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July 27, 2001

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# Amos

## Introduction

**1** The message of Amos. Amos was one of the shepherds from the city Tekoa. Amos saw visions\* about Israel during the time that Uzziah was king of Judah and during the time that Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel. This was two years before the earthquake.

## Punishment for Aram

**2** Amos said:  
The Lord will shout like a lion in Zion.\*  
His loud voice will roar from  
Jerusalem.  
And the green pastures of the shepherds  
will turn brown and die.  
Even Mount Carmel\* will become dry.

**3**The Lord says these things: “I will definitely punish [the people of] Damascus for the many crimes they did. Why? Because they crushed [the people of] Gilead\* with iron threshing tools.\* **4**So I will start a fire at Hazael’s\* house (*Aram*). And that fire will destroy the great palaces of Ben Hadad.\*

**5**“I will also break open the gates of Damascus.\* I will remove the person sitting

[on the throne] in the the Valley of Aven.\* I will remove the symbol of power from Beth-Eden\* And the Aramean people will be [defeated and] taken [back] to Kir.\* The Lord said those things.”

## Punishment for the Philistines

**6**The Lord says this: “I will definitely punish [the people of] Gaza\* for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because they took an entire nation of people and sent them as slaves to Edom.\* **7**So I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza. This fire will destroy the high towers in Gaza. **8**And I will destroy the one that sits [on the throne] in Ashdod.\* I will destroy the king that holds the scepter in Ashkelon.\* I will punish the people of Ekron.\* Then the Philistines that are still left alive, will die.”  
The Lord God said those things.

## Punishment for Phoenicia

**9**The Lord says these things: “I will definitely punish [the people of] Tyre\* for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because they took an entire nation and sent them as slaves to

**visions** Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

**Zion** The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

**Mount Carmel** A mountain in north Israel. This name means, “God’s vineyard.” This shows it was a very fertile hill.

**Gilead** An area where some of the people from the family group of Manasseh lived. See Num. 26:29.

**threshing tools** Boards with pieces of sharp stone or iron that were dragged over grain to remove the hulls.

**Hazael** Hazael was the king of Aram (Syria). He murdered Ben Hadad I so he could become king. See 2 Kings 8:7.

**Ben Hadad** Ben Hadad II, the son of Hazael, king of Aram (Syria). See 2 Kings 13:3.

**Damascus** The capital of Aram (Syria).

**the Valley of Aven** A name that can mean, “Leisure Valley” or “Empty Valley of Misfortune..

**Beth-Eden** The royal city of Aram (Syria) on Mount Lebanon. This name means, “House of Pleasure” or “Paradise.”

**Kir** Or, “Kur,” an area controlled by the Assyrians. See Amos 9:7.

**Gaza** An important city of the Philistines.

**for the many crimes they did** Literally, “For three crimes ... and for four ...” This shows that these people had done plenty of sins—and it was time to punish those people.

**Edom** A nation southeast of Israel.

**Ashdod** Another important city of the Philistines.

**Ashkelon** Another important city of the Philistines.

**Ekron** Another important city of the Philistines.

**Tyre** The capital of Phoenicia.

Edom.\* They did not remember the agreement they had made with their brothers (*Israel*).<sup>10</sup>So I will start a fire at the walls of Tyre. That fire will destroy the high towers in Tyre.”

#### Punishment for the Edomites

<sup>11</sup>The Lord says these things: “I will definitely punish [the people of] Edom\* for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because Edom chased his brother (*Israel*) with the sword. Edom showed no mercy. Edom’s anger continued forever—he kept tearing and tearing [at Israel like a wild animal].<sup>12</sup>So I will start a fire at Teman.\* That fire will destroy the high towers of Bozrah.”\*

#### Punishment for the Ammonites

<sup>13</sup>The Lord says these things: “I will definitely punish [the people of] Ammon\* for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because they killed the pregnant women in Gilead.\* The Ammonite people did this so they could [take that land] and make their country larger.<sup>14</sup>So I will start a fire at the wall of Rabbah.\* That fire will destroy the high towers of Rabbah. Troubles will come to them like a whirlwind\* into their country.<sup>15</sup>Then their kings and leaders will be captured. They will all be taken together.” The Lord said those things.

