

AMOS

1¹THE WORDS OF AMOS, one of the sheep-farmers of Tekoa, which he received in visions concerning Israel during the reigns of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. **2**He said,
The LORD roars from Zion
and thunders from Jerusalem;
the shepherds' pastures are scorched
and the top of Carmel [top of Carmel: *or* choicest farmland] is dried up.

The sins of Israel and her neighbours

3These are the words of the LORD:
For crime after crime of Damascus
I will grant them no reprieve,
because they threshed Gilead under threshing-sledges spiked with iron.
4Therefore will I send fire upon the house of Hazael,
fire that shall eat up Ben-hadad's palaces;
5I will crush the great men of Damascus
and wipe out those who live in the Vale of Aven
and the sceptred ruler of Beth-eden;
the people of Aram shall be exiled to Kir.
It is the word of the LORD.

6These are the words of the LORD:
For crime after crime of Gaza
I will grant them no reprieve,
because they deported a whole band of exiles
and delivered them up to Edom.
7Therefore will I send fire upon the walls of Gaza,
fire that shall consume its palaces.
8I will wipe out those who live in Ashdod
and the sceptred ruler of Ashkelon;
I will turn my hand against Ekron,
and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish.
It is the word of the Lord GOD.

9These are the words of the LORD:
For crime after crime of Tyre
I will grant them no reprieve,
because, forgetting the ties of kinship,
they delivered a whole band of exiles to Edom.
10Therefore will I send fire upon the walls of Tyre,
fire that shall consume its palaces.

11These are the words of the LORD:
For crime after crime of Edom
I will grant them no reprieve,
because, sword in hand, they hunted their kinsmen down,
stifling their natural affections.

Their anger raged unceasing,
their fury stormed unchecked.

¹²Therefore will I send fire upon Teman,
fire that shall consume the palaces of Bozrah.

¹³These are the words of the LORD:

For crime after crime of the Ammonites
I will grant them no reprieve,
because in their greed for land
they invaded the ploughlands of Gilead.

¹⁴Therefore will I set fire to the walls of Rabbah,
fire that shall consume its palaces
amid war-cries on the day of battle,
with a whirlwind on the day of tempest;

¹⁵then their king shall be carried into exile,
he and his officers with him.
It is the word of the LORD.

2¹These are the words of the LORD:

For crime after crime of Moab
I will grant them no reprieve,
because they burnt the bones of the king of Edom to ash [to ash: *or* for
lime].

²Therefore will I send fire upon Moab,
fire that shall consume the palaces in their towns;
Moab shall perish in uproar,
with war-cries and the sound of trumpets,

³and I will cut off the ruler from among them
and kill all their officers with him.
It is the word of the LORD.

⁴These are the words of the LORD:

For crime after crime of Judah
I will grant them no reprieve,
because they have spurned the law of the LORD
and have not observed his decrees,
and have been led astray by the false gods
that their fathers followed.

⁵Therefore will I send fire upon Judah,
fire that shall consume the palaces of Jerusalem.

⁶These are the words of the LORD:

For crime after crime of Israel
I will grant them no reprieve,
because they sell the innocent for silver
and the destitute for a pair of shoes.

⁷They grind the heads of the poor into the earth
and thrust the humble out of their way.
Father and son resort to the same girl,
to the profanation of my holy name.

⁸Men lie down beside every altar
on garments seized in pledge,
and in the house of their God [*Or* gods] they drink liquor

got by way of fines.

⁹Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorites before them,
though they were tall as cedars,
though they were sturdy as oaks,
I who destroyed their fruit above
and their roots below.

¹⁰It was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt,
I who led you in the wilderness forty years,
to take possession of the land of the Amorites;

¹¹I raised up prophets from your sons, '
Nazirites from your young men.
Was it not so indeed, you men of Israel?
says the LORD.

¹²But you made the Nazirites drink wine,
and said to the prophets, 'You shall not prophesy,'

¹³Listen, I groan under the burden of you,
as a wagon creaks under a full load.

¹⁴Flight shall not save the swift,
the strong man shall not rally his strength.
The warrior shall not save himself,

¹⁵the archer shall not stand his ground;
the swift of foot shall not be saved,
nor the horseman escape;

¹⁶on that day the bravest of warriors
shall be stripped of his arms and run away.
This is the very word of the LORD.

