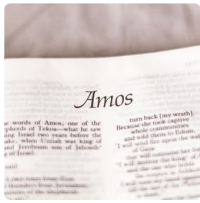


# OpenTheo

## Amos 3 - 9



### Amos - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg delves into the book of Amos, discussing themes such as the impending punishment on Israel for their transgressions, the importance of seeking the Lord and the consequences of turning away from Him. He also covers topics such as the significance of certain locations like Bethel and Gilgal, the concept of religious hypocrisy, and the blessings that come with seeking the Lord. Throughout the talk, Gregg emphasizes the need for repentance and correction, encouraging his audience to turn away from evil and seek the goodness of the Lord.

### Transcript

I'm going to read through this section, namely reading through without very much comment. I ended up making quite a few comments in chapters 1 and 2. But what I want to do is, again, survey the book, reading through it without stopping for expensive comments, and then go back over it and bring out some of the points that I think need to be focused upon. So we've seen in chapters 1 and 2 these eight burdens, beginning with the burden against Damascus and the Philistines and other pagan nations, and ending up with the lengthy denunciation of Israel, which was, of course, the main target of Amos' prophecy.

Chapter 3 through 6, these four chapters contain three sermons. Chapter 3 contains one, chapter 4 contains another, and the last of the three sermons is two chapters long. It's in chapters 5 and 6, twice as long as the others.

These sermons are short. They may have all been given on the same occasion, but they may have been given on separate occasions and simply put together here. We know the book was written sometime after the actual speaking of these words, because in chapter 1 he mentioned that these words were spoken two years before the earthquake.

It's quite clear when he wrote that it was after the earthquake, because he mentioned when the earthquake had come. Obviously the book was written at least two years after these words were uttered, and it may have been that he arranged sermons on separate occasions into the book in this order, or they may have been all given at once. The

reason we call them three separate sermons is because they each begin with, Hear this word, so it sounds like he's giving a new word in each case.

Hear this word, hear this word, hear this word. The first sermon is addressed to the children of Israel. Hear this word, chapter 3, verse 1. If it has caught nothing at all, if a trumpet is blown in a city, alerting that an invasion is about to take place, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it? Surely the Lord God does nothing unless he reveals his secret to his servants and prophets.

A lion roars, who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy? Proclaim in the palaces of Ashdod, and in the palaces of the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble on the mountains of Samaria, see great tumults in her midst, and be oppressed within her. For they do not know to do right, says the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. Therefore, thus says the Lord God, an adversary shall be all around the land.

He shall sap your strength from you, and your palaces shall be plundered. Thus says the Lord, as a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out who dwell in Samaria. In the corner of a bed or on the edge of a couch, hear and testify against the house of Jacob, says the Lord God, the God of hosts, that in that day I will punish Israel for their transgressions.

I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel, where the golden calf was, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground. I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house. The rich had sometimes two houses, and both will be destroyed.

The houses of ivory shall perish. Ahab had a house of ivory, the king, who was not king at this time, but a previous king. And the great houses shall have an end, says the Lord.

Now, we can see quite plainly this is a prophecy, that judgment for all of the transgressions previously named is going to come. It's going to come and especially hit the rich, but it's going to hit everybody. The rich are particularly mentioned as going to suffer, because probably they were not accustomed to suffering.

They were fat and sassy. We find them in chapter 6, verse 1, referred to those who are at ease. Well, actually, those who are at ease in Zion are mentioned in chapter 6, but also in who trust in the Mount of Samaria, that both kingdoms have people at ease in them, the northern and the southern, and woe unto those that are at ease, because they've become accustomed to ease.

People who are accustomed to hardship, of course, will suffer also, but they will suffer less, because they're more accustomed to suffering. That is, they'll adapt better. But there are quite a number of times in the book of Amos the affluent are singled out as for

those that will be targeted for judgment.

He tells us the altar of Beth will be destroyed. Only a small remnant, apparently verse 12 is saying only a small remnant of the people will survive. Perhaps that's what he means by like a shepherd taking two legs or a piece of an ear out of the mouth of a lion when he tries to rescue his sheep.

It's not much of a rescue when you get there too late like that. Or it might be just saying that they'll be torn apart, torn to pieces. At any rate, it's quite obviously a calamity that he's talking about.

