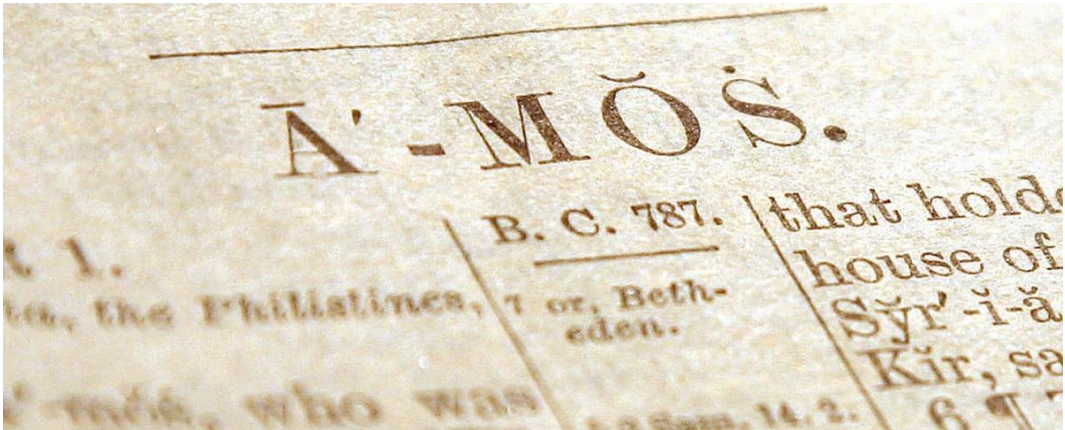




THE LION *The Book of Amos*

ROARS



800 - 760 BC

- ❖ **802** - Adad-Nirari III led his Assyrian army to victory over Syria and the destruction of Damascus.
- ❖ **802-745** - For half a century after the fall of Damascus, Assyrian expansion was thwarted by internal problems.
- ❖ **793-753** - Jeroboam II, king of the northern kingdom (Israel), enjoyed an era of peace, expansion, increased trade, and affluence.
- ❖ **792-740** - Reign of Uzziah, king of the southern kingdom (Jerusalem/Judah).
- ❖ **June 15, 763** - Eclipse of the sun visible in Judah/Israel.
- ❖ **c. 760-755** - Earthquake at Tel Hazor.

760 - 750 BC

- ❖ **760** - Amos is called to travel from Judah to Israel to prophesy in Samaria.
- ❖ **753-752** - Zechariah becomes king of the northern kingdom.
- ❖ **752** - Shallum assassinates Zechariah to become king of the northern kingdom.
- ❖ **752-742** - Menahem assassinates Shallum to become king of the northern kingdom.
- ❖ **750-722?** - Hosea's prophetic ministry.
- ❖ **750** - Micah called to be a prophet.

750 – 740 BC

- ❖ **745** - Assyrian aggression thwarted by internal problems until Tiglath-Pileser III came to power.
- ❖ **742-740** – Pekahiah reigns as king of the northern kingdom.
- ❖ **740** – Isaiah called to be a prophet; Death of King Uzziah of Judah; Pekahiah assassinated by Pekah to become the new king of the northern kingdom; Other states in the region pay tribute to the growing power of Assyria.

740 – 700 BC

- ❖ **752-732** – Pekah reigns as king of the northern kingdom.
- ❖ **734-732** - Tiglath-Pileser III invades Israel; Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus form a mutual defense alliance against Assyria and invite Ahaz of Judah to join them; Ahaz refuses Isaiah's counsel and seeks protection from Assyria by paying tribute to them, creating a heavy financial burden on Judah for years to come.
- ❖ **732-722** – Pekah is assassinated by Hoshea, who then becomes the last king of the northern kingdom; Alliance between Syria and Israel collapses with the fall of Damascus (**732**) and the fall of Samaria (**722**).

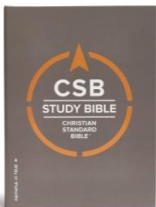




Jeroboam II King of Israel

Amos' prophecy was primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel, which had succeeded from Judah after the reign of King Solomon. Read **2 Kings 14:23-29** (& **1 Kings 12:25-33**). While King Uzziah of Judah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, what did King Jeroboam II of Israel do?

CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE STUDY BIBLE: The State of Israel



This was a time of great prosperity and military success for both nations, as all their traditional enemies were in a weakened condition. Samaria, the capital city of Israel, enjoyed enormous wealth, and luxuries flowed into the city. At the same time, decades of struggle with Damascus had left the population exhausted. Many farmers were reduced to poverty. Their more affluent neighbors, and especially the aristocracy, swooped in with loans that the poor could not repay and then reduced the debtors to slavery and seized their lands. The leaders of society believed they had no reason to fear for the future. Their city had high walls and fortified citadels, and their army was everywhere victorious. They were the chosen people of God, and they considered themselves immune from judgment.