Israel 's sins and threatened punishment

3¹LISTEN, ISRAELITES, to these words that the LORD addresses to you, to the whole nation which he brought up from Egypt:

²For you alone have I cared
among all the nations of the world;
therefore will I punish you
for all your iniquities.

³Do two men travel together
unless they have agreed?

⁴Does a lion roar in the forest
if he has no prey?

Does a young lion growl in his den
if he has caught nothing?

⁵Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground
if the striker is not set for it?
Does a trap spring from the ground
and take nothing?

⁶If a trumpet sounds the alarm,
are not the people scared?

If disaster falls on a city,
has not the LORD been at work [If disaster ... work: *or* If there is evil in a
city, will not the LORD act]?

⁷For the Lord GOD does nothing
without giving to his servants the prophets knowledge of his plans.

⁸The lion has roared; who is not terrified?
The Lord GOD has spoken; who will not prophesy?

⁹Stand upon the palaces in Ashdod
and upon the palaces of Egypt,
and proclaim aloud:

'Assemble on the hills of Samaria,
look at the tumult seething among her people
and at the oppression in her midst;

¹⁰what do they care for honesty
who hoard in their palaces the gains of crime and violence?'
This is the very word of the LORD.

¹¹Therefore these are the words of the Lord GOD:

An enemy shall surround [*shall surround: prob. rdg, Heb and round*] the
land;
your stronghold shall be thrown down
and your palaces sacked.

¹²These are the words of the LORD:

As a shepherd rescues out of the jaws of a lion
two shin bones or the tip of an ear,
so shall the Israelites who live in Samaria be rescued
like a corner of a couch or a chip from the leg of a bed [*or a chip ... bed:
prob. rdg, Heb obscure*].

¹³Listen and testify against the family of Jacob.
This is the very word of the Lord GOD, the God of Hosts.

¹⁴On the day when I deal with Israel
for all their crimes,
I will most surely deal with the altars of Bethel:
the horns of the altar shall be hacked off
and shall fall to the ground.

¹⁵I will break down both winter-house and summer-house;
houses of ivory shall perish,
and great houses be demolished.
This is the very word of the LORD.

4¹Listen to this,
you cows of Bashan who live on the hill of Samaria,
you who oppress the poor and crush the destitute,
who say to your lords, 'Bring us drink':

²the Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness
that your time is coming
when men shall carry you away on their shields [*Or baskets*]
and your children in fish-baskets.

³You shall each be carried straight out
through the breaches in the walls
and pitched on a dunghill [a dunghill: *prob. rdg, Heb the Harmon*].
This is the very word of the LORD.

⁴Come to Bethel – and rebel!
Come to Gilgal – and rebel the more!
Bring your sacrifices for the morning,
your tithes within three days.

⁵Burn your thank-offering without leaven;
announce, proclaim your freewill offerings;
for you love to do what is proper, you men of Israel!
This is the very word of the Lord GOD.

⁶It was I who kept teeth idle,
in all your cities,
who brought famine on all your settlements;
yet you did not come back to me.
This is the very word of the LORD.

⁷It was I who withheld the showers from you
while there were still three months to harvest.
I would send rain on one city
and no rain on another;
rain would fall on one field,
and another would be parched for lack of it.

⁸From this city and that, men would stagger to another
for water to drink, but would not find enough;
yet you did not come back to me.
This is the very word of the LORD.

⁹I blasted you with black blight and red;
I laid waste [I laid waste: *prob. rdg, Heb to increase*] your gardens and
vineyards;
the locust devoured your fig-trees and your olives;
yet you did not come back to me.
This is the very word of the LORD.

¹⁰I sent plague upon you like the plagues of Egypt,
I killed with the sword
your young men and your troops of horses.
I made your camps stink in your nostrils;
yet you did not come back to me.
This is the very word of the LORD.

¹¹I brought destruction amongst you
as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah;
you were like a brand snatched from the fire;
yet you did not come back to me.

This is the very word of the LORD.

¹²Therefore, Israel, this is what I will do to you;
and, because this is what I will do to you,
Israel, prepare to meet your God.