Those rhetorical questions in verses 2 or actually 3 through 6, it's hard to know exactly how much meaning is to be attached to each one individual. It is possible to see them in couplets, at least some of them. Like verse 4 has two statements that seem to be essentially the same.

Will a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den when he has caught nothing? What is this referring to? Well, earlier in chapter 1 and verse 2, he says the Lord has roared from Zion. The Lord has been compared to a lion. Also down in verse 8, he says a lion has roared.

Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken. Who can but prophesy? No doubt these are parallels. The lion who roared is the Lord speaking.

A lion has roared. You people ought to be afraid. God has spoken.

I'm prophesying to you the words of the Lord. You should respond to this as if it's a threat from a lion ready to pounce upon you sheep. When he says can two walk together and must it be agreed? In verse 3, basically he's saying God is not going to be able to continue to walk with any of you people.

You guys are too far removed from thinking his way. He says very plainly in verse 10, they do not know to do right, says the Lord. They've lost sight of the way that God thinks about things.

And they don't agree with God anymore. And therefore God can't walk with them. Down in verse 5, he says will a bird fall into a snare on the earth where no trap is laid for it? Or will a snare spring up when it has caught nothing at all? Obviously these two statements are related to each other.

The idea seems to be that a trap has been laid for them. And God is the one who has laid the trap and they're going to be caught like a bird. The trumpet is blown in the city, verse 6. Won't the people be afraid? If there's calamity in the city, isn't it the Lord who's done it? He's basically saying the Lord is going to bring calamity on the city.

And the people are being warned as if the trumpet is being blown by the prophet. Heralding the coming of the danger of the invading army. And the people are not being afraid.

He's basically saying it's a strange thing to see people not afraid when the trumpet is blown. Don't people get afraid when the trumpet is blown in the city? And he kind of mixes those images from the previous rhetorical questions when he says in verse 8, a lion has roared, because he mentions lions roaring in verse 4. When he says, who will not fear in verse 8, it reminds us of the statement recently made in verse 6. Will not the people be afraid when the trumpet is blown in the city? The prophet's words are like a trumpet sound or like a lion roaring. It should cause people to fear.

Doesn't that happen when lions roar, when trumpets sound? Doesn't a lion roar when somebody has something to fear? Namely, prey. And so he says, the lion has roared, who won't fear? Why aren't you people afraid? These people are at ease. They're comfortable.

They're ignoring the word of the Lord. And he says, why aren't you afraid? He says, the Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy? Now this may be stated because the people were urging him not to. We find in chapter 7 that he was forbidden to prophesy.

We also found back in chapter 2 and verse 12, that when God gave Israel prophets, he says, they commanded the Nazarites to drink wine and they commanded the prophets saying, don't prophesy. So, in general, the Jews did not receive the prophets, and in particular, Amaziah, Therese the Temple, had forbidden Amos to prophesy. But he responds, how can I not prophesy? God has spoken.

Remember, Jeremiah, in chapter 20, was persecuted for what he said, and he said, I'm not going to prophesy in the name of the Lord anymore. I'm tired of this abuse. I'm just going to quit.

But he says, when I held my peace, your word was like fire in my bones consuming me, and I couldn't hold it in. Jeremiah 20, in verse 9, he says that. When God has put his burden onto his heart, how can they hold it in? That's what Amos is saying.

Don't tell me not to prophesy. God is talking. How can I be silent when he's trying to talk, actually, through me? Well, this is his message.

Basically, the people need to take warning, as if a trumpet is being sounded, as if a lion is roaring. A trumpet has been sent to them. They're ignoring his words, but they better take heed because there's danger.

Lions don't roar unless there's an actual threat to a potential prey. Trumpets don't sound unless there's something to be feared. And he tells them what it is to be feared.

God's judgment. Their palaces are going to be plundered, and they're going to be torn to pieces like a lion by a lion. And the altar of Bethel is going to be destroyed.

And all their houses, including their ivory houses and their great palaces, are going to be ruined, which is a particular threat to the rich. The next sermon, chapter 4, Hear this word, you cows of Bashan. Now, this is a very unflattering way to speak to the women of Israel.

