

Major Messages from the Minor Prophets

Studies in the Minor Prophets

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Jersey Shore Baptist Church

Pastor Phil Erickson

Began January 25, 2017

Message Four – Amos – *Prepare to Meet Thy God*

Introduction

Memory Verse

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." - (Amos 4:12)

Introduction (1:1 – 2; 7:10 – 17)

The little we know about Amos, we learn from the prophecy, which bears his name. The only other Amos mentioned in the Bible is listed in the genealogical line of Jesus through Mary, in Luke 3:25, but he lived long after the prophet Amos. We know from the Scripture that Amos was a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. He was from Tekoa, which was in the southern Kingdom of Judah approximately 10 miles south of Jerusalem. (See Prophetic Activity Map) Tekoa is not a particularly well known place. It was built by Rehoboam “for defence in Judah” along with Bethlehem and Etom. The wilderness of Tekoa was the place where God wrought a great victory through King Jehoshaphat against Ammon and Moab when Jehoshaphat praised the Lord. (See 2 Chronicles 20) It is also the place where Joab “fetched” a “wise woman” from in order to convince King David to allow his son Absalom to return from exile. Outside of these few references, Tekoa is not mentioned all that much in Scripture.

Amos’ prophecy, however, was primarily, though not exclusively, against the northern Kingdom of Israel. He prophesied around 760 BC, about 40 years, or so, prior to the invasion of the Assyrian army and the subsequent captivity of the people of Israel. You will notice (v. 1) that the prophecy took place during the reigns of King Uzziah of Judah, and King Jeroboam II of Israel, two years before the “earthquake”. This earthquake was mentioned in the writings of Josephus, where he attributed it as a judgment of God resulting from the sin of King Uzziah. (See 2 Chronicles 26:16 – 23)

This earthquake was mentioned by Zechariah:

"And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (Zechariah 14:5)

Josephus said this about the earthquake:

Accordingly, when a remarkable day was come, and a general festival was to be celebrated, he put on the holy garment, and went into the temple to offer incense to God upon the golden altar, which he was prohibited to do by Azariah the high priest, who had fourscore priests with him, and who told him that it was not lawful for him to offer sacrifice, and that "none besides the posterity of Aaron were permitted so to do." And when they cried out that he must go out of the temple, and not transgress against God, he was wroth at them, and threatened to kill them, unless they would hold their peace. In the meantime, a great earthquake shook the ground and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately. And before the city, at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke off from the rest on the west, and rolled itself four furlongs, and stood still at the east mountain, till the roads, as well as the king's gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction.¹

Judah's King Uzziah reigned was from 791 – 740 BC. Israel's King Jereboam II reigned from 793 – 753 BC. Jereboam was a wicked king:

"In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." (2 Kings 14:23-24)

Uzziah, on the other hand, was a relatively good king until he became prideful and attempted to usurp the authority of the priests. (See 2 Chronicles 26)

Amos was contemporary to Isaiah and Micah of Judah; and Hosea and Jonah of Israel.

Amos' prophecy is all about the impending judgment of God upon Israel (*concerning Israel – v. 1*) as well as other nations at the hands of the Assyrians.

¹ Josephus, Flavius (2011-07-06). *The Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus [Annotated Edition]* (Halcyon Classics) (Kindle Locations 7936-7943). Halcyon Press Ltd. Kindle Edition.

Amos was not a priest, nor was he from the “school of the prophets”. He was a layman, working in the fields when God called him to go to Israel, a land that was foreign to him.

"And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." - (Amos 7:15)

You never know when the Lord may call you to do something for Him.

Notice the reference to Carmel in verse 2. Mt. Carmel was the place where Elijah slew the 850 prophets of Baal and of the groves. (1 Kings 18:17 – 46) Carmel means “garden-land” and was located on the northwest coast of Israel.

According to Amos 7, God sent this country preacher from an obscure place outside of Jerusalem in the southern kingdom to the palace of the king at Bethel in the northern kingdom. He prophesied impending judgment on the nation at a time when Israel was on top of the world economically, though she was morally and spiritually corrupt.

I Amos’ Prophecies Concerning the Nations Surrounding Israel (Chapters 1:3 – 2:5)

The Assyrian army would also conquer all of the surrounding nations along with Israel. Only the city of Jerusalem was spared, but the other cities of Judah were taken. (Refer to Map of Assyrian Campaigns Against Israel and Judah)

“for three transgressions of ..., and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof;”

This phrase is repeated and directed against seven nations surrounding Israel, including Judah. (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4).

This phrase illustrates the fact that the iniquity of these nations was over the top. Three transgressions meant that their cup of iniquity was full, four meant that it was overflowing. God uses this type of language also in Proverbs 30:15, 18, 21, and 29.

Note – these nations, with the exception of Judah, had all been guilty of repeated “transgressions”, or attacks, against the people of God, as well as against other nations.

A Damascus (1:3 – 5)

Hazael was the King of Syria, and Benhadad was his son. Kir is an unknown city that was the destination of the exiled Syrians (2 Kings 16:9)

"And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." - (2 Kings 16:9)

B Philistia (1:6 – 8)

The land of the Philistines was located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea south of Israel.

C Tyre (1:9 – 10)

Tyre was also located on the Mediterranean Sea due west of the Sea of Galilea.

Both Philistia and Tyre were guilty of trafficking in Hebrew slaves; Hiram, king of Tyre, had previously been friends with David, and had also made a covenant with Solomon, but apparently Tyre had eventually broken it. (1Kings 5:1 - 12; 9:10 - 14)

Ezekiel also prophesied against Tyre. (Ezekiel 26:1 – 18) Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the old city of Tyre, which was on the mainland, forcing the people of Tyre to relocate onto an island off the coast. Eventually the island city of Tyre was completely destroyed by Alexander the Great in 330 B. C., when he built a causeway out to the island.