#### Punishment for Moab

**2**The Lord says these things: “I will definitely punish the people of Moab\* for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom\* into lime.<sup>2</sup>So I will start a fire in Moab. And that fire will destroy the high towers of

Kerioth.\* There will be terrible shouting and the sounds of a trumpet, and Moab will die.<sup>3</sup>So, I will bring an end to the kings\* of Moab. And I will kill all the leaders of Moab.” The Lord said those things.

#### Punishment for Judah

<sup>4</sup>The Lord says this: “I will definitely punish Judah for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because they refused to obey the Lord’s commands. They didn’t keep his commands. Their ancestors\* believed [lies]. And those same lies caused the people of Judah to quit following God.<sup>5</sup>So I will start a fire in Judah. And that fire will destroy the high towers of Jerusalem.”

#### Punishment for Israel

<sup>6</sup>The Lord says this: “I will definitely punish Israel for the many crimes they did.\* Why? Because they sold good, [innocent] people for a little silver. They sold poor people for the price of a pair of shoes.<sup>7</sup>They pushed those poor peoples’ faces into the ground and walked on them. They stopped listening to suffering people. Fathers and sons have sexual relations with the same woman. They have ruined my holy name.<sup>8</sup>They take clothes from poor people, and then they sit on those clothes while they worship at their altars.\* They loaned money to poor people, and then took their clothes as collateral.\* They make people pay fines, and then they use that money to buy wine for themselves to drink in the temple of their God.

<sup>9</sup>“But it was I who destroyed the Amorites\* before them. The Amorites were tall like cedar trees. They were as strong as oak trees.

**Edom** A nation southeast of Israel.

**for the many crimes they did** Literally, “For three crimes ... and for four ...” This shows that these people had done plenty of sins—and it was time to punish those people.

**Teman** A city at the north part of the country of Edom.

**Bozrah** A city at the south part of the country of Edom.

**Ammon** The Ammonites were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, son of Lot. Read Genesis 19:38.

**Gilead** An area where some of the people from the family group of Manasse lived. See Num. 26:29.

**Rabbah** The capital of the Ammonites.

**whirlwind** A strong wind that blows in a circle.

**Moab** A country east of Israel. The Moabite people were descendants of Lot’s son, Moab. See Genesis 19:37.

**Kerioth** A city in Moab. This might be Ar, the capital of Moab.

**kings** Literally, “judge.”

**ancestors** Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

**altar(s)** A stone table used for offering sacrifices to God.

**collateral** Things that a person uses to borrow money. If that person does not pay his debt, then the person he borrowed from can keep those things. It was against Moses’ law to take a person’s clothes as collateral. See Deut. 24:12-13.

**Amorites** One of the nations who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came. They were the people that scared the Israelites while Moses was leading them in the desert. See Num. 13:33.

But I destroyed their fruit above and their roots below.\*

<sup>10</sup>“I was the One who brought you from the land of Egypt. For 40 years I led you through the desert. I helped you take the Amorites’ land. <sup>11</sup>I made some of your sons to be prophets. I made some of your young men to be Nazirites.\* People of Israel, it is true.” The Lord said these things. <sup>12</sup>“But you made the Nazirites drink wine. You told the prophets not to prophesy. <sup>13</sup>You are like a heavy weight to me. I am bent low like a wagon loaded with too much straw. <sup>14</sup>No person will escape—not even the fastest runner. Strong men will not be strong enough. Soldiers will not be able to save themselves. <sup>15</sup>People with bows [and arrows] will not survive. Fast runners will not escape. People on horses will not escape alive. At that time, even very brave soldiers will run away. They will not take the time to put their clothes on.” The Lord said these things!

**Warning to Israel**

**3** People of Israel, listen to this message! The Lord said these things about you, Israel. This message is about all the families (*Israel*) that I brought from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>“There are many families on earth. But you are the only family I chose to know in a special way. [And you turned against me.] So I will punish you for all your sins.”

