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

7:15. And the LORD took me. All ministry begins with God. Salvation begins with God. Sanctification begins with God. Glorification is of God. *Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

7:15. Took. Heb. *laqach*, "take hold of", or, "to seize, to apprehend". It is the Lord who takes the initiative in ministry. It is the Lord who will take even those who are rustic or unsophisticated and use them for His glory and the good of others. While Amos was formally uneducated, he was not uninformed. He knew history, he knew the contemporary problems, and he has a deep knowledge of the Word of God. To know God's Word is to be wiser than all others. The Psalmist said, "*I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation*" (Psalm 119:99).

16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac.

17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

7:17. Therefore thus saith the LORD.

Five Forms of Divine Discipline Against the Northern Kingdom of Israel

- Women shall become harlots in the cities.
- Children shall be slaughtered by the sword.
- The Holy Land shall be divided.
- Many will die in exile.
- The Northern Kingdom of Israel shall go into captivity.

Special Note.

Knowing the severity of God, it is far better for individuals to persevere in the faith. “Perseverance may be defined as that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer by which the work of divine grace begun in the heart is continued and brought to completion” (S. Lewis Johnson).

Special Note.

As Israel came under divine judgment in time, so every sinner will come under divine judgment in eternity. But there is a way of escape from the judgment to come. For Northern Israel the way of escape was to repent, to change their hearts and behavior and do right. For every sinner, the way to escape condemnation is to repent of sin, and seek the grace and mercy of God for salvation.

“If you have never believed in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we remind you that the Scriptures say that Christ has offered an atoning sacrifice for sinners and you may have the forgiveness of sins if you bow your heart before the Lord God at this very moment. Confess your sin. Acknowledge Christ, the savior, from sin. Receive Him as your personal savior. We invite you to come to Christ. Believe in Him. Trust in Him. Receive God’s marvelous forgiveness” (S. Lewis Johnson).

AMOS 8

The Fourth Vision The Basket of Summer Fruit Amos 8:1-3

A New Year's Sermon

1 Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit.

8:1. summer fruit. It is probable that the time of this vision was in the Fall, after the summer fruit had been harvested.

The Jewish Year

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Civil Year • The Ecclesiastical Year • The Agricultural Year | Began in the fall (October to November) Began in April at the time of the Passover Spring, Summer, Autumn |
|--|---|

Special Note.

The Bible often uses the events that take place during an agricultural year to represent either, the good ripening of human conduct, or the corruption and rotting of the same. Amos was instructed to behold a basket of summer fruit ripe as an object lesson. Though initially it looks lovely, and edible, deep down the elements of corruption are present. God said to His prophet, “Amos, Northern Israel is like a basket of summer fruit. Though viewed as my covenanted people, corruption is in the heart of the nation.”

Special Note.

“The corruption is within. Outwardly everything can be lovely and beautiful. Just as in our evangelical churches we look out, and so often everything seems to be lovely and beautiful, but corruption is often at work. So we must be prepared for a maturing that leaves us with nothing but death. And we must, by God’s grace, relying upon the Holy Spirit, seek to avoid the neglect and indifference to the things of the Lord, because, inevitably, that will lead to divine judgment” (S. Lewis Johnson).

2 And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.

8:2. I will not again pass by them. I will not spare them.

3 And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord GOD: *there shall be* many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast *them* forth with silence.

8:3. And the songs of the temple. And the songs of the palace.

8:3. howlings. wailings.

The Death Rattle of the Northern Kingdom

- Wailing
- Corpses
- Silence

God's Call to the Guilty

4 Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail,

8:4. swallow up the needy. trample on the needy.

5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

8:5. be gone. The transgressions of the people multiply. Israel had a fundamental disrespect for the Sabbath, and the things of the Lord. The people were greedy for gain, and wanted the holy days to be over, so they could return to making money. They wanted to make the bushel smaller, and the shekel bigger, and to cheat the customer with dishonest scales.

This is what was happening in the northern kingdom during the days of Amos but, by way of application, it can be said to be happening today in our country. Once there were Blue Laws in many states where liquor and cigarettes could not be sold. Business closed down to allow people to go to church. But all that has changed for men want the Sabbath to be over so they can get back to business.

6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; *yea*, and sell the refuse of the wheat?

8:6. buy the poor for silver. The people enslaved others for silver, or for as little as pair of shoes. Going to church and swindling were united, to the shame of the nation.

8:6. the refuse of the wheat. Whatever wheat grain may have remained in a basket, or spilt out on the ground, was gathered up and sold as quality grain. The old adage was to be heeded: "Buyer, Beware!"

