

## Comments on Amos 8

The fourth vision of Amos, wherein Northern Israel will be harvested like a basket of summer fruit and consumed by her enemies. She is ripe in her iniquity.

Where the previous visions in ch. 7 were aimed at the religious leadership, this vision is aimed at the economic leadership, the merchants who exploit.

<sup>1</sup> Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit. <sup>2</sup> And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. <sup>3</sup> And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.

v1-3 Amos sees a vision of the harvest gathering of summer fruit into baskets (v. 1), and the Lord explains He will no longer overlook their wickedness (v. 2). The idolatrous worship in their temples will cease and the dead bodies will be carried out in silence (v. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, <sup>5</sup> saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? <sup>6</sup> That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?

v4-6 Amos explicitly identifies who among Israel is being addressed: the merchants who profane the Sabbaths and exploit the poor for personal gain. Compare Micah 6:11, Isa. 1:11-12.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works. <sup>8</sup> Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: <sup>10</sup> And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

v7-10 The Lord will not relent anymore (v. 7), but will punish Israel with destruction like a massive flood (v. 8). The day of destruction will be darkened (v. 9) with smoke, and all of their

festival days will be nothing but days to mourn over what they have lost, as they go into captivity in rags, with bald heads, lamenting greatly (v. 10).

v10 "baldness upon every head", shaving the head was a symbol of subjugation, a humiliation. However, the baldness may also be a result of starvation from the mistreatment of captivity.

**<sup>11</sup> Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: <sup>12</sup> And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. <sup>13</sup> In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. <sup>14</sup> They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.**

v11-14 The Lord withdraw his prophets from among the people of Northern Israel, because they refuse to listen (v. 11). There will be no source of the Lord's truth (v. 12), all of the rising generation will be lost (v. 13) because of the wickedness of their elders. Those who worship the false idols of Israel at their centers of cultic worship will be annihilated (v. 14).

These verses have reference to the Lord depriving Israel of prophets. In ch. 3, the Lord sends prophet to warn the people, and they are summarily rejected, as is the case in ch. 7 with Amaziah. As such, the Lord will deprive the nation of prophets when they are sent into exile.

v13-14 While the younger generation is faint (v. 13), the older generation is slaughtered (v. 14).

v14 "Dan...Beersheba", Dan (a.k.a., Laish) was at the northern boundary of Israel's territory and Beersheba was at the southern extreme of their territory, cp. Judges 20:1, 2 Sam. 24:2, 1 Ki. 4:25. Thus, the reference is intended to include all of Northern Israel. Dan is also where Jeroboam I established one of his golden calves, cf. 1 Ki. 29:30.

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