

## **Easy-to-Read Version**

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## Amos

The prophet Amos did not come from a family of prophets. He was not trained to be a prophet. He had other work besides serving as a prophet. He raised sheep and had an orchard of fruit trees. He probably had no formal education, but he did not feel less qualified than those who had special training. He was very successful in business. And he was not afraid to speak to anyone, even kings. God used Amos to speak his message to the people of Israel.

Amos was not from Israel; he was from Judah. It is possible that his business took him north to Israel to trade with the people there. But the main reason Amos went to Israel was because God sent him there. God took Amos from working in his fields to speaking words of warning to his Israelite relatives in the north.

When Amos went to Israel, it was a time of peace and great success, about the middle of the eighth century BC. An Israelite king was in control. There was no reason to fear war from any other nation, including Judah in the south. Northern Israel had more wealth and land than at any other time in its history. But they would not be able to keep up this success for long.

In order for some Israelites to be rich, other Israelites had to be poor. Some rich people would buy food in the farm areas for low prices. Then they would take that food into the cities and sell it at much higher prices. This made life very difficult for the poor people. And it created a class of greedy Israelites who en-

joyed a life of luxury at the expense of the poor. Their wealth gave them time to live selfishly. They could eat and drink whatever they wanted. They could lie in bed all day. And they were often involved in sexual sin, even trading partners with each other. Then they would go to their temple to offer sacrifices! Amos let these wealthy hypocrites know that God was not pleased with this kind of worship.

Amos came and delivered God's message to these Israelites. First, he told them that God would judge the other nations for harming Israel. Of course, the Israelites were glad to hear this message from God. And they were very happy to hear Amos tell them that God would judge their relatives to the south in Judah for their sins. But then Amos told them that God would also judge them, the people of Israel. This was not what they wanted to hear.

Amos teaches us that God can use anyone, educated or not, to speak for him.

In the book of Amos, the prophet tells the Israelites...

About the judgement that is coming (1:1 – 2:16)

Why judgement is coming (3:1 – 6:14)

About visions he has seen of the coming judgement (7:1 – 9:15)

### Introduction

**1** The messages written here came in visions from God to a man named Amos. He was from the town of Tekoa, where he owned flocks of sheep. Amos received these messages about Israel two years before the earthquake that happened when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king

of Israel. <sup>2</sup>This is what Amos heard and said:

The LORD roars like a lion from Zion.  
His voice sounds like thunder from Jerusalem.

So the pastures will turn brown and die.  
Even the grass on top of Mount Carmel\* will dry up.

### Punishment for Aram

<sup>3</sup>This is what the LORD says:

“I will punish the people of Damascus<sup>†</sup>  
for their many crimes.<sup>‡</sup>

I will not change my mind.  
They crushed the people of Gilead,  
like grain crushed with iron threshing tools.

<sup>4</sup>So I will burn down King Hazael’s<sup>¶</sup>  
palace  
and all the fortresses of King Ben-Hadad.<sup>§</sup>

<sup>5</sup>I will also break open the gates of  
Damascus!

I will destroy the king in Aven Valley\*\*  
and the ruler in Beth Eden.<sup>††</sup>

The Arameans will be taken back to Kir<sup>‡‡</sup>  
as prisoners.”

These are the LORD’s own words.

### Punishment for Philistia

<sup>6</sup>This is what the LORD says:

“I will punish the people of Gaza<sup>¶¶</sup> for  
their many crimes.

I will not change my mind.  
They captured whole towns  
and sold the people as slaves to Edom.

<sup>7</sup>So I will burn down the walls of Gaza  
and all the fortresses there.

<sup>8</sup>I will destroy the king of Ashdod  
and the ruler of Ashkelon.

Then I will attack Ekron,<sup>§§</sup>  
and any Philistines left alive will die.”  
These words are from the Lord GOD.

### Punishment for Phoenicia

<sup>9</sup>This is what the LORD says:

“I will punish the people of Tyre\* for  
their many crimes.

I will not change my mind.  
They captured whole towns  
and sold the people as slaves to Edom.  
They did not keep the agreement of  
friendship

they had made with those people.