Special Note.

It is not wrong to be a shrewd and successful business man. However, it is wrong to put wealth first. It is wrong to cut corners. It is wrong to exploit the poor and the needy. It is wrong to forget the teachings of Christ, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35).

7 The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.

8:7. by the excellency of Jacob. by the pride of Jacob.

That by Which the LORD Hath Sworn

- The LORD hath sworn unto national Israel Deuteronomy 28:9
- The LORD hath sworn to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) Deuteronomy 29:13
- The LORD hath sworn to David 2 Samuel 3:9
- The LORD hath sworn by His holiness Amos 4:2
- The LORD hath sworn by Himself Amos 6:8
- The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob Amos 8:7

8:7. I will never forget their works. Many of the religious works of Israel were impressive. In the midst of pomp and ceremony, while offering sacrifices, while moving through the rituals designed to teach the coming of the Messiah, and His sacrificial work, the people's minds were elsewhere. God said He would not forget the evil His people have done. There will be divine retribution.

8 Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? And it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt.

8:8. the flood of Egypt. the Nile of Egypt. Each year the delta in North Africa flooded, leaving behind a rich silt deposit which was excellent for growing crops. Egypt has been called, "The Gift of the Nile."

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

8:9. in that day. Prophet teachers see in the phrase, "in that day," a reference to the Second Advent. However, in context, when Amos spoke about, "that day," he meant the day of divine discipline which would come upon his generation. Care must be taken not to rip a word, phrase, or idea out of context to fit a theological bias. Amos spoke of events relating to the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the seventh century BC. He did not speak about the Second Advent of Christ.

10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

A Spiritual Famine in the Land

11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*.

8:12. And they shall wander. And men shall stagger...and shall not find *it*. The truth will not be found because the truth has been rejected. 2 Thessalonians 2:11*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.*

8:12. from the north even to the east. Amos does not mention the South and thus the Southern Kingdom of Judah at this time, but the principle applies to them as well.

13 In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.

8:13. fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. When parents reject the Word of God, their children suffer the most. Many cults attract young people. The cults prey upon young people knowing how vulnerable they are.

14 They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

8:9-14. they shall fall. The false gods shall be destroyed. The god of Dan and the god of Beer-sheba shall fall, and never rise up again. When truth is exchanged for a lie, the lie shall be judged.

Special Note.

“The truth my dear friends, and fellow Christians, is to be held, to be guarded, to be loved, to be nourished, to be nurtured, and if, by God’s grace, He has opened your eyes to see the truth concerning Christ, love the God who has given His Son. Love the Holy Spirit who has illumined you. Love the word of God. Read the word of God. Ponder the word of God. Search the Holy Scriptures. Live in accordance with its precepts. And you know what, you will find God blessing you. He will bless you. He will bless your family. He will supply your needs” (S. Lewis Johnson).

A Terrible Time of Divine Discipline “That Day”

- Amos 8:9. There will be changes in the celestial sky.
- Amos 8:10. There will be crying and songs of lamentation.
- Amos 8:11. There will be a spiritual famine in the land.
- Amos 8:12. There will be an inability to find the Word of the LORD.

- Amos 8:13 There will be a burning thirst.
- Amos 8:14 There will be the destruction of false gods.

8:14. the sin of Samaria. This is a reference to the destruction of the false gods that were worshipped by those living in the northern kingdom.

8:14. The manner of Beer-sheba. The people who made religious pilgrimages to Beer-sheba, located in the south, were not to be spared.

AMOS 9

The Fifth Vision The LORD Standing Beside the Altar Amos 9:1f

1 I saw the LORD standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.

9:1. I saw the LORD standing upon the altar. Standing beside the altar, the LORD told Amos to smite the sanctuary and to destroy the sinful people of the land. "The point of this last vision is that when God finally sends the Assyrians to overthrow Israel, that there will be no way for sinners to escape punishment, no matter how hard they try" (John T. Willis).

9:1. the lintel of the door. The lintel is the horizontal crosspiece over an opening, as a door, window, usually carrying the weight of the structure above it. The roof was to collapse in the sanctuaries of the false gods being worshiped in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Whereas Samson destroyed the temple in Gaza from below, the LORD will destroy the temples of the false gods in the Northern Kingdom from above.

9:1. that the posts may shake. The *Complete Jewish Bible* translates this verse in the following way. "I saw Adonai standing beside the altar, and he said, 'Strike the tops of the columns until the thresholds shake! Smash them to pieces on the heads of all the people! Those who remain I will kill with the sword; not one of them will succeed in fleeing, not one of them will escape.'"