The Author

His name, Amos (עֲמוֹס), means “burden” or “burden bearer.” It could possibly be a shortened form of a name like Amasiah, meaning “The LORD carries” or “The LORD upholds.” This name for this prophet does not occur elsewhere in the Bible. Amos was from Tekoa (1:1), a small town about 6 miles south of Bethlehem and 11 miles from Jerusalem. He was not a man of the court like Isaiah, or a priest like Jeremiah. He earned his living from the flock and the sycamore-fig grove (**Amos 1:1; 7:14–15**). Whether he owned the flocks and groves or only worked as a hired hand is not known. His skill with words and the strikingly broad range of his general knowledge of history and the world preclude his being an ignorant peasant. Though his home was in Judah, he was sent to announce God’s judgment on the northern kingdom (Israel). He probably ministered for the most part at Bethel (**Amos 7:10–13**), Israel’s main religious sanctuary, where the upper echelons of the northern kingdom worshiped. He proceeds but lives during the ministries of Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.

What unique characteristics would Amos bring in being a prophet? How do you think he might be received by the Israelites?

THE LION ROARS



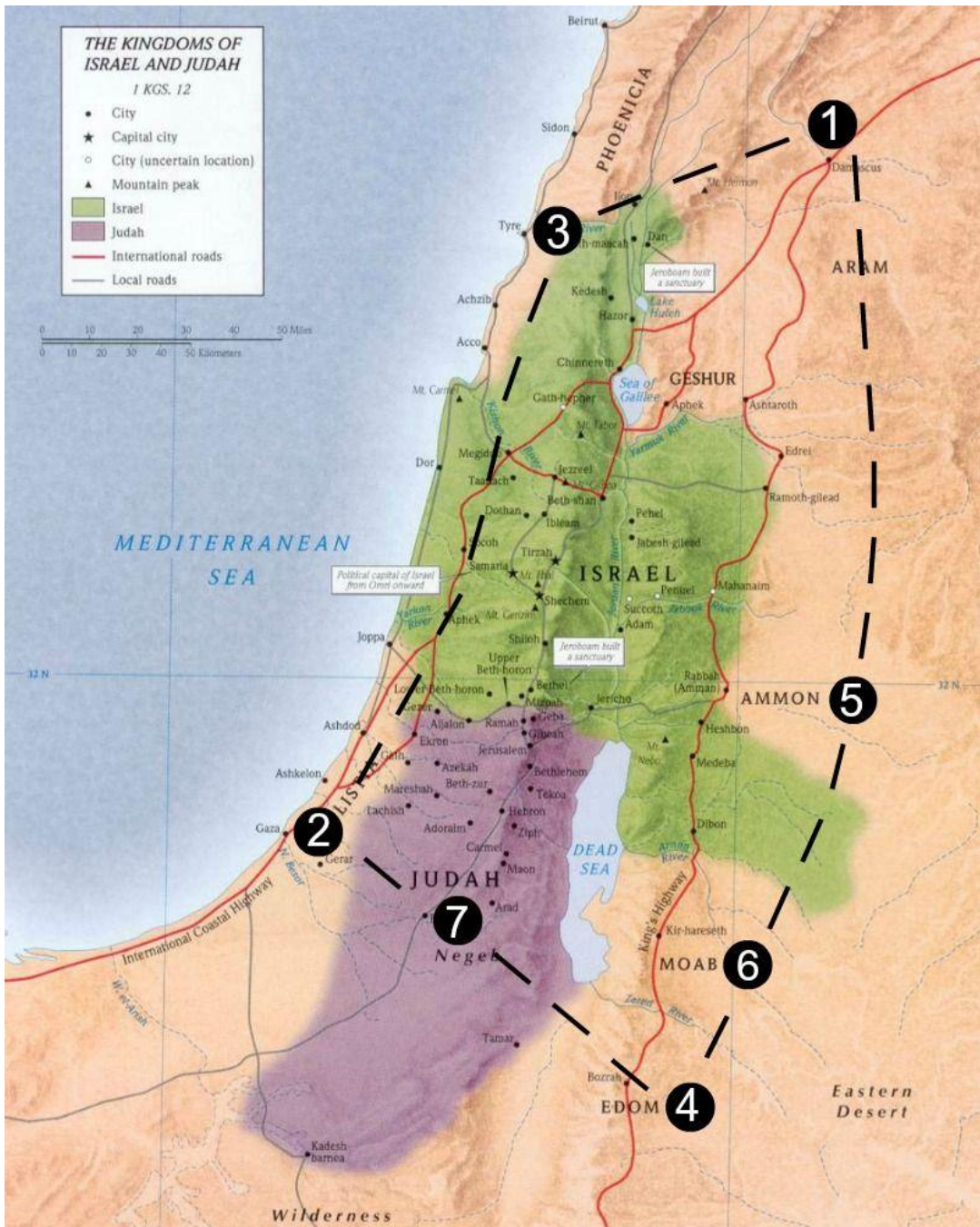
Outline of Amos

After the superscript (1:1), the book of Amos is divided into seven parts. The first part, the introduction, is a single verse (1:2). This is followed by six major divisions: 1:3–2:16; 3:1–15; 4:1–13; 5:1–6:14; 7:1–8:3; 8:4–9:15. Remarkably, formulas of divine speech (statements such as, “the Lord says,” “the Lord has spoken,” and “the Lord’s declaration”) are evenly distributed in these sections. Amos 1:3–2:16 has fourteen such formulas, and each of the following sections has seven such, for a total of forty-nine.

Amos demonstrates the character of God’s justice, which punishes not only the Gentile nations for their sins but also his Old Testament people - Israel and Judah. The Lord insists that people of all nations, classes, and incomes treat one another responsibly and mercifully in accordance with his Word. Though Amos focuses on the law’s condemnation and the imminent fall of Israel, he concludes with a prophecy of the coming Savior (9:11) and a note of enduring hope (9:13–15).

- I. Announcement of judgment on the nations—and on Israel (1, 2).
- II. Further proclamations of judgment (3–6).
 - A. Judgment on the whole house of Israel (3).
 - B. Judgment on the women of Samaria (4).
 - C. A lamentation for virgin Israel (5).
 - D. Woe to the complacent lovers of luxury (6).
- III. Five visions and messages of judgment (7:1–9:10).
 - A. A vision of locusts (7:1–3).
 - B. A vision of fire (7:4–6).
 - C. A vision of a plumb line (7:7–9), and the story of how the Lord called Amos (7:10–15).
 - D. A vision of summer fruit (8:1–3), and a message of judgment (8:4–15).
 - E. A vision of the Lord standing at the altar (9:1–4), and a message of judgment (9:5–10).

Conclusion: A message of hope for God’s believing people (9:11–15).





Geographical & Historical References Chapters 1-2

The following are helps in understanding the places and names in Amos 1-2.