<sup>10</sup>So I will burn down the walls of Tyre  
and all the fortresses there.”

\***1:2 Mount Carmel** A mountain in northern Israel. This name means “God’s vineyard”. This shows that it was a very fertile hill.

†**1:3 Damascus** The capital city of Aram (Syria).

‡**1:3 for their many crimes** Literally, “for three crimes ... and for four ...”. Also in verses 6,9,11,13; 2:1,4,6.

¶**1:4 Hazael** King of Aram (Syria). See 2 Kgs 8:7.

§**1:4 Ben-Hadad** Ben-Hadad II, king of Aram (Syria) after his father Hazael. See 2 Kgs 13:3.

\*\***1:5 Aven Valley** The name in Hebrew sounds like “Wicked Valley”. It may be a real place or an insulting name for Damascus.

††**1:5 Beth Eden** The name in Hebrew sounds like “House of Pleasure”. It may be a real Aramean city or another insulting name for Damascus.

‡‡**1:5 Kir** Or “Kur”, an area controlled by the Assyrians. See Amos 9:7.

¶¶**1:6 Gaza** An important city of the Philistines.

§§**1:8 Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron** Important cities of the Philistines.

\***1:9 Tyre** The capital city of Phoenicia.

### Punishment for Edom

<sup>11</sup> This is what the LORD says:  
 “I will punish the people of Edom for their many crimes.  
 I will not change my mind.  
 They chased their Israelite relatives with swords  
 and showed them no mercy.  
 They tore them apart with uncontrolled anger  
 and never stopped showing their rage.  
<sup>12</sup> So I will burn down the city of Teman  
 and all the fortresses of Bozrah.”<sup>†</sup>

### Punishment for Ammon

<sup>13</sup> This is what the LORD says:  
 “I will punish the Ammonites<sup>‡</sup> for their many crimes.  
 I will not change my mind.  
 They ripped open pregnant women in Gilead  
 so they could add that land to their own.  
<sup>14</sup> So I will burn down the walls of Rabbah<sup>¶</sup>  
 and all its fortresses.  
 They will hear the battle cries of their enemies,  
 and trouble will come on them like a storm.  
<sup>15</sup> Their king and his officials will be captured,  
 and they will all be taken away as prisoners.”  
 These are the LORD’s own words.

### Punishment for Moab

**2** This is what the LORD says:  
 “I will punish the people of Moab for their many crimes.

I will not change my mind.  
 They dishonoured the bones of Edom’s king.  
 They burned them to ashes.  
<sup>2</sup> So I will destroy the land of Moab with fire.  
 It will burn down the fortresses of Kerioth.<sup>§</sup>  
 They will die in the noise of battle,  
 among the shouts of soldiers and trumpet blasts.  
<sup>3</sup> I will bring down their leader  
 and kill their officials.”  
 These are the LORD’s own words.

### Punishment for Judah

<sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD says:  
 “I will punish the people of Judah for their many crimes.  
 I will not change my mind.  
 They refused to accept my teachings  
 and have not obeyed my commands.  
 They have been led the wrong way  
 by the same false gods their ancestors served.  
<sup>5</sup> So I will destroy the land of Judah with fire.  
 It will burn down the fortresses of Jerusalem.”

### Punishment for Israel

<sup>6</sup> This is what the LORD says:  
 “I will punish the people of Israel for their many crimes.  
 I will not change my mind.  
 They sell good people as slaves for a little silver.  
 They sell a poor man for the price of a pair of sandals.

<sup>†</sup>1:12 *Teman, Bozrah* Important cities in Edom, which here represent the whole country.

<sup>‡</sup>1:13 *Ammonites* The Ammonites were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, son of Lot. Read Gen. 19:38.

<sup>¶</sup>1:14 *Rabbah* The capital city of the Ammonites.

<sup>§</sup>2:2 *Kerioth* An important city in Moab.

<sup>7</sup>They trample helpless people into the dirt  
and push away those who need help.  
Fathers and sons have sex with the same woman  
and bring shame on my holy name.

