

STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Book of *Amos*

Prepared by:
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AMOS
THE PROPHET OF JUSTICE

AMOS "Burden Bearer." The first great reformer. Not a "professional" prophet, but chosen of God (7:14,15). A stern prophet of justice and righteousness.
(Not a popular prophet by the people)

HOME: Tekoa, a town of Judah, 6 miles south of Bethlehem, and 12 miles north of Jerusalem. A wild, desert country.

OCCUPATION
Shepherd and "dresser" of Sycamore trees.

DATE: 765 - 750 BC (c. 755 BC)

BACKGROUND:
The 8th Century - a period of great prosperity for both Israel and Judah. Two major perils threatened both sections - Moral and religious corruption, due to a wrong conception of the character of God; - The successes of the Assyrians, which were to the great mass of people an evidence of the superiority of the Assyrian gods, and might lead to apostasy from Jehovah.

In this period came the four prophets - Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. All of them emphasized the universality of Jehovah and His power, and they declared that the successes of the Assyrians were not due to Jehovah's weakness, but due to the people's sins. All of these prophets sought to impress the people with a more adequate conception of the character of the True God, each emphasizing that phase of the divine character which he considered best adapted to his day and generation.

The great need of the people in Israel in the 8th Century before Christ was that the heathen elements which had crept into their life and worship in the course of centuries should be eliminated. And what they tried to do was to emphasize the law as given by Moses. Foremost they taught that God was a God of Righteousness, and that as such He cared nothing for outward rites and ceremonies apart from a true heart, and holy living.

Luxury and wealth of the people are often mentioned by Amos. Morally, the people were corrupt.

MESSAGE: "Doom" - Repent or Perish

CHARACTERISTICS:
Amos might be called "the first great reformer." He was not of the school of the prophets, who, by this time, were disposed to cry what the people wanted, but he was chosen of God. There was not the sympathy, love and feeling of the statesman or citizen, but a cold sense of justice and right. His very attitude breathes the desert air of his life's environment. He was the

AMOS THE PROPHET OF JUSTICE

stern prophet of justice and righteousness. Amos was God's prophet to a prosperous Israel steeped in religiosity, immorality and complacency.

The book is of high literary merit, the language is pure, readable, clear, forceful and dramatic; It is vivid, uses color, metaphors, sarcasm, irony, parallelism, imagery, eloquent contrasts and poetry; It is full of passion and power; It is quoted twice in the New Testament; There is no reference to the man Amos in any other Bible book.

The preaching is sharp + vigorous

criticized as a "dark book."

OUTLINE:

Judgment Against The Nations (1,2)

Crimes of Israel (3-6)

Visions of Judgment (4-9)

Key statement -

"seek Me, and you shall live" (5⁴)

The *Vigilance* of The Prophet (1,2)

The *Voice* of The Prophet (3-6)

The *Visions* of The Prophet (7-9)

LESSONS:

The nature of God - Ruler of the earth

The peril of privilege (3:2)

Justice is elemental (2:6b-8)

The lessons of thoughtless concern (6:1-6)

The kind of worship that insults God (5:21-24)

Men displease God by hollow, insincere worship

"Our solemn assemblies may still be despised by Yahweh. Whenever mere ritual and form are allowed to take the place of filial communion with God and moral obedience, our worship will be as lightly esteemed by Him as was the worship of Israel long ago, and our sanctuaries will fall, as did the ancient high places. Our churches will be empty, their services despised, and the heart and mind of men will turn for sustenance elsewhere." (ISBE, page 53)

ATTRIBUTES of GOD GIVEN BY AMOS -

OMNIPotence 4¹³ 5⁸

over creation

form of nature 4⁶⁻¹¹

supremacy of the nations 1, 2, 5⁹, 7

Names -

Jehovah

Lord Jehovah

Jehovah, the God of Hosts

Jehovah, whose name is the God of Hosts

The Lord

omnipresent 9²⁻⁴ 1, 2

omniscience 9²⁻⁴ 4¹³

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AMOS: A Teaching Outline

I. Introduction to Amos	1:1-2
II. The Eight Judgments	1:3—2:16
A. Judgment on Damascus	1:3-5
B. Judgment on Gaza	1:6-8
C. Judgment on Tyre	1:9-10
D. Judgment on Edom	1:11-12
E. Judgment on Ammon	1:13-15
F. Judgment on Moab	2:1-3
G. Judgment on Judah	2:4-5
H. Judgment on Israel	2:6-16
III. The Three Sermons of Judgment	3:1—6:14
A. The First Sermon: Israel's Present	3
1. Israel's Judgment Is Deserved	3:1-10
2. Israel's Judgment Is Described	3:11-15
B. The Second Sermon: Israel's Past	4
1. Israel's Judgment Is Deserved	4:1-5
2. Israel's Judgment Is Demonstrated	4:6-11
3. Israel's Judgment Is Described	4:12-13
C. The Third Sermon: Israel's Future	5:1—6:14
1. Israel's Judgment Is Deserved	5:1-15
2. Israel's Judgment Is Described	5:16—6:14
a. The First Woe of Judgment	5:16-27
b. The Second Woe of Judgment	6
V. The Five Visions of Judgment	7:1—9:10
A. Vision of the Locusts	7:1-3
B. Vision of the Fire	7:4-6
C. Vision of the Plumb Line	7:7-9
D. Opposition of Amaziah	
(Historical Parenthesis)	7:10-17
E. Vision of the Summer Fruit	8
F. Vision of the Doorposts	9:1-10
VII. The Five Promises of the Restoration of Israel	9:11-15

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AMOS, BOOK OF

A prophetic book of the Old Testament noted for its fiery denunciation of the northern kingdom of Israel during a time of widespread idol worship and indulgent living. The book is named for its author, the prophet AMOS, whose name means "burden bearer." Amos lived up to his name as he declared God's message of judgment in dramatic fashion to a sinful and disobedient people.

For an outline of the book see Amos

Structure of the Book. The nine chapters of the Book of Amos emphasize one central theme: The people of the nation of Israel have broken their COVENANT with God, and His judgment against their sin will be severe. After a brief introduction of Amos as the prophet (1:1-2), the book falls naturally into three major sections: (1) judgment against the nations, including Judah and Israel (1:3-2:16); (2) sermons of judgment against Israel (3-6); and (3) visions of God's judgment (7:1-9:10). The book concludes with a promise of Israel's restoration (9:11-15).

In the first major section of the book Amos begins with biting words of judgment against the six nations surrounding the lands of Judah and Israel. These nations are Damascus (1:3-5), Gaza (1:6-8), Tyre (1:9-10), Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15), and Moab (2:1-3). Next he announces God's judgment against Judah, Israel's sister nation to the south (2:4-5). Because of Israel's bitterness toward Judah, Amos' listeners must have greeted this cry of doom with pleasant agreement.

But Amos was only warming up to the main part of his sermon. Suddenly he launched into a vivid description of God's judgment against the nation of Israel. With biting sarcasm, Amos condemned the citizens of Israel for their oppression of the poor (2:7), worship of idols (2:8), rejection of God's salvation (2:9,12), and defilement of the Lord's holy name (2:7). Hypocrisy, greed, and injustice prevailed throughout the land. True worship had been replaced by empty ritualism and dependence on pagan gods. And Amos made it plain that Israel would be judged severely unless the people turned from their sin and looked to the one true God for strength and guidance.

In the second major section of his book (3-6), Amos preached three biting sermons of judgment against the nation of Israel. He referred to the wealthy, luxury-seeking women of Samaria-the capital city of Israel-as "cows of Bashan" (4:1). He also attacked the system of idol worship which King Jeroboam had established in the cities of Bethel and Gilgal (4:4; 5:5).

Following these sermons of judgment, Amos moved on in the third major section of his book (7:1-9:10) to present five visions of God's approaching judgment. The prophet's vision of a basket of fruit is particularly graphic. He described the nation of Israel as a basket of summer fruit, implying that it would soon spoil and rot in the blistering sun of God's judgment (8).

Following these messages of judgment, the Book of Amos ends on a positive, optimistic note. Amos predicted that the people of Israel would be restored to their special place in God's service after their season of judgment had come to an end (9:11-15). This note of hope is characteristic of the Hebrew prophets. They pointed to a glorious future for God's people, even in the midst of dark times. This positive spirit, which issued from Amos' deep faith in God, sustained the prophet and gave him hope for the future.

Authorship and Date. The author of this book was the prophet Amos, since it is clearly identified in the introduction as "the words of Amos" (1:1). Amos was a humble herdsman, or shepherd, of Tekoa (1:1), a village near Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah. But God called him to deliver His message of judgment to the people who lived in Israel, Judah's sister nation to the north. Amos indicated in his book that he prophesied during the reigns of King Uzziah (Azariah) in Judah and King Jeroboam II in Israel (1:1). This places his prophecy at about 760 BC. He must have written the book some time after this date, perhaps after returning to his home in Tekoa.

In one revealing passage in his book, Amos indicates that he was "no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit" (7:14). In spite of this humble background, he was called by God to preach His message of repentance and judgment to a rebellious nation (7:15-16). His unquestioning obedience and his clear proclamation of God's message show that he was committed to the Lord and His principles of holiness and righteousness. Amos' keen sense of justice and fairness also comes through clearly in the book.

Historical Setting. Amos prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (793 BC - 753 BC), a time of peace and prosperity. The prophet speaks of the excessive luxury of the wealthy (6:3-7), who had no concern for the needs of the poor. Religiously, the nation had departed from the worship of the one true God. Jeroboam encouraged the practice of fertility cults, mixing an element of BAAL worship with Israel's faith in their Lord of the Covenant. The situation clearly called for a courageous prophet who could call the nation back to authentic faith as well as a policy of fairness and justice in their dealings with their fellow citizens.

Theological Contribution. Amos is known as the great "prophet of righteousness" of the Old Testament. His book underlines the principle that religion demands righteous behavior. True religion is not a matter of observing all the right feast days, offering burnt offerings, and worshiping at the sanctuary. Authentic worship results in changed behavior-seeking God's will, treating others with justice, and following God's commands. This great insight is summarized by these famous words from the prophet: "Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (5:24).

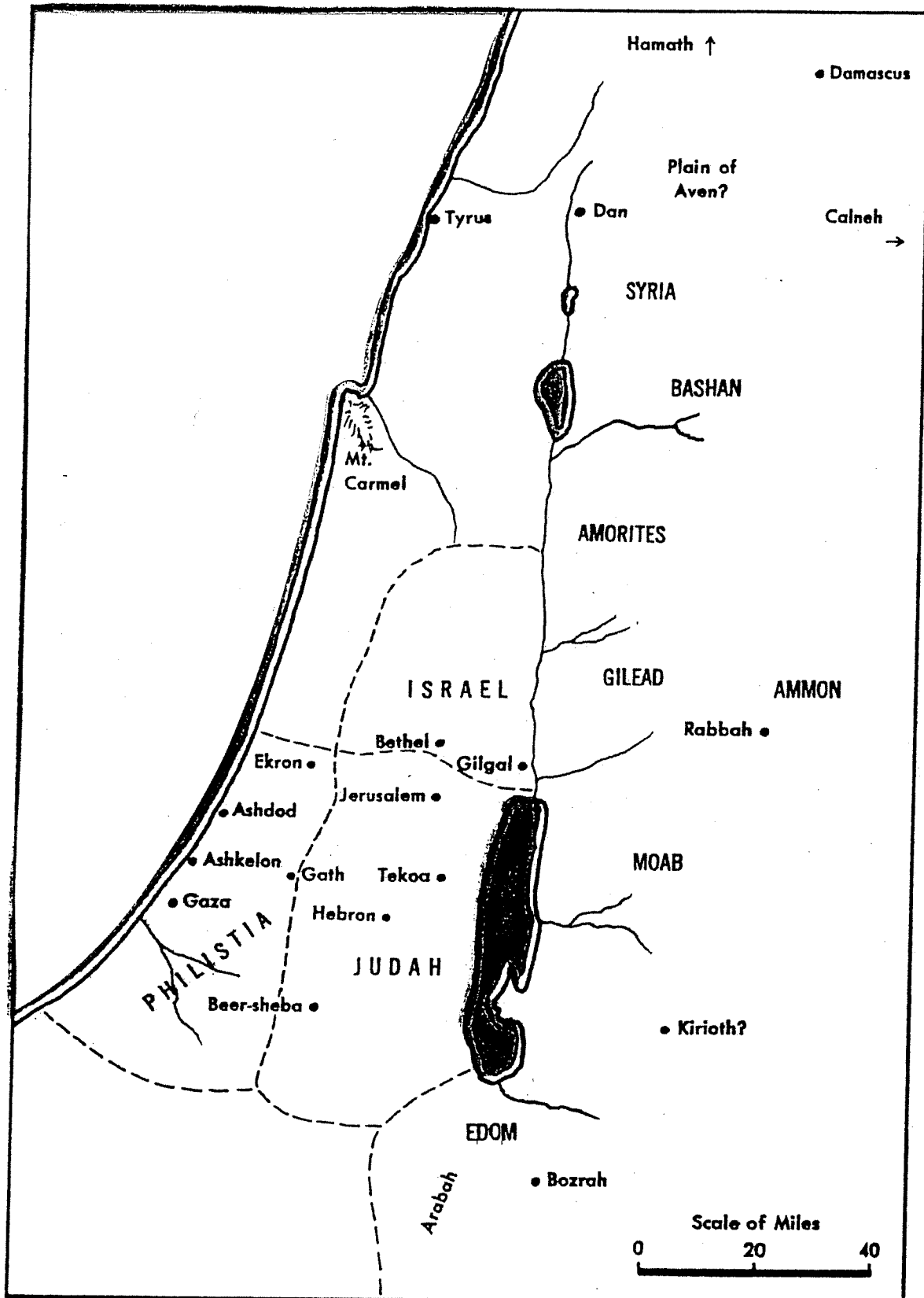
Special Considerations. Although Amos was a shepherd by occupation, his book gives evidence of careful literary craftsmanship. One technique which he used was puns or plays on words to drive home his message. Unfortunately, they do not translate easily into English. In his vision of the summer fruit, for example, Amos spoke of the coming of God's judgment with a word that sounds very similar to the Hebrew word for fruit (8:1-2). The summer fruit (*qayits*) suggested the end (*qets*) of the kingdom of Israel (RSV). Like ripe summer fruit, Israel was ripe for God's judgment.

