

Amos

1¹ Here is the message that was given to Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa in Judah. This is what he saw^a concerning Israel when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam, son of Jehoash, was king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. ² And he said,^b The Lord roars from Zion, he shouts from Jerusalem. The shepherds' pastures wither, the top of Mount Carmel dries up.

³ This is what the Lord says: The people of Damascus have repeatedly sinned^c and so I will not hesitate to punish them, for they beat the people of Gilead with sharp iron threshing tools.^d ⁴ So I will send fire down on the house of Hazael and burn up Ben-Hadad's fortresses.^e ⁵ I will smash the gates of Damascus, I will cut down those who live in the Valley of Aven, and the ruler from Beth Eden.^f The people of Aram will be deported as prisoners to the land of Kir, says the Lord.

⁶ This is what the Lord says: The people of Gaza have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, for they sent into exile whole communities, handing them over to Edom. ⁷ So I will send down fire on the walls of Gaza and burn up its fortresses. ⁸ I will cut down those who live in Ashdod and the ruler of Ashkelon. I will turn to punish^g Ekron and the Philistines who remain will die, says the Lord God.

^a**1:1.** The message was given through visions.

^b**1:2.** Because the vast majority of the book is the message from God, it seems better not to use quotation marks to identify such words as they would be generally superfluous, and break the flow.

^c**1:3.** Literally, “For three sins of Damascus, and for four.”

^d**1:3.** The reference is to threshing grain, where wooden boards studded with sharp iron spikes were dragged across the grain on the threshing floor to cut up the stalks and separate out the grain.

^e**1:4.** Hazael and Ben-Hadad were kings of Syria, and Damascus was the capital.

^f**1:5.** Valley of Aven means “the Valley of Wickedness” and Beth Eden means “the House of Pleasure.”

^g**1:8.** “Turn to punish”: literally, “turn my hand against.”

⁹ This is what the Lord says: The people of Tyre have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, for they exiled whole communities, handing them over to Edom, and did not keep their agreement to help each other as members of the same family.^h

¹⁰ So I will send down fire on the walls of Tyre and burn up its fortresses.

¹¹ This is what the Lord says: The people of Edom have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, for they hunted down the Israelites to whom they were related,ⁱ killing them with swords. They attacked without mercy, tearing the Israelites to pieces in an angry rage that never stopped. ¹² So I will send down fire on Teman, and I will burn up the fortresses of Bozrah.

¹³ This is what the Lord says: The people of Ammon have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, because they ripped open pregnant women in Gilead as part of their war to enlarge their territory. ¹⁴ I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah and burn up its fortresses. There will be shouts on the day of battle which will whirl with rage like a windstorm. ¹⁵ Their king will be sent into exile together with his princes, says the Lord.

2 ¹ This is what the Lord says: The people of Moab have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, because they desecrated the bones of the king of Edom by burning them, turning them into lime.^j ² So I will send down fire on Moab, and I will burn up the fortresses of Kerioth, and the people of Moab will die in the midst of uproar, battle cries, and the sound of the trumpet. ³ I will cut down their king and all their princes with him, says the Lord.

⁴ This is what the Lord says: The people of Judah have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, because they rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept his commands. Their lies have led them astray, the same lies that their forefathers followed. ⁵ So I will send down fire on Judah, and I will burn up the fortresses of Jerusalem. ⁶ This is what the Lord says: The people of Israel have repeatedly sinned and so I will not hesitate to punish them, because they sell good people for silver, and poor people for a

^h1:9. “Members of the same family”: literally, “brothers.”

ⁱ1:11. The Edomites were descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob.

^j2:1. Some have thought that they then used this lime to plaster their homes. The main point is that they deliberately desecrated the remains.

pair of sandals. ⁷ They trample the heads of the poor into the dust, and push the needy out of the way. A man and his father have sex with the same servant girl so that my holy name is profaned. ⁸ At every altar they stretch themselves out in clothes taken from debtors as collateral, in the temple of their god they drink wine taken from the people they fined.

⁹ Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorites before you,^k even though they were as tall as cedars and as strong as oaks. I destroyed them root and branch.

¹⁰ It was I who brought you out of the land of Egypt and led you through the desert for forty years so that you could take the Amorites' land.

¹¹ I appointed some of your sons to be prophets, and some of your young men to be Nazirites.^l Isn't this true, people of Israel?

¹² But you made the Nazirites sin by drinking wine, and you told the prophets, “Don't tell us what God says.”^m

¹³ Now see what I am going to do. I will crush you where you are, as if crushed by a heavy cart loaded down with sheaves of grain.