**The Cause of Israel’s Punishment**

<sup>3</sup>Two people will not walk together unless they agree! <sup>4</sup>A lion in the forest will roar only after catching an animal. If a young lion is roaring in his cave, then it means he caught something. <sup>5</sup>A bird will not fly into a trap on the ground if there is no food in the trap. And if the trap closes, then it will catch the bird. <sup>6</sup>If a trumpet blows a warning, then the people will surely shake with fear. If trouble comes to a city, then the Lord caused it. <sup>7</sup>The Lord my

Master might decide to do something. But before he does anything, he will tell his plans to his servants, the prophets. <sup>8</sup>If a lion roars, people will be scared. If the Lord speaks, prophets will prophesy.\*

<sup>9–10</sup>Go to the high towers in Ashdod\* and Egypt and announce this message: “Come to the mountains of Samaria. There you will see great confusion. Why? Because the people don’t know how to live right. Those people were cruel to other people. They took things from other people and hid those things in their high towers. Their treasuries are filled with things they took in war.”

<sup>11</sup>So the Lord says, “An enemy will come to that land. That enemy will take away your strength. He will take the things you hid in your high towers.”

<sup>12</sup>The Lord says,

“A lion might attack a lamb,  
and a shepherd might try to save the  
lamb.

But the shepherd will save  
only a part of that lamb.  
He might pull two legs  
or a part of an ear  
from the lion’s mouth.

In the same way,  
most of the people of Israel  
will not be saved.

The people living in Samaria  
will save only a corner from a bed,  
or a piece of cloth from a couch.”

<sup>13</sup>My Master, the Lord God All-Powerful, says these things: “Warn Jacob’s family (Israel) about these things. <sup>14</sup>Israel sinned, and I will punish them for their sins. I will also destroy the altars\* at Bethel.\* The horns of the altar\* will be cut off and fall to the ground. <sup>15</sup>I will destroy the winter house with the summer house. The houses of ivory will be destroyed.

**prophesy** To speak for God.

**Ashdod** Another important city of the Philistines.

**altar(s)** A stone table used for offering sacrifices to God.

**Bethel** A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.”

**horns of the altar** The corners of the altars were made in the shape of horns. These were important parts of the altar.

**fruit above and their roots below** This means the parents and their children.

**Nazirite(s)** A person that has made a special promise to God. This name is from the Hebrew word meaning “to separate from.”

Many houses will be destroyed.” The Lord said those things.

### The Women That Love Pleasure

**4** Listen to me, you cows of Bashan\* on Samaria’s mountain. You hurt poor people. You crush those poor people. You tell your husbands,\* “Bring us something to drink!”

<sup>2</sup>The Lord my Master made a promise. He promised by his holiness, that troubles will come to you. People will use hooks and take you away as prisoners. They will use fishhooks to take away your children. <sup>3</sup>Your city will be destroyed. The women will rush out through cracks in the wall and throw themselves onto the pile of dead bodies.\*

The Lord says this. <sup>4</sup>“Go to Bethel and sin! Go to Gilgal\* and sin even more. Offer your sacrifices in the morning. Bring a tenth of your crops for the three-day holiday. <sup>5</sup>And offer a thank offering made with yeast. Tell everyone about the freewill offerings.\* Israel, you love to do those things. So go and do them.” The Lord said [this].

<sup>6</sup>“I did many things to try to make you come to me. I didn’t give you any food to eat.\* There was no food in any of your cities. But you didn’t come back to me.” The Lord said those things.

<sup>7</sup>“I also stopped the rain—and it was three months before harvest time. So no crops grew. Then I let it rain on one city, but not on another city. Rain fell on one part of the country. But on the other part of the country,

**cows of Bashan** This means the wealthy women in Samaria.

Bashan was a place east of the Jordan River. It was famous for its big bulls and cows.

**your husbands** Literally, “their masters.”

**throw ... dead bodies** Or, “You will be thrown away. People will take you to Mount Hermon.” The Hebrew is hard to understand. It is not clear if the women will be “thrown away” or if the women will be “throwing something away.”

**Bethel ... Gilgal** Places of worship for the people of Israel. God wanted the people of Israel and the people of Judah to worship him only in the temple at Jerusalem.

**Offer your sacrifices ... freewill offerings** All of these things were against the Law of Moses. The leaders and false priests started these new holidays and different ways of worshipping God.

**I didn’t give you any food to eat** Literally, “I gave you clean teeth.”

the land became very dry. <sup>8</sup>So the people from two or three cities staggered to another city to get water—but there was not enough water for every person. Still you didn’t come to me for help.” The Lord said those things.