Another literary device which Amos used in his sermons of judgment against the nations is known as numerical parallelism: "For three transgressions...and for four..." (1:3). He repeated this phrase seven times as he covered the sins of the various nations around Israel (1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4). The reader can almost feel the suspense building until the prophet reaches the dramatic climax of his sermon: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals" (2:6).

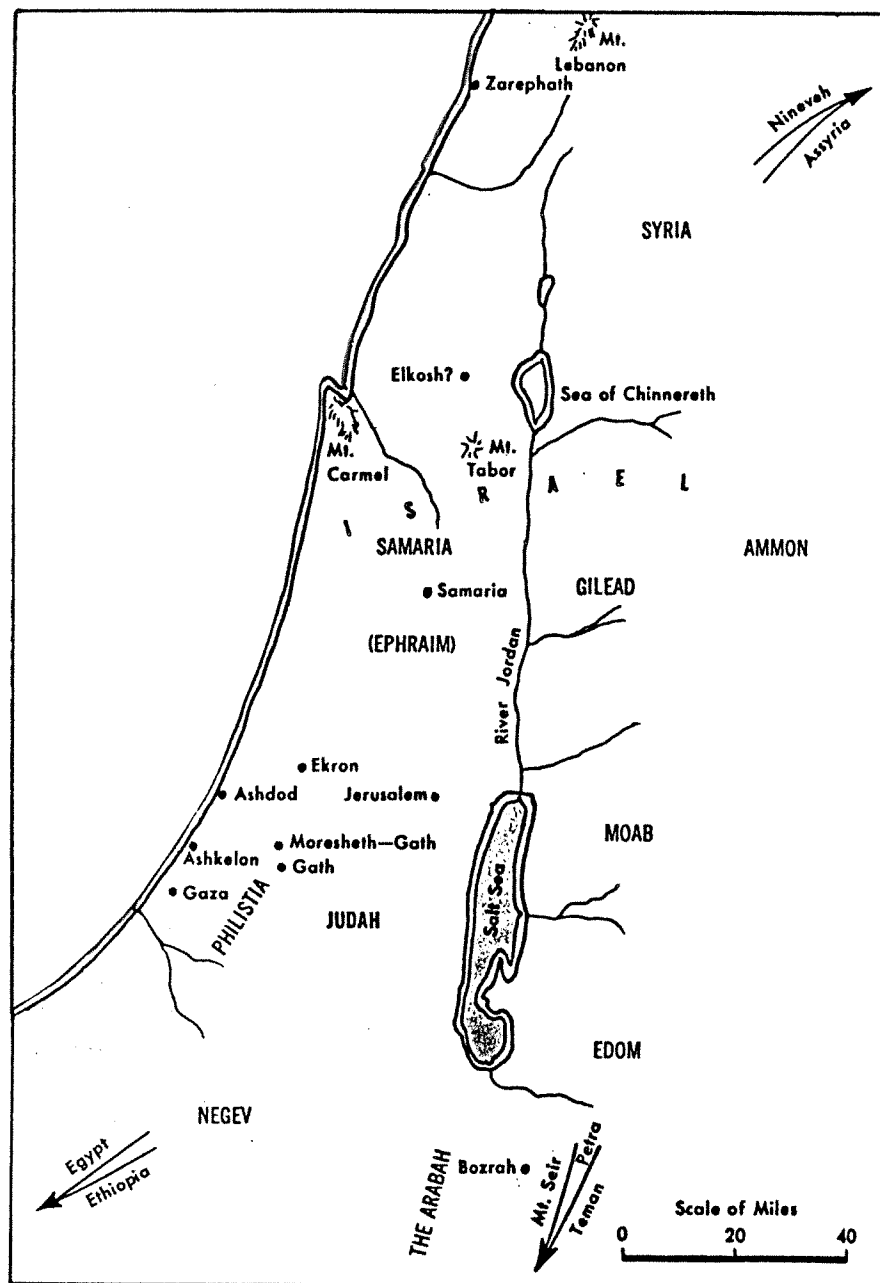
The Book of Amos is one of the most eloquent cries for justice and righteousness to be found in the Bible. And it came through a humble shepherd who dared to deliver God's message to the wealthy and influential people of his day. His message is just as timely for our world, since God still places a higher value on justice and righteousness than on silver and gold and the things that money will buy.

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GEOGRAPHY OF AMOS



GEOGRAPHY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS OF JUDAH



AMOS
CONDITIONS OF THE LAND

Jeroboam II was a strong king

There was much wealth in the nation, but very little wisdom. *Politically + economically at zenith of power*

Feasting and banquets took the place of religious endeavor.

A spirit of greed ruled society - corruption of justice was common sin.

Might became right - land seizure was an everyday crime - landlords had all the legal machinery at their command to oppress.

The result was that the rich became richer and the poor became poorer.

With scornful indifference men lived "at ease in Zion" (6:1) *spirit of self-sufficiency + smug complacency } material possessions*

Love of luxury prevailed - as prior to downfall of Rome, and the breaking out of the French revolution.

Religion lost all its vitality, and morals were completely ignored.

Insincerity and dishonesty, corruption and licentiousness, criminal extravagance and blind assurance took such a firm hold of the wealthy, arrogant hedonist, that they became heathen in everything but name.

Idolatry, hypocrisy, moral corruption, social injustice were everywhere

God's people - instead of worship, adoration, righteousness, love + concern for one another, they had become --

- 1. cruel*
- 2. selfish*
- 3. rebellious*

THE SINS OF THE NATIONS

The sin of Syria - cruelty

The sin of Philistia - slave trade

The sin of Phoenicia - slave agents in spite of covenant

The sin of Edom - determined unforgiveness

The sin of Ammon - cruelty based upon greed

The sin of Moab - violent and vindictive hatred

The sin of Judah - Jehovah's laws despised

The sin of Israel - the corruption of a delivered people

AMOS

Amos 1:1,2	Title and preface
Amos 1:3-2:3	Punishment of the heathen nations bordering Israel. The judgment upon the six neighboring heathen peoples was for excessive cruelty. Edom, Ammon and Moab were related to Israel; Damascus, Gaza and Tyre were not.
Amos 2:4,5	Judah's sin was religious apostasy. They had rejected the law of Jehovah and had turned to lies.
Amos 2:6-16	The burden of Amos' prophecy is begun here. Israel's sins were of a moral, social, and political nature, the result of idolatry and lawlessness.
Amos 3:1-8	Israel had sustained a special relationship to God as His chosen people; and because this had been violated, punishment must come. The prophet defends his right to speak to the point.
Amos 3:9-15	The wealthy ruling class are the first to be condemned. Ashdod and Egypt are called to witness the confusion in Samaria. Beth-el will be visited.
Amos 4:1-3	The profligate women of Samaria, called "kine of Bashan" (KJV) are condemned with their lords. Their luxurious homes shall be broken down, and they shall go away captive.
Amos 4:4,5	The apostate worship is condemned as in irony the prophet calls upon the people to multiply their transgressions at Beth-el.
Amos 4:6-13	Five chastisements are enumerated which had been sent by Jehovah on the people. But to no avail, for they had refused to be taught. Consequently, "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"
Amos 5:1-9	Facing the threat of judgment, Amos takes up a lamentation over the nation, followed by an urgent plea that the people "seek Jehovah."
Amos 5:10-15	The man who would judge fairly is hated by the rulers; therefore, only the corrupt are appointed. In such a state the poor receive no justice.

Amos 5:16-20	For such wickedness God must punish the nation. Wailing will be heard on every hand, for "woe" to them when the day of the Lord comes.
Amos 5:21-27	The emptiness of Israel's worship is again condemned. The nation is charged with having never been completely faithful to God.
Amos 6:1-6	A second woe is announced, this time against the revelers in Samaria. Their luxurious feasts are described and condemned.
Amos 6:7-14	Jehovah swears by Himself that the revelers must go. He declares His hatred for that of which Israel boasted. A nation will be raised against the people to execute the Lord's judgment.
Amos 7:1-9	A new section is introduced. Amos is shown a series of visions. The execution of the threat of the first two is averted by prophet's intercession.
Amos 7:10-17	Amaziah, the priest of Beth-el, warns Jeroboam of Amos' danger to the royal sanctuary, and interrupts Amos, urging him to return to Judah. Amos' classic response is that his mission and message are from Jehovah.
Amos 8:1-10	The fourth vision: a basket of summer fruit, which the prophet interprets. The wicked practices of the merchants are exposed and condemned. The nation's sun shall go down at noon. The end is near.
Amos 8:11-14	A famine of the word of God is predicted. They had rejected the message, but the day will come when they will seek it.
Amos 9:1-4	The fifth and final vision is shown to Amos. The house of Israel will crash about his own head. The people cannot hide from Jehovah, but will be sought out and punished.
Amos 9:5-10	The people will be swept away; the kingdom will be brought to an end. However, the righteous, if there are such, will not fall.
Amos 9:11-15	From the crash and ruin of the kingdom the prophet looks to the glorious future under the Messiah. Spiritual promises fill his closing word.

AMOS
PERMANENT LESSONS

1. Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society.
2. Privilege implies responsibility.
3. Failure to recognize and accept responsibility is sure to bring punishment.
4. Nations, and by analogy, individuals - are obligated to live up to the light and knowledge granted to them.
5. The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to His commands. ("The distinguishing characteristic of heathenism is the stress which it lays upon ceremonial" - G.A. Smith)

SOME QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION
AMOS

1. What passages in Amos do you find more appealing than others?
2. What has Amos to teach us about the relationship of privilege and responsibility?
3. Are there parallels to be seen between the position occupied by Israel and the position occupied by the church?
4. How similar are the sins of Amos' day to sins of our own day?

THE CHARACTER OF AMOS:

Simple, humble, plain, blunt, direct, courageous, dynamic, righteous, sympathetic, deeply religious, disciplined, powerful.

Sent to a people who felt no need for preaching, because they lacked the necessary basis for a true understanding of a spiritual message.

RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE:

Outwardly religious. Songs, offerings, attendance, elaborate ceremonies and regular religious observances were in abundance. Very pious - special creatures of God. There was much eschatological expectation. However, immorality was rampant; the righteous were hated and opposed; rich nobles who lead in religious matters were selfishly indifferent to the poor; They were lacking in knowledge, and idled away their time.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE:

Strong, vigorous with armies, fortifications, trade routes and powerful political alliances. They were rich; had pride in armies and accomplishments. There was no anxiety or fear. Land of freedom, luxury and ease.

SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE:

UNPRECEDNTED PROSPERITY. LIFE OF LUXURY AND SELF INDULGENCE. Winter housing and Summer houses with plenty of stone and ivory paneling. Business was good; wine plentiful; ivory couches; rich furnishing; feasts and banquets. Contrast of rich (ease/extravagance) with the poor (slave population). Plenty of palaces and plenty of hovels; cities were growing; most of

land was in the hands of the few. There were dishonest judges; corrupt government; usury, extortion, riots and class hatred. They were utterly oblivious to the tragic certainties to come

THE MINOR PROPHETS

AMOS

INTRODUCTION

1. Name: "Burden-bearer."

2. Home: Tekoah (1:1), a town of Judah (7:12), about six miles south of Bethlehem and about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. A wild desert country, the influence of which is seen in the prophet's preaching (3:3-8).