Tekoa (1:1) = Small village in Judah about 5 miles south of Bethlehem.

(Mount) Carmel (1:2) = Mountain in the northern kingdom (Israel) on the coast with the Mediterranean Sea and a notorious site for Baal worship. Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal here (**1 Kings 18:20-29**). This peak dedicated to this phony lord of rain and fertility would soon be parched and bare. From the driest portion of the land to the greenest, the Lord's judgment will be felt like a severe drought that devastates the whole land.

Damascus (1:3) = Capital of the Aramean state (modern Syria) directly north of Israel and a constant enemy in that day. Although conquered by King David c. 250 years earlier, it soon recovered its strength and became a lasting nemesis of Israel. Damascus will be the first city to experience the fulfillment of the Lord's judgment: it falls to the armies of Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 B.C., about two decades after the ministry of Amos.

Gilead (1:3) = Located northeast of Jerusalem and was part of the northern kingdom (Israel). It sat in the territory separating Israel and Aram and so was among the first places attacked by Damascus. The Arameans used brutal military tactics there, symbolically described as going over the countryside with iron sledges.

Hazael (1:4) = King of Damascus from c. 842–796 BC and founder of a new line of kings. He rose to power after murdering the previous king.

Ben-Hadad (1:4) = Son of Hazael and the second king of Damascus with this name, ruling c. 796–775 BC.

Valley of Aven (1:5) = Possibly the Beqaa Valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains extending along the northern border of Israel, but may refer to the river valley in which Damascus is located, calling it the "valley of wickedness" or "valley of idolatry."

Beth Eden (1:5) = Aramean city-state north of Damascus, on the banks of the Euphrates, the garden spot of that region.

Aram (1:5) = The empire north of Israel; Damascus is its capital. Assyrian armies under their aggressive rulers Tiglath-Pileser III (also known in the Bible as "Pul"), Shalmaneser V, and Sennacherib will overrun Syria and Canaan, including Philistia, in 734–732 B.C.

Kir (1:5) = An unidentified place, possibly in the vicinity of Elam from which the Arameans of Damascus are said to have come. In context, the LORD's judgment on them is to exile them back where they came from.

Gaza (1:6) = Main city in Philistia, located southwest of Israel and Judah, along the coast of the Great Sea. It guarded the entry to Palestine from Egypt.

Edom (1:6) = Kingdom south of Judah. The Edomites descended from Esau and thus from Abraham, through Isaac. Throughout history, Edom often waged war against Israel.

Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron (1:8) = Three more cities of the Philistine group.

Philistines (1:8) = All the major cities of the Philistines (Gaza ... Ashdod ... Ashkelon, and Ekron) are mentioned except Gath, which by the time of Amos had already been substantially wiped out. Philistia was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians.