¹⁴ Not even your fastest runners will escape; strong men will lose their strength. Even the greatest warrior will not be able to save his life. ¹⁵ The archer will not stand his ground. The quickest on his feet will not be able to get away, and even those on horseback will not save themselves. ¹⁶ On that day even the bravest of the mighty warriors will run away naked, says the Lord.

3 ¹ People of Israel, listen to this message that the Lord has spoken against you—all of you, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. ² I chose a special relationshipⁿ with you alone out of all the families of the earth, and so I will punish you for your wrongdoing. ³ Can two people walk together unless they have arranged to meet? ⁴ Does a lion roar in the forest before finding its prey? Does a young lion growl from its den if it has caught nothing? ⁵ Does a bird fall into a trap and get caught unless the spring is set? Does a trap spring

^k2:9. The people of Judah. “Before you”: or “for your sake.”

^l2:11. Nazirites: men who took special vows of service for God, and who were not allowed to drink wine or cut their hair.

^m2:12. “Don't tell us what God says”: literally, “You shall not prophesy.”

ⁿ3:2. The word often translated here as “know” is related to choice and intimacy, not mere knowledge.

shut if there's nothing there to catch? ⁶ When the trumpet sounds in the city, shouldn't the people be alarmed? When a disaster comes to a city, isn't it the Lord who does it? ⁷ For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his intentions to his servants the prophets. ⁸ The lion has roared—so who isn't scared? The Lord God has spoken—so who can refuse to speak for him?^o

⁹ Announce this to the fortresses of Ashdod and to the fortresses in the land of Egypt: Assemble yourselves on Samaria's mountains and see all the turmoil and oppression happening in the country.

¹⁰ They don't know how to do what is right, declares the Lord. They have stored up in their fortresses what they've taken by violence and robbery.

¹¹ As a result, says the Lord, an enemy will surround you, break down your strongholds, and plunder your fortresses.

¹² This is what the Lord says: Just as a shepherd tries to rescue a sheep from a lion's mouth, but only saves a couple of legs or a piece of an ear, so it will be for the people of Israel living in Samaria—all that will be “saved” will be the corner of a couch and a piece of a leg from a bed.^p

¹³ Listen! Warn the house of Jacob, declares the Lord God of power. ¹⁴ For on that day I will punish Israel for their sins. I will destroy the altars of Bethel: the corners^q of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground. ¹⁵ I will tear down their winter houses and their summer houses as well, their houses filled with ivory will be ruined—their many houses will be destroyed.

4 ¹ Listen to this message, you well-fed cows of Bashan^r who live on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor and crush the needy,

^o3:8. “Speak for him”: or “prophesy.”

^p3:12. The point being made here is not how little is saved, but nothing is saved except proof of total destruction. A shepherd took the remains of a sheep to the owner to prove how the animal died; otherwise he would have to pay for it himself. Similarly with Israel, its destruction would be so complete that the only evidence left would only confirm this.

^q3:14. Literally, “horns.” If anyone held on to these horns on the corner of an altar they were given sanctuary. By cutting them down the Lord shows that nowhere can be seen as a place of safety.

^r4:1. It is thought that this refers to the high society women of Samaria who lived well. The reference to the cows of Bashan is that they were fattened cattle (see Ez. 39:18).

and who order your husbands,^s “Bring us drinks!”² The Lord God has sworn by his holiness: Watch out! For the time is coming when they will drag you away with hooks, each one of you will be like a fish on a hook.³ You will leave through breaches in the city walls, thrown out in the direction of Mount Hermon.

⁴ Why don't you go to Bethel and sin? Go to Gilgal and add to your sins even more?^t Offer your sacrifices in the morning, bring your tithes after three days.⁵ Burn a thank offering of bread made with yeast,^u and announce what you're giving as freewill offerings so everyone will know. This is what you love to do! declares the Lord God.

⁶ It was I who made sure you had nothing to eat^v in all your cities, and a lack of food wherever you lived, but still you wouldn't return to me, says the Lord.⁷ It was I who kept the rain from falling when there was still three months before harvest.^w One city would have rain, while another would not. One field would have rain, another would dry up from lack of rain.⁸ People wandered from town to town looking for water, yet were still thirsty. But still you did not return to me, declares the Lord.⁹ I struck your many farms and vineyards with blight and mildew; locusts devoured your fig trees and olive trees. But still you did not return to me, declares the Lord.¹⁰ I sent a plague on you like I did in Egypt. I killed your young men in battle; I took away your horses; I made you smell the stench of dead bodies in your camps. But still you did not return to me, declares the Lord.¹¹ Some of you I destroyed as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick pulled out of a fire. But still you did not return to me, declares the Lord.