<sup>9</sup>“I made your crops die from heat and disease. I destroyed your gardens and your fields of grapes. Locusts\* ate your fig trees and olive trees. But you still didn’t come to me [for help].” The Lord said those things.

<sup>10</sup>“I sent diseases against you, like I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with swords. I took away your horses. I made your camp smell very bad [from all the dead bodies]. But still you didn’t come back to me [for help].” The Lord said those things.

<sup>11</sup>“I destroyed you like I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.\* And those cities were completely destroyed. You were like a burnt stick pulled from a fire. But still you didn’t come back to me [for help].” The Lord said those things.

<sup>12</sup>“So I will do these things to you, Israel. I will do this to you. Israel, prepare to meet your God! <sup>13</sup>Who am I? I am the One who made the mountains. I created your minds.\* I taught people how to speak and I changed the darkness into dawn. I walk over the mountains of the earth. [Who am I?] My name is YAHWEH, God of the armies.”\*

### A Sad Song for Israel

**5** People of Israel, listen to this song. This funeral song is about you.

<sup>2</sup> The virgin\* of Israel has fallen.

She will not get up any more.

She was left alone, lying in the dirt.

There is no person to lift her up.

**Locusts** Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large crop very quickly.

**Sodom and Gomorrah** Two cities that God destroyed because the people were very evil.

**your minds** Or, “the wind.”

**YAHWEH, God of the armies** This is usually translated, “Lord God All-Powerful.”

**virgin** The Hebrew word can mean “a woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone,” “bride,” or “fiancee.” Here it means the city Samaria.

<sup>3</sup>The Lord my Master says these things:

“Officers leaving the city with 1,000 men,  
will return with only 100 men.  
Officers leaving the city with 100 men,  
will return with only ten men.

**The Lord Encourages Israel to Come Back**

<sup>4</sup> The Lord says this to the nation\* of Israel:  
“Come looking for me and live.

<sup>5</sup> But don’t look in Bethel.\*  
Don’t go to Gilgal.\*  
Don’t cross the border  
and go down to Beersheba.\*  
The people of Gilgal will be taken away  
as prisoners.\*  
And Bethel will be destroyed.\*

<sup>6</sup> Go to the Lord, and live.  
If you don’t go to the Lord,  
then a fire will start at Joseph’s house.\*  
That fire will destroy Joseph’s house,  
and no person will be able to stop  
that fire at Bethel.

<sup>7-9</sup> [You should go to the Lord for help.]  
God made the Pleiades and Orion.\*  
He changes darkness into the morning light.  
He changes the day into the dark night.  
He calls for the waters of the sea,  
and pours them out on the earth.  
His name is YAHWEH!.\*  
He keeps one strong city safe,  
and he lets another strong city  
be destroyed.”

**nation** Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.

**Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba** These were ancient places of worship. Abraham and Jacob built altars in these places. But God had told the people of Israel that they should go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship him.

**taken away as prisoners** In Hebrew this sounds like the name “Gilgal.”

**destroyed** The Hebrew word is like the name “Beth Aven.” This name means “House of Wickedness.” The prophets often used this name for Bethel.

**Joseph’s house** Here this means the ten-family-group nation of Israel. Joseph was the ancestor of the family groups of Ephraim and Manasseh in Israel.

**Pleiades and Orion** Two well-known groups of stars (*constellations*).

**YAHWEH** This name is usually translated, “Lord.”

**The Evil Things That the Israelites Did**

You change goodness to poison.\*  
You killed justice,  
and let it fall to the ground.

<sup>10</sup> [Prophets] go to the public places  
and speak against [the bad things  
that people are doing].  
And the people hate [those prophets].  
[The prophets] teach good, simple truths.  
And the people hate those [prophets].  
<sup>11</sup> You take unfair taxes\* from poor people.  
You take loads of wheat from them.  
You build fancy houses with cut stone.  
But you will not live in those houses.  
You plant beautiful fields of grapes.  
But you will not drink the wine  
from them.

<sup>12</sup> Why? Because I know about your  
many sins.  
You have done some really bad things:  
You hurt people that do right.  
You accept money to do wrong.  
You keep justice from the poor people  
in court.

<sup>13</sup> At that time, wise teachers will be quiet.  
Why? Because it is a bad time.