2 Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:

9:2. they dig into hell. they dig into sheol.

Doctrine of Sheol Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

1. The meaning of "sheol" is unknown.
2. In Old Testament thought, sheol was the abode of the dead.
3. Sheol is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek Hades, which means "the unseen world." Both are translated hell in the Authorized Version.
4. Sheol was regarded as an underground region (Numbers 16:30, 33; Amos 9:2), shadowy and gloomy, where disembodied souls had a conscious but dull and inactive existence (2 Samuel 22:6; Ecclesiastes 9:10).

5. The Hebrew people regarded Sheol as a place to which both the righteous and unrighteous go at death (Genesis 37:35; Psalm 9:17; Isaiah 38:10), a place where punishment is received and rewards are enjoyed.
6. Sheol is pictured as having an insatiable appetite (Isaiah 5:14; Habakkuk 2:5).
7. However, God is present in sheol (Psalm 139:8; hell, NKJV). It is open and known to Him (Job 26:6; Proverbs 15:11).
8. This suggests that in death God's people remain under His care, and the wicked never escape His judgment. Sheol gives meaning to Psalm 16:10. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
9. Peter saw the fulfillment of this messianic psalm in Jesus' resurrection according to Acts 2:27. "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

3 And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:

4 And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

9:4. I will set mine eyes upon them. This Hebrew expression was usually used in a positive way. God would set His eyes upon someone for their good. But here, the expression is used in a negative way.

9:4. upon them.

Special Note.

God is aware of "them" who lead others into sin. These individuals are forgetful of the holiness of God. They are forgetful of sin and its rewards. They fancy themselves that a date in past history has put God eternally in their debt and that, irrespective of character, they may count upon his cooperation in all of the things that they're doing. They appealed to what God had done for them in the past. They thought of the Exodus and the promises associated with it. They thought of the Abrahamic promises and how in the Exodus, they were confirmed to them and they rested in that.

They felt themselves to be the chosen people of God, and there was, of course, a sense in which that was true. But the chosen people of God manifest their election in a certain kind of life, and the kind of life lived by these people is evidence of the fact that they are not really what they think they are, but they appeal to their past. And so Amos has a word for Israel and the nations (S. Lewis Johnson).

A Hymn to the Sovereignty of God
Amos 5:8-9 * Amos 9:5-6

5 And the Lord GOD of hosts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt.

6 *It is* he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name.

9:6. hath founded his troop in the earth. has founded His vaulted dome over the earth (New American Standard).

9:6. The LORD *is* his name. In Amos 9:1 the Hebrew term “Adonai” (the master; the sovereign Lord) is used. But now we read in Amos 9:6, “The LORD is his name”. When capitalized in the Authorized Version, the Hebrew term is a reference to Yahweh, the covenant keeping God. So, “Yahweh *is* his name.”

The Destruction of the Sinful Northern Kingdom
Amos 9:7-10

7 *Are* ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? Saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? And the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?

9:7. *Are* ye not as children of the Ethiopians. Each generation must come out of spiritual bondage, reflected in the mention of Egypt, lest they be as the children of the Ethiopians.

8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD *are* upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.

9:8. I will not utterly destroy. In the midst of the Lord God’s most severe form of divine retribution, grace and mercy flash forth. Let every person pray with the psalmist, “O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure” (Psalm 38:1). Better yet, let every Christian live so that there is no need for the wrath of God to be made manifest.

9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.

9:9. yet shall not the least grain full. The judgment of God is discriminating, and it is purifying.

9:9. not the least grain. not the smallest pebble. This is a reference to all foreign elements being sifted out. Only the pure grain will fall to the ground.

10 All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

9:10. The evil. The calamity.

An Epilogue of Hope for the Future
Amos 9:11-15 * Acts 15: 12-18

11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

9:11. the tabernacle of David. The prophets of God were enamored with the Davidic Ideal, the belief that a Son of David who would rule over the house of Jacob forever. The Davidic Ideal is set forth in Isaiah 9, 11, 55; Jeremiah 23, 33; Ezekiel 34, 37 Hosea 3, and other passages as well.

9:11. that is fallen. The reference may be to the division that took place under Jeroboam I. The reference may be future and speak of the impending conquest of the nation by a foreign power and the deportation of the people.

Special Note.