Now, Bashan wasn't in Israel. Bashan was a... Do you remember, Bashan was on the other side of the Jordan. It was one of those regions that the Reubenites and the Gadites wanted for themselves because they had many herds.

And they said, this is great grazing land. Remember, in the days of Moses, before the Jews with Joshua went into the land, these two-and-a-half tribes came to Moses and said, Listen, you see we've got a lot of herds and flocks. This land here on the east of Jordan is really nice.

This land of Bashan and Gilead and so forth. Why don't you just let us stay here? And they were granted permission to do that if they would first go and help their brethren conquer the land of Canaan and then they could return. So they did.

So Bashan was known for its grazing land. And the cows of Bashan were fat cows. Now, the people that are addressed here are not really people of Bashan.

He's talking about the women of Samaria, the women of Israel. But he compares them with the fat cows of Bashan. Remember, shepherds and people who tend sheep and people who tend cows are not very friendly toward each other.

Usually, cowboys hate shepherds and vice versa, partially because cows and sheep don't share the grazing land very well. As I understand, I don't know much about this, but I understand that sheep pull up the grass by the roots, which ruins the grazing land for the cows. And there's generally, I think probably historically, always been some hostility between those who tend sheep and those who tend cows.

Amos was a shepherd. And therefore, to call these people cows is to use a rather disdainful name. And even if he had been a cowboy, he would have called them cows.

Not very flattering to call the women fat cows. But it's very clear that this prophecy, this second sermon, is addressed to the women, the society women, the women who had wealthy husbands and lots of idle time on their hands and just sat around and gave orders for people to bring them more to eat and more to drink. And they were totally unconcerned about the plight of the poor.

In fact, they oppressed the poor. It says, Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your

husbands, Bring this wine, let us drink. The Lord God is sworn by His holiness.

Behold, the day shall come upon you when He shall take you away with fishhooks This is no idle threat. The Assyrians were very cruel. When they conquered Samaria and any other nation, they often would put hooks through people's nose and drag them off by the nose or by the lips or by the cheeks or something.

They put hooks through their faces and pull them. Really horrible treatment they used. They did worse things too.

But he's making this threat to them. They're fat and sassy. They're sitting around indulgent.

They think that this is going to go on forever. He says, you're going to be cruelly abused. When Samaria falls, you will go out through broken walls.

In other words, the enemy will break down the walls of the city and penetrate the city. Each one straight ahead of her and you will be cast into harmony, says the Lord. Come to Bethel and transgress.

At Gilgal, multiply transgression. Bring your sacrifices every morning. Bring tithes every three days or every three years.

Different texts say. Offer a sacrifice of Thanksgiving with leaven. Proclaim and announce the free will offerings.

For this you love. You children of Israel, says the Lord. In other words, they love to come and do religious things.

But their very religion was a transgression against God. They worshiped. But they worshiped at an altar that God had forbidden at Bethel.

They worshiped the golden calf. They transgressed in their very worship. They brought sacrifices.

They paid tithes. They went through all the religious motions, but they were offensive to God. He loved to do it though.

Very religious. But they do offer their sacrifices with leaven. Proverbs 5. And that was forbidden in the law.

Leaven is sometimes a type or a symbol of sin. And it may be suggesting that as God commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices without leaven, it meant that they should not be sinful. That God doesn't receive sacrifices from people who are hypocritical and actually living in sin, but coming in to do their religious duty nonetheless.

These people were offering their sacrifices, but they had sin in their lives. And that could be what's referred to by offering their sacrifices with leaven. The leaven of sin, possibly.

Verse 6. Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. That means they didn't have food, so their teeth didn't get dirty. And lack of bread in all your places.

This was a famine of sin. Yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. I also have held rain from you, so drought followed famine.

When there were still three months to the harvest, which is the time when they need rain to ripen the harvest, the latter rains. And I made it rain on one city and withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain, the part withered.

So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water. Water was not totally impossible to find, but it was scarce. And people had to combine, you know, they had gone pilgrimage from one city to another to find water, to find a city that had it.

But they were not satisfied. Yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. Verse 9, I blasted you with blight and mildew.

This is mildew on the crops that would destroy their harvest. When your gardens increased, your vineyards, your fig trees, your olive trees, and locusts devoured them, yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. Three times he said that various judgments had been sent upon them, which were supposed to alert them to the fact that they're not pleasing the Lord, and they're going to turn around, but they haven't returned to the Lord.