<sup>8</sup>At every altar people are lying on clothes taken from the poor,  
who had to give them up as a promise to pay a debt.\*\*

And they drink wine at my Temple—  
wine that people brought to pay fines!

<sup>9</sup>“Have you forgotten, Israel, that I am the one  
who destroyed the Amorites†† before you?

They were as tall as cedar trees  
and as strong as oaks,  
but I completely destroyed them,  
roots, branches and all!

<sup>10</sup>I was the one who brought you out of Egypt.

For 40 years I led you through the desert  
so you could have the land of the Amorites.

<sup>11</sup>I made some of your sons prophets  
and some of your young men Nazirites.  
People of Israel, isn’t this the truth?”

These are the LORD’s own words.

<sup>12</sup>But you made the Nazirites break their vow,‡‡  
and you told my prophets not to prophesy.

<sup>13</sup>“Now you will groan under my punishment,  
like a cart full of grain straining under the weight.

<sup>14</sup>No one will escape, not even the fastest runner.

The strong will not be strong enough.  
Even warriors will not be able to save themselves.

<sup>15</sup>The archers will be forced to run away.

The swiftest soldiers will not outrun disaster.

Even those on horses will not escape alive.

<sup>16</sup>On that day the bravest warriors will run away,

leaving even their clothes behind.”

These are the LORD’s own words.

### Warning to All Israel

**3** People of Israel, listen to this message! This is what the LORD says about you, about all the people he led out of Egypt:

<sup>2</sup>“There are many families on earth,  
but you are the only one I chose to be mine.

So you deserve the punishment I will give you  
for all the wrong things you have done.”

### There Is a Reason for All That Happens

<sup>3</sup>If two people walk together,  
it’s because they agreed to.

<sup>4</sup>If a lion roars in the forest,  
it means he has found an animal to kill.  
If a young lion growls in his cave,  
it means he has caught something to eat.

<sup>5</sup>Will a bird fly into a trap  
if there is no food in it for bait?  
And will the trap snap shut  
if nothing has flown inside?

\*\***2:8 promise to pay a debt** See Deut. 24:12-13 for the rules about making loans to the poor.

††**2:9 Amorites** One of the nations who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came. They were the people who scared the Israelites while Moses was leading them in the desert. See Num. 13:33.

‡‡**2:12 break their vow** Literally, “drink wine”. One of the rules Nazirites promised to keep was not to drink wine during the period of their vow. See Num. 6:2-3.

<sup>6</sup> When a trumpet warns the city of an attack,  
 who will not shake with fear?  
 When disaster comes to a city,  
 who doesn't know it was the LORD who  
 planned it?

<sup>7</sup> Yes, and before the Lord GOD does  
 anything,  
 he lets his servants the prophets know  
 his plan.

<sup>8</sup> When a lion roars,  
 how can anyone not be afraid?  
 And now that the Lord GOD has spoken,  
 how can anyone refuse to tell what he  
 said?

<sup>9-10</sup> Go to the fortresses in Ashdod<sup>¶¶</sup> and  
 in Egypt  
 and announce this message from the  
 LORD:

“Come together on the hills around  
 Samaria.

See the great confusion there  
 and how cruel they are to each other.  
 They don't know how to do what is right.  
 They have filled their fortresses  
 with things they have stolen or taken by  
 force.”

<sup>11</sup> So this is what the Lord GOD says:  
 “An enemy will surround your land.  
 They will break down your strong walls  
 and take the things you have hidden in  
 your fortresses.”

<sup>12</sup> This is what the LORD says:  
 “Israel will be like a lamb eaten by a lion.  
 All that is left for the shepherd to save  
 are a couple of leg bones and a piece of  
 an ear.

In the same way, all that will be ‘saved’  
 of those in Samaria

will be a part of a couch  
 and a piece of a bed.”

<sup>13</sup> The Lord GOD All-Powerful says:  
 “Listen to this, and then tell the descen-  
 dants of Jacob what I say:

<sup>14</sup> “When I punish the people of Israel for  
 their sins,  
 I will also destroy the altars at Bethel.  
 The corners of every altar will be cut off  
 and will fall to the ground.