D Edom (1:11 – 12)

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. (See Genesis 25:19 – 34; Genesis 27) Though Jacob was a "deceiver", Esau was very carnal and "profane". (See Hebrews 12:14 – 17) The rivalry between Jacob and Esau had eased somewhat when they were both older, it continued on for many centuries through their descendants. The Edomites refused to allow Moses to pass through their land on their way to the Promised Land. God had commanded the Israelites not to "abhor" the Edomites. (Numbers 20:14 – 22; Deuteronomy 23:7 – 8)

King Saul fought against the Edomites:

"So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them." (1 Samuel 14:47)

And, so did David:

"And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men. And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went." (2 Samuel 8:13-14)

But, they revolted in the days of King Jehoram:

"In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into

their tents. Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time." (2 Kings 8:20-22)

Obadiah's prophecy will focus on God's judgment against the Edomites, and God pronounced a very sober and severe judgment and against the Edomites through the prophet Malachi:

"The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever." (Malachi 1:1-4)

There was no love between the Edomites and the people of Israel. The psalmist remembered that the Edomites cheered on the Babylonians as they destroyed Jerusalem:

"Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." (Psalm 137:7)

There is nothing left today of the Edomite (Idumean) kingdom except ruins. The Romans completely destroyed what was left of Edom in 70 A.D. The exact locations of Teman and Bozrah are unknown, but Petra is said by some to be in the region of Teman, or close to it.

According to The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

Teman was Edom's largest southern city; Bozrah was her fortress stronghold in the north. The two cities thus stand for the whole nation under God's wrath. Some scholars, however, say Teman was in the north near Bozrah. At any rate, both were major Edomite cities (cf. references to Teman in Jer. 49:7, 20; Ezek. 25:13; Obad. 9; Hab. 3:3). Edom was subjugated by the Assyrians in the eighth century b.c., turned into a desolate wasteland by the fifth century b.c. (Mal. 1:3), and overtaken by the Nabateans, an Arabian tribe, around 400–300 b.c.²

E Ammon (1:13 – 15)

The Ammonites and Moabites were both descendants of Lot through his immoral relationship with his daughters. (See Genesis 19:31 – 38)

² Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). Amos. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1430). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Ammonites and Moabites were also both bitter enemies of God's people:

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever." (Deuteronomy 23:3-6)

Gilead was an area that bordered Ammon on the north. The Syrians and Israelites were also guilty of committing the heinous act of "ripping up the women with child" (see 2 Kings 8:12; 15:16); and Israel reaped what she sowed:

"Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up."
(Hosea 13:16)

Ezekiel also prophesied against the Ammonites. (See Ezekiel 25:1 – 7)

F Moab (2:1 – 3)

The judgment against Moab mentioned here was not an act of cruelty or aggression toward Israel, though they have often been enemies. Rather, the act that got God's attention was an act against an Edomite King. We have no other mention of this incident in the Scripture, unless it refers to an event in 2 Kings 3:26 – 27, which, is unclear.

However, Moab was not a friend to Israel either. Moab, like Ammon, refused to allow Israel passage through Moabite territory on their way to the Promised Land. (See Judges 11:17, as well Deuteronomy 23:3 – 6 above)

Israel also served Moab during the period of the Judges. (Judges 3:12 – 30)

It was Moab along with Midian who hired Balaam to curse Israel in Numbers 22, and when they were unsuccessful doing that they corrupted Israel another way:

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel." (Numbers 25:1-3)

Other prophets that pronounced judgment against Moab were: Isaiah (Isaiah 15–16); Jeremiah (Jeremiah 48); Ezekiel (Ezekiel 25:8–11); Zephaniah (Zephaniah 2:8–11).

Moab, like Amman, was eventually destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser III and the Assyrians.

Conclusion of Amos' Prophecies Against Non-Hebrew Nations

Before we move on to discuss God's judgments against Judah and Israel, let's consider a few thoughts:

- 1 These six Gentile nations who were not "God's People" were expected to heed the warnings of this Hebrew prophet. God was going to hold non-Jewish nations accountable for their treatment of His Hebrew people and for violations of His moral law, which was written on their hearts:

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Romans 2:12-16 KJV)

- 2 In the case of Moab, God held a Gentile nation responsible for something that was not done to Israel.

- 3 There is really nothing left of any of these nations today.

G Judah (2:4 – 5)

God rebukes Judah, because unlike the other nations, they should have known better. They had the commandments of God. Unto Israel and Judah were committed the "oracles of God" (Romans 3:22), *and unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.* (Luke 12:48)

In the New Testament, God rebukes the Jews for not practicing what they preached. (Romans 2:17 – 3:9)

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: ... But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:" (Deuteronomy 28:1, 15)

Verse 5 was fulfilled in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem.

II Amos' Pronouncements Against Israel (Chapter 2:6 - 6)

A A Critique of Israel's Conduct (Chapter 2:6 - 4)

At this point in Amos' prophecy, he will no longer be preaching against the sins of other nations; now, he will start preaching against the people in the audience. Remember, he preached this message in Bethel, at the chapel where the king worshipped.

J. Vernon McGee had this to say:

Amos is getting closer to home. He's going to start meddling.

The story is told of the preacher who one Sunday morning was preaching against various sins. He preached about the sin of drunkenness, and a woman sitting in the congregation loudly "amened" him. He preached against the sin of smoking, and she "amened" him for that. Then when he started preaching against the sin of chewing tobacco, she shifted her wad to the other cheek and grumbled, "Now he's quit preachin' and has gone to meddlin'!"

Amos is starting to meddle now. He is going to talk about the sin of the congregation which was before him.³

The nation of Israel at this time in their history was probably at the zenith of their prosperity. They were very wealthy, but their wealth was built through the oppression of the poor. They were "religious", and even maintained some of the traditions of their roots, but their religion was mixed with idolatry. They were far from God. The land was polluted with drunkenness, and every kind of immorality imaginable.

It is eerily similar to the religious state of America today:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

The Church at Laodicea is thought by many to be representative or a picture of the churches at the time of Christ's return. They, too, were very prosperous financially, but very poor spiritually:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and

³ McGee, J. V. (1997). Thru the Bible commentary (electronic ed., Vol. 3, p. 690). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Revelation 3:14-22)

You and I may be doing well financially, but how are we doing spiritually?