I sent among you a plague after the man of Egypt. What kind of plague that is, we don't know, because we know that there were several plagues that God sent on Egypt, and he doesn't specify here. Your young men I killed with the sword, along with your captive horses.

I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils, yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. Verse 11, I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Whether he means literally with fire and brimstone out of heaven, or simply means that through some direct acts of judgment, just as he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by a direct act of judgment, maybe there were people among them that had been just smitten by the Lord, supernaturally, in one way or another.

And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning, yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel. For behold, he who forms mountains and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, or what his spirit is, can be translated, and makes the morning darkness, who treads the high places of the earth,

the Lord God of hosts is his name.

So this second sermon is addressed, first of all, to the women, the rich society women, because they're callous to the needs of the poor, and they're self-indulgent, but he says their fortunes will be reversed. He mentions that they come to Bethel and to Gilgal, and they offer sacrifices, they seem very religious, but their very religion is a sin, and they transgress against God by doing so. And then in verses 6 to the end, he basically is telling them of things that he has already done to get their attention and to persuade them to repent, but unappealingly they've been unresponsive to his chastening.

And he mentions all these things that he's already done, and now he says in verse 12, therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel, because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God. They've never returned to God, they don't know him, they've never met him, but they're going to meet him. Now there's better ways to meet God than the way that he meets.

Everybody's going to meet God someday. God will be known throughout all the earth. Every knee is going to bow, and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

God has said three times in the scripture that the knowledge of his glory will cover the earth, and as the waters come to the sea, everybody's going to know God, but how are they going to meet him? How are they going to know him? In chapter 5, in the third sermon, he tells them twice, seek me and live. In other words, become acquainted with him. Get to know him that way.

If they don't, they'll meet him as a judge. And that's what he's warning them of at the end of chapter 4. Prepare to meet your God. I've done these things, you haven't seen me personally.

You haven't really seen me roll up my sleeve and bear my arm. I've never really come with a full-on visitation of judgment. You haven't met me yet.

You've only seen a few little things I've done to try to turn you around, and you haven't turned around. You haven't come to me. You haven't voluntarily met me and returned to me.

So, I'm going to invade you, and I'm going to destroy you, and that's how you're going to meet your God, oh Israel. Now the third sermon is in chapters 5 and 6, longer. He says, Hear this word which I take up against you, this lamentation o'er the house of Israel.

The virgin of Israel has fallen, she will rise no more. She lies forsaken on her land, there is no one to raise her up. For thus says the Lord God, this city that goes out by a thousand shall have only a hundred left.



That is, that go out to battle by thousands, only a hundred will be left of their armies or of their citizens, one or the other. And that which goes out by a hundred shall have only ten left of the house of Israel. Ninety percent are going to be wiped out.

For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel, seek me and live, but do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal. Now it's quite clear that when he said in chapter 4, verse 4, come to Bethel and transgress, at Gilgal multiply transgression, he was speaking sarcastically. He was speaking ironically.

He didn't really want them to come to Bethel and Gilgal. He was saying, this is what you love to do. This you love, chapter 4, verses 4 and 5. Now he's making it clear what his will is.

He doesn't want them to come to Gilgal and Bethel. He was just being sarcastic. He said that before.

Don't seek God there, because at Bethel they're going to find a golden calf, not God. And they shouldn't go to the other false places of worship either. Do not pass over to Beersheba, for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing.

Seek the Lord and live, he says a second time, verse 6, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph in Saul, with no one to quench it in Bethel. You who turn justice into wormwood, or bitterness, and lay righteousness to rest in the earth. He made the Pleiades and Orion, certain constellations that are referred to elsewhere in the scriptures also, Job, for example.

He turns the shadow of death into morning. These are the things that God can do. And he makes the day dark as night.

He calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth. The Lord is his name. He rains ruin upon the strong, so that fury comes upon the fortress.

They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly. That is the people of Israel. They don't like to be rebuked.

They don't like the prophet, or even the righteous magistrate, who judges righteous judgments. They don't like those people. They abhor them.

They like evil rulers. They like false prophets, who don't rebuke them. Therefore, because you tread down the poor and take grain taxes from it, though you have built houses of hewn stone, you shall not dwell in them.

