

Amos Chapter 9

Amos 9:1 "I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered."

In another vision, Amos sees judgment arrive, and it begins at the “altar.”

Whether this refers to the altar at Beth-el or the altar in Jerusalem’s temple, the point is that judgment begins where forgiveness should have been sought (3:14).

This fifth vision opens with the Lord standing beside the altar in Beth-el, commanding that the temple be torn down, thus falling upon the worshippers.

He would spare none.

This final vision of the prophecy, of “the Lord standing upon the altar,” portrays the destruction of the idolatrous temple at Beth-el.

This temple has given cohesiveness and direction to Israel in her idolatrous defection from the Lord.”

Now Amos sees the destruction coming on Israel.

The altar had been a place of forgiveness.

The standing on the altar here shows He has risen in judgment against these people.

This striking of the lintel is as if God has smitten the temple, so that it did shake.

God has broken off fellowship with these people.

Cutting them in the head shows they are no longer in communion with their God.

God will slay them with the sword.

Someone else may strike the blow, but it is truly from God.

They can run, if they want to, but they will not escape the judgment of God.

Verses 2-4

Desperate to escape, none will successfully hide from the hand of judgment.

Righteous David found solace in the omnipresence of God (Psalm 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23-24); the wicked find only His wrath (Rev. 20:13).

Amos 9:2 "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:"

“Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them”:

That is, they that endeavor to make their escape from their enemies, though they seek for places of the greatest secrecy and privacy.

Not hell, the place of the damned; nor the grave, the repository of the dead.

Neither of which they chose to be in rather, sought to escape them.

But the deepest and darkest caverns, the utmost recesses of the earth, and the very center of it which, could they get into, would not secure them from the power and providence of God.

And from their enemies in pursuit of them by his permission.

Though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down; the summit of the highest mountains, and get as near to heaven, and at as great a distance from men, as can be, and yet all in vain.

The Targum is, "if they think to be hid as it were in hell, from thence their enemies shall take them by my word.

And if they ascend the high mountains, to the top of heaven, thence will I bring them."

This just goes to the extreme, showing there is no place far enough away that they can be delivered from the wrath of God.

Luke 10:15 "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell."

Luke 10:18 "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

Amos 9:3 "And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:"

“Carmel”:

One high woody mountain, shelter and hiding-place for wild beasts, by a figure put for all the rest.

If they think to be safe where wild beasts find a refuge, they are deceived.

This is a mountainous region that rises 1800 feet above the Mediterranean sea, known for its many caves and forests (see note on 1:2).

“I will search and take them out thence”:

I will, saith God, hunt them out, and take them.

“And though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea”:

This is an irony like brutish atheists, they think to hide themselves in the bottom of the sea.

“Thence will I command the serpent”:

Crocodile or shark or some sea monster.

“And he shall bite them”:

Devour them.

Miserable Israel to whom sea, mountains, heaven, or hell will afford a hiding-place!

Even the serpent is at the command of God.

When God commands him to bite someone, he is compelled to do it.

There were woods and thickets on Carmel, but they could not go deep enough into the woods to get away from God.

Be sure, He will find you.

Amos 9:4 "And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good."

Those excluded from safety everywhere else may perhaps hope that yet the enemy may spare them.

Captives are the slaves, the possession of their conquering enemies.

These make profit of them by selling them to others, or employing them in labor and service.

“Before their enemies”:

This seems to intimate some voluntariness in these people going before the conqueror, whom they hope to mollify and sweeten, that he may use them well.

Yet this hope shall fail them too.

“Thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them”:

The enemy should, either out of cruel humor and hatred against them, or on any slight occasion and disgust, slay them as if they had commission from me so to do.

Neither propriety in them, nor service by them, nor profit in the sale of these poor and miserable captives, should be safety to them.

They should be accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“I will set mine eyes upon them”:

I will perpetually watch over them, and then be sure no opportunity will be let slip.

“For evil”:

To afflict and punish them.

“And not for good”:

Or for their benefit.

Thus, was the course of God’s providence against them from the days Amos aimed at unto this very day.

God until now has and still does, make good his threat against this idolatrous, cruel and oppressing people.

Their captivity is not a safe haven either.

