

## Comments on Amos 9

The final vision of Amos is aimed squarely at the political elite of Northern Israel. The vision presents the sifting of the good from the wicked (v. 1-10), and ends with the hope that in the future there will be remnant recovered by the Lord (v. 11-15).

<sup>1</sup> I saw the LORD standing upon the altar: and he said, smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. <sup>2</sup> Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: <sup>3</sup> And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: <sup>4</sup> And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.

v1-4 Amos sees the Lord standing next to the altar in the Northern Israel temple, telling him to strike down the columns, so the structure collapses and kills everyone inside (v. 1). No matter where they try to escape or hide it will not matter, they cannot escape (v. 2-3). All will either be killed or go into captivity (v. 4).

<sup>5</sup> And the Lord GOD of hosts is he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. <sup>6</sup> It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.

v5-6 The Lord exercises His power over all of Creation, so none can withstand His decrees. A parenthetical authority statement.

In the authority statement, the imagery of the flood is employed to symbolize the Lord's anger and the destruction of the foreign invaders. This symbolism obviously has its source in Noah's Deluge, but is also commonly employed by others of the Prophets, cf. Isa. 28:2, Isa. 59:19, Jer. 47:2, Nahum 1:8.

<sup>7</sup> Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? <sup>8</sup> Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth;

saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. <sup>9</sup> For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. <sup>10</sup> All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

v7-10 The Israelites are no better than any of their Gentile neighbors (v. 7), so they will be treated as such (v. 8). However, a remnant will be preserved (v. 9), but not the most wicked among them (v. 10).

v10 The Lord singles out the most religiously hypocritical among Israel for annihilation.

<sup>11</sup> In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: <sup>12</sup> That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

<sup>13</sup> Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. <sup>14</sup> And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. <sup>15</sup> And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

v11-15 Those who are sifted out of the destruction (v. 9), will be restored and be found among the house of David when it is rebuilt (v. 11). All of the Lord's worshippers, wherever they may be from will be among them (v. 12). In those days to come, they will be blessed by the Lord and be reestablished (v. 13-14) in the Promised Land (v. 15).

In the preceding 10 verses, the Lord states He will sift Israel like wheat, leaving the good. Now, He explains the purpose of leaving the good: He will restore the remnant of Israel in the days to come. The vision starts with a message of doom (v. 1-10), but ends here with a message of hope.

In the day of restoration the Lord will reestablish the kingdom of David (v. 11, cp. Hosea 3:5, Micah 5:2), so that Israel will possess all nations (v. 12, cp. Micah 4-5). In that day the lands of Israel will be blessed with fantastic bounty, in contrast to the present curses of drought (v. 13, ct. 4:6). Israel will be redeemed from captivity, they will rebuild their ruined cities, and they will enjoy the produce of their own

labors (v. 14). And Israel will be planted firmly in her ancestral lands, according to the Abrahamic covenant (v. 15).

v13-14 The KJV doesn't do a good job on these two verses. The JPS renders it:

13 A time is coming  
-declares the Lord-  
When the plowman shall meet the reaper,  
And the treader of grapes  
Him who holds the [bag of] seed;  
When the mountains shall drip wine  
And all the hills shall wave [with grain].  
14 I will restore My people Israel.  
They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them;  
They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine;  
They shall till gardens and eat their fruits.

These two verses represent a curse reversal, cp. Lev. 26:5. At this future time, where the righteous remnant is gathered, they will be blessed with the Lord's Providence.

v15 concludes the book with the final explanation of why the Lord is sparing a remnant from Israel. The Lord alludes to the ancestral lands of Israel, lands which were promised to Abraham under the covenant between him and the Lord. Thus, when the Lord states He will plant Israel in the land He has given them, He is indicating He is fulfilling the promises made to Abraham. These promises included both lands and people, thus the Lord has to preserve a righteous remnant to inhabit the land.

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