1 Amos Records Their Transgressions (vs. 6 – 8)

a. They had mistreated the poor. (2:6 – 7; also 4:1; 5:11; 8:6)

God has a lot to say about oppressing the poor:

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)

"Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates:" (Deuteronomy 24:14)

"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor." (Proverbs 14:31)

"Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:" (Proverbs 22:22)

The New Testament warns Christians about showing partiality toward the rich at the expense of the poor:

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." (James 2:1-9)

The poor were being oppressed in Israel, and God was not happy about it. The rich were suing the poor who could not pay their bills, and then they were sold into slavery and servitude.

b. They were immoral (2:7b)

Verse 7b describes a disgusting act, which was clearly condemned by the Mosaic Law. It is not clear whether or not this verse is speaking of an act of incest, or perhaps even a pagan religious ritual. It could also just be speaking of a father and son participating immorally with a prostitute.

"And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife." (Exodus 22:16)

"If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days. A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt."

(Deuteronomy 22:28-30)

c. They were idolatrous and drunkards (2:8)

Wiersbe said this regarding this verse:

The third sin was open idolatry (Amos 2:8). Wealthy men took their debtors' garments as pledges but did not return them at sundown as the law commanded (Ex. 22:26–27; Deut. 24:10–13, 17). Instead, these rich sinners visited pagan altars, where they got drunk on wine purchased with the fines they exacted from the poor. Then, in their drunken stupor, they slept by the altars on other people's garments, defiling the garments and disobeying

the law. The officials were getting rich by exploiting the people, and then were using their unjust gain for committing sin.⁴

2 Amos Reminds Them of Their Past (vs. 9 – 12)

Amos describes God's careful protection and provision for Israel as he brought them out of Egypt and defeated their enemies. Notice the reference to the Amorites. Apparently, Jacob had tangled with the Amorites before the children of Israel went into Egypt. He gave Joseph a portion of land that he took from the Amorites:

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." (Genesis 48:21-22)

And, God conquered the Amorites that blocked their path on their way back into the Promised Land. (Deuteronomy 2:24 – 37)

God gave them prophets but they silenced them. God gave them devoted Nazarites, but they became drunkards. (See Numbers 6 for references to the Nazarite vow.)

3 Amos Reaches Forth into Their Future (vs. 13 – 16)

Amos 2:14 – 16; and 3:11 are references to the Assyrian Empire, which would conquer Israel in 722 BC.

4 Amos Reveals God's Proclamation (3:1 – 10)

"Hear this word" – Chapters three, four, and five all begin with this phrase.

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:" (Hebrews 3:7-8)

God wants us to hear the Word as well as heed the Word of God.

The idea expressed in the first part of chapter three is that God is not just "blowing smoke"; He is not communicating hollow threats. He is revealing, through Amos, a certain coming judgment, and He will follow through. He will do exactly what He say He will do.

You will note the reference in v. 1 to the "whole family". Though this prophecy is primarily against the northern kingdom of Israel, God is also warning the folks from Judah as well.

a. vs. 1 – 3 reiterate God's reasons

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). Be concerned (p. 20). Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor.

Verse two indicates that Israel should have known better. Israel was forsaking a very special relationship given to them by God, which He had not given to any other nation on earth. Today, the Church has this unique and privileged bond with the Lord. Are we forsaking the grace that the Lord has given us by walking contrary to His will? Notice also, that God was going to deal harshly with Israel, because they should have known better. Israel was given an abundance of light and light brings responsibility.

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2)

In a similar way, the Church has been given an awesome privilege, because God has chosen to reveal Himself to us as well. We are a "chosen generation". (1 Peter 2:9)

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" (Ephesians 1:4)

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

However, as with Israel, this awesome privilege that we have bears with it a heavy responsibility.

*"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. **For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:** and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."* (Luke 12:47-48)

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
(Hebrews 12:6)

God's people will get away with less in a temporal sense than the lost will, but they will also reap less eternally.

God had brought Israel out of bondage in Egypt (3:1), but the people did not remain in agreement with God:

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" – (Amos 3:3)

Somewhere along the way, Israel started veering off of God's path.

Though this verse is in reference to Israel, it is applicable to Christians today. We cannot work with or fellowship intimately with people who are not on the same page as we are:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

By the way, if you and God are walking in opposite directions, it will be you who will have to make a U-turn. God is right, and you and I need to bend to His will.

b. vs. 4 – 10 reiterate God’s resolve

The lion only roars when he has captured his prey.

The bird is ensnared when the trap is laid for him.

When the warning trumpet blows in the city, people fear because there is a real threat of danger.

God is stating that Israel is the prey, the ensnared bird, and the people who hear the warning of the trumpet. God has caught them in their rebellion and has declared them guilty.

Amos 3:6b is an Old testament equivalent to:

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Colossians 1:17)

Nothing happens without God’s knowledge and permission.

Verses seven and eight tell us that it is the prophet who does God’s roaring. The people of Israel tried to silence the prophets. (2:12; 7:12 – 13)

Verse nine reveals where the message was to be delivered. Ashdod was a city in the land of the Philistines. The other places mentioned in this passage will not only hear the sentence, but will also witness their demise as well.

Verse ten sums up God’s reasons for His resolve to punish them.

God is not saying that Israel did not know how to do right, He is saying that they refused to do what they knew was right. Israel knew better. They had rejected the Word of God.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17)

5 Amos Records God's Plan (3:11 – 15)

In this latter part of chapter 3, God reveals what will happen to Israel in their near future. Remember, Amos was prophesying this approximately 40 years or so prior to the judgment of Assyrian captivity, which occurred in 722 BC.

Verse 12 give us an indication, which has proven historically accurate, of what will be left of Samaria when God gets done with her.

Verse 14 mentions the altars of Bethel, which speaks of Israel's idolatry. Remember, Bethel was one of the two locations in the northern kingdom where a golden calf was worshipped. The other city was Dan. (See 1 Kings 12:25 – 33)

Verse 15 mentions their summer and winter houses, their houses of ivory, and their great houses. All of these reflect Israel's tremendous wealth, which came about largely because of their oppression of the poor. Ahab and Jezebel had built their ivory palace in Samaria years before the time of Amos, but it was still there at the time of this prophecy.