God will see that the sword of the enemy comes and brings judgment upon them.

God is now, not looking for good in them.

Their sin blots out any good they might do.

Verses 5-9

Lest anyone question the Lord's power, they are reminded of His omnipotence revealed in creation and in His sovereign rulership of the nations.

Other nations have been transplanted from their homelands; why not Israel?

Amos 9:5 "And the Lord GOD of hosts [is] he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as [by] the flood of Egypt."

Accumulate in grand imagery the majesty, power, and irresistible resources of the Lord, who has at length become their enemy.

The very world itself melts, as Sinai did, at His touch.

"The land":

Either the inhabitants, or rather the land itself in which they dwelt, the land of Canaan.

Or more likely the whole earth, how firm and hard so ever it seems to be.

And it shall melt":

As snow before the sun in its hottest influences, or as wax before a mighty fire.

He who can do this, can do all that I have denounced against you, O Israel.

"And all that dwell therein shall mourn":

Their houses destroyed, their substance consumed, and all that is near and dear to them swallowed up.

"The flood of Egypt":

The Nile (see note on 8:8).

God is all powerful.

He can send fire so hot it would actually melt the earth.

He can also, send a flood that would drown everyone.

God is in control of all of nature.

The earth shakes at His command and the wind blows at His command.

God is omnipotent.

He is all power.

Amos 9:6 "[It is] he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD [is] his name."

The prophet, in this vision, saw the LORD standing upon the idolatrous altar at Beth-el.

Wherever sinners flee from God's justice, it will overtake them.

Those whom God brings to heaven by his grace, shall never be cast down; but those who seek to climb thither by vain confidence in themselves, will be cast down and filled with shame.

That which makes escape impossible and ruin sure, is, that God will set his eyes upon them for evil, not for good.

Wretched must those be on who the LORD looks for evil, and not for good.

"He that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth": he laid the foundations of this lower world, and can as easily shake or overturn as at the first he laid them.

All that is below the royal pavilions of God is but as a little bundle which he can soon untie and scatter about.

Nor are the things tied up of such worth and value that he should lose by doing it.

How much easier is it for him to destroy (as he hath spoken), your land and cities, which are a very small thing compared with the whole world.

And this as a point compared with the unmeasurable greatness of the heavens!

You set a value on yourselves, and are proud, and think that God will not lose such jewels.

As if a king in his royalty should fear to lose a pin's head, or one atom of dust that lieth on his footstool.

"He that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth, the LORD is his name":

Either to drown it, as at the general deluge; or to water and refresh it, as he does by exhaling water from the sea.

And then letting it down in plentiful showers upon the earth (see Amos 5:8).

Now all these things are observed to show the power of God, and that therefore there can be no hope of escaping out of his hands.

We know that Paul went to the third heaven.

This indicates there are stories, like in a hotel, in the heavens.

We read in an earlier Prophetic book of the Holy Place having chambers.

We do not know what heaven is really like, because we have not been there.

Look with me, at the following Scripture about heaven.

John 14:2 "In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

It was God who created the heavens and the earth.

During the Noah flood, not only did it rain from above, but the water came up from beneath as well.

God can do with His creation whatever He chooses.

He is God.

Amos 9:7 "[Are] ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"

“Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me?”

Israel had become like the pagans who surrounded her.

“Kir”

See note on 1:5.

Ethiopians are mentioned here, in connection with them being a heathen nation.

The disobedient children (Israel), were no better off than the heathen.

God would punish them as if they were not His own.

God had brought Israel out of Egypt and made covenant with them, but they did not keep the covenant.

The Syrians were saved from the ditch (Kir).

The Philistines from Caphtor are probably speaking of the Phoenicians.

The important lesson in this is, God's children would be punished the same as the heathen's world, if they broke covenant with God.

Verses 8-12

Although judgment would be severe, God would preserve a "remnant" that would include "all the Gentiles (heathen), ... called by" His "name" (Acts 15:16-18).

This should encourage the people of God who live in a corrupt world.

God designates His judgment for the unrepentant, not the righteous.

Amos 9:8 "Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD [are] upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD."

The kingdom of the ten tribes which had so utterly revolted from the true center and spiritual ideas of the worship of Jehovah.