3. Occupation: A shepherd and dresser of sycamore trees (1:1; 7:12-14).

4. Characterization: Amos might be called "the first great reformer." He was not of the school of the prophets, who, by this time, were disposed to cry what the people wanted, but he was chosen of God (7:14,15). There was not the sympathy, love and feeling of the statesman or citizen, but cold sense of justice and right. His very attitude breathes the desert air of his life's environment. He was the stern prophet of justice and righteousness.

5. Date: Probably c. 755 B. C.

6. Background:

a. The eighth century - period of great prosperity for both Israel and Judah. Two major perils threatened both sections: (1) Moral and religious corruption, due to a wrong conception of the character of Jehovah; (2) The successes of the Assyrians, which were to the great mass of people an evidence of the superiority of the Assyrian gods, and might lead to apostasy from Jehovah.

b. In this period came the four prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. All of them emphasized the universality of Jehovah and his power, and they declared that the successes of the Assyrians were not due to Jehovah's weakness; but due to the people's sins. All of these prophets sought to impress the people with a more adequate conception of the character of the true God, each emphasizing that phase of the divine character which he considered best adapted to his day and generation.

c. The great need of the people in Israel in the eighth century before Christ was that the heathen elements which had crept into their life and worship in the course of centuries should be eliminated. And what they tried to do was to emphasize the law as given by Moses. Foremost they taught that God was a God of righteousness, and that as such He cared nothing for outward rites and ceremonies apart from a true heart and holy living.

d. Luxury and wealth of the people are often mentioned by Amos. (1) Extravagant houses, 3:15; (2) luxurious finishes on the interior, 3:12; (3) Many extravagancies are also mentioned and condemned, 6:4-6; (4) A contrast between wealth and poverty, luxury and want, ease and toil found in this book.

e. Morally, the people were corrupt.

f. The message of the book is "Doom".

AMOS
The Prophet of Justice

NAME: "Burden-Bearer"

HOME: Tekoa, a town of Judah, 12 miles south of Jerusalem, a wild, desert country.

OCCUPATION: Shepherd, "dresser" of sycamore trees

DATE: 765 B.C. - 750 B.C.

BACKGROUND OF BOOK: Great prosperity - moral and religious corruption

MESSAGE: Doom - repent or perish.

TEACHING: Nature of Jehovah and relation between God and other nations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BOOK: high literary merit, language is pure, readable, clear
forceful and dramatic; vivid, color-user; metaphors, sarcasm, irony, parallelism,
imagery, eloquent contrasts and poetry - passion and power.

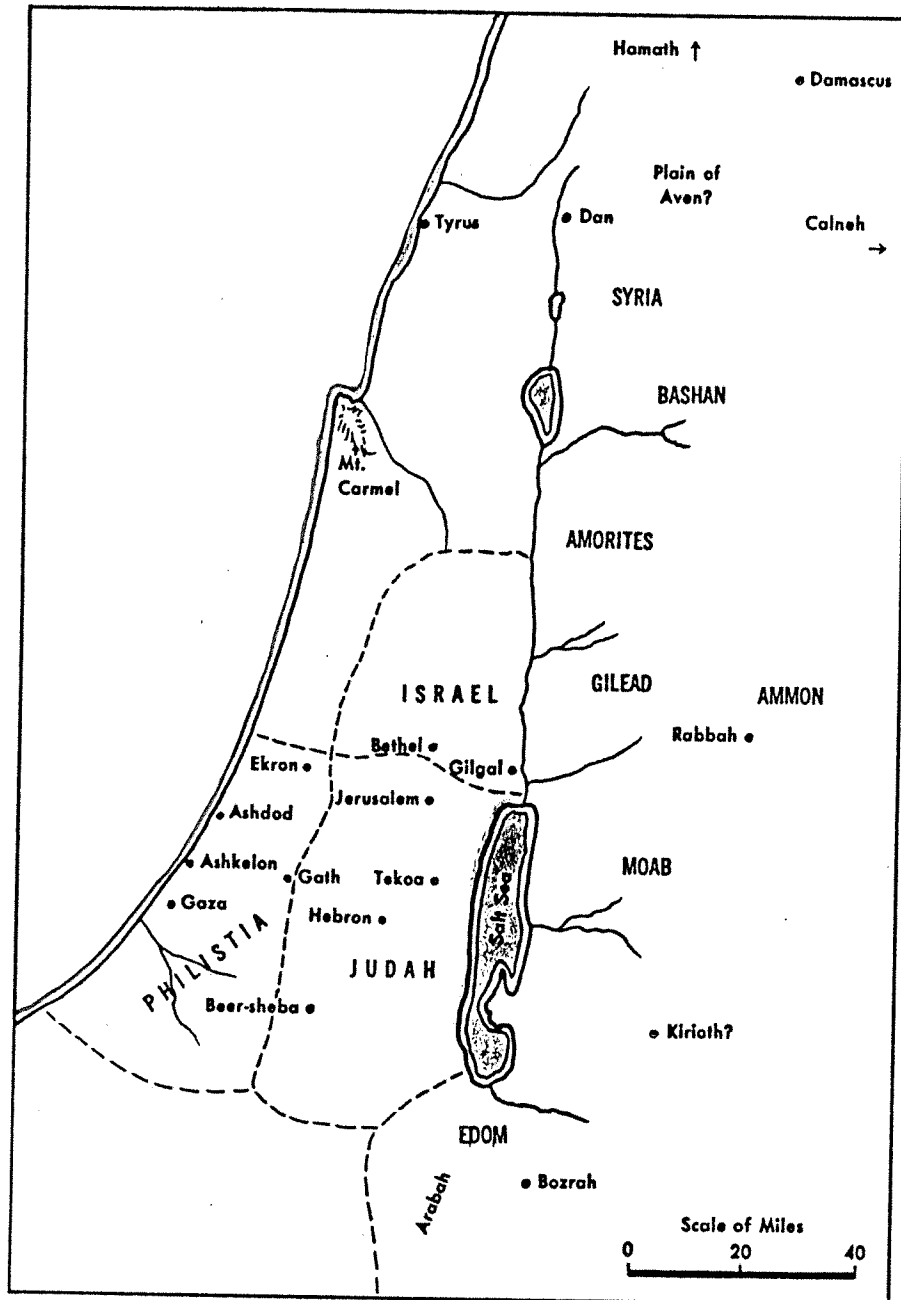
BRIEF OUTLINE: Judgment against Nations 1,2
Crimes of Israel 3-6
Visions of Judgment 7-9

LESSONS:

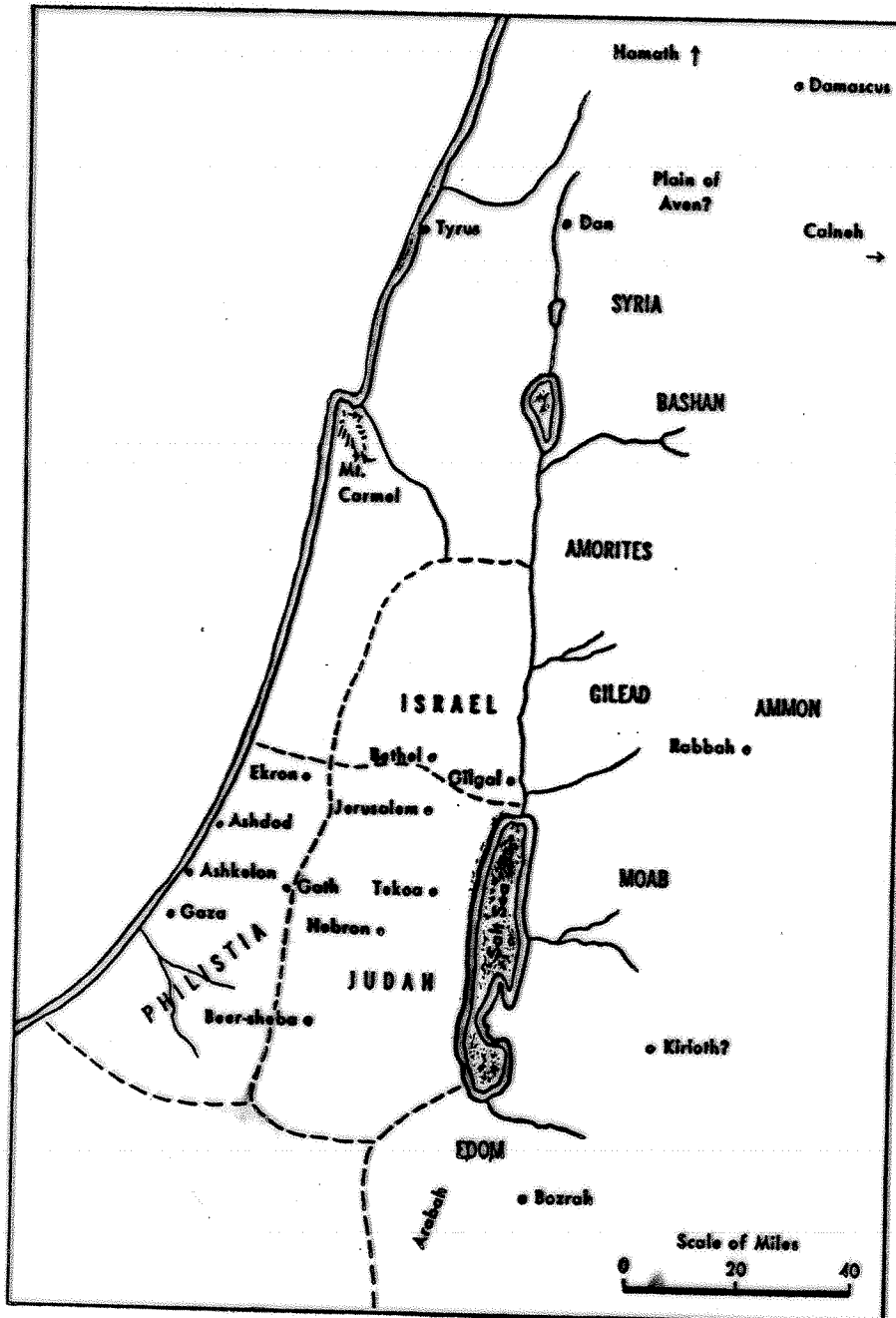
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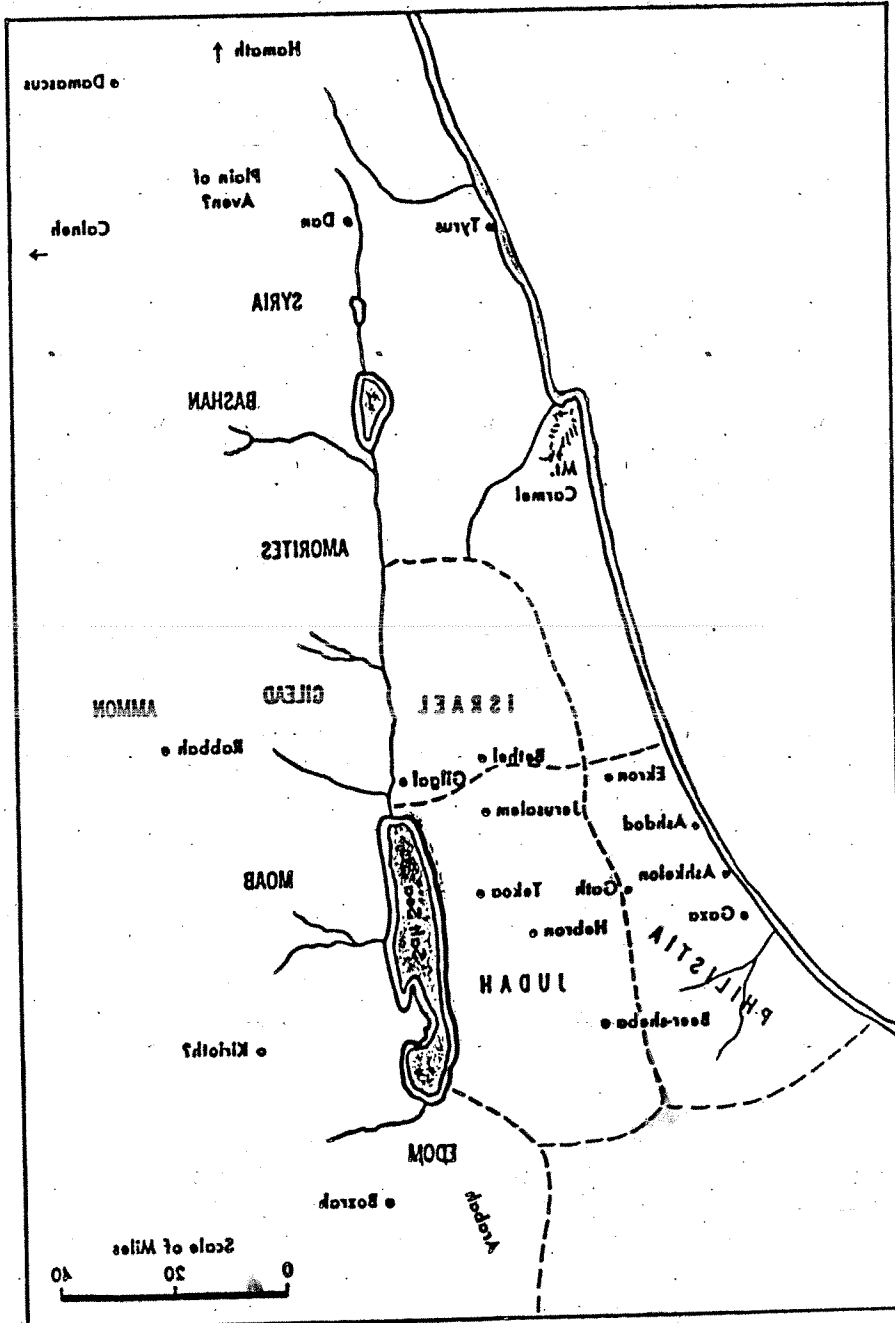
GEOGRAPHY OF AMOS