Remember, the man delivering this prophecy was most likely a poor, uneducated farmer from down in Judah; and he was preaching at these educated, rich folk in Samaria. God loves to use base things to confound the wise:

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke 10:21)

6 Amos Recalls Past Warnings (Chapter 4)

Notice – *"Hear this word"* (also in 3:1 and 5:1) – This is the second of three times this phrase is used. Some have stated that this is the second of three messages.

Notice in chapter 4 vs. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 - *"yet have ye not returned unto me"*. These are all natural calamities that were meant to warn them and get Israel to turn back to God. 4:12 records that the people did not heed the warnings, and were doomed to suffer the consequences.

a. They lived luxuriously at the expense of the poor (vs. 1 – 3)

Bashan – means “fruitful” – an area east of the Jordan river known for its fertile soil. (Jeremiah 50:19; Micah 7:14) It was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh. Deuteronomy 3:1 – 14 records that Moses conquered the Og, the King of Bashan, and he gave it to Manasseh. The land was formerly known as “the land of the giants”.



“Kine” are cows. Apparently the kine from Bashan were very valuable because of the rich grazing in the land of Bashan. (Ezekiel 39:18; Psalm 22:12) The word “kine” is used here metaphorically for the women of Samaria. “Kine” is in the feminine form (Notice also “her” in verse 3). This rebuke was addressed to the wives as well as their husbands (“masters”). They apparently were very wealthy, well fed, and enjoying life at the expense of the poor who they were “oppressing” and “crushing”. (Amos 2:6 – 7; 5:11 – 12; 8:4 – 6) The idea here is that the wives were really the masters who controlled their husbands and got them to do whatever was necessary to give them what they wanted, including “drink”, presumably a reference to intoxicating beverages. Often what they wanted was obtained because of the deceitful and sometimes violent violation and subjugation of the poor.

See also Isaiah 3:16 – 26 and 32:9 – 13 for Isaiah’s rebuke of women.

See 1 Peter 3:1 – 6 for the conversation (behavior) of a godly woman.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

James warned the rich of his day:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabbath. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." (James 5:1-6)

God gives wealth in order to be a blessing to people. These Israelites were using people to make themselves rich.

Andrew Carnegie said, “Surplus wealth is a sacred trust which its possessor is bound to administer in his lifetime for the good of the community.”

It is not a sin to be rich. God has mightily used many wealthy people to advance the cause of Christ, and be a blessing to the poor. It is a sin, however, to not be a good steward of what the Lord gives you.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Verses 2 – 3 tell us that these women will be dragged out of their cities through the “breaches”, or openings in the walls. The Assyrians will be the nation that accomplishes this for the Lord in 720 BC.

b. They worshipped hypocritically (vs. 4 – 5)

Bethel was originally a place of great blessing for the people of Israel, but they made it a place of idolatry. (Genesis 12:7 - 8; 13:3 - 4; 28:10 – 22; 1 Kings 12:25 - 31)

Gilgal was the place where Israel was circumcised before they conquered Jericho and the rest of the Promised Land (Joshua 5:1 – 9). Hosea tells us that there was great iniquity in Gilgal:

"All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers." (Hosea 9:15)

"Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields." (Hosea 12:11)

See “Prophetic Activity” map for the locations of these two cities.

Notice the reference to the “after three years” – See Deuteronomy 14:28 – 29. These offerings were for the poor and for the Levites. Wasn’t it nice of these filthy rich people to throw a bone to the poor folks that created their wealth in the first place.

On the surface, it almost looked as if Israel was having a change of heart, a religious revival of sorts. However, Israel’s worship was not only tainted with idolatry, it was filled with hypocrisy. Genuine repentance and revival will result in a change of behavior. This passage is actually “dripping with sarcasm”. The people were merely going through the motions ritualistically.

Notice the reference to the “sacrifice ... with leaven” (v. 5) Leavened bread was actually not completely sinful for thanksgiving offerings. (See Leviticus 7:11 – 15), though it was forbidden for other offerings. Leaven in the Bible is a picture of sin.

The phrase “*this liketh you*” means “this pleases you”.

Jesus spoke of the Pharisees in His day:

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matthew 15:8)

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." (Mark 7:6)

Paul warned that the end times will be like this:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

c. They resisted the warnings stubbornly (vs. 6 – 13)

The natural calamities from Israel's past that are mentioned in vs. 6 – 13 were designed by God to be warnings to get the attention of Israel and to get them to repent. "Yet, have [they] not returned unto [God].

- 1 Famine (v. 6) – "cleanness of teeth" and "want of bread"
- 2 Drought (vs. 7 – 8)
- 3 Blasting (disease), Mildew, and palmerworms (locusts – see also Joel 1:4) {v. 9}
- 4 Diseases and Enemies (v. 10) – Notice that the diseases were after the manner of Egypt, which is possibly a reference to the plagues that God brought upon Egypt in the Exodus.
- 5 Supernatural Disasters (v. 11) – as Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)

You may remember that God had given Israel plenty of warning that He would do these things to them if they forsook Him. (Deuteronomy 28:15 – 68)

God now tells them in verse 12 that they could count on the fact that He was about to do all of this (and more) to them in their near future. It was probably too late for the nation at this point, but it was not too late for any individual or family within Israel to turn back to God.

Notice the references to the omnipotent, sovereign God in v. 13:

He Created all things in the past – "*formeth the mountains*"

He sustains all things in the present – "*createth the wind*"

Our Lord Jesus is the same Creator God as is mentioned here in Amos 4:13:

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

(Colossians 1:15-18)

He even knows our thoughts – "*declareth unto man what is his thought.*"

He can turn light into darkness – "*maketh the morning darkness*"

And, He stomps all over the "high places", which is probably a reference to those made by men for their worship of false gods.

See Psalm 139 – Israel was being solemnly warned – they were messing with an Awesome God.