"And I will destroy it from off the face of the earth":

And I will ruin any such kingdom for their sins that it shall cease to be a kingdom on earth.

"Saving that I will not utterly destroy":

And so, would I do with the kingdom of Israel, but that I have by covenant with their fathers engaged to be their God for ever, which promise I will keep to a remnant of their seed for ever.

"The house of Jacob":

The seed of Jacob, which God will not utterly destroy, though he did destroy other nations (Jer. 30:11).

"Saith the LORD": This is added to confirm the gracious word concerning the remnant which shall be spared.

After the Assyrians took them, the ten tribes of Israel were never a kingdom as such, even unto this day.

God kept a remnant of the people however as He would never utterly destroy His family.

They have been scattered among the other nations, but they are still His.

The house of Jacob includes the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, as well.

Amos 9:9 "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as [corn] is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

“Sift ... among all nations”:

Only the chaff was to be punished; His remnant was to be preserved to inherit the blessings spoken of in the following verses.

Now we see they were dispersed into many nations.

They have never yet come back together.

They will be persecuted, but will live.

Some will cling to the Lord no matter how many trials they face.

My personal belief is that many of them receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Amos 9:10 "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us."

Those who do not repent and renounce their false gods will die.

Verses 11-15

Millennial blessings await the final faithful remnant, when Messiah personally reigns over all nations in Jerusalem upon the throne of David, and the Jews are never again pulled up from their divinely inherited land.

Verses 11-12

The “tabernacle” that has “fallen” refers to the fragile state of the Davidic dynasty.

The northern tribes rejected the Davidic king and broke away, leaving a divided nation.

Yet God would be faithful to His covenant and rebuild the house of “David” (2 Sam. 7:15-16; Psalm 72:17).

Amos 9:11 "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:"

A reference to the dynasty of David.

God will “raise up” and “rebuild” this tabernacle on earth for Christ to rule in His millennial kingdom (Zech. 14:9-11).

The apostles used this passage to illustrate that Gentiles could thus be a part of God’s redemption (see notes on Acts 15:13-18).

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David”:

Even though Israel has sunk to an all-time low, and judgment must fall, still God’s plan for the house of David and His promises to Abraham have not failed and will ultimately be realized.

Though it is marred, it is not beyond God’s ability to repair.

Peter quotes these verses at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:16-17), to demonstrate God’s intention to save Jews and Gentiles alike.

The church of the living God is open to Jew and Gentile.

All who accept Jesus as their Savior shall be saved.

The tabernacle of David that is raised is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will reign as King forever.

God brings their redemption through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

God provides their redemption; it is a free gift of grace offered to all.

All who will accept it shall be saved.

A gift becomes real to us, when we accept it.

God restores His kingdom.

Jesus gave His body on the cross at Calvary for whosoever will receive Him.

Amos 9:12 "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this."

This the restored Jews did in the time of Hyrcanus, when they made an entire conquest of Edom, as Josephus relates.

Or that these may be possessed; that is, by David or Christ, who shall have the Heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession (Psalm 2:8).

When the remnant, according to the election of grace, in those nations that have been the greatest enemies to Christ and his Gospel.

Signified by Edom, shall be converted.

And call upon the name of the Lord, and worship him; and be called by his name.

“Saith the LORD, that doeth this”:

Whose word is true, whose power is great, whose grace is efficacious, to accomplish all that is here promised and foretold.

The heathen that are called by His name are the Christians.

Luke 1:32 "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:"

Colossians 3:11 "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond [nor] free: but Christ [is] all, and in all."

Verses 13-14

Prosperity, in hyperbolic fashion, is here described (Lev. 26:5; Joel 3:18; Contrast Isaiah 5).

Fruitfulness is so enormous that planting and reaping seasons overlap.

This prosperity will encourage massive repatriation (Isaiah 11:15-16), and reconstruction (Zechariah. 2:1-5).

Amos ends his prophecy with one of the most stunning pictures in all of Scripture: that of unimagined prosperity in Israel during the millennial kingdom, the thousand year reign of Christ before the final judgment.

The crops will be so plentiful that the seasons for planting and harvesting will run together.

Amos 9:13 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt."

Or "are coming" and which will commence upon the accomplishment of the above things, when the church of Christ is raised up and established, the Jews converted, and the Gentiles brought in.