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AMOS

PREPARE TO MEET GOD

GENTILE AND JEW			ISRAEL (northern kingdom)			JEW AND GENTILE					
GENTILE NATIONS	2:4	JUDAH	2:6	ISRAEL	I	S	R	A	E	L	ISRAEL JUDAH GENTILES
	Lyric prophecy ORACLES										
1:1 INTRODUCTION			2:1	3	4	5	6	7-1	7-10 (PARENTHESIS)	9-11	9-15
JUDGMENTS VS. NATIONS			JUDGMENTS VS. ISRAEL			FIVE VISIONS OF JUDGMENT			MESSIANIC PROMISE		
J			U			D			G		
M			E			N			T		
H O P E			H O P E			H O P E			H O P E		
THE R I G H T E O U S N E S S O F G O D			THE R I G H T E O U S N E S S O F G O D			THE R I G H T E O U S N E S S O F G O D			THE LONGSUFFER- ING OF GOD'S GRACE		

1. Syria
2. Philistia
3. Phoenicia
4. Edom
5. Ammon
6. Moab
7. Judah

8. Israel

"HEAR THIS WORD"

PREPARE TO MEET
THY GOD, O ISRAEL
4:12

"THE LORD SHOWED
UNTO ME"

1. LOCUSTS
2. FIRE
3. PLUMBLINE
4. SUMMER FRUIT
5. ALTAR

KEY VERSES: 1:2; 4:12; 5:4

KEY WORDS:
SAITH THE LORD
TRANSGRESSIONS
I WILL
SEEK

4:2:51:4:5:1 :832R3V Y3X-

QUINTO ME.
1. LOCUSTS
2. FIRE
3. GUMBALL
4. REMMUS
TUPP
PATLA 2

4:15
THEY COD' O ISKAEF
PREPARE TO MEET
JAGRSI O DOO YHT

...THE LORD SHOWED

"QROM SIHT RA3H"

[illegible]

DO NOT MEET TO DISCUSS

ZOMA

OUTLINE: I. SIN AND PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS - AMOS 1:1-2:5.

- A. Title and Preface (1:1,2).
- B. The heathen nations (1:3-2:3).
 - 1. Damascus (Syria) - for war crimes (1:3-5).
 - 2. Gaza (Philistia) - for slave traffic (1:6-8).
 - 3. Tyre (Phoenicia) - delivered up brothers (1:9,10).
 - 4. Edom - continual anger for Israel (1:11,12).
 - 5. Ammon - war crimes, extreme cruelty (1:13-15).
 - 6. Moab - vengeance even on king's bones (2:1-3).
- C. Judah - apostasy (2:4,5).

II. ISRAEL'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT - AMOS 2:6-6:14.

- A. Theme of the prophecy (2:6-16).
 - 1. Israel's sins (2:6-12).
 - 2. The consequences (2:13-16).
- B. Israel's sin and doom (3:1-5:17).
 - 1. Condemnation of wealthy (3:1-4:5).
 - 2. Jehovah's ignored chastisements (4:6-13).
 - 3. Lamentations and threats (5:1-17).
- C. Woes upon Israel (5:18-6:14).
 - 1. Day of the Lord a terror (5:18-20).
 - 2. Worship is unacceptable (5:21-24).
 - 3. They had followed the evil of their fathers (5:25-27).
 - 4. At ease in their wealth (6:1-6).
 - 5. Exile and destruction (6:7-11).
 - 6. Vanity of trusting in human powers (6:12-14).

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the name "Amos" mean?
2. When did Amos prophesy?
3. List Israel's neighbors which are condemned in chapters 1 and 2. Why was each condemned?
4. The following are the capitals of what nations: Damascus? Gaza? Tyrus (Tyre)?
5. What were some of the sins of Israel?
6. What made Israel's rebellion worse than that of the heathen nations (cf. 3:1,2)?
7. Who are the "Kine of Bashan" (cf. 4:1)?
8. What had the Lord done in efforts to cause Israel to repent (cf. 4:6-11)?
9. Considering the context, is Amos 6:5 a valid argument against instrumental music in worship?
10. What did the Lord promise as punishment (cf. 6:7)?

OUTLINE: I. FIVE VISIONS OF AMOS - AMOS 7:1-9:10.

- A. The locust - Amos appeals to God and averts doom (7:1-3).
- B. Devouring fire - Amos appeals to God and averts doom (7:4-6).
- C. The plumbline (7:7-9).
- D. Interlude: Amaziah's confrontation (7:10-17).
 - 1. Amaziah reports to Jeroboam concerning the message of Amos (7:10,11).
 - 2. Amaziah tells Amos to go prophesy in Judah (7:12,13).
 - 3. The response of Amos (7:14-17).
 - a. His message was from the Lord (15,15).
 - b. Amaziah's punishment for his antagonism (16,17).
- E. The basket of summer fruit and its meaning (8:1-14).
 - 1. The vision (Note: the Hebrew for "summer" is "qets" and the Hebrew for "end" is "qaytis." This is probably intended as a pun) (8:1-3).
 - 2. Judgment against Israel (8:4-14).
 - a. Their mistreatment of poor (4-7).
 - b. Coming doom (8-10).
 - c. They will be without the word of the Lord (11,12).
 - d. Certain fall (13,14).
- F. The Lord standing by the altar - destruction of the Kingdom (9:1-10).
 - 1. No place of escape (9:1-4).
 - 2. The power of Jehovah (9:5,6).
 - 3. The destruction to be a "sifting" and not utter (total) destruction of the house of Jacob (9:7-10).

II. ISRAEL'S BRIGHT FUTURE - AMOS 9:11-14.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is a plumbline? What is the significance of that vision?
2. What is the significance of the first two plagues being averted by the prophet's intercession?
3. Why didn't Amos intercede in the third vision (cf. 7:8)?
4. Who was Amaziah? Of what did he accuse Amos?
5. What was at Bethel (cf. I Kings 12:25ff)?
6. What had Amos' occupation been when he was called?
7. Which of his visions was a Hebrew pun?
8. What is the meaning of 8:11?
9. Was Israel utterly destroyed?
10. To what does 9:11-15 refer?

(1)

AMOS--- THE PROPHET OF JUSTICE

I. AMOS--the man:

A. The name Amos signifies--"burden" or "burden bearer".

B. HIS BACKGROUND.

1. He lived in the village of Tekoa, which was 12 miles from Jerusalem and 6 miles south of Bethlehem.
2. This region was too dry for summer crops of grain, as it was only 18 miles from the Dead Sea.
3. Amos was a herdsman of a small in size and ugly in appearance sheep. These sheep were highly esteemed for their fine wool.
4. He was also known for being a "dresser of sycamore trees". This tree had a fruit that did not ripen until pierced, this is what Amos did as a "dresser of sycamore trees". This was a type of fig tree.
5. By his own admission he said "HE WAS NOT A PROPHET--THE SON OF A PROPHET--BUT A HERDSMAN, AND A TENDER OF SYCAMORE TREES--YET THE LORD TOLD HIM TO GO, PROPHECY TO MY PEOPLE"---7:14,15

C. Time of his prophesying:

1. In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah--783-742 B.C.
2. In the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash--786-746 B.C.
3. Two years before the earthquake--this date is somewhat uncertain--yet must have been one of unusual severity as it is alluded to by Zechariah in 14:5
4. This was a period of great peace and prosperity during which it seems that the rich became richer, and the poor poorer. Some lived in wealth and luxury and often at the expense of the poor and destitute. They "built houses of hewn stones"--"planted pleasant vineyards"--"stretched themselves upon their couches and beds of ivory"--in doing so they trampled the poor.
5. The people offered their sacrifices and performed all their religious functions--but it was mere formalism and religious ritual which was totally devoid of meaning.
6. This was the setting that Amos came into--yet he was more than equal to the task as he cried, "WOE TO THEM THAT ARE AT EASE IN ZION, AND TO THEM THAT ARE SECURE IN THE MOUNTAIN OF SAMARIA." 6:1

D. His Literary Style:

1. Can you not see Amos--a rough-hewn man, a keeper of sheep, a dresser of sycamore trees, from a small town, sent to a wealthy nation, a sophisticated city of Bethel to pronounce doom.
2. His style was that of his background:
 - a. The use of such metaphors and symbols:
 1. Threshing instruments--1:3
 2. Harvest carts---2:13
 3. Plowing and oxen---6:12
 4. Baskets and summer fruit--8:1
 5. Sieves--9:9
 6. The gin and the snare--3:5
 7. Fishhooks---4:2
 8. Plowmen, reapers, sowers, grape treaders---9:13
 9. Gardens and vineyards---4:9
 10. Locusts, and earthquakes---1:1; 7:1; 8:8; 9:5
 - b. "as a shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear." 3:12 as to how they shall be rescued from the enemy.
3. His style may to some be crude yet his message was that of God who called him.

E. His Message--3 main divisions:

1. Eight formal judgements pronounced upon Israel and her neighbors--1,2
 - a. Damascus--for threshing Gilead 1:3-5
 - b. Gaza--for delivering captives to Edom:6-8

- c. Tyre--also for delivering captives to Edom 1:9-10
- d. Edom--For pursuing his brother without pity 1:11-12
- e. Ammon--For crueity to Gilead 1:13-15
- f. Moab--For burning the bones of the king of edom to lime 2:1-3
- g. Judah--for rejecting the law of Jehovah 2:4,5
- h. Israel--For selling the righteous and needy 2:6-16
- 2. Three discourses of threathing and doom--each one beginning with the exhortating, "HEAR YE THIS WORD." 3-6
 - a. God's choice of Israel conditional--3
 - 1. This could be the greatest chapter in the book.
 - 2. God established a special relationship with Israel, but the nation would nevertheless be punished because of iniquity and oppression.
 - b. Israel is condemned for its way and needs to prepare to meet God--4
 - 1. The pompous women--"cows of Bashan"
 - 2. Insincere worship--"come to Bethel and trangress" (worship the calves at Bethel and Gilgal)
 - c. The lament over Israel's destruction.--5,6
 - 1. The people presist in affliction of the poor.
 - 2. The love of luxury and soft living.
 - 3. The utter disregard of the will of God.
 - 4. This brings about the two woes:
 - a. "Woe to you who are at ease in Zion and trust in the Mount of Samaria--6:1,2
 - b. "Woe to you who put far off the day of doom"--6:37
- 3. Five visions pointing to the end and an epilogue of hope:
 - a. The vivisons of locusts--7:1-3
 - b. The Visions of the devouring fire--7:4-6
 - c. Vision of the Plumbline--7:7-9
 - d. Vision of the basket of summer fruit--8:1-14
 - e. the Vision of the smitten sanctuary--9:1-6 (The people are pictured as being buried under the ruind of their false religion)
- 4. In the mist of these 5 visions Amos has a conforntation and controversy with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel--7:10-17
- 5. The final message in the promise of a better day, to be fulfilled in the Messianac hope.--9:11-15
- F. Some permanent Value of the Book of Amos for us today:
 - 1. Amos vindicates the moral personality of God, emphasizing that the essence of the divine nature is absolute righteousness.
 - 2. Amos also taught that the most elaborate worship, if insincere, is but an insult to God.
 - 3. He also taught that there needs to be social jutices between man and man.
 - 4. That privilage involves responsibility,
 - 5. Religion is a personal matter, likewise conviction--IT CAN NOT BE INHERITED.

