

## General Comments on Amos 7-9

This second half of the book of Amos is a series of visions, interrupted by a confrontation with the high priest of Bethel (ch. 7). The first three visions are Amos acting in Amaziah's place, being an intercessor for Northern Israel (cf. 7:1-6), but ultimately witnessing the Lord's final Judgement against them in deciding to send foreign invaders (cf. 7:7-9). This is while Amaziah is telling Amos to stop preaching and to go home and stop profaning the sacred temple of the king (cf. 7:10-17), as predicted in 2:12.

This is a repetition of the "for three transgressions...and for four" formula used in ch. 1-2 against all of the nations. Amos should not be the one acting as intercessor on behalf of Northern Israel, as he is not the local chief priest, he is a foreigner. But, Amaziah is hopelessly corrupt, another terrible leader among his people. So, when Amaziah turns on Amos, that is the fourth offense. The Lord's subsequent judgement for Israel's sins is given in the fourth and fifth visions, where the economic leaders (ch. 8) and political leaders (c. 9) are condemned. Thus, Amos' indictment is against all of Israel's leaders, there are none good among them, all are corrupt, and so Israel's future destruction is sealed.

First vision (7:1-3), Amos intercedes against locusts.

Second vision (7:4-6), Amos intercedes against drought.

Third vision (7:7-9), Amos witness to coming invasion.

Confrontation with Amaziah (7:10-7:17) chief priest of Bethel who fails to be the intercessor and witness between the Lord and Northern Israel, and this is his fourth transgression when he rejects the Lord's prophet.

Fourth vision, harvest of corrupt merchants of Israel (8:1-6), pervasive destruction like a flood (8:7-8:10), days are coming...survivors scattered (8:11-14).

Fifth vision, destruction of corrupt rulers of Israel (9:1-4), pervasive destruction like a flood (9:5-6), Jacob, no better than Gentiles, to be sieved for good (9:7-10), days are coming...gathering of scattered Israel and restoration of united Israel under David's throne (9:11-15).

## Comments on Amos 7

In this chapter, Amos is acting as an intercessor, like Abraham or Moses, pleading with the Lord for mercy over people who deserve to be punished. Amos is an outsider, a foreigner, who is acting in the Amaziah's intended role. However, Amaziah is completely subservient to the wicked king, so he will not do anything except censure Amos and tell him to go back to where he came from.

<sup>1</sup> Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. <sup>2</sup> And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. <sup>3</sup> The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

v1-3 The Lord shows Amos a vision of Him bringing a plague of locusts upon Israel to consume all of their fields (v. 1). When Amos sees it, he begs the Lord not to do it as Israel is too small to survive such a grievous plague (v. 2). The Lord heeds and relents (v. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part. <sup>5</sup> Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. <sup>6</sup> The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

v4-6 The Lord shows Amos a terrible fire (i.e. a drought) that consumes all the lakes and farmland (v. 4). Amos sees it and again asks the Lord not to do it as Israel will not survive such a drought (v. 5). Again, the Lord relents (v. 6).

<sup>7</sup> Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the LORD stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the LORD, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more: <sup>9</sup> And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

v7-9 The Lord shows Amos a vision of foreign invasion where Israel is sacked. The Lord measures the city walls with a plumb line (v. 7). The Lord asks Amos what he sees, and this time Amos doesn't try to plead Israel's case, rather, he acknowledges the Lord's plans (v. 8). The Lord then goes on to state Israel

and her idolatrous sanctuaries will be sacked and the house of Jeroboam II will be disposed of (v. 9).

The reason Amos doesn't try to stop the Lord on this one is because he sees that through this method, unlike the previous two, a remnant will be left of Israel, cf. 9:8.

v7 "plumbline", a common military intelligence technique to determine the necessary sizes of siege engines, ladders, scaling ropes and so on. That it is in reference to the imminent sack of Northern Israel by foreign invaders cf. Isa. 28:17 and Isa. 34:11. Also, in v. 18 the plumb line has reference to the foreign invaders parceling up Israel's lands for themselves, cp. Micah 2:4-5.

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

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

<sup>12</sup> Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: <sup>13</sup> But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

<sup>14</sup> Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: <sup>15</sup> And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. <sup>16</sup> Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. <sup>17</sup> Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

v10-17 After hearing about what Amos has said, Amaziah, the chief priest among Northern Israel, sends a letter to king Jeroboam II telling him what Amos has said about him (v. 10-11).

Amaziah then sends a letter to Amos, telling him to go back home and practice his profession of prophesy there, and not to offend the king of Israel anymore (v. 12-13).

Amos responds to Amaziah's accusation that he is a prophet for hire by saying he is shepherd by trade (v. 14) and it was the Lord who called him to Israel (v. 15). Amos then tells Amaziah what the Lord has said: to ignore Amaziah (v. 16), Amaziah's family will suffer because of the invasion and he will die in captivity along with the rest of Israel. And to finish it all off, Amos states emphatically Israel will go into exile, thus defying Amaziah's orders (v. 17).

v12 "eat bread, and prophesy there", Amaziah is accusing Amos of being a foreign agitator who is making his living by preaching against the monarchy. This is a convenient excuse for Amaziah, as he isn't going to engage with him on religious terms. Amaziah is attempting to secularize and politicize Amos' message so as to pit him against the king.

v14 is an attack on the professional priests of Bethel, and thus a rebuttal to Amaziah's insinuation in v. 12. They are so corrupt the Lord has to avoid the professional religionists and choose a humble agrarian to do His will.

"sycamore fruit", i.e., [sycamore figs](#).

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