¹² Therefore, this is what I am going to do to you, Israel. Because I am going to do this, Israel, prepare to meet your God!¹³ Watch! The One who made the mountains, who created the winds, who reveals

^s4:1. The word used for husbands is not the usual term, but one meaning “lord” or “master.” It is used here to show that the wives are reversing roles in that “masters” are acting as servants.

^t4:4. Clearly the tone is sarcastic.

^u4:5. This was expressly forbidden: Leviticus 6:17; Leviticus 7:12.

^v4:6. Literally, “cleanness of teeth.”

^w4:7. This was the critical time in order to ensure a good harvest. No rain at this time would mean the crops would fail.

his thoughts to humankind, who turns the sunlight into darkness, who walks on the high places of the earth—the Lord God of power is his name!

5¹ Listen, people of Israel, to this funeral lament that I sing about you! ² Virgin Israel has fallen, and will never rise again! She lies abandoned on the ground, and there is no one to help her up. ³ This is what the Lord says: From a city that sends out a thousand soldiers, only a hundred will return; from a city that sends out a hundred soldiers, only ten will return.

⁴ This is what the Lord says to the people of Israel: Look to me so you may live! ⁵ Do not look to the false gods of Bethel, do not go to the pagan shrines of Gilgal or travel to those of Beersheba. For Gilgal will go into exile, and Bethel will come to nothing. ⁶ Look to the Lord so you may live! Otherwise he will explode like fire against the descendants of Joseph and no one from Bethel^x will be able to quench it. ⁷ You twist justice and make it bitter,^y you throw integrity to the ground.

⁸ The One who made the Pleiades and Orion,^z who turns the darkness into morning, and daytime into night, who calls for the water of the seas, and pours it down as rain upon the earth—the Lord is his name! ⁹ In a flash he cuts down the strong and destroys the fortresses.

¹⁰ You hate anyone who confronts injustice^a and loathe anyone who speaks honestly. ¹¹ Because you trample down the poor and impose a tax on their grain, building for yourselves impressive houses, you will not live in them, and you will not drink wine from the fine vineyards you have planted. ¹² For I know the extent of your wrongdoing and your numerous sins. You oppress good people by taking bribes, and you prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts. ¹³ So smart people keep quiet in such evil times. ¹⁴ Do what is right, and not evil, so you may live. Then the Lord God of power will be with you, as you claim he is. ¹⁵ Hate evil and love good—and

^x5:6. Possibly meaning the false gods of Bethel will be able to do nothing.

^y5:7. Literally, “wormwood,” a plant with a very bitter taste.

^z5:8. Two constellations of stars.

^a5:10. This is the meaning of the Hebrew “in the gate”—the place where legal cases were heard.

make sure justice wins out in your courts. Maybe the Lord God of power will have mercy on those who are left of Jacob's people.

¹⁶ For this is what the Lord, the Lord God of power says: There will be weeping in the city squares and wailing^b in the streets. They will call even the farmers to grieve, as well as the professional mourners. ¹⁷ There will be wailing in every vineyard, for I will pass through^c the midst of you, says the Lord.

¹⁸ How disastrous it will be for those of you who long for the day of the Lord. Why would you want the day of the Lord to come? It will bring darkness, not light. ¹⁹ It will be like a man running away from a lion only to meet a bear; or a man who goes home and leans his hand on a wall, only to be bitten by a snake. ²⁰ Isn't the day of the Lord darkness without light? Yes, pitch dark without a glimmer of light. ²¹ I hate, I despise your festivals and take no delight in your religious assemblies. ²² Even though you present me with burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. As for your peace offerings of fattened cattle—I will not even look at them. ²³ Stop your noisy worship songs. I will not listen to the melody of your harps. ²⁴ Rather let justice flow like a river, and doing right like an ever-flowing stream.

²⁵ Did you bring me sacrifices during those forty years in the desert, people of Israel? ²⁶ But now you carry idols of Sakkuth your king and Kaiwan your star god that you made for yourselves. ²⁷ So I will send you into exile in a land beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of power.