<sup>14</sup> You say [that God is with you].  
So you should do good things, not evil.  
Then you will live.  
And the Lord God All-Powerful  
really will be with you.

<sup>15</sup> Hate evil and love goodness.  
Bring fairness back into the courts.  
Maybe then the Lord God All-Powerful  
will be kind to the survivors\*  
from Joseph’s family.

**A Time of Great Sadness Is Coming**

<sup>16</sup> My Master, God All-Powerful, says,  
“People will be crying in the public places.

**poison** Literally, “wormwood,” a type of plant with bitter leaves. It could be used as a medicine, or if strong enough, as a poison.

**take unfair taxes** We are not sure of the exact meaning of this Hebrew word.

**survivors** People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

- People will be crying in the streets.  
 People will hire the professional criers.\*
- 17 People will be crying in the fields of grapes.  
 Why? Because I will pass through  
 and punish you.”  
 The Lord said those things.
- 18 Some of you want to see  
 the Lord’s special day of judgment.  
 Why do you want to see that day?  
 The Lord’s special day will bring darkness  
 not light!
- 19 You will be like a man  
 that escapes a lion  
 only to be attacked by a bear!  
 You will be like a man  
 that goes into the safety of his house,  
 leans against the wall,  
 and is bitten by a snake!
- 20 The Lord’s special day will be  
 a day of sadness, not joy  
 a day of darkness, not light,  
 a day of gloom, without a glimmer  
 of light.

### The Lord Rejects Israel’s Worship

- 21 “I hate your holidays!  
 I will not accept them!  
 I don’t enjoy your religious meetings!
- 22 Even if you offer me burnt offerings  
 and grain offerings,  
 I will not accept them!  
 I will not even look at the fat animals  
 you give as fellowship offerings.
- 23 Take your noisy songs away from here.  
 I will not listen to the music  
 from your harps.
- 24 You should let fairness flow like water  
 through your country.  
 Let goodness flow like a stream  
 that never becomes dry.
- 25 Israel, you offered me sacrifices  
 and offerings in the desert for 40 years.\*

**professional criers** People that went to funerals and cried loudly for the dead people. Families and friends of the dead person often gave food or money to these people.

**Israel ... 40 years** Or, “Israel, did you offer me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for 40 years? No!”

- 26 But you also carried statues  
 of Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan.\*  
 And you made yourselves  
 that star for your god!\*
- 27 So I will cause you to be taken captive  
 beyond Damascus.”  
 The Lord says those things.  
 His name is God All-Powerful.

### Good Times Will Be Taken Away from Israel

- 6 Oh, it will be very bad  
 for you people taking it easy in Zion,\*  
 and for you people who feel so safe on  
 Mount Samaria.  
 You are “important” leaders  
 of the most important nation!  
 The “House of Israel”  
 comes to you for advice!
- 2 Go look at Calneh.\*  
 From there, go to the large city Hamath.\*  
 Go to the Philistine city Gath.  
 Are you better than these kingdoms? No.  
 Their countries are larger than yours.
- 3 You people are rushing towards  
 that day of punishment.  
 You bring that rule of violence  
 nearer and nearer.
- 4 But now, you enjoy all the comforts.  
 You lie on ivory beds,  
 and stretch out on your couches.  
 You eat tender young lambs from the flock,  
 and young calves from the stable.
- 5 You play your harps.  
 And like David, you practice on\*  
 your musical instruments.

**Sakkuth ... Kaiwan** These were names of Assyrian gods.

**star for your god** This might be to honor a special god or all the stars in the sky. Many people thought the sun, moon, stars, and planets were gods or angels. This verse might also be translated, “You carried the shelter for your king and the footstool for your idols—the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.” The ancient Greek translation gives the names Moloch and Raphan.

**Zion** The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

**Calneh** A powerful city in northern Syria.

**Hamath** A powerful city in Syria.

**practice on** Or, “invent.” The Hebrew word means to “think,” “become skilled,” or “design.”

6 You drink wine in fancy cups.\*  
 You use the best perfumes.  
 And you are not even upset that Joseph’s  
 family is being destroyed.