B A Call for Genuine Conversion? or A Genuine Call for Conversion? (Chapter 5)

Notice in chapter 5 vs. 4, 5, 6, 8, 14 “seek ye me, and ye shall live”. God said that Israel still had time to seek Him, which seems almost contradictory to the message of a lamentation. He told them not to seek Beth-el, the religious capitol, with all of its apostasy and idolatry. He also told them to seek good, and not evil; and to love good, and not evil. (v. 14)

It is very interesting that God seems to be saying throughout this Prophecy that it is too late for Israel, that they are doomed for judgment (v. 2); and, yet, here there seems to be a genuine invitation for Israel to restore her relationship with God, and reverse the judgment. I have three thoughts regarding this:

- i. The invitation was genuine, but God in His foreknowledge, He knew exactly what Israel would do. We, as well as Israel, are “elect” according to the foreknowledge of God. (1 Peter 1:2) “All” Israel will someday be in a right relationship with the Lord. (Romans 11:26), but at this point in their history, they were content to be rebellious.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Romans 8:29-30)

- ii. The invitation, though rejected by the nation, corporately, would be received by many individuals and families within.
- iii. The invitation would be remembered in Israel’s captivity, after the prophesied judgment fell. (Deuteronomy 4:25 – 31)

1 A Lamentation for Israel (v. 1 – 3)

Notice the word, “lamentation” in v. 1, which means a funeral dirge over the demise of Israel. (See also Amos 8:10) This chapter begins with mourning over what will happen to Israel, and ends with God expressing his passionate grief over the decision that He knew Israel would make. Nestled in the middle of chapter five is an invitation for the nation to repent. (vs. 4 – 15)

The word, “virgin”, probably is referring to the fact that Israel had never been conquered up to this point in their history.

Verse three indicates that 90% of the nation would be destroyed or taken into captivity.

3 An Invitation to Seek God (vs. 4 – 9)

Notice – “seek me” (v. 4); “seek the Lord” (v. 6); “seek him: (v. 8)

The invitation is genuine. God says, “and ye shall live” (vs. 4 and 6)

The contrast is given also in these verses. The people of Israel would rather seek the false altars of Bethel, Gilgal, and even in Beersheba, which is all the way down in southern Judah. Beersheba was the place where Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech.

Note – in the latter part of verse 5, God pronounces judgment on Bethel and Gilgal, but not on Beersheba, because Beersheba was in the southern Kingdom of Judah, which would not be judged until much later.

Israel would also rather do unrighteousness than righteousness. (v. 7)

Note – “wormwood” is a bitter, poisonous herb that is used symbolically to speak of a curse, or of poison, or bitterness. (See 6:12 [here translated hemlock]; Deuteronomy 29:18)

The seven stars in verse eight refers to the constellation Pleiades, which when rising before daybreak signaled the return of spring. The rising of Orion after sunset announced the coming of winter. (See also Job 9:9; 38:31) God is saying here that he controls the seasons, the daily cycle of the earth, and the tides.

4 An Invitation to Sow Good (vs. 10 – 15)

The one that rebukes in the gate would be the judge. Israel came to hate anyone that judged righteously.

*"And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the **entering of the gate of the city**, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them."* (Joshua 20:4)

*"Then went Boaz **up to the gate**, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down."* (Ruth 4:1)

Notice in v. 12, the judges who were “in the gate” were taking bribes. Corruption was rampant in the land. Even the prudent (v. 13) will not speak out against the corruption. God will see to it that Israel reaps what they sow (v. 11)

Those who love God will love good, because God is good. God’s people will desire to do good. They will not always succeed, but they will try, and try again after failing.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20)

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:15, 21)

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)

Brother Chalie Clark has one rule at his teen camps: Do right!

Our nation today is guilty of the same things that Israel is. The vast majority in our nation no longer love God, and no longer love the good. And, those few who do truly love the Lord are mocked and shouted down into silence. There is a great gulf fixed in our nation between God and the devil; between right and wrong; and the gulf gets wider every day.

5 The Revelation of the Consequences of Israel's Decision (vs. 16 – 27)

Because Israel was choosing wrong over right, and evil over God, they would be left to face their own consequences. However, even in this section, there is another plea for repentance (v. 24).

Notice vs. 21 – 26 – God strongly rebukes their artificial system of worship. God desires true repentance, not vain tradition, especially when the tradition was mixed with pagan practices.

Moloch (probably a reference to Molech, though the Hebrew word, *melek*, means king) worship consisted of the worship of Saturn and all the host (stars) of heaven, and even included the sacrifice of children. (2 Kings 17:16 – 17; Acts 7:42 - 43)

"And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 18:21)

Chiun is uncertain, but is believed by some to be a statue representing an Assyrian/Babylonian god of Saturn.

God is stating that Israel chose a corrupted version of Judaism and mixed it with the worship of these and many other false gods.

Israel was doomed to face the consequences of their continued rejection of God even after God had pleaded with them over and over again to repent.

America will face a worse judgment if she continues down the path that she is on. We may not worship false deities, but we are certainly not worshipping God, either. And, we are just as guilty of all of the immorality and self-worship today that Israel was guilty of in Amos' day. If America is to get right with the Lord, it will have to begin with God's people. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

C A Condemnation of Captivity (Chapter 6)

In chapter six, we see more descriptions of Israel's guilt, as well as a revelation of the consequences. Again, God will use the tool of repetition to drive his point home to the people of Israel. He began his prophecy of judgment for Israel in chapter two, and He has been reviewing and repeating much of the same information over and over again since. He is building a complete case against them, which will convict them of their guilt beyond any shadow of doubt.

Notice in chapter 6 vs. 1 and 7 – this is a warning to Judah as well. Zion is a reference to Jerusalem.

1 He Describes Their Indifference (vs. 1 – 8)

They were “at ease”, which means they were arrogant, secure, and careless. They had no idea about the impending doom; they thought it could not possibly happen to them. They were oblivious. They were like the people in Noah's day who were:

"...eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark," (Matthew 24:38)

a. They had false expectations of protection. (vs. 1 – 3)

Samaria, like Jerusalem, was situated on a mountain that afforded them a measure of protection from invading armies. According to McGee, when the Assyrians did attack 40 years or so later, it took them three years to completely conquer the city.