6¹ How disastrous it will be for you who have an easy life in Zion, and you who feel secure living on Mount Samaria—you who are the most famous men in all of Israel to whom people come for help! ² But go to Calneh, and see what took place there. Then go on to the great city of Hamath, and down to the Philistine city of Gath.^d Were they better kingdoms than yours? Did they have more territory than you? ³ You put out of your minds any thought of coming disaster, yet you are bringing closer the time when violence reigns.

^b5:16. Literally, “saying ‘Alas! Alas!’”

^c5:17. In punishment. Vineyards, normally places of laughter and celebration, are filled with weeping and wailing.

^d6:2. Foreign cities destroyed by invaders.

⁴How disastrous it will be for you people who lie on beds decorated with ivory and lounge on couches, eating lamb from your flocks and fattened calves from the stall. ⁵You make up songs accompanied by the harp, thinking you're great composers like David. ⁶You drink wine by the bowlful, and anoint yourselves with the finest oils, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph's descendants. ⁷So you will be at the head of those led away into exile; the feasting and lazing around will be over.

⁸The Lord God has sworn an oath on his own life. This is what the Lord God of power declares: I detest Jacob's arrogance and I hate his fortresses; I will hand over this city and all in it to the enemy.^e ⁹If there are ten people in a house, they will die. ¹⁰And when a relative comes to take away the bodies from the house, he will ask someone inside "Is there anyone else with you?" The person will reply, "No..." Then the other will say, "Quiet! Don't even mention the Lord's name."

¹¹Watch out! When the Lord gives the command, large houses will be reduced to rubble, and small houses smashed to pieces. ¹²Can horses gallop over rocks? Can oxen plow the sea? But you have turned justice into poison, and the fruit of doing good into bitterness! ¹³You joyfully celebrate your conquest of Lodebar,^f and say "Didn't we in our own strength capture Karnaim?"^g

¹⁴Watch out, people of Israel! I am going to send an enemy nation to attack you, says the Lord God of power, and they will oppress you from the Pass of Hamath to the Arabah Valley.^h

7¹This is what the Lord God showedⁱ me. I saw that he was preparing a swarm of locusts just when the spring crops began to grow. (Spring crops begin to grow right after the time when the king's hay is cut.)^j ²And so when the locusts finished eating every green plant in the fields, I pleaded with the Lord God, "Please forgive your people! How can the descendants of Jacob survive?"

^e6:8. "To the enemy": implied.

^f6:13. The name of this town means "nothing."

^g6:13. Karnaim means "strength."

^h6:14. Meaning from the north to the south. The Arabah Valley is the Jordan Valley.

ⁱ7:1. In vision.

^j7:1. Assumed meaning; Hebrew is unclear.

They are so weak.”³ So the Lord changed his mind. “It won't happen,” said the Lord.

⁴ This is what the Lord God showed me. I saw that the Lord God was calling for a judgment of fire. The fire burned up the depths of the sea and destroyed the farmland.⁵ I pleaded with the Lord God, “Please stop! How can the descendants of Jacob survive? They are so weak.”⁶ So the Lord changed his mind. “This too won't happen,” said the Lord.

⁷ This is what he showed me. I saw the Lord was standing beside a wall that had been built with a plumb line.^k He was holding a plumb line in his hand.⁸ And the Lord asked me, “Amos, what do you see?” I replied, “A plumb line.” And the Lord God said, “I am placing a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel.^l I won't ignore their sins anymore.⁹ The high places^m of the descendents of Isaac will be torn down, and the holy places of Israel will be destroyed. Sword in hand, I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam.”

¹⁰ Then Amaziah, priest of Bethel, sent a message to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, “Amos is plotting against you among the people of Israel. What he's saying is unbearable!¹¹ For he's saying Jeroboam will be killed by the sword, and the people will be taken away from their land into exile.”

¹² Amaziah said to Amos, “Go away prophet! Run away to the land of Judah. Go and prophesy there to earn your bread.ⁿ ¹³ But don't ever prophesy again at Bethel, for this is where the king worships, the national Temple.”

¹⁴ But Amos replied, “I'm not a trained prophet,^o or the son of a prophet. I was just a shepherd, and also took care of fig trees.¹⁵ The Lord took me from following my flock, and the Lord told me, ‘Go, and give my message to my people of Israel.’”

¹⁶ So now hear what the Lord is telling you: You say, “Don't prophesy against Israel, and don't preach against the descendants of Isaac.”

^k7:7. This term only occurs here, so the meaning is not certain.

^l7:8. As a standard to measure his people's faithfulness.

^m7:9. Where pagan worship occurred.

ⁿ7:12. Implying a selfish motive for Amos' prophesying—to earn a living.