¹³It is he who forges the thunder and creates the wind,
who showers abundant rain on the earth [who showers ... earth: *prob. rdg, Heb* who tells his thoughts to mankind],
who darkens the dawn with thick clouds
and marches over the heights of the earth –
his name is the LORD the God of Hosts.

5¹Listen to these words; I raise a dirge over you, O Israel:

²She has fallen to rise no more,
the virgin Israel,
prostrate on her own soil, with no one to lift her up.

³These are the words of the Lord GOD:

The city that marched out to war a thousand strong
shall have but a hundred left,
that which marched out a hundred strong
shall have but ten men of Israel left.

⁴These are the words of the LORD to the people of Israel:

Resort to me, if you would live, ⁵not to Bethel;
go not to Gilgal, nor pass on to Beersheba;
for Gilgal shall be swept away
and Bethel brought to nothing.

⁶If you would live, resort to the LORD,
or he will break out against Joseph like fire,
fire which will devour Israel with no one to quench it;
⁸[*v7 transposed to follow v9*] he who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turned darkness into morning
and darkened day into night,
who summoned the waters of the sea
and poured them over the earth,
who makes Taurus rise after Capella

⁹and Taurus set hard on the rising of the Vintager [who makes ... Vintager:
prob. rdg, Heb who smiles destruction on the strong, and destruction comes
on the fortified city] –

he who does this, his name is the LORD [his ... LORD: *transposed from end of v8*].

⁷You that turn justice upside down [*upside down: prob. rdg, Heb* poison]
and bring righteousness to the ground,

¹⁰you that hate a man who brings the wrongdoer to court
and loathe him who speaks the whole truth:

¹¹for all this, because you levy taxes on the poor
and extort a tribute of grain from them,
though you have built houses of hewn stone,
you shall not live in them,
though you have planted pleasant vineyards,
you shall not drink wine from them.

¹²For I know how many your crimes are
and how countless your sins,
you who persecute the guiltless, hold men to ransom
and thrust the destitute out of court.

¹³At that time, therefore, a prudent man will stay quiet,
for it will be an evil time.

¹⁴Seek good and not evil,
that you may live,
that the LORD the God of Hosts may be firmly on your side, as you say he
is.

¹⁵Hate evil and love good;
enthroned justice in the courts;
it may be that the LORD the God of Hosts
will be gracious to the survivors of Joseph.

¹⁶Therefore these are the words of the LORD the God of Hosts:

There shall be wailing in every street,
and in all open places cries of woe.
The farmer shall be called to mourning,
and those skilled in the dirge to [*prob. rdg, Heb places to before those
skilled*] wailing;

¹⁷there shall be lamentation in every vineyard;
for I will pass through the midst of you,
says the LORD.

¹⁸Fools who long for the day of the LORD,
what will the day of the LORD mean to you?
It will be darkness, not light.

¹⁹It will be as when a man runs from a lion,
and a bear meets him,
or turns into a house and leans his hand on the wall,
and a snake bites him.

²⁰The day of the LORD is indeed darkness, not light,
a day of gloom with no dawn.

²¹I hate, I spurn your pilgrim-feasts;
I will not delight in your sacred ceremonies.

²²When you present your sacrifices and offerings
I will not accept them,
nor look on the buffaloes of your shared-offerings.

²³Spare me the sound of your songs;
I cannot endure the music of your lutes.

²⁴Let justice roll on like a river
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

²⁵Did you bring me sacrifices and gifts,
you people of Israel, those forty years in the wilderness?

²⁶No! but now you shall take up

the shrine of your idol king
and the pedestals of your images [*prob. rdg, Heb adds the star of your
gods*],
which you have made for yourselves,
27and I will drive you into exile beyond Damascus.

So says the LORD; the God of Hosts is his name.

6¹Shame on you who live at ease in Zion,
and you, untroubled on the hill of Samaria,
men of mark in the first of nations,
you to whom the people of Israel resort!

²Go, look at Calneh,
travel on to Hamath the great,
then go down to Gath of the Philistines –
are you better than these kingdoms?
Or is your [*prob. rdg, Heb their*] territory greater than theirs [*prob. rdg, Heb
yours*]?