Tyre (1:9) = The senior Phoenician merchant port city, allied to Israel by a "treaty of brotherhood" in the days of David, later in the time of Solomon, and later still during the reign of Ahab, whose father-in-law ruled Tyre and Sidon. Their cedar lumber and skilled labor helped with Jerusalem building projects. Tyre is eventually captured by Alexander the Great more than four centuries after Amos prophesies its end.

Teman (1:12) = Edomite territory, the home of Esau, south of the Salt Sea.

Bozrah (1:12) = Edom's northernmost city. Amos hints that Edom will suffer widespread, or even complete, destruction.

Ammon (1:13) = People east of the Jordan, tracing their ancestry (and Moab's) to Abraham's nephew Lot and Lot's incestuous acts with his daughter (**Genesis 19:30-38**).

Rabbah (1:14) = Ammon's capital city.

Moab (2:1) = Nation east of Israel, on the southern border of Ammon.

Kerioth (2:1) = Main city of Moab, near Aroer, and site of principal shrine for pagan god Chemosh.

Amorite (2:9) = Inhabitants of Canaan before the Israelites took the land. King Solomon had forced them into slavery. This is their last mention in the Bible.

THE LION ROARS



1:1-2:16 The Lion of Justice Roars

Amos begins his prophecy with a circle of judgment, naming places surrounding the northern kingdom of Israel before specifically addressing Israel.

Have you ever seen a lion in the wild or in a zoo? Describe the experience.

What can we deduce from the fact that God “roars” and thunders”? Is it a good thing that God “roars” and “thunders”? Why or why not?

Through **Amos 1:3-2:3**, what specific sins of the surrounding nations have invoked the judgment of God?

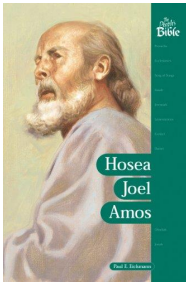
What do these specific judgments tell us about God? Why is it notable that God is holding Gentile (non-Israelite) nations accountable for their actions?

In **Amos 2:4-5**, what specific sin of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, invoked God’s judgment? How is this different from the sins of the surrounding nations?

Three Sins, Even Four

The expression “for three sins...even for four” does not have a definitive interpretation. Some say that the expression is meant to show the completeness of someone’s sins which now require judgment. Others say that going from three to four sins refers to the escalation of wickedness. Others yet say that the first three are comparable sins but that the fourth one is emphasized as an offense that brings God’s long patience to an end and opens the floodgates of judgment. I guess we could simply say that God is judging these people not just for one sin but multiple sins. The judgment is just and deserved.

In **Amos 2:6-16**, what specific sins of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, invoked God's judgment? Why are these sins particularly repugnant?



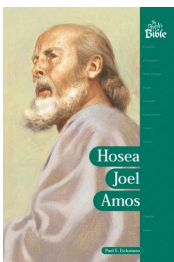
PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Nazirites

Nazirites took a vow not to drink wine or eat grapes, not to cut their hair, and not to go near a dead body (**Numbers 6:1-21**). Their unusual diet and appearance during the term of their vow marked them as God-fearing Israelites who had especially consecrated themselves to the Lord. The presence of both prophets and Nazirites among them reminded all the people of Israel that the holy Lord was their God and that they were to be his holy people.



God clearly shows us in these first two chapters that he cares about the way we treat other human beings. How are the injustices and sins like the ones presented still prevalent today? How can we play a part in resolving them?

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Impending Judgment



How long does the Lord's patience last? In the time before the flood, he gave corrupt humanity a time of grace that lasted 120 years while Noah built the ark (**Genesis 6:3**). Then came the deluge. The Northern Kingdom lasted a little more than two centuries, beginning with the rebellion of Jeroboam I in 931 B.C. It will stay in existence for another generation after the ministry of Amos, until the Assyrian conquest in 722 B.C. In our own time, the Lord is patient, "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**). When his will is persistently despised, he still can

use a natural disaster or a conquering army to carry out his judgments in this world's history. His Word also tells us that his last judgment is coming, but he does not tell us when.



PRAYER

Let's end our study of this section by praying the words of **Psalm 7:8-17**.

Psalm 7:8–17 (NIV84)

- ⁸ let the LORD judge the peoples.
 Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness,
 according to my integrity, O Most High.
- ⁹ O righteous God,
 who searches minds and hearts,
bring to an end the violence of the wicked
 and make the righteous secure.
- ¹⁰ My shield is God Most High,
 who saves the upright in heart.
- ¹¹ God is a righteous judge,
 a God who expresses his wrath every day.
- ¹² If he does not relent,
 he will sharpen his sword;
 he will bend and string his bow.
- ¹³ He has prepared his deadly weapons;
 he makes ready his flaming arrows.
- ¹⁴ He who is pregnant with evil
 and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment.
- ¹⁵ He who digs a hole and scoops it out
 falls into the pit he has made.
- ¹⁶ The trouble he causes recoils on himself;
 his violence comes down on his own head.
- ¹⁷ I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness
 and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.