What is certain is that, as Amos predicted, God kept His word and the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell in divine judgment to the forces of Sargon II (722 – 705 BC). At least, it is Sargon II who claims credit for the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel. "Sargon claimed to have besieged and captured Samaria, capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. Actually, Sargon's predecessor Shalmaneser had besieged Samaria for three years (2 Kings 17:3-6; 18:9-12) and apparently died shortly before its fall in 722 B.C. - 721 BC. Nevertheless, Sargon claimed credit for the victory. On an inscription found in his palace he says: "The city of Samaria I besieged, I took; 27,290 of its inhabitants I carried away; fifty chariots that were among them I collected" (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary). In this manner, the tabernacle of David fell. But, by the grace of God, it was foretold that it would rise again. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.

9:11. I will raise up the tabernacle of David. The fulfillment of this prophecy is declared in the New Testament, by James, to be the inclusion of Gentiles into the body of Christ, apart from circumcision. *Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*

12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

9:12. That they may possess the remnant of Edom. Historically, the Edomites were hostile to Israel. When the children of Israel were on their journey to the Land of Promise, they came to the territory of Edom. The Hebrews asked permission to pass through the territory, but permission was denied. The terrible story is recorded in Numbers 20:14-21. The LORD never forgot that incident, and promised that one day Israel would possess the territory once denied to them.

Special Note.

The fall of Edom speaks of the fact that worldly opposition to the plans and purposes of God are doomed to failure.

9:12. called by my name. This phrase is a marriage metaphor. To be called by the name of the Lord is to be so identified, and united with Him, so that two are one. What a marvelous position converted Gentiles enjoy with the people of God. *Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Life and Liberty in the Kingdom of God
Amos 9:13-15

13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

9:13. the plowman shall overtake the reaper. The time will come, said Amos, after the restoration of Israel from her exile, that the land will prosper. There will not be enough time to reap all of one harvest before it is time to sow once more. Moreover, sweet wine shall be in abundance. There will be, “*wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart (Psalm 104:13).*

14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

9:14. my people of Israel. Care must be taken to distinguish between those in Israel that had the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and those who did not. The reason is simple: “*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*” (*Romans 9:6*).

15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

9:11. In that day. This is a common expression in Scripture, used by different authors over a span of many centuries. Some see it as a technical phrase associated with the time of a promise or prophecy being fulfilled.

9:11-15.

What God Will Do

- The Lord will raise up the house of David that has fallen into idolatry resulting in divine discipline.
- The Lord will rebuild that which has been destroyed.
- The Lord will bring from captivity the people of Israel and cause them to prosper in the Promised Land.
- The Lord will secure the Land of Promise.
- The Lord will make the Land of Promise to prosper agriculturally.

9:11-15. Most of Amos speaks of judgment as the Lord is said to “roar from Zion” (*Amos 1:2*). However, in the end, the prophet speaks strongly of the loving kindness and faithfulness in divine mercy God has for Israel. By way of application, God will be faithful to His own.

“In loving-kindness Jesus came
My soul in mercy to reclaim,
And from the depths of sin and shame
Through grace He lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me,
With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light,
O praise His Name, He lifted me!

He called me long before I heard,
Before my sinful heart was stirred,
But when I took Him at His word,
Forgiv’n, He lifted me.

His brow was pierced with many a thorn,
His hands by cruel nails were torn,
When from my guilt and grief, forlorn,
In love He lifted me.

Now on a higher plane I dwell,
And with my soul I know 'tis well;
Yet how or why I cannot tell
He should have lifted me."

Charles H. Gabriel, 1905

9:11-15. In these final verses the prophet Amos declares there will be material blessings, and spiritual blessings, associated with those in the kingdom of God. It is not an either / or proposition. Christians can enjoy the blessings of God without feeling guilty. However, if material blessings causes a person to lose sight of God, then the Lord may either take away the material prosperity, or demand a sacrifice as Abraham was told to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac.

9:15. Saith the LORD thy God. saith the LORD your God. A question arises: "Is the LORD your God?" Not everyone can say that the LORD is their God for they are not saved. To such a person the gospel invitation goes forth. If you would be free from the power, pollution, and penalty of sin, like Israel of old (v. 13-15), come to Christ. By faith, call upon the name of the Lord, and be saved. May the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, bring you to Christ. Amen.