II. THE TEXT:

A. The Introduction: 1:1,2

- 1. Amos the writter and the time of writting. v1
- 2. Amos the prophet of God. v2--"AND HE SAID"
 - a. The same as found in Joel 3:16--this shows the unity of the prophets of God.
 - b. The lion roar was one of the most terrifing sounds in nature.
 - c. The Lord roars and speaks from Jerusalem--NOT DAN and BETHEL--where the seats of Idolatrous worship were held.
 - d. The pastures (habitations of the shepherds shall mourn and the top of mount Carmel shall wither. The whole land from Jerusalem on the South to Mount Carmel on the North shall feel the effects of the vengeance of the Lord.

- 1. Because of its height Mount Carmel was always green and flowery.

- 2. For this reason the terror of the Lord felt--when the top would be no longer a green field.

B. The Announcing of the Judgements Coming:

1. "For three transgressions...and for four...."
 - a. Many have tried to list the three or four transgressions that each were guilty of..
 - b. Yet the expression used to signify a great number of transgressions.
 - c. To make it fill up and overflow---
 - d. This expression is used eight times in the book--1:3; 1:6; 1:9; 1:11; 1:13; 2:1; 2:4; 2:6.
2. The judgement against Damascus 1:3-5
 - a. They had been an enemy of Israel
 - b. Their punishment will not be reversed.
 - c. Damascus was punished see II Kings 13:25; 16:1-9
3. The punishment of Gaza 1:6-8
 - a. The Philistines were not willing to take just a few captives, but would remove entire populations and sell them as slaves to the Edomites.
 - b. All these towns were in the land of the Philistines.
 - c. See II Kings 18:8 for one account of their cruelty.
4. That of Tyre 1:9-10
 - a. They too were guilty as the Philistines of selling whole populations to the Edomites.
 - b. "Brotherly Covenant"
 1. This could mean the close relation that Tyre and Israel had in the days of David and Solomon.
 2. Or that of Israel (Jacob) and the Edomites (Esau) brothers and sons of Isaac.
 3. Whatever it means they were guilty of breaking a close tie.
 - c. Ezekiel 26:7-14 shows the Lord's displeasure with this city--only a place for fishermen to dry their nets.
5. The Judgement on Edom. 1:11-12
 - a. The Edomites were descendants of Esau--and seem to harbor a bitter resentment for the Jews.
 - b. In Gen. 27:40 the Bible predicts that Esau will pursue Jacob with a sword, yet God looked after His people.
 - c. They too would feel the wrath of God for their wrong doing.
6. The Judgement on Ammon. 1:13-15
 - a. These were the descendants of Lot by his youngest daughter. Gen. 19:30-38.
 - b. They were a barbarous people--greedy for territory which they took by brutal acts.
 - c. Rabbah was their chief City.
 - d. All would be taken into captivity.
7. The Judgement on Moab. 2:1-3
 - a. These also were the descendants of Lot by his oldest daughter. Gen. 19:30-38
 - b. Whatever the deed of burning the bones of the King of Edom to lime was--It was an inhuman act and caused the wrath of God to come upon them.
8. The Judgement on Judah. 2:4,5 (2 southern tribes)
 - a. The prophet Amos passes from judgement of alien nations and turns now to the most favoured people.
 - b. Look at their charges:
 1. Despised the Law of the Lord.
 2. Not keep the commandments
 3. Lies lead them astray. (lies of the fathers)
 - c. Verse 5 was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar with the burning of Jerusalem II Kings 25:9
9. The Judgement of Israel 2:6-16 (10 northern tribes)
 - a. There six judgements pronounced against Israel.
 1. They would sell the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals.
 2. They were unmerciful in that they generally oppressed the poor--They panted after the dust of the earth which is on the head of poor.

2. "WOE TO YOU WHO PUT FAR OFF THE DAYS OF DOOM..."
 - a. Because of their false sense of security, the people had put the day of accounting far into the future.
 - b. Notice their actions:
 1. Caused seat of violence to come near
 2. Relaxed on beds of ivory and stretch out on couches.
 3. Banqueting on the best fatted lambs and cattle.
 4. Had their depraved spirits lulled and soothed by music (like that which David used to worship God--invented instruments like David) (NOTE: this verse is not one that can be so used to show that Instruments of music are wrong in our worship today) This was music as to go along with their feasting.
 5. Drinking wine from large sacrificial bowls.
 6. Anointing self with choicest oils.
 7. In doing all this they had forgotten the poor of their nation. They really could care-less about the poor.
 - c. The end result--be first of the captivities taken.
 - d. God swears by Himself that the revelers must go--He declares His hatred for that which Israel boast--A nation shall rise against the people to execute the Lord's Judgement.
 1. God rejection of descendance of Jacob.
 2. No matter how big a city, or household all would be destroyed.
 3. Their very actions were pure stupidity to think that they could hide the sin from God.
 4. Their destruction would be afflicted from Hamath to Arabah--to reject God is to invite inevitable Destruction.
6. A series of five visions--interrupted by the priest of Bethel and ending with an epilogue of hope and comfort for the future. 7-9 ("thus the Lord showed me") This was not just something that the prophet felt but that which God revealed to him.
 - a. Vision of locusts 7:1-3
 1. The locusts would destroy the grass after the first mowing--nothing left for the cattle.
 2. After the first be taken nothing left for those left.
 3. Yet by the prophets prayer God gives relief. The destruction of Israel is averted for a time.
 - b. Vision of devouring fire 7:4-6
 1. The devouring fire would have eaten up the land Nothing left.
 2. The Prophet prays and the destruction is once again averted.
 - c. Vision of plumbline 7:7-9
 1. A plumbline is used to determine the vertical perfection of a wall. It also is used for the straightness of that wall.
 2. Israel was made according according to the Plumbline of God. it is now used to see how far they have gone from the laws and commands of God.
 3. This time no need for the prophet to pray as God will not pass by anymore.
 4. The destruction was a sure thing to all.
 - d. Amaziah the priest of Bethel challenges Amos at his right to denounce and speak against the house of Jeroboam. 7:10-17
 1. Amaziah sends word to Jeroboam to warn him of Amos actions.
 2. He then tells Amos to leave--Go home and prophesy there--and speak no more in Bethel.
 3. Amos replies to Amaziah:
 - a. Was no prophet--not even the son of a prophet--but a herdsman and a tender of sycamore trees.
 - b. The Lord call me and said Go prophesy to my people--you say don't prophesy--yet God said to prophesy.
 - c. Listen Amaziah what is going to happen to your own family 7:17
 - e. Vision of the basket of summer fruit. 8:1-14
 1. The end is come for Israel--not pass them by anymore.

2. The destruction is certain--the charges are given at the judgement and judgement begins.
- f. The Vision of the smitten sanctuary 9:1-6
 1. The people are buried under their false religion.
 2. They think that they might escape God's punishment--yet God will begin over them for their transgressions.
 3. Who will bring this about--"THE LORD IS HIS NAME."
7. The Book of Amos concludes with the promise of restoration 9:7-15
 - a. He is the Lord of the people who has delivered them in times past.
 - b. They shall be destroyed for their sinful ways.
 - c. Yet not all (The nation will be destroyed, be no more) yet not all the people, a remnant will be left.
 - d. "I will raise up the tabernacle of David"
 1. This shows that a remnant will be left and with the Gentiles who are called by my name will be one. Compare this with Acts 15: 16-18---the inclusions of the Gentiles into the church. vs. 11,12
 2. Vs.13-15-- not that the nation of Israel will once again flourish on this earth as God's people but that the coming of the Messiah who would establish a spiritual kingdom of which all nations of the earth will enjoy the spiritual blessings of God.
 3. This has been fulfilled by Christ in its entirety.

III. Some passages of special interest.

A. Amos 3:3 "CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER UNLESS THEY ARE AGREED?"

How dangerous it is to travel with one who is unknowing, or unexperience in the ways of God. To be sure one is right need to travel hand in hand with God.

B. Amos 3:7 "SURELY THE LORD GOD DOES NOTHING, UNLESS HE REVEALS HIS SECRETS TO HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS."

God will not cause any false alarm. When the prophets sounds the warning it is because God has given the message.

C. Amos 5:25 "DID YOU OFFER ME SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS IN THE WILDERNESS FORTY YEARS, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?"

They did not! The prophet here points out that it is better to obey God than to sacrifice in a form to Him.

D. Amos 6:1 "WOE TO THEM THAT ARE AT EASE IN ZION."...

Do not be satisfied in self or false sense of religion--But do what God would have you to do in service to Him.

E. Amos 9:11-15 I think that this one of the beautiful thoughts in the book, that God will always look after his people. That he will give the hope to serve Him and will bless them as they do serve Him. He will be with them as long as they are faithful to Him.

BOOKS USED FOR THIS STUDY:

1. The twelve Minor Prophets----George L. Robinson
2. The Minor Prophets---- Jack P. Lewis
3. A Commentary on the Minor Prophets---Homer Hailey
4. The Bible Commentary Vol. VI Ezekiel to Malachi---F.C. Cook
5. Clark's Commentary Vol. IV, Isaiah to Malachi---Adam Clark
6. Keil and Delitzsch--Minor Prophets Vol. I---C.F. Keil
7. The Pulpit Commentary Vol. 14, Amos-Malachi---H.D. SPENCE and Joseph S. Exell
8. Bible Commentary Vol. II E.M. ZERR
9. Lamp to my feet---Charles J. Aebi
10. My Servants the Prophets---Edward J. Young
11. The New King James Bible
12. Strong's Concordance
13. The Living Messages of the Old Testament (Spirit Sword Lecturship 1977) (Chapter 12--Alan Highers)

14. My Servants the Prophets Vol II John T. Willis. (The way of Life series)

Amos's Four Visions Of Judgment & Hope

H. NEIL RICHARDSON

Taking a short passage from the Bible and looking at it from a variety of perspectives can be very instructive. For example, from a short passage from the book of the eighth-century B.C. prophet Amos, we can learn: something about the problems of translation and why scholars sometimes emend (that is, change) the text; how a knowledge of everyday life in Bible times and of earlier pre-Israelite cultures help illuminate the text; something about the nature of the prophetic calling; and finally, a little about how to interpret the prophetic message—as one of hope rather than doom.

The short passage on which I will focus—Amos 7:1-9, 8:1-3—contains four prophetic visions (see the text on p. 19).

What we commonly refer to as a vision is the prophet's experience of the imminent presence of God. Sometimes, but not always, the vision constitutes the prophet's call to prophetic activity. The visions in Amos 7 and 8 came to the prophet after he had been active for some time.

Visions that come to the prophets from time to time often occasion an influx of important ideas and powerful emotions that give new meaning and direction to an understanding of God's intent for Israel and its people.

All four visions in Amos 7 and 8 are first-person reports, a typical form of autobiographical

memorabilia. They all begin the same way: "This is what Yahweh showed me"; the beginnings tie the visions together and also set them apart from surrounding material. The visions are succinct, using an economy of language. They exhibit elevated, finely polished prose.

Looking at the visions more closely, we see that there are two pairs, the first two and the last two. In the first pair Amos initiates the dialogue. In the second pair it is Yahweh who initiates the dialogue. In the first pair of visions, dangers to Israel's future are averted by Amos's intercession. Here we see a significant, though often overlooked, role of the prophet—as intercessor. A prophet not only speaks to the people on behalf of God; he also speaks to God on behalf of the people. In the first pair of visions, God relents.

The thrust of the second pair of visions is precisely opposite from that of the first. In visions three and four, Amos does not intercede. Not only does he not intercede, but the destruction of Israel is presented as certain.

In the first vision, the farmers of Israel are threatened by a swarm of locusts Yahweh is creating. Locusts come in huge clouds that blacken the sky as though the sun were setting. They are capable of destroying all vegetation (compare Isaiah 33:4).

A late eighth-century B.C. seal containing a

*A Vision of
a Swarm of
Locusts
(Amos
7:1-3)*

Hebrew inscription (the owner's name) and an extremely well-executed locust lends immediacy to our perception of this biblical menace. Somehow we better appreciate the threat of the locust when we see such a vivid, almost contemporaneous portrayal. The Hebrew word for locust used in Amos's vision is *gby*, the customary word for locust, however, is *'rbh*. In only one other passage in the Bible is a variant of *gby* used (Nahum 3:17). This seal, however, uses another variant of *gby* (that is, *gbh*). The picture on the seal establishes that the word *gbh* on the seal means locust. Apparently this was the seal owner's family name. This may be the only instance in Hebrew epigraphy where a name is accompanied on a seal by a pictorial illustration of its meaning. The owner of the seal would certainly have been surprised if he had known that 2,700 years after he used the seal it would help confirm "locust" as the meaning of an unusual biblical word.