³You who thrust the evil day aside
and make haste to establish violence [You ... violence: *or* You who invoke
the day of wrongdoing and bring near the sabbath of violence].

⁴You who loll on beds inlaid with ivory
and sprawl over your couches,
feasting on lambs from the flock
and fatted calves,

⁵you who pluck the strings of the lute
and invent musical instruments like David,

⁶you who drink wine by the bowlful
and lard yourselves with the richest of oils,
but are not grieved at the ruin of Joseph –

⁷now, therefore,
you shall head the column of exiles;
that will be the end of sprawling and revelry.

⁸The Lord GOD has sworn by himself:

I loathe the arrogance of Jacob,
I loathe his palaces;
city and all in it I will abandon to their fate.

⁹If ten men are left in one house,
they shall die,

¹⁰and a man's uncle and the embalmer shall take him up
to carry his body out of the house for burial,
and they shall call to someone in a corner of the house,
'Any more there?', and he shall answer, 'No.'
Then he will add, 'Hush !' –
for the name of the LORD must not be mentioned.

¹¹For the LORD will command,
and at the shock the great house will be rubble
and the cottage matchwood.

¹²Can horses gallop over rocks?
Can the sea be ploughed with oxen?
Yet you have turned into venom the process of law
and justice itself into poison,
¹³you who are jubilant over a nothing^[see next note] and boast,
'Have we not won power [a nothing *and* power: *Heb* Lo-debar and Karnaim,
making a word-play on the two place-names] by our own strength?'
¹⁴O Israel, I am raising a nation against you,
and they shall harry your land
from Lebo-hamath to the gorge of the Arabah.
This is the very word of the LORD the God of Hosts.

Visions foretelling doom upon Israel

7¹THIS WAS WHAT THE LORD GOD SHOWED ME: a swarm of locusts hatched out when the late corn, which comes after the king's early crop, was beginning to sprout. ²As they were devouring the last of the herbage in the land, I said, 'O Lord GOD, forgive; what will Jacob be after this? He is so small.' ³Then the LORD relented and said, 'This shall not happen.'

⁴This was what the Lord GOD showed me: the Lord GOD was summoning a flame of fire [a flame of fire: *prob. rdg, Heb* to contend with fire] to devour the great abyss, and to devour all creation. ⁵I said, 'O Lord GOD, I pray thee, cease; what will Jacob be after this? He is so small.' ⁶The LORD relented and said, 'This also shall not happen.'

⁷This was what the LORD showed me: there was a man standing by a wall [*prob. rdg, Heb* adds of a plumb-line] with a plumb-line in his hand. ⁸The LORD said to me, 'What do you see, Amos?' 'A plumb-line', I answered, and the Lord said, 'I am setting a plumb-line to the heart of my people Israel; never again will I pass them by. ⁹The hill-shrines of Isaac shall be desolated and the sanctuaries of Israel laid waste; I will rise, sword in hand, against the house of Jeroboam.'

¹⁰Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, reported to Jeroboam king of Israel: 'Amos is conspiring against you in Israel; the country cannot tolerate what he is saying. ¹¹He says, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall be deported far from their native land." ' ¹²To Amos himself Amaziah said, 'Be off, you seer! Off with you to Judah! You can earn your living and do your prophesying there. ¹³But never prophesy again at Bethel, for this is the king's sanctuary, a royal palace.' 'I am [*Or was*] no prophet,' ¹⁴Amos replied to Amaziah, 'nor am I a prophet's son; I am [*Or was*] a herdsman and a dresser of sycomore-figs. ¹⁵But the LORD took me as I followed the flock and said to me, "Go and prophesy to my people Israel." ¹⁶So now listen to the word of the LORD. You tell me I am not to prophesy against Israel or go drivelling on against the people of Isaac. ¹⁷Now these are the words of the LORD: Your wife shall become a city strumpet [become ... strumpet: *or* be carried off as a prostitute in a raid] and your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword. Your land shall be divided up with a measuring-line, you yourself shall die in a heathen country, and Israel shall be deported far from their

native land and go into exile.'