Samaria was the capitol of the northern kingdom and it was a very important city in the world at that time. It was the place in Israel where all of the important people and dignitaries lived.

They mistakenly trusted that their strategic geographical position and their prominence among the nations would protect them.

In verse two, Amos draws their attention to three other important cities that all fell to invaders. Calneh (probably the Calno of Isaiah 10:9) and Hamath were both cities to the north that were conquered by Shalmanezar III in 815. Gath was a city of the Philistines just south of the southern kingdom of Judah, which had recently been destroyed by King Uzziah in 760 BC. God was telling Samaria (and Jerusalem) that if these great cities fell, what strength did they have to withstand the great Assyrian army, not to mention the wrath of God.

Notice v. 3 – they put far away the evil day. They thought the day of judgment would never come.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

b. They were extravagant in their preoccupation. (vs. 4 – 6)

Alluded to in these verses are covetousness, sexual immorality, laziness, drunkenness, and gluttony. These are all sins of a pleasure-seeking and prosperous nation.

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

The Bible is replete with verses that condemn all of these sins individually.

These are the sins that are bringing America down today.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

The Church at Corinth was like Samaria, in that there was rampant sin, and the people didn't care. (See 1 Corinthians 5)

The Church at Laodicea was much like Samaria. (See Revelation 3:14 – 17)

Dr. Vance Havner told of having dinner in a dining room that was dimly lighted. At first, he could scarcely read the menu, but then he found he could see fairly well. He said to his friends, "Isn't it strange how easy it is to become accustomed to the dark?" That's one of the problems in the church today: we've gotten accustomed to the darkness, and our lights aren't shining bright enough.⁵

c. They were extreme in their misconception (vs. 7 – 8; 14)

The Northern Kingdom simply did not think or believe that judgment like what Amos was prophesying was possible.

They could not have been more wrong. God says that these who were deluded in their assumption of safety and drunk in their distraction and indifference will be the first to go into captivity.

⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). Be concerned (p. 59). Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor.

Hemath (v. 14) is a city on the northern boundary of Israel, and the “river of the wilderness” possibly refers to the one of the rivers near the Dead Sea, at the southern border. God was telling them that the destruction of Israel will be complete.

2 He Delivers Two Illustrations (vs. 9 – 13)

In these verses, Amos paints two pictures for them: the first will illustrate the extent of the destruction that God promised to come. The second depicted the delusion of the people in thinking that it would not happen.

a. The Magnitude of Devastation (vs. 9 – 11)

Verses 9 – 11 talk about the death that will come to every home, small as well as great, presumably because of pestilence, which usually follows war. Remember, Samaria will be shut up for three years as the invaders cut them off from supply and possibly even water. Under these conditions, people starve, and many die of disease. (See Amos 5:3) This one that is found hiding in the house, is admonished to not make mention of the Lord. Why? Perhaps, it is because they failed to call upon the Lord before the time ran out. (See Proverbs 1:23 – 33) Perhaps, they did not want to draw God’s attention to someone that had escaped. At any rate, according to verse 11, the people were afraid that more judgment would come.

b. The Madness of their Delusion (vs. 12 – 13)

The illustration of a horse running on rocks, or a man plowing on rock shows the folly of Israel’s logic. According to verse 13, they were trusting in nothing (“nought”), and they thought they had enough strength to withstand anything. They were very prideful, and pride goes before destruction.

III Amos’ Pictures [Visions] (Chapters 7 – 9)

“Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me...”

This next section contains five visions, which are all introduced with a statement similar to the one above. The first two visions of judgment, however, never come to pass, because of the intercession of Amos on Israel’s behalf. The last three visions depict judgments that will not be avoided.

A Locust (7:1 – 3)

In this first vision, Amos saw a devastation of locusts on the grass that would feed the livestock in Israel. Apparently, the king kept the first cutting of grass for himself, as a tariff, in order to feed his livestock. The second cutting would be for the people, but before the people could

make the second cutting, a huge swarm of locusts came to devour the grass. This judgment was stopped, however, because of the intervention of Amos. Amos interceded for the people:

*"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**"* (James 5:16)

Perhaps God stayed that judgment because it would have really hurt the poor people who were already suffering because of the oppression of the rich.

B Fire (7:4 – 6)

The fire depicted here in the second vision is believed by some to be symbolic of a drought that would dry up the underground sources of water. Sever drought will inevitably lead to fires. There aren't too many widespread forest fires in wet locations. This judgment was also withdrawn.

Notice - chapter 7 vs. 3 and 6 – both of these judgments were withdrawn after Amos interceded on behalf of Israel. I wonder how many of God's judgments against America were stopped because of the intervention of a praying man of God. (See Genesis 18:22 – 33 for Abraham's interceding on behalf of his nephew Lot.)

C A Plumbline (7:7 – 9)

A plumb line is used to determine whether or not something is level. Israel was measured against God's law and was found crooked.

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." (Daniel 5:27)

The word of God is compared here to a plumb line, and has also been compared to a mirror (2 Corinthians 3:18; and James 1:23 – 25); and a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24)

Notice – vs. 10 – 17 is an historical interlude, similar to Isaiah 36 – 39. Notice that it is the religious leadership that speaks out against the prophecies of Amos. Amaziah the priest of Bethel goes to Jeroboam II to complain about Amos. Amaziah seems to be particularly upset about the third vision, as we see him use many of the same words that Amos used. However, he misrepresents Amos. Amos did not say that Jeroboam II would die by the sword. (compare vs. 9 & 11) He said that the judgment would be against the House of Jeroboam. According 2 Kings 14:23 – 29, Jeroboam II dies of old age. His son, Zechariah, would not be so fortunate, however. (See 2 Kings 15)

We actually do not have recorded here in Amos the reply of King Jeroboam, but we do know that Amaziah was the king's chaplain, and he had Jeroboam's full support and authority.

Amaziah tells Amos that he is no longer welcome in Israel. He tells him to go back home. Remember, Amos was just a poor, uneducated farmer. Amaziah was the well-respected, wealthy, and educated priest. He no doubt had nothing but contempt for Amos.