<sup>15</sup> I will destroy all their houses,  
 the winter houses and the summer  
 houses.

Their houses decorated with ivory will  
 be ruined.

All their mansions will be destroyed.”  
 These are the LORD's own words.

### The Women Who Love Pleasure

**4** Listen to this message,  
 you cows of Bashan<sup>§§</sup> on Samaria's  
 mountain:

You mistreat the poor  
 and crush those in need.  
 Then you tell your husbands  
 to bring you another drink!

<sup>2</sup> The Lord GOD has made a promise,  
 a promise as sure as he is holy:  
 “Your enemies will catch you and drag  
 you away,

all of you as helpless as a fish on a hook.  
<sup>3</sup> They will drag you through breaks in  
 the wall

and throw you out towards Harmon.\*  
 This message is from the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> “Go to Bethel and sin against me!  
 Go to Gilgal<sup>†</sup> and sin again and again!  
 Bring your sacrifices in the morning,

<sup>¶¶</sup>3:9-10 *Ashdod* An important city of the Philistines.

<sup>§§</sup>4:1 *cows of Bashan* This means the wealthy women in Samaria. Bashan, an area east of the Jordan River, was famous for its fat cattle.

\*4:3 *Harmon* An unknown place. It may refer to Mount Hermon, a mountain in northern Palestine.

<sup>†</sup>4:4 *Bethel, Gilgal* Places of worship for the people of Israel, where they were at this time offering worship to false gods.

and offer a tenth of your crops the third day.

<sup>5</sup>Bring an offering of thanksgiving of bread made with yeast, and bring extra offerings to boast about. This is something you Israelites love to do!”

This is what the Lord GOD says.

<sup>6</sup>“I took away the food<sup>‡</sup> from your cities. There was no food anywhere in your land.

But you did not come back to me.”

This is what the LORD says.

<sup>7</sup>“I stopped giving you rain three months before harvest time.

Then I let it rain on one city, but not on another.

One field got rain, but another field dried up.

<sup>8</sup>The people from two or three towns would wander to another town for water,

but there was not enough for everyone. But you still did not come back to me.”

These are the LORD’s own words.

<sup>9</sup>“I made your crops die from heat and disease.

I destroyed your gardens and your vineyards.

Locusts ate your fig and olive trees, but you still did not come back to me.”

This is what the LORD says.

<sup>10</sup>“I sent diseases against you, as I did to Egypt.

I killed your young men in war.

I took away your horses.

The smell of death in your camp was awful,

but you still did not come back to me.”

These are the LORD’s own words.

<sup>11</sup>“I destroyed some of you

the same way I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

And the rest of you were almost destroyed,

like a burning stick pulled from a fire, but you still did not come back to me.”

These are the LORD’s own words.

<sup>12</sup>“So, Israel, this is what I will do to you. You people of Israel, prepare to meet your God.”

<sup>13</sup>He is the one who formed the mountains,

causes the wind to blow,

and lets people know his thoughts.

He changes the dawn into darkness

and walks over the earth on mountain tops.

His name is the LORD God All-Powerful.

### A Sad Song for Israel

**5** People of Israel, listen to this message! It is a funeral song that I will sing about you:

<sup>2</sup>I see Israel as a young woman who has been struck down,

and she will never get up again.

Abandoned in her own land,

there is no one to lift her up.

<sup>3</sup>This is what the Lord GOD says:

“A city in Israel that sends out 1000 soldiers

will see only 100 return.

And a town that sends out 100 soldiers will see only 10 return.”

<sup>4</sup>This is what the LORD says to the nation<sup>¶</sup> of Israel:

“Come back to me and live.

<sup>5</sup>But don’t look for help in Bethel.

And don’t go to Gilgal

or down south to Beersheba.<sup>§</sup>

<sup>‡</sup>4:6 *I took away the food* Literally, “I gave you clean teeth.”

<sup>¶</sup>5:4 *nation* Literally, “house”. This might mean the royal family of that country.