Geographical & Historical References Chapters 3-4

The following are helps in understanding the places and names in Amos 3-4.

Ashdod & Egypt (3:9) = The rich and powerful of Philistia and Egypt are summoned to witness the Lord's indictment against those who store up ill-gotten riches in the fortresses of Samaria.

Mountains of Samaria (3:9) = From these mountains, one can see the entire city of Samaria, the capital of Israel's northern kingdom.

Altars of Bethel (3:14) = Bethel is 10 miles north of Jerusalem and is one of the main sites of unauthorized worship in Israel. The Lord first marks for punishment the altars of Bethel, where the Israelites brought their sacrifices before a golden bull-calf. Amos is repeating a prophecy that a man of God from Judah made when Jeroboam I dedicated the first altar at Bethel (**1 Kings 13:1-3**). The altar will be desecrated; the horns of the altar, extensions on the four corners serving as signs of divine power, will be hacked off, rendering them useless for protection. The Lord will fulfill this prophecy about a century after the fall of Samaria, when the Judean king Josiah demolishes the altar at Bethel (**2 Kings 23:15**).

Cows of Bashan (4:1) = Bashan is east of the Sea of Galilee and was a region known for strong bulls and fat cows that pastured on its hills.

Harmon (4:3) = This location is unknown, possibly Mount Hermon in Bashan. It may just mean "oppression." The point, though, is clear: many people will be slaughtered, and those who survive will file out of the ruined walls of the city into exile into a foreign place with a strange name.

Bethel (4:4) = Although idols were placed here and at Dan by Jeroboam I, Bethel was first the place where Jacob had the vision of the ladder extending into heaven and was blessed by the Lord. (**Genesis 28:10-22 & 35:1-15**)

Gilgal (4:4) = Joshua had set up 12 stones here to commemorate that the Lord had crossed them into the land of Israel on dry land after parting the Jordan River. (**Joshua 4:20-24**). They were then circumcised and celebrated the Passover for the first time in the Promised Land. (**Joshua 5:2-12**) Gilgal along with Bethel were popular places of worship in Amos' day.

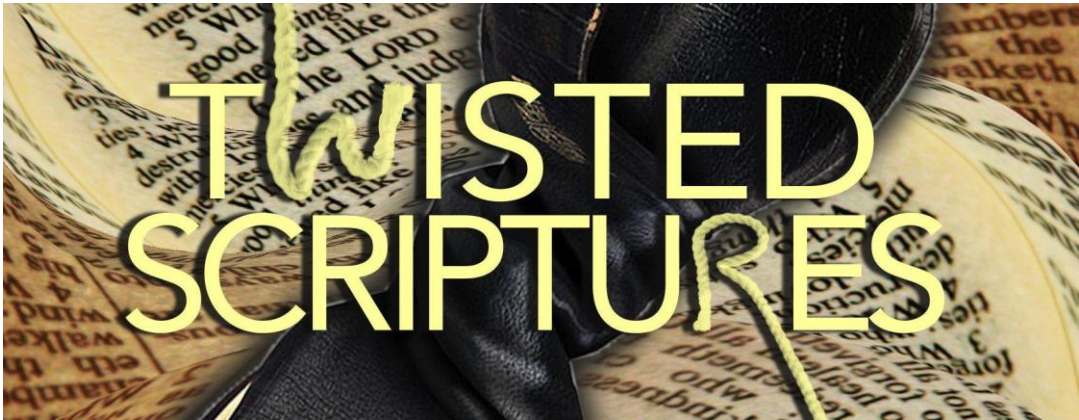


3:1-4:13 The Lion of Justice Draws Near

Have you ever been, or felt like, you were surrounded with no way out? Describe the experience.

How does Amos argue for the principle of cause and effect in **3:3-6**? What is he trying to communicate about the cause of God's judgment upon Israel?

Looking at **Amos 3:6**, the phrase, "When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?" may jump out at you. It may even challenge your way of thinking of the LORD. How do we best understand this verse?



Amos 3:7 – The Need for Continuing Revelation?

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) believe this verse teaches God to be continually revealing information through his prophets which, for them, include the current president of their church, his two counselors, and members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. When any of those fifteen men speak at the semi-annual General Conference in Salt Lake City, their words are considered scripture. However, no new scriptural revelation is needed; the Bible alone is sufficient. (See **2 Timothy 3:16**.) They ignore the immediate context which is that Amos is right now with these words revealing the Sovereign LORD's plan to judge the Israelites. The LDS use this passage to say more than what is written here.



How will God deal with false religion and rampant materialism? (**Amos 3:12-15**) What lessons does this have for us? Is wealth and prosperity an assurance of God's continuing favor?