7Those people are stretched out on their  
 couches now. But their good times will end.  
 They will be taken away like prisoners to a  
 foreign country. And they will be some of the  
 first people taken. 8The Lord my Master used  
 his own name and made a promise. The Lord  
 God All-Powerful made this promise:

“I hate the things that Jacob\* is proud of.  
 I hate his strong towers.  
 So I will let [the enemy] take the city  
 and everything in it.”

**There Will Be Few Israelites Left Alive**

9At that time, ten people in one house  
 might survive, but they too will die. 10And  
 when a person dies, a relative will come to get  
 the body so he can take it out and burn it.\*  
 The relative will come to take away the bones.  
 He will call to any person who might be  
 hiding way back in the house, “Are there any  
 other [dead bodies] in there with you?”

That person will answer, “No, ...”\*

But the relative will [interrupt him and]  
 say, “Hush! We must not mention the name  
 of the Lord.”

11 Look, the Lord God will give the command,  
 and the large houses  
 will be broken to pieces,  
 and the small houses  
 will be broken to small pieces.  
 12 Do horses run over loose rocks? No!  
 and people don’t use cows for plowing.  
 But you turn everything upside down.  
 You changed goodness to poison.  
 You changed fairness to bitter poison.

**fancy cups** Very large bowls used in worship rituals.

**Jacob** Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22–28.

**And when a person dies ... burn it** The exact meaning of the  
 Hebrew is not clear here.

**No, ...** This answer might have been, “No, bless the Lord.” But  
 the person was stopped before he finished speaking.

13 You are happy in Lo-Debar,\*  
 You say,  
 “We have taken Karnaim\*  
 by our own strength.”

14“But Israel, I will bring a nation against  
 you. That nation will bring troubles to your  
 whole country—all the way from Lebo-  
 Hamath to Arabah Brook.” The Lord God  
 All-Powerful said those things.

**The Vision of the Locusts**

7The Lord showed this to me: He was  
 making locusts\* at the time the second  
 crop began growing. It was the second crop  
 after the king’s cutting [of the first crop]. 2The  
 locusts ate all the grass in the country. After  
 that I said, “Lord my Master, I beg you,  
 forgive us! Jacob\* can’t survive! He is [too]  
 small!”

3Then the Lord changed his mind about this.  
 The Lord said, “That thing will not happen.”

**The Vision of the Fire**

4The Lord my Master showed these things  
 to me: [I] saw the Lord God calling for  
 judgment by fire. The fire destroyed the Great  
 Deep. The fire was beginning to eat up the  
 land. 5But I said, “Lord God, stop, I beg you!  
 Jacob\* can’t survive! He is [too] small!”

6Then the Lord changed his mind about  
 this. The Lord God said, “That thing will not  
 happen either.”

**The Vision of the Plumbline**

7The Lord showed me this: The Lord stood  
 by a wall with a plumbline\* in his hand. (The  
 wall had been marked with a plumbline.) 8The  
 Lord said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”  
 I said, “A plumbline.”

**Lo-Debar** A place name, meaning “nothing.”

**Karnaim** Another place name, meaning “horns.” Horns are  
 often a symbol (picture) for strength.

**locusts** Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large crop  
 very quickly.

**plumbline** A string with a weight on one end. Workers used  
 plumbines to make sure the walls they were building were  
 straight. The workers often put paint on the string and popped  
 the string. This left a straight line of paint on the wall. Then  
 the workers chipped away the crooked part of the wall.

Then my Master said, “See, I will put a plumbline among my people Israel. I will not let their ‘crookedness’ pass inspection any more. I will remove those bad spots.”<sup>9</sup> Isaac’s high places\* will be destroyed. Israel’s holy places will be made into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboam’s\* family with swords.”

### Amaziah Tries to Stop Amos

<sup>10</sup>Amaziah, a priest at Bethel,\* sent this message to Jeroboam, the king of Israel: “Amos is making plans against you. He is trying to make the people of Israel fight against you. [He has been speaking so much that] this country can’t hold all his words. <sup>11</sup>Amos has said, ‘Jeroboam will die by the sword, and the people of Israel will be taken as prisoners out of their country.’”

<sup>12</sup>Amaziah also said to Amos, “You seer,\* go down to Judah and eat there.\* Do your preaching there. <sup>13</sup>But don’t prophesy\* any more here at Bethel! This is Jeroboam’s holy place. This is Israel’s temple!”