<sup>§</sup>5:5 *Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba* Ancient places of worship, where Abraham and Jacob built altars.

The people of Gilgal will be taken away  
as prisoners,\*\*  
and Bethel will be destroyed.”††

<sup>6</sup> Turn to the LORD and live,  
or he will come against the people of  
Joseph‡‡ like a fire—

a fire that will destroy the whole nation.  
No one in Bethel will be able to stop it.

<sup>7</sup> You people change justice to bitterness.  
You throw away fairness like trash.

<sup>8</sup> The Lord is the one who made the stars.  
He created the Pleiades and Orion.<sup>¶¶</sup>

He changes darkness into dawn  
and the day into night.

He calls for the waters of the sea  
and pours them out on the earth.

His name is YAHWEH!

<sup>9</sup> He brings swift destruction on the  
strongest city,  
tearing down the walls that protect it.

### Israel's Sin

<sup>10</sup> You hate anyone who speaks against  
evil in public  
or anyone who tells the truth.

<sup>11</sup> You take unfair taxes<sup>§§</sup> from the poor,  
making them pay from the crops they  
grew.

That is why you will never get to enjoy  
the fancy stone houses you have built.  
You will never drink the wine  
from the beautiful vineyards you have  
planted.

<sup>12</sup> Yes, I know all the bad things you do,  
your terrible sins.

You hurt people who do right,

you accept money to do wrong,  
and you keep the poor from getting jus-  
tice in court.

<sup>13</sup> In such evil times as these,  
anyone who is smart will keep quiet.

<sup>14</sup> You say that God is with you,  
so you should do good, not evil.  
Then you will live,  
and the LORD God All-Powerful will be  
with you.

<sup>15</sup> Hate evil and love goodness;  
bring justice back into the courts.  
Maybe then the LORD God All-Powerful  
will be kind to those from Joseph's fam-  
ily who are still alive.

### A Time of Great Sadness Is Coming

<sup>16</sup> This is what the Lord, the LORD God  
All-Powerful says:

“People will be crying in the public  
places.

They will be mourning in the streets.

They will even call farm workers to  
come and mourn

along with the hired mourners.\*

<sup>17</sup> People will be crying in the vineyards,  
because I will pass through and punish  
you.”

These are the LORD's own words.

### The Lord's Day of Judgement

<sup>18</sup> Why are you people eager for the day  
of the LORD to come?

You are just asking for trouble!

Why do you want that day to come?

It will be a day of darkness, not light.

\*\*5:5 *taken away as prisoners* In Hebrew this sounds like the name “Gilgal”.

††5:5 *destroyed* The Hebrew word is like the name “Beth-aven”. This name means “House of Wickedness”. The prophets often used this name for Bethel.

‡‡5:6 *the people of Joseph* The ten-tribe nation of Israel. Joseph was the ancestor of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in Israel.

¶¶5:8 *the Pleiades and Orion* Two well-known groups of stars (constellations) in the night sky.

§§5:11 *take unfair taxes* The meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.

\*5:16 *hired mourners* People who were paid to attend funerals and cry loudly for the dead.

<sup>19</sup> You will be like someone who escapes  
from a lion,  
only to be attacked by a bear.

He runs to his house,  
leans against the wall  
and is bitten by a snake.

<sup>20</sup> The day of the LORD will bring dark-  
ness, not light.

It will be a day of gloom,  
without a ray of light.

### The Lord Rejects Israel's Worship

<sup>21</sup> "I hate your festivals;  
I will not accept them.

I don't enjoy your religious meetings.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> Take your noisy songs away from  
here.

I will not listen to the music from your  
harps.

<sup>24</sup> But let justice flow like a river,  
and let goodness flow like a stream that  
never becomes dry.

<sup>25</sup> Israel, you had no sacrifices or offer-  
ings to bring me  
during the 40 years you wandered in the  
desert.

<sup>26</sup> But now I will make you take with you  
those idols you made—  
Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan, your  
star god.

<sup>27</sup> I will make you go away as captives  
far beyond Damascus."