What is it about the women in **Amos 4:1-3** that invokes God's wrath? How might we be "cows of Bashan"?

In looking at **Amos 4:4-5**, how can we worship the LORD and still be sinning? What would Amos say about our church services? How can we guard against hypocritical and sinful worship of God?

Tithes Every 3 Years

*There was a special tithe that was to be brought every three years (cf. **Deuteronomy 14:28; 26:12**).*

In reading through **Amos 4:6-11**, what signs had the LORD given to warn the Israelites of their sins? Does the LORD give us similar signs today? Explain your answer. (Consider also **Proverbs 3:12; Luke 13:1-9; & Hebrews 12:1-13.**)

Thinking of **Amos 4:12-13**, is it scary to meet God? Why or why not?



PRAYER

Let's end our study of this section by praying the words of **Psalm 9:7-12**.

Psalm 9:7–12 (NIV84)

- 7 The LORD reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
- 8 He will judge the world in righteousness;
he will govern the peoples with justice.
- 9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
- 10 Those who know your name will trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.
- 11 Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.
- 12 For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.



Geographical & Historical References Chapters 5-6

The following are helps in understanding the places and names in Amos 5-6.

Beersheba (5:5) = It was once the home of Abraham, and there the Lord also appeared to Isaac (**Genesis 26:23-24**) and Jacob (**Genesis 46:1-3**). We know from archaeology that there was a shrine there.

House of Joseph (5:6) = This refers to the northern kingdom of Israel, dominated by the tribe of Ephraim, descendants of Joseph, son of Jacob (Israel).

Pleiades & Orion (5:8) = Pleiades is a group of seven stars that are a part of the constellation Taurus. This constellation is named after the seven daughters of Atlas who were turned into a group of stars in Greek mythology. In the Bible, Pleiades is always mentioned in connection with Orion, a giant hunter slain by Artemis in Greek mythology. These constellations can be seen nearly from everywhere in the world.

Zion (6:1) = Another name of Judah's capital, Jerusalem.

Mount Samaria (6:1) = The capital of Israel, the northern kingdom.

Calneh (6:2) = Syrian city north of the bend in the Orontes River. It had been destroyed by the Assyrians in the mid-ninth century.

Hamath (6:2) = Important Syrian city north of Damascus. It was conquered by Jeroboam II, the king of Israel during the ministry of Amos (**2 Kings 14:28**).

Gath (6:2) = One of five royal cities of the Philistines on the coastal plain west of Judah. It was destroyed by another contemporary of Amos, King Uzziah of Judah (**2 Chronicles 26:6**).

Lo Debar & Karnaim (6:13) = Cities on the east side of the Jordan & the Sea of Galilee, probably taken by Jeroboam's forces when they marched against Syria (**2 Kings 14:28**). Lo Debar means "nothing" and Karnaim means "horns," a symbol of strength. By naming these

particular cities, Amos mocks Israel's foolish national pride. It is as if the Israelites are saying, "Our might is stronger than strength! Look! We have taken No-town!"

Lebo Hamath & Valley of the Arabah (6:14) = The invaders will oppress the whole land from Lebo Hamath, Jeroboam's northern boundary, to the valley of the Arabah, south of the Dead Sea, the southern limit of Israelite control (**2 Kings 14:25**). Added to earlier details, this oppression must be the Assyrian invasion meaning that their army was under the Lord's all-controlling command.



5:1-6:14 The Lion Roars Justice

How do you define justice?

Read **Psalms 146; 9:16; 11:7; & 33:5**. What do these verses say about God's heart for justice?

Have you ever felt like God was unjust? Do you still think so? Why or why not?

Read **Proverbs 28:5; Jeremiah 22:15-16; & James 1:27**. What does it mean to seek justice? What might reveal to us if we are not actively involved in seeking justice? What changes could we make to seek justice?

In **Amos 5:4-6, 14-15**, what does it mean to seek God and live? Where were the Israelites seeking God?

Looking at **Amos 5:7-15**, what injustices were the Israelites guilty of? How might we be guilty of similar injustices?

According to **Amos 5:18-20**, why should the Israelites not long for the day of the LORD? Should we? Why or why not?

What is more important to God than services, offerings, and singing according to **Amos 5:21-24**? What does this teach us?

New Testament Quote

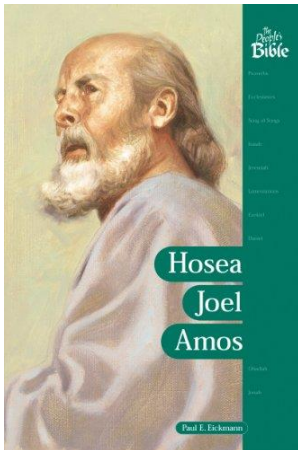
#1 – Amos 5:25-27

*Amos is quoted twice in the New Testament. The first time is in **Acts 7:42-43**, where Stephen cites **Amos 5:25-27** against the Jews and shows by it that the Jews have never kept God's law from the time they first came out of Egypt.*

What type of people does Amos address in **6:1-7**? What kept them from administering justice? How can we avoid the same pitfalls?