Amos very humbly agrees that he was a nobody, but he quickly adds that he was called into the ministry by God Himself, and he wasn't about to take orders from some false priest. It was God that told Amos to go to the northern kingdom, and it will have to be God to get him to leave. Though Amos was perhaps poor and uneducated, he definitely had God's power on him.

Peter and James had a similar experience as they debated with the priests in the New Testament temple.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13)

God pronounces judgment on Amaziah the priest through Amos. It is important to note that this was not revenge on the part of Amos because of the treatment that he received from Amaziah. This was God's decision. Because Amaziah was being unfaithful to God and rejected His messenger, God pronounced that his wife would be unfaithful to him. Because the decisions that Israel was making would destroy future generations, God told Amaziah that his children would also die.

D A Basket of Summer Fruit (8:1 – 14)

After God had shown Amos the first three visions in chapter seven, and even after the third message was rejected by the religious leader, God continued to speak to and through Amos. People may reject you, but if you are speaking the Word of God, He will never forsake you. (See Acts 27:21 – 26)

Amos must have been discouraged. Jeremiah had similar troubles later with the southern kingdom:

"O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the LORD is with me

as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten." (Jeremiah 20:7-11)

This picture indicates that Israel was fully ripe, and was ready for judgment. Judgment was imminent now. Israel would reject God's offer of mercy, and she would have to suffer the full wrath of God.

1. The Luscious Fruit (vs. 1 – 3)

The first idea that we glean from the vision of ripe fruit is that the fruit is fully developed, sufficiently so that it has been picked. You do not usually pick fruit unless it is ripe, or at least near ripe. Israel's iniquity and rebellion against God was fully ripened and was ready for judgment.

The second thought from this passage is similar to the first. Fruit is picked at the time of harvest, and the end of the harvest signals that winter is near.

Jeremiah later wrote in a similar context:

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jeremiah 8:20)

We can definitely see that Israel is reaching the end of God's patience.

Fruit is also used to represent soul winning (See John 15), and the attributes that are manifested in a person who is yielded to the Holy Spirit:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

The harvesting of fruit is used symbolically in Revelation for both those that are headed for heaven, and for those that are doomed for eternal judgment. (See Revelation 14:12 – 20)

2. The Lost Fortune (vs. 3 – 10)

The Party is Over – See Daniel 5 – Belshazzar was having a party when the Medes were invading and conquered him.

Jesus said in reference to the eve of Armageddon:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:36-39)

Notice in v. 5 that the people could not wait for the religious observances to be over so they could open up shop to cheat the poor people. Giving them small measures (ephah) for a lot of money (shekel).

"Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God." (Deuteronomy 25:13-16)

God was going to hold Israel accountable for their treatment of the poor.

Notice that the people were upset about the interruption of their business because of the Sabbath. Nehemiah dealt with this same issue after the Captivity. (See Nehemiah 13:15 – 22)

3. The Listening (to God's Word) Famine (vs. 11 – 14)

Amos was speaking the Word of God and the Israelites were not listening. God is speaking now to America, but are we listening? The Word of God is flowing freely today, but will it always?

See Proverbs 1:23 – 33 – You had better listen to God's Word when He is speaking.

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:6-11)

God has often connected the Word of God to food or bread:

"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." (Luke 4:4)

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (Job 23:12)

Just as food sustains the body, the Bible nourishes the soul. Too many of God's people today are starving spiritually.

E The Day of the Lord's Judgment (9:1 – 10)

The next image seen by Amos is the meting out of judgment by the Lord. God had been speaking to Amos all along, but now Amos sees the Lord.

1 God will smite and the altar will be destroyed. (v. 1)

The temple here is probably not the Temple in Jerusalem, though it too would be smitten by God in the future. This is most likely the altar at Bethel where Jereboam I set up one of the golden calves. You will recall that he set up two calves, the other being in Dan, so that the people of the northern kingdom would not be tempted to travel back down south to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple. (See 1 Kings 12:26 – 31)

"Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD." (Amos 3:13-15)

God never recognized this altar at Bethel. It was the focal point of Israel's rebellion, and now it will be the focal point of God's judgment.

2 God will search and will allow no one to escape. (vs. 2 – 4)

Carmel is at the very northern border of Israel. It is an area that has many caves where people could hide, but not from God.

God is omnipresent - see Psalm 139:7 – 12.

You and I cannot hide from God physically, and we cannot hide anything from God. Even our thoughts are known to Him. It is ridiculous to try to pretend that God does not see what we do and think, and that he cannot hear what we say.

3 God will sift and all of Israel will be scattered. (v. 5 - 10)

Caphtor is apparently the area where the Philistines originally came from. Some believe that Caphtor is in Asia Minor; others believe it is on the Island of Crete. Kir is where the Syrians originated from. Interestingly, the King of Assyria will eventually banish the Syrians back to Kir:

"And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." (2 Kings 16:9)

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:" (Luke 22:31)

God is going to put Israel in a sifter, and He will spread them all over the Assyrian Kingdom. Many will die; most of the survivors will be displaced; everyone in the kingdom will be adversely affected. Notice, however, in verse 8, the Lord assures Israel that he will not utterly destroy them.

Also, in verse 10, the text indicates that those that are saved from within the kingdom will be spared the brunt of the judgment. Everybody, whether saved or lost, are sinners; but, this context seems to indicate that only the lost will die.

It is important to remember that the judgment described here is a judgment against a nation. A nation will not face eternal judgment in Hell, but lost individuals within that nation will. However, the saved from within Israel, though they may experience some or maybe even all of the temporary consequences that the nation experiences, will spend eternity with the Lord in Heaven.