These are the LORD's own words.  
His name is God All-Powerful.

### Israel's Good Times Will Be Taken Away

**6** Watch out, you people enjoying life  
in Zion,  
and you who feel so safe on Mount  
Samaria!

You are such important leaders of a most  
important nation.

The family of Israel comes to you for  
advice.

<sup>2</sup> Go and look at Calneh.

From there, go to the large city Hamath.  
Go to the Philistine city of Gath.<sup>†</sup>

Are you better than these kingdoms?  
Their countries are larger than yours.

<sup>3</sup> You people push away any thought of  
a day of judgement;  
you bring near the rule of violence.

<sup>4</sup> But now 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.

<sup>5</sup> You love to make up songs and, as  
David did,  
sing them as you play your harps.

<sup>6</sup> Instead of showing your sorrow  
for the ruin of Israel,  
you put on the best perfumes for a  
celebration,

and you drink bowls full of wine.

<sup>7</sup> You people are stretched out on your  
couches now,  
but your good times will end.

So you will be taken away as captives to  
a foreign country,  
and you will be some of the first people  
taken.

<sup>8</sup> The Lord GOD used his own name  
and made an oath. The LORD God All-  
Powerful said:

"I hate what Jacob is proud of.

<sup>†</sup>6:2 *Calneh, Hamath, Gath* Powerful Babylonian, Syrian and Philistine cities that were all captured by the Assyrians.

I hate his fortresses.  
So I will let an enemy take his city  
and everything in it.”

### There Will Be Few Israelites Left Alive

<sup>9</sup>Ten people might be left alive in a house, but they too will all die. <sup>10</sup>And then a close relative will come with another person to get the bodies so that they can be taken out and burned.<sup>‡</sup> The relative will call to the helper inside the house, “Are there any other dead bodies in there with you?”

That person will answer, “No, ....”

But the relative will interrupt and say, “Stop! We must not mention the name of the LORD.”

<sup>11</sup>Look, the LORD will give the command,  
and the large houses will be broken to pieces,  
and the small houses will be broken to bits.

<sup>12</sup>Do horses run over big rocks?  
No, and you cannot plough the sea with oxen.

But you turned everything upside down.  
You changed justice and goodness to bitter poison.

<sup>13</sup>You are so excited about defeating Lo Debar.<sup>¶</sup>

And you boast, “We have taken Karnaim<sup>§</sup> by our own strength.”

<sup>14</sup>“But Israel, I will bring a nation against you that will bring troubles to your whole country from Lebo Hamath to Arabah Brook.”  
This is what the LORD God All-Powerful said.

### A Vision of Locusts

**7** This is what the Lord GOD showed me: he was forming a swarm of locusts. This was at the time the second crop began to grow, after the king’s people had cut the first crop. <sup>2</sup>Before the locusts could eat all the grass in the country, I said, “Lord GOD, I beg you, forgive us! Jacob cannot survive! He is so small and weak!”

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The LORD said, “It will not happen.”

### A Vision of Fire

<sup>4</sup>This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw the Lord GOD calling for a shower of fire. The fire destroyed the ocean and was beginning to eat up the land. <sup>5</sup>But I said, “Lord GOD, stop, I beg you! Jacob cannot survive! He is so small and weak!”

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The Lord GOD said, “It will not happen either.”

### A Vision of a Plumb Line

<sup>7</sup>This is what the Lord showed me: he stood by a wall that had been built straight using a plumb line.<sup>\*\*</sup> He had a plumb line in his hand. <sup>8</sup>The LORD said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

I said, “A plumb line.”

Then the Lord said to me, “See, I will use a plumb line to show that my people are like a wall that is crooked. I will not ignore their ‘crooked ways’ any more. <sup>9</sup>Isaac’s places of worship will be destroyed. Israel’s holy places will be made

<sup>‡</sup>6:10 *And then ... burned* The meaning of the Hebrew text here is uncertain.

<sup>¶</sup>6:13 *Lo Debar* This name means “nothing”.