According to **Amos 6:8-14**, what will God do about these people?

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: Do horses run on the rocky crags?



Anyone who wants to reach some goal or accomplish some project must proceed prudently. A horseman, for example, who wants to arrive at his destination in one piece does not race his animal pell-mell over rocky cliffs. A farmer who wants to prepare soil for planting does not have his oxen plow on rocky mountainsides. (Another reading in verse 12, dividing one of the Hebrew words in two, brings out the same point: "Does one plow the sea with oxen?") Yet the Israelites have proceeded as foolishly as reckless riders or unthinking plowmen. Justice in the courts should heal the ills of their society, but they have perverted justice and turned it to poison. Works of righteousness should flourish among God's people like sweet grapes in a well-tended vineyard. Instead, Israel's life bears fruit as bitter as wormwood.

Reflect on and discuss the following statement: We carry out justice when we give all human beings their due as creations of God. Carrying out justice includes not only the righting of wrongs but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable.



PRAYER

Let's end our study of this section by praying the words of **Psalm 146**.

Psalm 146 (NIV84)

¹ Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

² I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

³ Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortal men, who cannot save.

⁴ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,
⁶ the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets prisoners free,
⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the alien
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD.



Geographical & Historical References Chapter 9

The following are helps in understanding the places and names in Amos 9.

Cushites (9:7) = Cushites are black Africans from south of Egypt, from the territory that today is Sudan. When the Israelites gave up the LORD and his Word, they were no different than any other nation, and they would be judged as any other nation was judged.

Caphtor (9:7) = Caphtor was either Crete or Cyprus, and it represented the Aegean Sea area from which the Philistines came.

Kir (9:7) = Kir was probably east of Mesopotamia, in the area of Elam, place of origin for the Arameans.



7:1-9:15 The Lion of Justice Roars His Verdict

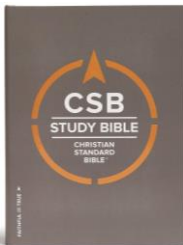
Although people in general have an aversion to verbally judging others, when is it necessary?



Amos sees visions of the LORD carrying out his justice. What was Amos' cry for justice in **7:1-6**? What was the LORD's answer?

Read **Psalm 103:10-14**. Why did the LORD answer Amos that way? What does that mean for us?

CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE STUDY BIBLE: The LORD Relented

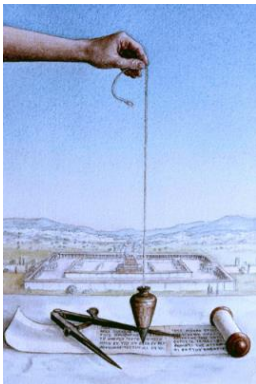


The phrase, the LORD relented, in **Amos 7:3 & 6** distresses and confuses some readers because it implies that God changed his mind. The same expression is used in **Exodus 32:14**, where God relented in response to the intercession of Moses after he had announced his intention to wipe out Israel and make a new nation from Moses's descendants. Readers wonder how an omniscient God could change his mind. Two errors must be avoided. First, the conclusion that God is not fully omniscient and that there are things in the future that he cannot know. Second, the conclusion that God's relenting (or changing his mind) is only a pretense and that Amos's and Moses's acts of intercession did not really change anything God was planning to do. God is fully omniscient, and our prayers do matter. These two truths are certain even if they seem mysterious. Additionally, the "change" of God's mind would of course be something he foreknew he would do in response to intercession by prayerful men such as Moses and Amos.

What is different about the vision in **Amos 7:7-9** when compared to the previous two visions? What does this imply?

High Places of Isaac

*The high places are centers of religious and political pretension and of self-righteous pride would be wiped out. Isaac, Israel's (Jacob's) father, is used here as a way of referring to Israel found only in Amos (c.f. **Amos 7:16**).*



PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: A Plumb Line

The lead weight that the Lord is holding on a cord shows that the wall, once vertical, has now sagged out of plumb. A careful stonemason or bricklayer would tear it down and start his building over. The meaning of the vision is clear. The Lord is picturing himself as a mason laying brick or stone. The wall represents Israel, the people he created to receive his covenant. The plumb line is his law, the standard laid down at Mount Sinai for Israel's life as his covenant people. The law reveals Israel's sin: the people are like a sagging, crooked wall, ready to be torn down. "I will spare them no longer," the Lord says (**Amos 7:8**).