Scripture Memorization

Amos 5:24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Supplemental Material

Spiritual Lesson in Amos

Extracted from the Teaching Ministry of S. Lewis Johnson

1. While education is useful in the work of the ministry, it is not essential. Ultimately everything depends upon the Lord taking hold of an individual and equipping and preparing that person for the work of the ministry. Without that endowment with power from on high, all ministries shall fail.
2. Amos has been called the Prophet of Justice because his theological construct is rooted in the covenant that God made with Abraham and confirmed it with his descendants.
3. The God of Amos is the God of creation (Amos 5:8). He is also sovereign (Amos 9:1-4). And most importantly, God is the God of history. He controls the events in the life of a nation (Amos 2:4; 4:11). God is omniscient. He knows all things (Amos 5:12). God is a God of unconditional electing love (Amos 3:2). God is a God of grace and extends opportunity for repentance (Amos 5:4).
4. As the Lord God is the only Savior on the earth, so the Lord Jesus Christ said of Himself, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6).
5. There is a self-destructive and anti-social nature to many societies, including American society. In 1952, a nationwide poll was taken of people ages 18 through 24. Sixty-four percent of those young people said that religion was important in their lives. Twenty-five years later in 1978 another poll was taken with the same questions. This time, only thirty-seven percent of the young people between those ages said that religion was an important part of their lives (*Why the Churches Have Gone Wrong*, John Howard).
6. In the book of Amos, God is vindicated in His acts of judgment and righteousness (Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6).
7. In the book of Amos, the prophet attacks elaborate but insincere worship. He says that it is an offense to God (Amos 5:21-23).
8. In the book of Amos, there is a tremendous amount of stress on human responsibility. There is responsibility in the matter of election (Amos 3:2). Because Israel was a privileged and an elect nation, their responsibility was all the greater. The apostle Peter taught the same truth (1 Peter 4:17). Judgment does not begin with the world, it begins with the church.

9. God does not forget the evil that is done to His people (Amos 1:4). The brutality Hazael performed against Gilead was not forgotten by God. What was done yesterday is remembered by the Lord today. One reason why ultimate punishment is endless is because the guilt of sin is endless before the Lord God. Time does not wipe out guilt.
10. War is spoken of by the prophet Amos. There is a just war, but warfare itself is brutal. When it is waged, it should be waged to win and it should be waged to make the enemy howl. Nothing should be left to an invaded people except their eyes for weeping.

William Tecumseh Sherman said, *“You cannot call off on war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it. There is many a boy here today who looks on war as all glory, but boys, it’s all hell. You can bear this warning voice to generations yet to come. I look upon war with horror.”*

11. The nations that warred against Israel, were religious nations. They all had their gods, but they were false gods. And false gods lead men to do cruel things. Worship a false god and you will become false yourself.
12. Throughout the book of Amos there is the theme of the certainty of divine judgment and discipline on the northern kingdom of Israel.
13. Another theme is that the judgment of God is not total. This truth flashes forth in the midst of condemnation, but it can be found. God remembers His covenantal promises so that His people are not completely destroyed.
14. It must always be remembered that there is a penalty to be paid for the pretense of worshiping God. The Lord will make war against great pretenders, and He will prevail.
15. False worship is established, with judgment to follow, when the hearts of individuals are deliberately turned away from the Lord.
16. About one hundred and eighty years before the ministry of Amos, c. 931 BC, Jeroboam I led ten tribes to form the Northern Kingdom.

Special Note.

Jeroboam knew his control over people could not stand if they continued to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts of the Lord each year. What Jeroboam devised, what the Bible calls, “The Sins of Jeroboam”, was to use religion in the interests of advancing his political agenda.

1 Kings 14:16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

Jeroboam made two calves and then called upon Israel to worship the calves, which they did. One idol was set up in Dan, and another was placed in Bethel. Counterfeit worship was established.

And so were special feast days. Jeroboam had the Feast of Tabernacles observed in the eighth month and on the fifteenth day, rather than in the seventh month on the fifteenth day, as was originally established in the Law.

Leading the nation into false worship was Jeroboam I as he stood by the false altars. This story is recorded in 1 Kings 12:25-33.

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."

17. Because good leaders are needed, Christians are to pray for those in authority. Beyond that, Christians are to obey God rather than men when national leaders want to lead people into sin.
18. God does not expect His people to engage in false worship, nor does He expect His people to practice social injustice. Quite the opposite.

- *Amos 5:24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.*

Special Note.

God expects the service of an honorable public and private life.

God expects those who represent Him to be gentle, and just, in all their relations with one another.

God expects individuals to have the kind of relationships in their families and otherwise that are reflective of the truth of Jesus Christ.

19. Those who belong to the Lord God bear the marks of moral and spiritual concern. They long for holiness. They love the Word of God. They rest in the grace of God, and by God's grace, they call upon Him earnestly and sincerely.

PROPHETS OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak

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