<sup>§</sup>6:13 *Karnaim* This name means “horns”. Horns were a symbol of strength.

<sup>\*\*</sup>7:7 *plumb line* A string with a weight on one end used to show how straight the walls of a building were.

into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboam's<sup>††</sup> family."

### Amaziah Tries to Stop Amos

<sup>10</sup> Amaziah, a priest at Bethel, sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel: "Amos is making plans with others against you right here in the heart of your kingdom. What he is saying will destroy the country!" <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 earn your living by prophesying there. <sup>13</sup> But don't prophesy any more here at Bethel. This is King Jeroboam's holy place. This is Israel's temple."

<sup>14</sup> Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I was never a prophet. I was not trained to be a prophet. I was tending sheep and taking care of sycamore trees. <sup>15</sup> But then the LORD took me away from my flock. The LORD said to me, 'Go and tell my message to my people in Israel.' <sup>16</sup> So listen to the LORD's message. You tell me, 'Don't prophesy against Israel. Don't speak against Isaac's family.' <sup>17</sup> So that is why 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<sup>‡‡</sup> country.  
The people of Israel will definitely be taken  
from this country as prisoners."

### A Vision of Ripe Fruit

**8** This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw a basket of summer fruit. <sup>2</sup> He said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A basket of summer fruit."

Then the LORD said to me: "The end"<sup>¶¶</sup> has come to my people Israel. I will not ignore their sins any more. <sup>3</sup> Their temple songs will become funeral songs." This is what the Lord GOD says. "There will be dead bodies everywhere. In silence people will take out the dead bodies and throw them onto a pile."<sup>§§</sup>

### Merchants Only Want to Make Money

<sup>4</sup> Listen to me, you who trample on helpless people.

You are trying to destroy the poor of this country.

<sup>5</sup> You merchants say,

"When will the New Moon celebration be over

so that we can sell grain?

When will the Sabbath be over

so that we can bring out more wheat to sell?

We can raise the price

and make the measure smaller.

We can change the scales

and cheat the people.

<sup>6</sup> And we can use the chaff swept off the floor

to mix with the grain we sell.

The poor cannot pay their loans,

so we will buy them as slaves.

We will buy those helpless people for the price of a pair of sandals."

<sup>7</sup> The LORD made a promise. He used his name, "the Pride of Jacob", and said:

<sup>††</sup>7:9 *Jeroboam* The king of Israel. See verse 10.

<sup>‡‡</sup>7:17 *foreign* Literally, "unclean". See unclean in the Word List.

<sup>¶¶</sup>8:2 *end* This Hebrew word sounds like the word for "summer fruit".

<sup>§§</sup>8:3 *In silence ... a pile* Or "People will be saying, 'Hush!'" See Amos 6:10.

“I will never forget what those people did.

<sup>8</sup>There will be an earthquake that will shake the whole land because of what they did.

Everyone living there will cry for those who died.

The land will be tossed around. The whole land will rise and fall like the Nile River in Egypt.”

<sup>9</sup>The Lord GOD also said, “At that time I will make the sun set at noon

and make the land dark on a clear day.

<sup>10</sup>I will change your festivals into days of crying for the dead.

All your songs will become sad funeral songs.

I will put mourning clothes on every body

and baldness on every head.\*

I will cause mourning everywhere, like that for an only son who has died. It will be a very bitter end.”

### A Famine of God’s Word

<sup>11</sup>The Lord GOD says:

“Look, the days are coming when I will cause a famine in the land. The people will not be hungry for bread. They will not be thirsty for water. No, they will be hungry for words from the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>The people will wander around the country, from the Dead Sea to the western coast,

then through the north around to the east.

They will go back and forth looking for a message from the LORD, but they will not find it.

<sup>13</sup>At that time the beautiful young women and the young men will become weak from thirst.

<sup>14</sup>They made promises by the false god<sup>†</sup> of Samaria.

They took oaths in the name of the god of Dan<sup>‡</sup>

and made vows in the name of the god of Beersheba.<sup>†</sup>

But they will fall and never get up again.”