“That the ploughman shall overtake the reaper”: or "meet the reaper"; or come up to him, or touch him, as it may be rendered.

And so the Targum; that is, before the reaper has well cut down the grain, or it is scarce gathered in.

The ploughman shall be ready to plough up the ground again, that it may be sown, and produce another crop.

“And the treader of grapes him that soweth seed”:

Or "draws seed" out of his basket and scatters it in the land.

Signifying that there should be such an abundance of grapes in the vintage, that they would continue pressing till seedtime.

And this denotes a great affluence of temporal good things, as an emblem of spiritual ones (see Lev. 26:5); where something of the like nature is promised and expressed in much the same manner.

“And the mountains shall drop sweet wine”:

Or "new wine"; intimating that there shall be an abundance of vines grown upon the mountains, which will produce large quantities of wine, so that they shall seem to drop or flow with it.

“And all the hills shall melt”:

With liquors; either with wine or honey, or rather with milk, being covered with flocks and herds, which shall yield an abundance of milk.

By plenty of spiritual things, as the word and ordinances, and rich supplies of grace; as well as of temporal things is meant (see Joel 3:18).

This speaks of a time when the curse is off of the land, and one crop is not fully eaten, until another crop is ready to be picked.

There will be an abundance of food in that day.

No one will be in want.

When Jesus sets up His kingdom here on this earth, there will be no need at all.

Everyone will have all their needs taken care of.

This will be that Sabbath of rest for the believers in Christ.

Amos 9:14 "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit [them]; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them."

I will restore them to their own country, and settle them in it.

See the following verses and notes (on Isaiah 11:12; and Ezekiel 28:25).

“And they shall build the waste”:

Cities of Judah and of Israel too, as well as Jerusalem.

Many of which we meet with in the latter histories of the Jews and their wars.

“Inhabit them”:

So they did from the time of their return until the Roman captivity, and were not by the space of six hundred years, pulled out of their habitation.

“Shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof”:

Be blessed in the increase of them and enjoy it, freed from the curse (Deut. 28:39).

“They shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them”:

These, planted for delight, should be blessed too.

Both vineyards and gardens should be fruitful, and they that planted them should dwell in their houses safely and eat the fruit of them.

This is actually taking place in the land of Israel today on a small scale.

This will become more and more productive, when the Lord Jesus comes back and reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Old Satan, and all of his problems, will be locked away for a thousand years.

There will be no negative influence in the earth during that time.

Amos 9:15 "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."

“They shall no more be pulled up out of their land”:

The ultimate fulfillment of God’s land promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:7; 15:7; 17:8), will occur during Christ’s millennial reign on earth (Joel 2:26-27).

Their promise of eternal inheritance of the Promised Land will be fulfilled.

God will not allow them to ever be overrun again.

This was never true of the literal Israel, but it will be true of spiritual Israel.

All of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ make up spiritual Israel.

God said it, it is so.

Romans 11:26-27 "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" "For this [is] my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Amos Chapter 9 Questions

1. I saw the Lord _____ upon the altar.
2. What causes the posts to shake?
3. What is He showing Amos in verse 1?
4. How can they escape the judgment of God?
5. What does verse 2 mean about heaven and hell?
6. What unusual thing does God punish those in the sea with?
7. There were _____ and _____ on Carmel.
8. Their captivity is not a safe _____ either.
9. When God touches the land, it _____.
10. God is omnipotent, all _____.
11. We know that Paul went to the _____ heaven.
12. Where did the water come from in the flood of Noah?
13. Why are the Ethiopians specifically mentioned?
14. The disobedient children (Israel), were no better off than the_____.
15. What is the important lesson in verse 7?
16. What will happen to the sinful kingdom?
17. Does this mean that every Israelite will die?

18. Where have they been?
19. Who does the house of Jacob include?
20. They were _____ into many nations.
21. All the sinners of my people shall die by the _____.
22. The church of the living God is open to _____ and _____.
23. What saves everyone who will accept it?
24. The heathen that are called by His name are _____.
25. Where will Satan be during the reign of Jesus?
26. If ye be Christ's, then are ye _____ seed, and heirs according to the promise.