8¹This was what the Lord GOD showed me: there was a basket of summer fruit, ²and he said, 'What are you looking at, Amos?' I answered, 'A basket of ripe summer^[see next note] fruit.' Then the LORD said to me, 'The time is ripe [*ripe summer and ripe: a play on the Heb qais (summer) and qes (end)*] for my people Israel. Never again will I pass them by. ³In that day, says the Lord GOD, the singing women in the palace shall howl, "So many dead men, flung out everywhere! Silence!" '

⁴Listen to this, you who grind the destitute and plunder [*and plunder: prob. rdg, Heb to destroy*] the humble, ⁵you who say, 'When will the new moon be over so that we may sell corn? When will the sabbath be past so that we may open our wheat again, giving short measure in the bushel and taking overweight in the silver, tilting the scales fraudulently, and selling the dust of the wheat; ⁶that we may buy the poor for silver and the destitute for a pair of shoes?' ⁷The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: I will never forget any of their doings.

⁸Shall not the earth shake for this?
Shall not all who live on it grieve?
All earth shall surge and seethe like the Nile
and subside like the river of Egypt.

⁹On that day, says the Lord GOD,
I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
¹⁰I will turn your pilgrim-feasts into mourning
and all your songs into lamentation.
I will make you all put sackcloth round your waists
and have all your heads shaved.
I will make it like mourning for an only son
and the end of it a bitter day.

¹¹The time is coming, says the Lord GOD,
when I will send famine on the land,
not hunger for bread or thirst for water,
but for hearing the word of the LORD.

¹²Men shall stagger from north to south [*south: prob. rdg, Heb west*],
they shall range from east to west,
seeking the word of the LORD,
but they shall not find it.

¹³On that day fair maidens and young men
shall faint from thirst;

¹⁴all who take their oath by Ashimah, goddess of Samaria,
all who swear, 'By the life of your god, O Dan',
and, 'By the sacred way to Beersheba',
shall fall to rise no more.

9¹I saw the LORD standing by the altar, and he said:
Strike the capitals so that the whole porch is shaken;

I will smash them all into pieces [I will ... pieces: *prob. rdg, Heb* I will hack them on the heads of them all]

and I will kill them to the last man [them to the last man: *or their children*] with the sword.

No fugitive shall escape,
no survivor find safety;

²if they dig down to Sheol,
thence shall my hand take them;
if they climb up to heaven,
thence will I bring them down.

³If they hide on the top of Carmel,
there will I search out and take them;
if they conceal themselves from me in the depths of the sea,
there will I bid the sea-serpent bite them.

⁴If they are herded into captivity by their enemies,
there will I bid the sword slay them,
and I will fix my eye on them
for evil and not for good.

⁵The Lord the GOD of Hosts,
at whose touch the earth heaves,
and all who dwell on it wither [*Or mourn*],
it surges like the Nile,
and subsides like the river of Egypt,

⁶who builds his stair up to the heavens
and arches his ceiling over the earth,
who summons the waters of the sea
and pours them over the land –
his name is the LORD.

⁷Are not you Israelites like Cushites to me?
says the LORD.

Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor, the Aramaeans from Kir?

⁸Behold, I, the Lord GOD,
have my eyes on this sinful kingdom,
and I will wipe it off the face of the earth.

A remnant spared and restored

Yet I will not wipe out the family of Jacob root and branch,
says the LORD.

⁹No; I will give my orders,
I will shake Israel to and fro through all the nations
as a sieve is shaken to and fro
and not one pebble falls to the ground.

¹⁰They shall die by the sword, all the sinners of my people,
who say, 'Thou wilt not let disaster come near us

or overtake us.'

¹¹On that day I will restore
David's fallen house;
I will repair its gaping walls and restore its ruins;
I will rebuild it as it was long ago,
¹²that they may possess what is left of Edom
and all the nations who were once named mine.

This is the very word of the LORD, who will do this.

¹³A time is coming, says the LORD,
when the ploughman shall follow hard on the vintager [*Or* reaper],
and he who treads the grapes after him who sows the seed.
The mountains shall run with fresh wine,
and every hill shall wave with corn.

¹⁴I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel;
they shall rebuild deserted cities and live in them,
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
make gardens and eat the fruit.

¹⁵Once more I will plant them on their own soil,
and they shall never again be uprooted
from the soil I have given them.
It is the word of the LORD your God.