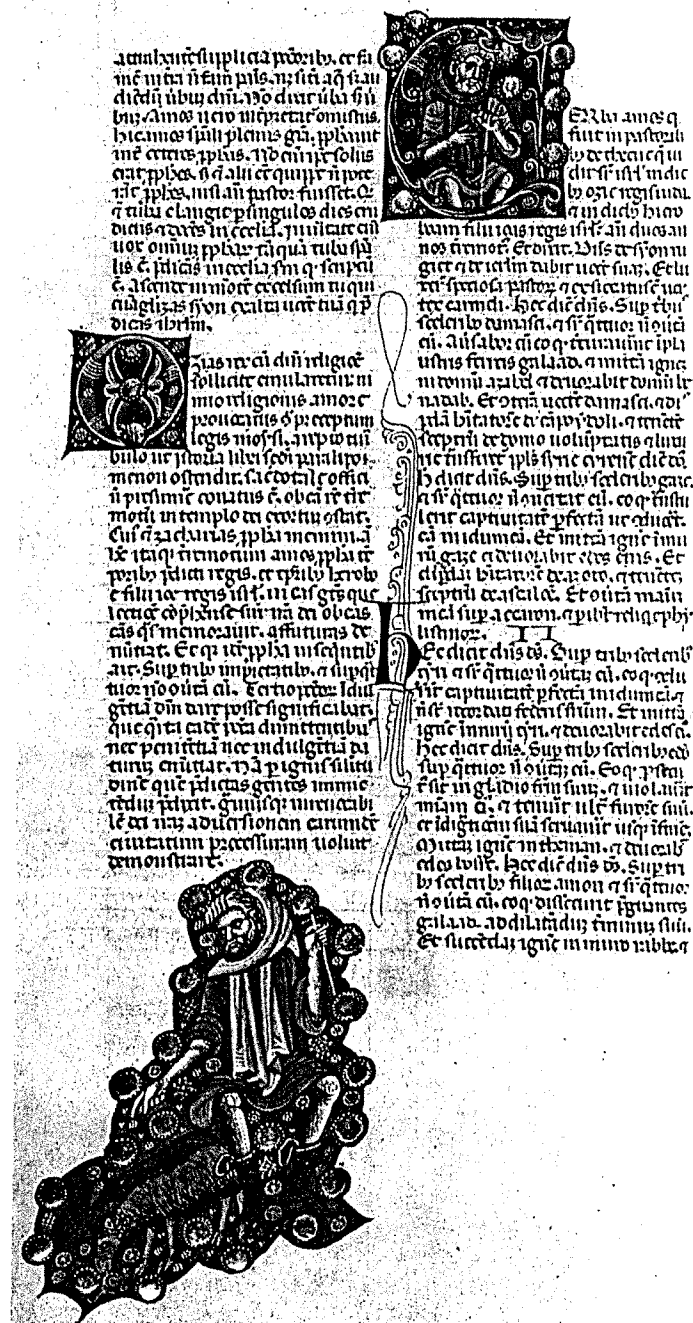
Most scholars believe that the last line of the first verse in this vision—"Lo, it was the late sowing after the king's cutting"—was a notation made in the margin of an Amos manuscript at a later date. This line emphasizes the catastrophic nature of the locust threat in this vision. In the ancient Near East two crops were grown in one season. The first paid the royal tax; the second, usually less productive, crop was retained by the farmer. In the vision, it was the second crop that the locusts were to devour.

Amos understood the vision of the locusts devouring the crops as having a deeper meaning. It was a symbol of the destruction of the nation. Therefore, he pleaded with God not to visit this dreadful catastrophe on the people. Jacob (a synonym for Israel), the prophet tells God, is small and not able to withstand God's judgment. In response to Amos's intercession, Yahweh is moved to pity. The calamity that was about to befall the nation is averted.

The second vision follows the same pattern as the first. It too concerns a great catastrophe, the means by which Yahweh would punish the nation. The subject—"rain of fire"—suggests that an experience of lightning prompted the vision.

The Hebrew phrase I have translated "he was calling for a rain of fire" is usually translated "he was calling for a judgment by fire" (see, for example, the Revised Standard Version). Literally, it means "he called to contend by fire" (see the New Jewish Publication Society translation). Actually neither the RSV nor the NJPS translation makes much sense. My translation, "rain of fire," depends on a different word division of the text

Vision of a Rain of Fire (Amos 7:4-6)



AMOS THE SHEPHERD decorates a page from the Book of Amos in the Conradin Bible, an exquisite example of medieval Italian illumination.

Amos was born in Tekoa, south of Bethlehem, in the eighth century B.C.; he tells us that he was primarily a herdsman, not a prophet, when he was taken from his work to prophesy concerning Israel (Amos 7:14-15). Although most scholars view Amos's four visions in chapters 7 and 8 as messages of doom, author H. Neil Richardson reads in them some hope because God listens to the prophet and offers forgiveness.

Its pages cut up and dispersed for hundreds of years, the Conradin Bible now resides—almost intact—in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland.



COURTESY OF NATHAN AVIGAD



OPINHAS AMITAL

LOCUSTS ATTACK a tree (above) and almost obscure the sky. Amos's first vision—of Yahweh forming a swarm of locusts—may have resembled this scene. A close encounter with the locust species *Schistocerca gregaria* (left) is conducted by Lilach Gavish at the zoology department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

When Amos pleads with God to forgive Israel and not let the locusts "devour the herbage of the earth," God assents.

A locust appears as a family emblem in a wax impression (inset, above) made by a half-inch-long seal. The Hebrew script on the seal dates it to the First Temple period, in the late eighth or seventh century B.C. The first word of the inscription, *Azaryaw*, on the top, is the seal owner's first name, and the second word, *Haggobeh* or *Haggebah*, is his second name, which means "the locust." This is the only Hebrew seal that includes a pictorial illustration of a name.

In the Old Testament, names that have the definite article "the" prefixed to them—as in "the locust"—belong to craft guilds or to families that have important jobs in the Temple or the government. The *Azaryaw* of this seal was probably a member of a family of priests or Temple functionaries. A seal-cutter of considerable skill made this seal to order for him, and did a superior job in executing the locust that illuminates it.

Four Visions of Amos*

I. A Vision of a Swarm of Locusts (Amos 7:1-3)

¹This is what [the Lord] Yahweh showed me:

Lo, he was forming a swarm of locusts
When the second crop was beginning to
come up.

[Lo, it was the late sowing after the
king's cutting.]

²To devour the herbage of the earth.

³And when he had finished

⁴I said, "O [Lord] Yahweh, forgive, I beg of

* In this translation, words in brackets are not found in the Greek translation (the Septuagint). In late Judaism the Hebrew word for Lord (*'adonāy*) was added either before or after Yahweh in order to remind the reader not to pronounce the ineffable name of God. For this reason, it is found in the Hebrew version (the Masoretic text), but not in the Greek. The last line of 7:1 is in brackets because it is probably a later addition. The Greek text of the last line of 7:1 is quite different: "One locust was king Gog." This resulted from a misreading of a few letters, suggesting that the Hebrew text with which the translators were working was in poor condition and hence difficult to read.

you;

How will Jacob survive since he is so
small?"

⁵Yahweh repented of this—

"It won't happen," said [the Lord]
Yahweh.

II. A Vision of a Rain of Fire (Amos 7:4-6)

¹This is what [the Lord] Yahweh showed me:

Lo, he was calling for a rain of fire
Which would consume the great deep
and devour the land.

²Then I said, "O [Lord] Yahweh, stop, I
beg of you;

How will Jacob survive since he is so
small?"

³Yahweh repented of this—

"It won't happen," said [the Lord]
Yahweh.

III. A Vision of Tin (Amos 7:7-9)

¹This is what (Yahweh) showed me:

Lo, someone stood beside the heat
holding tin in his hand.

²Yahweh said to me: "What do you see,
Amos?"

I said to him, "Tin."

Yahweh said to me:

"Lo, I am putting a groan in the midst of
my people Israel.

Never again will I pardon her.

³The high places of Isaac will be
deserted.

The sanctuaries of Israel abandoned.

I will attack the house of Jeroboam with
the sword."

IV. A Vision of Ripe Fruit (Amos 8:1-3)

¹This is what [the Lord] Yahweh showed me:

Lo, there was a basket of ripe fruit.

²Then he said to me: "What do you see,
Amos?"

I said, "A basket of ripe fruit!"

Yahweh said to me:

"The end has come for my people Israel.

Never again will I pardon her.

³The palace singers will wail that day

So many corpses will be strewn about.
Hush!"

than the standard word division. In ancient manuscripts, the scribe often failed to provide any indication, by space or otherwise, of where one word ended and the next one began. The spaces between the words of the Bible were provided only hundreds of years after the text was written. The standard word division, as I have indicated, yields "contend by fire," which doesn't make sense. The standard Hebrew word division is as follows: *lrb b's*.^{*} If we retain the exact same letters but divide them as follows—*lrb b'š*—we get "rain of fire," a very sensible reading.¹ This same expression, "rained . . . fire," is found in Genesis 19:24 and Ezekiel 38:22, although a different Hebrew word is used for "rained." Nevertheless the use of the expression in these other two books of the Bible strongly suggests that that was the meaning intended in the passage from Amos.

The threat here is that the fire will consume the "great deep." In earlier Near Eastern mythology the "great deep" referred to the mythological monster Tiamat, goddess of the deep whom Marduk slew in the Babylonian creation epic. In Canaanite literature found at Ras Shamra (ancient

Ugarit, on the Syrian coast, north of Israel) we meet a minor deity with a double name —*dbb š*;² translated literally, this means "destroyer-fire." The reference in Amos to this mythological background suggests that the god *dbb š* will consume the great deep, the ancient Tiamat.

The prophet uses what was originally mythological language, but in a historicized way. In the passage in Amos, the fire will consume not only the great deep, but the land as well. The picture we get is of a great fire drying up the subterranean waters that ultimately provided the springs that irrigate the farmlands. If Yahweh rained down this fire, it would eventually dry up the fathomless waters of the deep that fed the springs and would consume the entire land.

Amos again intercedes, reminding God of Israel's weakness and vulnerability. Again Yahweh, portrayed as displaying a sensitivity to the needs of his people and with an emotional awareness of the outcome of his actions, becomes personally involved in the lives of humanity and responds favorably: "It won't happen."

In traditional translations, the vision in 7:7-9 refers to a plumb line or plumb bob. The line I have rendered, "Lo, someone stood beside the

*A Vision of
Tin (Amos
7:7-9)*

* The letter š is to be pronounced sh.



AVINDAM DANIN



GARO NALBANDIAN

A RIPE RED POMEGRANATE (lower photo) and figs (upper photo) are both fruits harvested at summer's end in Israel. They recall the fourth vision of Amos—a basket of ripe fruit. The Hebrew word for ripe fruit, *qāyis*, is echoed in Yahweh's statement that the end, *qēs*, has come for Israel. Thus, says author Richardson, the ripe fruit symbolizes this end. But, continues Richardson, the end is not final; a renewed Israel is implied.

heat holding tin in his hand" is usually translated something like this: "Behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall with a plumb line" (RSV).

The crux in the passage is the Hebrew word *'anāk*, which appears in only one passage in the entire Hebrew Bible, here in Amos 7:7-8. As

noted, it is usually translated "plumb line" or "plumb bob." Of all the other Semitic languages, only Akkadian provides any help in plumbing the meaning of *'anāk*; in Akkadian we find the word *anāku*. Clearly Hebrew *'anāk* and Akkadian *anāku* are related, with the same consonants and probably the same meaning. The Akkadian word means only "tin."³ Thus we are justified in assuming that what Amos saw was tin, not a plumb bob or plumb line, because tin is too lightweight to serve as such an instrument.

The common translation "beside a wall built with a plumb line" is recognized by most commentators as an impossible translation. The New Jewish Publication Society translation candidly confesses that the "meaning of [the] Heb[rew] is uncertain."

The literal meaning of the Hebrew is that the wall is made out of material represented by the word *'anāk*. I believe the Hebrew word for "wall," *ḥomat** (a form of *ḥomāh*), represents a scribal error. Originally the word was not *ḥomat*, but was a word related to *ḥmm*, meaning "heat." So I have changed *ḥomat* to *ḥammāh*. Another emendation commonly made by commentators which I too make is the elimination of *'anāk* after the word usually translated "wall"; at some point a scribe mistakenly put an additional *'anāk* here, probably because of the three subsequent occurrences of the word.