Jeroboam II completed his 41-year reign and died in 753 B.C., a few years after Amos finished his ministry. He was succeeded by his son Zechariah, who also "did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam [I] son of Nebat" (**2 Kings 15:9**). After a six-month reign, Zechariah was assassinated, and the royal house of Jeroboam II - the dynasty of Jehu - came to its bloody end. No doubt Shallum, Zechariah's assassin, thought that he was acting to carry out his own plan to become the next king of Israel. Actually, his sword carried out the Lord's judgment announced by his prophets Amos and Hosea (**Amos 1:4**).

In **Amos 7:10-13**, what seems to be Amaziah's problem with Amos' message?

What are some situations where we must take a similar stand as Amos in **7:14-17**?

Priest of Bethel

When Israel worshipped the Golden Calf at Mount Sinai, they claimed they were still worshipping the LORD. The calf was not intended to be an image of the LORD, but rather it was the pedestal on which the invisible LORD was supposedly standing.

When Jeroboam revived the worship of golden calves so that the people of Israel would not go to Jerusalem to worship, the golden calves served as a replacement for the Ark of the Covenant, which was the footstool of the LORD's throne.

The calf worship at Bethel and Dan was not intended to be a renunciation of the LORD, but it was in fact a renunciation of the LORD because it substituted Israel's own way of worship for the way that the LORD had prescribed.



What is the point of the ripe fruit in the fourth vision in Amos **8:1-6**? What injustices had made them ripe?

Thinking of **Amos 8:11-12**, who has experienced a famine of the words of the Lord? How might we?

If Israel's judgment is already sealed and going to happen, why does the LORD send Amos to preach to them?

Signs of Judgment

*One sign of the judgment will be an earthquake. This frightening event took place two years after Amos predicted it (**Amos 1:1**; see also **Zechariah 14:5**). Another sign of judgment will be darkness at noon. Amos may be predicting an eclipse of the sun. (According to Assyrian records, a total solar eclipse took place in 763 B.C.) Events such as earthquakes and eclipses confirm the fact that the prophet truly is a spokesman for the Creator and Judge of the world.*

Read **Amos 9:7-8,11-15** as well as **Isaiah 43:25 & Hebrews 8:7-13; 10:15-18**. In the face of judgment, what hope do the Israelites and us have?

New Testament Quote #2 – Amos 9:11-12

*St. James in the first council of the apostles quotes from **Amos 9:11-12** in **Acts 15:16-17** as a proof of Christian liberty, that the Gentiles under the New Testament are not bound to keep the laws of Moses which the Jews themselves have never kept and could not keep, as St. Peter preaches in **Acts 15:10**.*

PEOPLE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY: As Grain Is Shaken In A Sieve



The prophet uses the picture of grain in a sieve. A farmer shakes and whirls the wheat or barley. Sand and fine pebbles that remain after winnowing fall through the screen to the ground, so that only pure grain is left. Israel will be carried off to Assyria, and somewhat over a century later, Judah will be exiled to Babylon. Even though most of the people will be sifted out by being scattered among the nations, the Lord will bring back a purified remnant after the captivity (see also **Isaiah 10:21-22; 17:3**). Through the remnant that returns to the Promised Land, he will send his Savior when his time fully comes.

How would you summarize the message of Amos?

What lessons have you taken away from your study of it?



PRAYER

Let's end our study of this section by praying the words of **Psalm 9:13-20**.

Psalm 9:13–20 (NIV84)

- ¹³ O LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,
¹⁴ that I may declare your praises
in the gates of the Daughter of Zion
and there rejoice in your salvation.
¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
¹⁶ The LORD is known by his justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. *Higgaion. Selah*
¹⁷ The wicked return to the grave,
all the nations that forget God.
¹⁸ But the needy will not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.
¹⁹ Arise, O LORD, let not man triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.
²⁰ Strike them with terror, O LORD;
let the nations know they are but men. *Selah*



OS

ad to JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, & LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR



ISRAEL & ITS LEADERS

EXPOSURE OF RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY

"LET JUSTICE FLOW LIKE A RIVER, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN UNFAILING STREAM..." (5:24)

HEBREW: MISHPAT
ACTIONS TAKEN TO CORRECT INJUSTICE

HEBREW: TSEDAQA
RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS
EQUITY DESPITE SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

ANNOUNCING THE DAY OF THE LORD

40 YEARS LATER... (see 2 KINGS 17)

ARMIES OF ASSYRIA

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD'S JUSTICE & MERCY



HE MUST CONFRONT EVIL AMONG ISRAEL & THE NATIONS

HIS LONG-TERM PURPOSES ARE FOR RESTORATION & A NEW FAMILY

7-9 AMOS' VISIONS

SYMBOLIC DEPICTIONS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

SCORCHING FIRE

LOCUST SWARM

OVERRIPE FRUIT

GOD

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

HOUSE OF DAVID

FUTURE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

GOD'S KINGDOM OVER ALL NATIONS

created by the Bible Project



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