### A Vision of God Commanding Punishment

**9** I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said:

“Strike the top of the pillars so that even the foundation will shake. Make the roof fall on everyone’s head. Those who survive I will kill with a sword.

None of them will be able to run away. None of them will escape.

<sup>2</sup>If they dig deep into the ground,<sup>§</sup> I will pull them from there.

If they go up into the skies,<sup>\*\*</sup> I will bring them down from there.

<sup>3</sup>If they hide at the top of Mount Carmel,<sup>††</sup>

I will find them and take them from there.

\***8:10 baldness ... head** People shaved their heads to show that they were very sad or upset.

†**8:14 false god** Literally, “sin”, referring to the calf-shaped god in Samaria.

‡**8:14 Dan** One of Israel’s holy places was in this city.

†**8:14 Beersheba** A town in Judah. This name means “well of the oath”.

§**9:2 ground** Literally, “Sheol, the place of the dead”.

\*\***9:2 skies** Or “heaven”.

††**9:3 Mount Carmel** A mountain in northern Israel. This name means “God’s vineyard”. This shows that it was a very fertile hill.

If they try to hide from me at the bottom  
of the sea,  
I will command the snake, and it will  
bite them.

<sup>4</sup>If they are captured and taken away by  
their enemies,

I will order that they be put to death.

Yes, I will watch over them,

but I will watch for ways to give them  
troubles,

not for ways to do good things.”

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD All-Powerful is the one  
who touches the land,  
and it melts.

Then all the people who live in the land  
will cry for the dead.

The land will rise and fall  
like the Nile River in Egypt.

<sup>6</sup>He built his upper rooms above the  
skies.

He put his skies<sup>‡‡</sup> over the earth.

He calls for the waters of the sea  
and pours them out on the earth.

YAHWEH is his name.

<sup>7</sup>This is what the LORD says:

“Israel, are you the only people in the  
world important to me?

I care just as much for the Ethiopians.

Yes, I brought you out of Egypt.

But I also brought the Philistines from  
Crete,<sup>¶¶</sup>

and the Arameans out of Kir.”<sup>§§</sup>

<sup>8</sup>“I, the Lord GOD,

am watching this sinful kingdom.

I will wipe the kingdom of Israel  
off the face of the earth.

But I will never completely destroy the  
people of Israel,”

says the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>“I am giving the command  
to shake Israel like grain in a sifter.\*

The good people will be scattered among  
the nations.

But those who are useless will be caught  
and thrown away.

<sup>10</sup>Sinners among my people say,

‘Nothing bad will happen to us.’

But all of them will be killed with  
swords.

### God Promises to Restore the Kingdom

<sup>11</sup>“David’s house<sup>†</sup> has fallen,

but at that time I will set it up again.

I will repair its broken places and rebuild  
its ruins.

I will set it up as it was before.

<sup>12</sup>Then my people will take over what is  
left of Edom

and all the other nations that belonged  
to me.”

This is what the LORD says,  
and he will make it happen.

<sup>13</sup>The LORD says:

“A time of great blessing is coming.

Workers will still be harvesting  
when it is time to plough the fields  
again.

They will still be trampling the grapes

when it is time to plant a new crop.

Sweet wine will drip from the mountains  
and pour from the hills.

<sup>14</sup>I will bring my people, Israel,

back from captivity.

They will rebuild the ruined cities,

and they will live in them.

They will plant vineyards

and drink the wine they produce.

They will plant gardens

<sup>‡‡</sup>9:6 *skies* Literally, “dome” or “vault”.

<sup>¶¶</sup>9:7 *Crete* Literally, “Caphtor” in Hebrew.

<sup>§§</sup>9:7 *Kir* Place where the Arameans lived in captivity.

<sup>\*</sup>9:9 *sifter* A tool with a screen through which grain is shaken to remove rocks or trash.

<sup>†</sup>9:11 *David’s house* This probably means his kingdom.

and eat the crops they grow.  
<sup>15</sup>I will plant my people  
on their own land,

and never again will they be pulled up  
out of the land that I gave them.”  
This is what the LORD your God said.