^o7:14. Meaning that Amos had not attended the schools of the prophets.

¹⁷ But this is what the Lord says: Your wife will become a prostitute in the city; your sons and daughters will be killed by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a foreign land. The people of Israel will definitely be taken from the land and go into exile.

8 ¹ This is what the Lord God showed me. I saw a basket of fruit.^P ² He asked me, “What do you see, Amos?” I said, “A basket of fruit.” Then the Lord told me, “This is the end of my people Israel! I won't ignore their sins anymore. ³ On that day the Temple songs will become sorrowful wailing. There will be dead bodies scattered everywhere. Silence!” declares the Lord.

⁴ Listen to this, you who trample down the needy, and wipe out the poor of the land. ⁵ You who ask, “When will the holy day^Q be over so we can get back to selling grain? When will the Sabbath be over so we can open our storehouses, and cheat people with short measures and unfair scales?” ⁶ You buy the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of sandals, and you sell grain mixed with chaff. ⁷ The Lord God, of whom the descendants of Jacob are so proud, has sworn an oath: I will never forget the evil you have done. ⁸ Shall not the land tremble because of this, and everyone who lives there mourn? The earth will rise up like the Nile river in flood, be tossed around, and then fall again.

⁹ On that day, declares the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the land during the daytime. ¹⁰ I will turn your festivals into times of mourning, your happy songs into laments. I will make you wear sackcloth and shave your heads.^r I will make your mourning like that for an only son. At the end of it all it will be a bitter day.

¹¹ The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, or a lack of water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. ¹² People will wander from sea to sea,^s from north to east, running to and fro searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. ¹³ On that day, even the beautiful girls and healthy young men will collapse from thirst.

^P8:1. Probably figs.

^Q8:5. Literally, “new moon”—one of Israel's religious festivals.

^r8:10. Signs of mourning for the dead.

^s8:12. From the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea.

¹⁴ Those who swear by the disgraceful idols^t of Samaria, who take oaths like, “By the life of your god, Dan,” or “A pilgrimage to the god of Beersheba”—they will fall, and never rise again.

9 ¹ Then I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he said: Strike the tops of the Temple pillars so that the foundations shake, and shatter them on the heads of all the people below. Those who survive I will kill by the sword. None of them will escape, not a single one. ² Even if they dig down into Sheol,^u I will catch them and pull them up. Even if they climb up to heaven, I will bring them down. ³ Even if they hide themselves at the top of Mount Carmel, I will search for them and catch them. Even if they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will command the sea serpent to bite them. ⁴ Even if they are driven into exile by their enemies, I will order them put to death by the sword. I will watch them carefully—and for evil, not for good. ⁵ The Lord God of power touches the earth and it melts, and all who live there mourn. The earth rises up like the Nile river in flood, and then falls again.

⁶ The Lord builds his upper rooms in heaven, and places the foundations on the earth. He calls for the water of the seas, and pours it down as rain upon the earth—the Lord is his name! ⁷ Aren't the Ethiopians^v as important to me as you, people of Israel? asks the Lord. Yes, I brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, but I also brought the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir.

⁸ Watch out! I'm watching this sinful kingdom.^w I will eradicate it from the face of the earth. Yet I will not completely destroy the descendants of Jacob. ⁹ See what I'm doing! I will give the command, and the people of Israel will be shaken among the nations like flour through a sieve, and nothing will fall to the ground. ¹⁰ All the sinners of my people will be killed by the sword—all those who say, “Nothing bad is going to happen; no disaster will fall on us.”

¹¹ On that day I will restore the fallen kingdom of David; I will repair the broken walls, I will rebuild the ruins, and I will make it as it was in days of old. ¹² And they will possess what is left of Edom

^t8:14 “disgraceful idols”: literally, “guilt.”

^u9:2. The place of the dead, understood to be underground.

^v9:7. Literally, “Cushites.”

^w9:8. Meaning Israel.

and all the nations that were once mine,^x declares the Lord. He will make this happen. ¹³ Look! The time is coming, says the Lord, when the reaper will overtake the plowman, and the one who treads the grapes will overtake the one who sows the seed.^y The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and flow from all the hills. ¹⁴ I will bring my people back from captivity, and they will rebuild the ruined cities, and they shall live in them. They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will plant gardens and eat the fruit they produce. ¹⁵ I will plant them in their own land, and they shall never be uprooted again from the land I have given them, declares the Lord your God.

^x9:12. Literally, “called by my name.”

^y9:13. In other words, this will be a time of great plenty.