What, then, is the meaning of "tin" in the vision? If we turn to the fourth vision, with which this vision is paired, we note that there also the prophet sees something. The word for what he sees reminds him of another word similar to it in sound. It is this word that conveys the meaning of the vision. So also in this third vision. The word for tin—*'anāk*—reminds him of a word similar in sound: *'anāḥāh*,⁴ meaning "a groan." I believe this word appeared in the original text in Amos 7:8 where we now find *'anāk*. Amos suggested that Yahweh was about to put a groan in the midst of the nation. No doubt this would take place when the people started to suffer the consequences of their wrongdoing and began to realize that Yahweh was not going to pardon them.

Yahweh then makes clear what will happen in Israel. No longer will any of their worship centers, the "high places" situated on hills taken over from the Canaanites, or sanctuary buildings, remain in use. In addition the house of Jeroboam (Jeroboam II, c. 786-747 B.C.) will come to an end. In fact, Jeroboam's dynasty ended about 747 B.C. with the assassination of Jeroboam's son,

* The letter *ḥ* is pronounced like a rough, or hard, *ch*.

Zechariah, after a reign of six months.

In this vision, Amos does not intercede. There appears to be no reprieve.

There is a break between the third and fourth visions. Following the third vision, with its reference to King Jeroboam, there is a prose biographical unit written no doubt by a contemporary of Amos. Its purpose is to add a historical statement regarding what happened to Amos. Its placement at this point in the text is according to what scholars call the catchword principle. That is, the word Jeroboam in Amos 7:9 occasioned the placement of 7:10-17 because of the word Jeroboam in 7:10.

Vision of Ripe Fruit
(Amos 8:1-3)

The fourth vision (Amos 8:1-3) concerns a basket of ripe fruit. The word for ripe fruit is *qāyīṣ*.^{*} In a famous inscription known as the Gezer calendar, we find the word *qṣ*; there it is clear that it is the name of the last month of the ancient Israelite year: August/September. Figs and pomegranates are harvested at this time. So the fruit referred to in this vision is probably figs, and that is the way the word is sometimes translated.

But the word *qāyīṣ* has additional significance. When Yahweh asks Amos what he saw, the prophet replies, "A basket of ripe fruit (*qāyīṣ*)." To this Yahweh responds, "The end (*qēṣ*) has come for my people Israel." The vision of ripe fruit (*qāyīṣ*) symbolizes the end (*qēṣ*). Here we find the same kind of play on words (discernible only in the Hebrew) that we found in the third vision. Each of the parallel word plays in the third and fourth visions tends to confirm the correctness of the translation and interpretation in the other.

The word "end" has unmistakable eschatological overtones. This is prophetic, not apocalyptic, eschatology—not the final end of the world or time, but the end of Israel as a this-world, this-history event after which there will be a new this-world, this-history Israel. In apocalyptic eschatology, by contrast, the end is final, and after there is only an other-world existence.

Although the idea of a renewed Israel is not conveyed in this vision, we find it at the very heart of Amos's prophecies, including the famous passage with which the Book of Amos ends:

¹¹On that day,

I will restore David's fallen Succoth;

I will block up the gaps in its wall;

Its ruins I will restore,

Rebuilding it as in former days.

¹²[That they may possess the rest of Edom and all the nations that once were mine—Oracle of Yahweh who does this.]

¹³Yet, the time will soon come

^{*} The letter *ṣ* is to be pronounced *ts*.

[—Oracle of Yahweh—]

When the plower will overtake the reaper,

And the vintager the sower;

When the juice of grapes will run down the mountains

And all the hills shall flow with it.

¹⁴I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel.

They will rebuild deserted cities and settle down.

They will plant vineyards and drink wine.

They will make gardens and eat the produce.

¹⁵And I will establish them upon their land.

They will never again be uprooted from their land.

[Which I have given them]

Says Yahweh your God.

Amos 9:11-15

(author's translation)

In the fourth vision, Israel's demise is emphasized by the statement, "Never again will I pardon her," a repeat from the third vision, which thus ties the third and fourth visions together. There follows in the fourth vision the statement, "The palace singers will wail that day." The Hebrew literally says, "Songs will wail," so the text is usually emended to *šārôt* (female singers), instead of *širôt* (songs). Among the palace personnel were female singers who entertained the royal family and members of the court, enlivening otherwise dreary winter evenings (see 2 Samuel 19:35). But in this vision, these lovely singers will soon be wailing. Why? Because there are so many dead, their corpses strewn about—an allusion to the statement in the previous vision that the house of Jeroboam will die by the sword.

The fourth vision closes with a single word, *hāṣ*, which I have translated "hush!" (as does the New Jewish Publication Society translation). It is an exclamatory imperative, an effective literary device by which the terrifying character of the situation is conveyed. "Be silent!" because with death and destruction all around, there is no time for making any sound, not even a funeral lament!

Some scholars deny that any hope is conveyed by Amos himself. I disagree. The first two visions do present a message of hope, which is repeated at the end of the book, as quoted above. Yahweh is presented as a God who listens to the voice of the prophet when forbearance and forgiveness are called for. Yahweh is a God of salvation. **BM**

¹ See Delbert R. Hillers, "Amos 7:4 and Ancient Parallels," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26 (1964), pp. 221-225.

² Shmaryahu Talmon, "The Ugaritic Background of Amos VII, 4," *Tarbiz* 35 (1966), pp. 301-303.

³ Benno Landsberger, "Tin and Lead: The Adventures of Two Vocables," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24 (1965), pp. 285-296.

⁴ F. Horst, "Die Visionsschilderungen der alttestamentlichen Propheten," *Evangelische Theologie* 20 (1960), pp. 193-205; see p. 201.

Amos 1:1

"The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders 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."

Amos 1:2

"And he said: "The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers.""

Amos 1:3

SYRIA - CRUELTY

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron."

SIGNIFIES A FULL
AND COMPLETE
NUMBER.

Amos 1:4

"But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad."

Amos 1:5

"I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven, And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir," Says the LORD."

BOLT;
ARM OF PROTECTION AND
SECURITY, LEAVING THE
CITY OPEN FOR CAPTIVITY

Amos 1:6

Philistia - SLAVE TRADE

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they took captive the whole captivity To deliver them up to Edom."

Amos 1:7

"But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, Which shall devour its palaces."

Amos 1:8

"I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn My hand against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish," Says the Lord GOD."

Amos 1:9

Phoenicia - SLAVE AGENTS IN
SPITE OF A
COVENANT

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood."

Amos 1:10

"But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, Which shall devour its palaces.""

Amos 1:11

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, And cast off all pity; His anger tore perpetually, And he kept his wrath forever."

DETERMINED AND
REVENGEFUL UNFORGIVENESS

Amos 1:12

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

Amos 1:13

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory."

CRUELTY

Amos 1:14

"But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, And it shall devour its palaces, Amid shouting in the day of battle, And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind."

Amos 1:15

"Their king shall go into captivity, He and his princes together," Says the LORD."

Amos 2:1

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime."

SHOCKING AND
VINDICTIVE HATRED

Amos 2:2

"But I will send a fire upon Moab, And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; Moab shall die with tumult, With shouting and trumpet sound."

Amos 2:3

"And I will cut off the judge from its midst, And slay all its princes with him," Says the LORD."

Amos 2:4

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have despised the law of the LORD, And have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed."

REJECTED LAW OF
GOD - KEPT NOT THE
STATUTES - LIES CAUSED
THEM TO ERR

Amos 2:5

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

Amos 2:6

"Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they sell the righteous for silver, And the poor for a pair of sandals."

INJUSTICE
AVARICE
OPPRESSION
IMMORALITY
PROFANITY
BLASPHEMY
SACRILEGE

Amos 2:7

"They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor, And pervert the way of the humble. A man and his father go in to the same girl, To defile My holy name."

Amos 2:8

"They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge, And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god."

Amos 2:9

"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was as strong as the oaks; Yet I destroyed his fruit above And his roots beneath."

Amos 2:10

"Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you forty years through the wilderness, To possess the land of the Amorite."

Amos 2:11

"I raised up some of your sons as prophets, And some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?" Says the LORD."

AGGRAVATION OF THE SINS--

Amos 2:12

"But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, And commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!'"

AMORITES DESTROYED
BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT
RAISED UP SONS FOR PROPHETS
YOUNG MEN FOR NAZARITES - CORRUPTED
THESE

Amos 2:13

"Behold, I am weighed down by you, As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down."

Amos 2:14

"Therefore flight shall perish from the swift, The strong shall not strengthen his power, Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;"

Amos 2:15

"He shall not stand who handles the bow, The swift of foot shall not escape, Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself."

Amos 2:16

"The most courageous men of might Shall flee naked in that day," Says the LORD."

(3' 4' 5') - "HEAR THIS WORD"

Amos 3:1

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

Jehovah's VERDICT
AND SENTENCE

Amos 3:2

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

Amos 3:3

"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"

SERIES OF 7 QUESTIONS

Amos 3:4

"Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?"

Jehovah HAS ROARED, THEREFORE
FEAR

Amos 3:5

"Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it? Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?"

Jehovah HAS SPOKEN, THEREFORE
THE PROPHECY

Amos 3:6

"If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?"

Amos 3:7

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."

Amos 3:8

"A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"

Amos 3:9

"Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod, And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say: 'Assemble on the mountains of Samaria; See great tumults in her midst, And the oppressed within her.'"

39-15 Punishment

Amos 3:10

"For they do not know to do right," Says the LORD, 'Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.' ""

Amos 3:11

"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "An adversary shall be all around the land; He shall sap your strength from you, And your palaces shall be plundered.""

Amos 3:12

"Thus says the LORD: "As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion Two legs or a piece of an ear, So shall the children of Israel be taken out Who dwell in Samaria; In the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!"

A REMNANT SAVED

Amos 3:13

"Hear and testify against the house of Jacob," Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,"

Amos 3:14

"That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions, I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel; And the horns of the altar shall be cut off And fall to the ground."

Amos 3:15

"I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; The houses of ivory shall perish, And the great houses shall have an end," Says the LORD."

Amos 4:1

"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria,
Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands,
"Bring wine, let us drink!"

DEGRADATION OF WOMANHOOD
TO MERE ANIMALISM

Amos 4:2

"The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: "Behold, the days shall come upon
you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with
fishhooks."

Amos 4:3

"You will go out through broken walls, Each one straight ahead of her, And
you will be cast into Harmon," Says the LORD."

Amos 4:4

"Come to Bethel and transgress, At Gilgal multiply transgression; Bring
your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days."

Amos 4:5

"Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, Proclaim and announce the
freewill offerings; For this you love, You children of Israel!" Says the
Lord GOD."

Amos 4:6

"Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread
in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD."

Amos 4:7

"I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the
harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered."

Amos 4:8

"So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they
were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD."

Amos 4:9

"I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your
vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them;
Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD."

Amos 4:10

"I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I
killed with a sword, Along with your captive horses; I made the stench of
your camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD."

Amos 4:11

"I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you
were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned
to Me," Says the LORD."

Amos 4:12

"Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

Amos 4:13

"For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth; The LORD God of hosts is His name."

Amos 5:1

"Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel."

Amos 5:2

"The virgin of Israel has fallen; She will rise no more. She lies forsaken on her land; There is no one to raise her up."

Amos 5:3

"For thus says the Lord GOD: "The city that goes out by a thousand Shall have a hundred left, And that which goes out by a hundred Shall have ten left to the house of Israel.""

DIMINUTION OF THE NUMBER
OF PEOPLE

Amos 5:4

"For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live;"

VS 4-15 HISTORY OF
GOD'S PAST CALLS

Amos 5:5

"But do not seek Bethel, Nor enter Gilgal, Nor pass over to Beersheba; For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, And Bethel shall come to nothing."

Amos 5:6

"Seek the LORD and live, Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, And devour it, With no one to quench it in Bethel;"

Amos 5:7

"You who turn justice to wormwood, And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"

Amos 5:8

"He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning And makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth; The LORD is His name."

Amos 5:9

"He rains ruin upon the strong, So that fury comes upon the fortress."

Amos 5:10

"They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, And they abhor the one who speaks uprightly."

Amos 5:11

"Therefore, because you tread down the poor And take grain taxes from him, Though you have built houses of hewn stone, Yet you shall not dwell in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, But you shall not drink wine from them."

Amos 5:12

"For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate."

Amos 5:13

"Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, For it is an evil time."

Amos 5:14

"Seek good and not evil, That you may live; So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, As you have spoken."

Amos 5:15

"Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph."