<sup>14</sup>Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am not a professional prophet. And I am not from a prophet’s family. I keep cattle and take care of sycamore trees. <sup>15</sup>[I was a shepherd] and the Lord took me from following the sheep. The Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ <sup>16</sup>So listen to the Lord’s message. You tell me, ‘Don’t prophesy\* against Israel. Don’t preach against Isaac’s family.’ <sup>17</sup>But the Lord says: ‘Your wife will become a prostitute\* in the city. Your sons and daughters will be killed with swords. Other people will take your land and divide it among themselves. And you will die in a foreign\* country. The

people of Israel will definitely be taken from this country as prisoners.’”

### The Vision of the Ripe Fruit

**8** The Lord showed me this: [I] saw a basket of summer fruit. <sup>2</sup>The Lord said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

I said, “A basket of summer fruit.”

Then the Lord said to me, “The end\* has come to my people Israel. I will not overlook their sins any more. <sup>3</sup>The temple\* songs will become sad funeral songs. The Lord my Master said those things. There will be dead bodies everywhere. In silence, people will take out the dead bodies and throw them [onto the pile].”\*

### Israel’s Businessmen Are Interested Only in Making Money

- <sup>4</sup> Listen to me!  
You people walk on helpless people.  
You are trying to destroy the poor people of this country.
- <sup>5</sup> You businessmen say,  
“When will the New Moon\* be over so we can sell grain?  
When will the Sabbath be over so we can bring our wheat [to sell]?  
We can raise the price and make the measure smaller.\*  
We can adjust the scales and cheat the people.\*”
- <sup>6</sup> [The poor people can’t pay their loans,] so we will buy them as slaves.  
We will buy those helpless people for the price of a pair of shoes.  
Oh, and we can sell the wheat that was spilled on the floor.”

<sup>7</sup>The Lord made a promise. He used his name, Pride of Jacob, and made this promise:

**high places** Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

**Jeroboam’s** The king of Israel. See verse 10.

**Bethel** A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.”

**seer** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9–11.

**eat there** This shows that Amaziah thought that Amos was a professional prophet. He thought he preached to receive food or money.

**prophesy** To speak for God.

**prostitute** A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

**foreign** Literally, “unclean.”

**end** This Hebrew word sounds like the word for “summer fruit.”

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**In silence ... the pile** Or, “People will be saying, ‘Hush!’” See Amos 6:10.

**New Moon** This was the first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

**We ... smaller** Literally “We will make the ephah small and the shekel large.”

**We ... people** Literally, “Cheat with lying balances.”

- “I will never forget the things  
that those people did.  
8 The whole land will shake  
because of those things.  
Every person that lives in the land  
will cry for people that died.  
The whole land will rise and fall  
like the Nile River in Egypt.  
The land will be tossed around.”
- 9 The Lord also said these things:  
“At that time I will cause the sun  
to go down at noon.  
I will make the earth dark on a clear day.  
10 I will change your holidays  
into days of crying for the dead.  
All your songs will be songs of sadness  
for dead people.  
I will put clothes of sadness on everyone.  
I will make every head bald.\*  
I will make it like heavy crying  
for an only son that has died.  
It will be a very bitter end.”

**A Terrible Time of Hunger  
for God’s Word Is Coming**

- 11 The Lord says:  
“Look, the days are coming when I will  
cause a time of hunger in the land.  
The people will not be hungry for bread.  
The people will not be thirsty for water.  
No, the people will be hungry  
for words from the Lord.  
12 The people will wander around the country,  
from the Dead Sea  
to the Mediterranean Sea,  
and from the north part of the country,  
to the east.  
The people will go back and forth  
looking for a message from the Lord.  
But they will not find it.  
13 At that time,  
the beautiful young men and women  
will become weak from thirst.  
Those people made promises  
by the sin of Samaria,\*

**head bald** People often cut their hair to show they were very sad or upset.

**sin of Samaria** The calf god in Samaria.

They said,  
‘Dan,\* as surely as your god lives,  
we promise...’  
And they said,  
‘As surely as the god of Beersheba\* lives,  
we promise...’  
But those people will fall,  
and they will never get up again.”