F The Day of the Lord's Restoration (9:11 – 15)

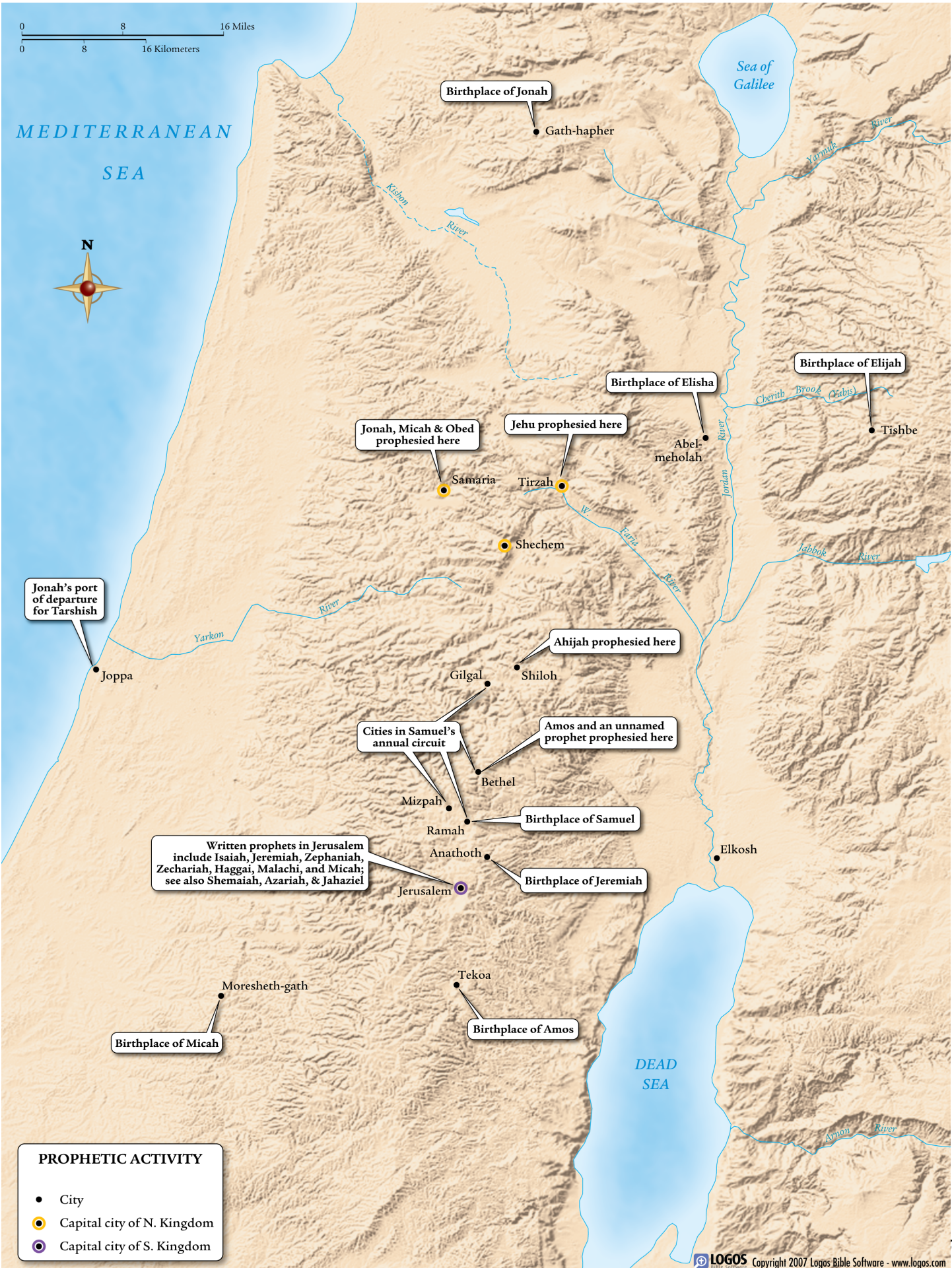
The restoration of Israel applies to both the northern and southern kingdoms corporately. Notice the "fallen tabernacle of David", which is a reference to the royal line, which even at the time of Christ was at a low point. One of the heirs to the throne was a lowly carpenter. God will restore Israel's King (Jesus), when He restores Israel.

"In that day" is a reference to the distant future, beyond the church age; after the rapture and tribulation period. Israel will not be completely restored until the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ where both the northern and southern kingdoms will be reunited in the land of Israel, and will be at peace with God, each other, and all other nations for 1000 years. The land of Israel will be fertile (v. 13 & 14), and the people will be prosperous and protected.

See also Jeremiah 30 – 33; Hosea 2:14 – 23; 14:4 – 7; Joel 3:18 – 21; Zephaniah 3:14 – 20; Zechariah 13 – 14.

"The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." (Jeremiah 30:1-3)

A lot of good things happen when a nation gets right with the Lord. The same applies to a home and even to an individual Christian. Israel did not heed God's warning to repent, and it had to face judgment. America may have to suffer the very same consequences if she, like Israel, refuses to listen to God.



0 8 16 Miles
0 8 16 Kilometers

MEDITERRANEAN SEA



Birthplace of Jonah

Gath-hapher

Sea of Galilee

Birthplace of Elijah

Tishbe

Birthplace of Elisha

Abel-meholah

Jonah, Micah & Obad prophesied here

Samaria

Jehu prophesied here

Tirzah

Shechem

Jonah's port of departure for Tarshish

Joppa

Ahijah prophesied here

Gilgal

Shiloh

Cities in Samuel's annual circuit

Amos and an unnamed prophet prophesied here

Mizpah

Bethel

Birthplace of Samuel

Ramah

Written prophets in Jerusalem include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Haggai, Malachi, and Micah; see also Shemaiah, Azariah, & Jahaziel

Anathoth

Birthplace of Jeremiah

Elkosh

Birthplace of Micah

Moreseth-gath

Tekoa

Birthplace of Amos

DEAD SEA

PROPHETIC ACTIVITY

- City
- Capital city of N. Kingdom
- ⊙ Capital city of S. Kingdom

ASSYRIAN CAMPAIGNS AGAINST ISRAEL AND JUDAH

- City
- ▲ Mountain
- ← Shalmaneser III campaign (841 BC)
- ← Adad-nirari III campaign (797 BC)
- ← Tiglath-pileser III campaign (734 BC)
- ← Tiglath-pileser III campaign (733 BC)
- ← Tiglath-pileser III campaign (732 BC)
- ← Shalmaneser V/Sargon II campaign (725 BC)
- ← Sargon II campaign (712 BC)
- ← Sennacherib campaign (701 BC)

