

## MAJORING IN A MINOR-AMOS PART EIGHT

### THE FIFTH VISION OF AMOS

Finally, we come to the end of this series on the Book of Amos as we examine his fifth and final vision. The first one, was of Locusts and famine, the second was about fire, while the third dealt with a plumb-line and a tin wall. In the previous study, we saw the basket of ripe fruit and how it points to end times, the Harvest, and the second coming of our Lord. Now we turn to chapter 9, for the final vision.

*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.*

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

*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:*

*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.*

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.*

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.*

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?*

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.*

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.*

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

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:*

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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

Note very carefully, the opening words of this vision; they give us two extremely important pieces of information that are central to understanding what is happening here. First of all, God is **standing**. In the Bible, standing is frequently used to signify the opposite to sitting. Standing, represents taking physical action, whereas sitting indicates taking none. One good example of this, would be how Jesus dealt with the woman taken in adultery. He sat and didn't condemn her.

This has to be linked to where God is standing. He is at the altar, where sin offerings are made, and judgement is given. God symbolically sits on the mercy seat to show mercy, but when He stands, mercy is finished and sentence is about to be passed. This then, is the controlling image of this final vision. God has passed sentence on Israel and there is nothing that can change it.

This point is further emphasised in verse 1, with the next image. Reference is made to lintels and doorposts, and these are key images for the people of Israel.

*Exo 12:22-23*

*22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.*

*23. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*

This image was given as a symbol of God's protection from His wrath and judgement. Now see how this has changed: '*Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake:*' This protection has been broken, that the wrath of God may fall upon them too. The Bible clearly states, that everything that can be shaken, will be shaken.

How does this apply to us? It is my understanding, that the NT equivalent of this symbol, is the Cross. It was here, that the shed blood of the sinless Lamb of God redeemed us, and placed us under God's hand of mercy and grace. All those who do not come to the Cross of Christ, all those who spurn His Cross, all those who deny its saving power and its relevance in our society, are placed outside its protection. If the Cross is not central to our lives, as I've said before, then Almighty God is standing to pass judgement on a sinful and rebellious people.

Note next, where God's first blow will fall; on the Head. If, as the Bible says, judgement begins in the House of God, then this makes it quite clear, that this judgement will begin at the Head. Those who are in leadership will take the first blow. Those who have deceived the people and led them astray, will be struck down first. Doesn't the Bible also say, strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter?

*Mat 26:31*

*Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*

Our God is a God of righteousness and His righteous anger will be let loose upon those leaders who have fallen into those sins already detailed by Amos in the earlier chapters of his Book. Remember, this is ONE book and everything in it, is linked. This final vision is the culmination of all that has gone before.

The next few verses outline how complete and unrelenting God's judgement will be. There shall be no escape possible, there will be no place to hide in that terrible Day of the Lord. But what of us? I think verse 9 contains the first part of the answer.

*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.*

We will be sifted, we will be shaken, which is a necessary part of sifting, so that the chaff will be blown away, but note that *'not the least grain fall upon the earth.'* We will still be under His protection.

Consider these verses from the Book of Hebrews:12:23-29

*23. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

*24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

*25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

*26. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. (Matt 24:29 et.al.)*

*27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

*28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

*29. For our God is a consuming fire.*

If this isn't a NT parallel to Amos 9, then I don't know what is. This is the Hope that springs forth from the terror of the vision. This is part of what the rest of Amos chapter 9 speaks about. Let us briefly consider the closing verses.

*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:*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

These verses clearly speak of restoration and the coming of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Amos, so full of dire warnings and judgements, finishes with a rousing acclamation of God's eternal plan.

What is important to note here, is the clear provision for the Gentile nations in verse 12, and the eventual restoration of the Jews in verse 14. God is in control, hallelujah.

Verse 13 is interesting. It speaks not only of Harvest, a common theme in Amos as we have seen, but also gives some indication of the way in which it will be brought about. There are initially, three elements presented here, and as we all know three is the number of divine completeness.

We first of all see, the plougher, the sower and the reaper, the three key persons of any harvest. These reflect what should be the three key functions of the church; preparing the ground, sowing the seed and eventually, reaping the harvest.

Then we have the fourth person in the sequence. Four is the number of creation and that is what this person is doing, treading out the grapes to create wine, another well known Biblical symbol. This is the final key function of the church, after taking in the harvest, we have to turn it into the new wine. We have to train up and equip the people for their new life in Christ.

The time will come, says Amos, when we won't be able to keep up with the number of people coming to the Lord; each worker, will overtake the other; there won't be time to get one harvest gathered before more workers are in the field preparing it for the next season. This is but a part of the blessings God will pour out on His people.

Earlier on, God decreed that under His judgement, the people of Israel would plant, but not reap, nor would they enjoy the fruits of their labour. Now, in the time of His restoration, this will be reversed as verse 14 tells us.

*'they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.'*

I don't know when this time will be; I'm no expert on the Book of Revelation which also deals with these events. What I do know, is that the time is coming soon and we need to be prepared. There is going to be a final harvest and we will have our parts to play in it. Some of us are best fitted to prepare the ground, some will sow the seed, others will go out as labourers into the harvest field, while still others will tread the grapes into new wine. Each one is just as important as any of the others, and each is in its own way necessary for the rest to function properly. Are you ready to take up your task when the call of God comes upon your life?

In conclusion, we began this study because the times and society of Amos, were very much like our own, so his message to the Israelites, was also God's message to us. Let us not miss what the Lord is saying to His people in this day and at this time. Let us not make the same mistakes as they did. Let us not therefore come under His judgement as they did, but rather stay under His Mercy and His Grace.

These can be exciting times, and the Lord has much that He wants accomplished. As I've said before, we are His voice and His hands and His feet to this world and to this generation. If we won't accept this responsibility, then who will!