**Vision of the Lord Standing by the Altar**

- 9 I saw my Master standing by the altar.\*  
He said,  
“Hit the top of the columns,  
and the building will shake  
all the way down to the thresholds\*  
Make the columns fall on the  
peoples’ heads.  
If any people are left alive,  
then I will kill them with a sword.  
A person might run away,  
but he will not escape.  
Not one of the people will escape.  
2 If they dig deep into the ground,\*  
I will pull them from there.  
If they go up into the skies,\*  
I will bring them down from there.  
3 If they hide at the top of Mount Carmel,\*  
I will find them there,  
and I will take them from that place.  
If they try to hide from me  
at the bottom of the sea,  
I will command the snake,  
and it will bite them.  
4 If they are captured  
and taken away by their enemies,  
I will command the sword,  
and it will kill them there.  
Yes, I will watch over them,  
but I will watch for ways  
to give them troubles,  
not for ways to do good things.”

**Dan** One of Israel’s holy places was in this city.

**Beersheba** A town in Judah. This name means “well of the oath (promise).”

**altar(s)** A stone table used for offering sacrifices to God.

**thresholds** The wood or stone under the door.

**ground** Literally, “Sheol, the place of the dead.”

**skies** Or “heaven.”

**Mount Carmel** A hill in north Israel very good for growing plants. This name means “God’s vineyard.”

**Punishment Will Destroy the People**

- 5 My Master, the Lord All-Powerful,  
will touch the land,  
and the land will melt.  
Then all the people that live in the land  
will cry for the dead people.  
The land will rise and fall  
like the Nile River in Egypt.
- 6 The Lord built his upper rooms  
above the skies.  
He put his skies\* over the earth.  
He calls for the waters of the sea,  
and pours them out [as rain] on the land.  
YAHWEH\* is his name.

**The Lord Promises Destruction for Israel**

7The Lord says this:

- “Israel, you are like the Ethiopians to me.  
I brought Israel out of the land of Egypt.  
I brought the Philistines from Caphtor,\*  
and the Aramean people from Kir.\*”
- 8 The Lord my Master is watching  
the sinful kingdom (*Israel*).  
The Lord said,  
“I will wipe [Israel] off the face of the earth.  
But I will never completely destroy  
Jacob’s family.”
- 9 I am giving the command  
[to destroy the nation Israel].  
I will scatter the people of Israel  
among all nations.  
But it will be like a person [sifting flour].  
A person shakes flour through a sifter.\*  
[The good flour falls through.]  
but the bad lumps are caught.  
[It will be that way with Jacob’s family.]
- 10 Sinners among my people say,  
‘Nothing bad will happen to us!’

But all those people will be killed  
with swords!”

**God Promises to Restore the Kingdom**

- 11 “David’s tent\* has fallen,  
but at that time,  
I will set his tent up again.  
I will fix the holes in the walls.  
I will build the ruined buildings again.  
I will build it like it was before.
- 12\* Then the people left alive in Edom,  
and all the people called by my name,  
will look to the Lord [for help].”  
The Lord said those things,  
and he will make them happen.
- 13 The Lord says,  
“The time is coming when  
the person plowing the field,  
will catch up with the person  
harvesting the crops.  
The person that walks on the grapes,  
will catch up with the person  
that pulls the grapes from the plants.  
The sweet wine will pour  
from the hills and mountains.
- 14 I will bring my people, Israel,  
back from captivity.  
They will build the ruined cities again.  
And they will live in those cities.  
They will plant fields of grapes,  
and drink the wine they produce.  
They will plant gardens,  
and eat the crops they produce.
- 15 I will plant my people  
on their land.  
And they will never again  
be pulled up out of the land  
that I have given them.”  
The Lord your God said these things.

**skies** Literally, “dome, vault.”

**YAHWEH** This Hebrew name for God is usually translated “Lord.” This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “He is” or “He makes things exist.”

**Caphtor** This might be Crete or Cyprus.

**Kir** A place of exile for the Aramean people. We are not sure where Kir was.

**sifter** Something like a cup with a screen on its bottom. A sifter is used for removing large lumps from the good flour.

**David’s tent** This probably means the city Jerusalem or the country Judah.

**Verse 12** This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has, “Then they will take the people that are left in Edom and the other nations that are called by my name.”