Amos 5:16

"Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this: 'There shall be wailing in all streets, And they shall say in all the highways, 'Alas! Alas!' They shall call the farmer to mourning, And skillful lamenters to wailing."

VS 16, 17

CONSEQUENT DOOM

Amos 5:17

"In all vineyards there shall be wailing, For I will pass through you," Says the LORD."

Amos 5:18

"Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light."

5¹⁸ - 6¹⁴

THE DOUBLE WOES

Amos 5:19

"It will be as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him!"

1. THOSE WHO DESIRE THE
DAY OF THE LORD

Amos 5:20

"Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?"

2. THOSE AT EASE IN ZION

Amos 5:21

"I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies."

Amos 5:22

"Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings."

Amos 5:23

"Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments."

Amos 5:24

"But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream."

Amos 5:25

"Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?"

Amos 5:26

"You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves."

Amos 5:27

"Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus," Says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts."

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Amos 6:1

"Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, And trust in Mount Samaria, Notable persons in the chief nation, To whom the house of Israel comes!"

Amos 6:2

"Go over to Calneh and see; And from there go to Hamath the great; Then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory?"

Amos 6:3

"Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, Who cause the seat of violence to come near;"

Amos 6:4

"Who lie on beds of ivory, Stretch out on your couches, Eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall;"

Amos 6:5

"Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David;"

Amos 6:6

"Who drink wine from bowls, And anoint yourselves with the best ointments, But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

Amos 6:7

"Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives, And those who recline at banquets shall be removed."

Amos 6:8

"The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself, The LORD God of hosts says: "I abhor the pride of Jacob, And hate his palaces; Therefore I will deliver up the city And all that is in it.""

Amos 6:9

"Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die."

Amos 6:10

"And when a relative of the dead, with one who will burn the bodies, picks up the bodies to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, "Are there any more with you?" Then someone will say, "None." And he will say, "Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD.""

Amos 6:11

"For behold, the LORD gives a command: He will break the great house into bits, And the little house into pieces."

Amos 6:12

"Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into gall, And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood,"

Amos 6:13

"You who rejoice over Lo Debar, Who say, "Have we not taken Karnaim for ourselves By our own strength?"

Amos 6:14

"But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel," Says the LORD God of hosts; "And they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath To the Valley of the Arabah."

The Four Fold VISION OF
Judgment

"The Lord Showed me"

Amos 7:1

"Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings."

Amos 7:2

"And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: "O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!"

LOCUSTS 1-3

Amos 7:3

"So the LORD relented concerning this. "It shall not be," said the LORD."

Amos 7:4

"Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, the Lord GOD called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory."

FIRE 4-6

Amos 7:5

"Then I said: "O Lord GOD, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!"

Amos 7:6

"So the LORD relented concerning this. "This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD."

Amos 7:7

"Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand."

PlumbLine 7-9

Amos 7:8

"And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore."

Amos 7:9

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

no restraint as before!

Amos 7:10

"Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words."

as long as the message
was mixed with mercy,
it was tolerated by the
people.

Amos 7:11

"For thus Amos has said: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive From their own land.' "

Amos 7:12

"Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy."

now that element is missing
and hostility breaks out.

Amos 7:13

"But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence."

Amos 7:14

"Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit."

Amos 7:15

"Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, And the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'"

Amos 7:16

"Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac.'"

Amos 7:17

"Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by survey line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.' "

Amos 8:1

"Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, a basket of summer fruit."

*Symbol of Israel's ripeness
for judgement*

Amos 8:2

"And He said, "Amos, what do you see?" So I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me: "The end has come upon My people Israel;

I will not pass by them anymore." *"I will spare them no more!"*

Amos 8:3

"And the songs of the temple Shall be wailing in that day," Says the Lord GOD; "Many dead bodies everywhere, They shall be thrown out in silence."

*symbol - v. 1
announcement - vs 2,3
Application vs. 4-14*

Amos 8:4

"Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail,"

Amos 8:5

"Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit,"

Amos 8:6

"That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals; Even sell the bad wheat?"

Amos 8:7

"The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their works."

Amos 8:8

"Shall the land not tremble for this, And everyone mourn who dwells in it? All of it shall swell like the River, Heave and subside Like the River of Egypt."

Amos 8:9

"And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;"

Amos 8:10

"I will turn your feasts into mourning, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, And its end like a bitter day."

Amos 8:11

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD."

Amos 8:12

"They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, But shall not find it."

Amos 8:13

"In that day the fair virgins And strong young men Shall faint from thirst."

Amos 8:14

"Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, Who say, 'As your god lives, O Dan!' And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives!' They shall fall and never rise again."

Vision 5 - Jehovah
9:1-10

Amos 9:1

"I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, And break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered."

Amos 9:2

"Though they dig into hell, From there my hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, From there I will bring them down;"

Amos 9:3

"And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, From there I will search and take them; Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, From there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;"

Amos 9:4

"Though they go into captivity before their enemies, From there I will command the sword, And it shall slay them. I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."

Amos 9:5

"The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it melts, And all who dwell there mourn; All of it shall swell like the River, And subside like the River of Egypt."

Amos 9:6

"He who builds His layers in the sky, And has founded His strata in the earth; Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the face of the earth; The LORD is His name."

Amos 9:7

"Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me, O children of Israel?" says the LORD. "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, The Philistines from Caphtor, And the Syrians from Kir?"

Amos 9:8

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," Says the LORD."

Amos 9:9

"For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground."

Amos 9:10

"All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.'"

Amos 9:11

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;"

no symbol, no sign,
but present acting, smiting
Jehovah

one of the most awe-inspiring
visions of the Bible

vs 1-6 Judgment Irrevocable
+
inescapable

vs 7-10 Judgment Reasonable
+
discriminative

vs 11-15 Restoration

Amos 9:12

"That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the LORD who does this thing."

Amos 9:13

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it."

Amos 9:14

"I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them."

Amos 9:15

"I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God."

thing like a protective plant could bring joy, whereas the sparing of a city could bring anger. As Luther suggests, God begins to play with the prophet in an effort to teach His lesson: a worm smote the gourd and the vine withered. This was followed by a sultry wind that further withered the gourd-vine and added to the prophet's discomfort to the point that he fainted. Again he wished that he would die, saying, "It is better for me to die than to live."

Once more Jehovah chided the pouting prophet, asking if Jonah had done right in his anger. To this the prophet replied that he did well to be "angry, even unto death," thus "expressing the great excess of his anger." (Bewer, *International Critical Commentary*). His first anger had been because Nineveh was not destroyed; his present anger is because a vine was destroyed. Here is a contrast between the murmuring of Jonah and the voice of God as it speaks to the conscience of the murmurer. There now follows the

4:10

final word, spoken by Jehovah, which carries with it the true contrast between man and God. Man can become greatly concerned and disturbed when that which directly affects him is touched by the finger of providence; but he can be utterly indifferent, even hard, to that which may be of infinitely greater value when this does not affect him. He may murmur greatly over an immediate personal discomfort, but wish for the destruction of those who may in time affect him. If man is so affected by the immediate, though ever so small, should not God be concerned over Nineveh with its teeming thousands? There seems to have been some one hundred and twenty thousand individuals not yet of accountable age, besides the multitude of adults for whom God was concerned. Keil, considering the one hundred and twenty thousand to have been those under seven and to have been one-fifth of the population, estimates the total population of the city to have been about six hundred thousand or more. God was concerned not only for the huge population, but also for the brute creation as well. Surely God cares for and is concerned about all of His creation.

4:7

4:8

4:9

4

AMOS

"Burden-bearer"

General Observations

1. The Man

From the obscurity of a shepherd's role Amos stepped out for a few brief moments upon the stage of history, to go down in its annals as one of its first and greatest reformers. Having served the purpose for which he was called, he stepped back into that same obscurity from which he had come. His clear insight into the conditions of his day, his indignation at the corruptions within a nation, and his courage and devotion to God have made him worthy of a place among the great. Israel was corrupt from the top of its social and political stratum to the bottom. Amos cried out against these evils and pointed out to the nation its inevitable doom.

The prophet's background is clearly reflected in his preaching, and in his prophecies one hears the roar of the lion and of the young lions and sees the spring of a snare or gin as a bird is caught in it (3:4-5). As a shepherd he knows what it is to rescue two legs (shin-bones) and a piece of an ear of a beloved sheep from the lion that has slain it (3:12). At night he has studied the constellations, Pleiades and Orion, in their heavenly glory, and has watched the night turn to day as the morning dawns (5:8). He has seen "the sun go down in the clear day" as an eclipse swallowed the sun. He makes us feel

STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

INTRODUCTION

"A study of the prophets will enrich the life of anyone who applies himself to learn their teaching; it can only confuse those who would use their teaching as a basis on which to speculate about the future. An understanding of their teaching concerning the Messiah Who was to come, will strengthen the faith of anyone who sees those predictions fulfilled in the New Covenant. An understanding of the political, social, moral and religious corruption will give courage to the Lord's faithful today. The consequences of Israel's disobedience and an understanding of the principles on which God dealt with that disobedience, will help one better to read the signs of the times. The reading of one's newspaper, secular magazines, and listening to news reports of present-day world events will take on new significance to him."

"This does not mean that one is to see God foretelling any specific event of today, or that He has in mind certain individuals of today. It means that one will come to see the principles upon which God dealt with the conditions of that day, and, on the ground of faith in God's immutability, he may conclude that God will act accordingly today."

Homer Hailey

The messages were relevant to the moral and religious situation of that, but their message will never be out of date.

1. Men still trust in material strength;
2. Men still delight in wealth and luxury;
3. Men still forget God;
4. Men still lie, kill, steal, sin;
5. Oppression and injustice are still in style.

Consider *Romans 15:4* - "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."

All but *Obadiah* and *Nahum* are quoted, or alluded to, in the New Testament.

STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

INTRODUCTION

THE "MAJOR" PROPHETS:

ISAIAH - The "Messianic" Prophet (66 chapters)
JEREMIAH - The "Weeping" Prophet (52 chapters)
EZEKIEL - The "Graphic" Prophet (48 chapters)
DANIEL - The "Captive" Prophet (12 chapters)

THE "MINOR" PROPHETS: In pre-exilic times the book of Jonah was written to Nineveh; Amos, Hosea and Joel were written to Israel; Obadiah wrote to Edom; Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah wrote to Judah.

During the post-exilic days the books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were written.

HOSEA - A prophet of the northern kingdom, but made occasional reference to Judah. He began his ministry when Israel was at the peak of power. Hosea writes to Israel's idolatry, wickedness and future captivity. (14 chapters)

JOEL and **ZEPHANIAH** - Prophets of coming judgment. In Joel we have the coming day of God, a prophecy of the gospel age and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Zephaniah tells of the great day of God. (Joel - 3 chapters; Zephaniah - 3 chapters)

AMOS - Commissioned to the northern kingdom, yet gave attention also to Judah. His messages concluded by predicting the judgment of God upon Judah and Israel. The Lord reproved the nation for disloyalty and revealed that because of their exceeding sinfulness they could not be secure. (9 chapters)

OBADIAH - The doom of Edom. (1 chapter)

JONAH - Sent on an errand of mercy to Nineveh. (4 chapters)

MICAH - Contemporary of Isaiah and labored in the rural districts. The Messiah's first appearance is dealt with in Micah 3-5. Micah prophesied of the impending fall of Israel and Judah, lamented the prevailing treachery and violence but closed with a vision of future national supremacy. (7 chapters)

NAHUM - About 150 years after Jonah, Nahum gives a message of doom to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire which had destroyed Israel. (3 chapters)

HABAKKUK - Realized God was raising up the Chaldean empire to correct the Jewish nation. Knowing how ruthless and wicked the Chaldeans were, he asked how God could use such a degenerate race to punish the Hebrews who, though sinful, were on a higher plane than the Babylonians. God replied that He had a purpose in it all, and when that was accomplished the Chaldean empire would be destroyed. (3 chapters)

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH and MALACHI - They were contemporary with Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther in the post-exilic period, as also indicated by the content of their messages. Haggai's book has to do with the rebuilding of the temple. Zechariah's prophecy is along the same lines with visions of the coming Messiah and His kingdom. Malachi brings the final Old Testament message to a disobedient nation. (Haggai - 2 chapters; Zechariah - 14 chapters; Malachi - 4 chapters)

Subj: **Congratulations**
Date: **11/8/2010 1:03:23 P.M. Central Standard Time**
From: t-pauley@sbcglobal.net
To: jdhestand@aol.com

I heard yesterday that you are going to be preaching each week in Denton. I am so happy for you. Where we will miss your talent in our adult classes this opportunity for you is so great . **PREACH THE WORD BROTHER!!!!!!**

For Him,

Tom and Paula