You have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine from them. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins. You afflict the just and take bribes.

You divert the poor from justice at the gate. Therefore, the prudent keep silent at that

time, for it is an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live.

So the Lord God of hosts will be with you as you have spoken. Take evil, love good, establish justice in the gate. It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Now, twice he has said in verses 4 and 6, Seek me, or seek the Lord, and live. Have you ever wondered what it means to seek the Lord? I was just listening to a tape by John Wimber this morning, and I don't listen to John Wimber very much, but someone gave it to me and wanted me to hear it. And he mentioned that the Lord was speaking to him about seeking the face of the Lord.

Now, that's a good biblical phrase, seek the face of the Lord, Psalm 27, verse 7 or verse 8. David says, Lord, when you said seek my face, my heart said, I will seek your face. But then David said to me in verse 9, he says, but don't hide your face from me. Has it ever puzzled you when people say, you know, we ought to seek God.

Well, what do you do to seek God? Where do you look for him? I know where to seek for my glasses when I need them, where to seek for a clean pair of socks, where to seek a meal in the cupboards. I know how to look for places that can be geographic, for things that can be located in a geographical place, but God's everywhere. How do you look for him? How do you seek for him? By what means has God found or sought after him? How do you seek his face? David raises that question too in the Psalm I just mentioned, Psalm 27, he says, Lord, you told me to seek your face.

My heart has responded affirmatively. Yes, Lord, I will seek your face. But where is it? Don't hide your face far from me, he says.

Where do I look for you? You're invisible. Well, mercifully, God doesn't leave the question unanswered. I believe this passage actually answers that question.

Twice he says, seek me and live, but then in verse 14 he says, seek good and not evil that you may live. Quite obviously, it's parallel to saying, seek me and live. He spells it out.

How do you seek God? By seeking good and not evil. Then he goes on, so the Lord of hosts will be with you. You'll find him.

Hate evil and love good. Establish justice in the gate. That is, the magistrates and the judges have to start doing the right thing instead of the corrupt thing they've been doing.

It may be that the Lord of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. Now notice, seeking the Lord, therefore, is treated as synonymous with seeking good and not evil. Loving what is good and hating what is evil and being just in your dealing.

In other words, it's a way of living. It's a surrendering of your thoughts to thinking the way God thinks on things. Loving what he loves and hating what he hates.

It's a changing of your mind. It's repenting. Turning around.

That's what seeking God apparently is. It's repenting of the ways that you disagreed with God and starting to agree with him. Can two walk together unless they're agreed? He had said earlier.

Obviously, the people love evil and they hate good. Now they need to change that. They need to love good and hate evil.

And so that is what it means to seek the Lord. To begin to repent and think the way God thinks and to live a certain way. Establishing justice and so forth.

So, seeking the Lord is really a very practical thing. It has to do with the way you form your values, your thought processes, and it also has to do with the way you conduct yourself. Okay.

Verse 16. Therefore, the Lord God of hosts, the Lord says this. There shall be wailing in all streets.

They shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas! They shall call the farmer to mourning and the skillful lamenters to wailing. In all vineyards there shall be wailing, for I will pass through you, says the Lord. Now, I will pass through you means he's not going to pass by them.

Remember in the Exodus, the last plague upon Egypt was God passing through the land of Egypt and smiting the firstborn of every house. But he said that when I see the blood on the doorpost, I will pass over you and I will not slay your firstborn. In other words, when God passed through to judge, there were certain people that he would not pass through.

He'd pass over. He'd pass by. He would not cause his judgment to wrestle him.

Now, here, the children of Israel who stand vulnerable to God's judgment, he says, I'm going to pass through you. Unlike his passing over them in Egypt and not judging them, he's going to treat them like he treats the Egyptians. Later on we'll see in chapter 8. Notice chapter 8, verse 2, the way he says this.

He said, Amos, what do you see? I said, a basket of summer fruit. Then the Lord said to me, the end has come upon my people Israel. I will not pass by them anymore.

He's going to pass through them. He's not going to pass by them. That's what he says there.

He's not going to pass over them anymore. Also, I believe he says that in chapter 7, verse 8. He says, behold, I'm setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel. I will not pass by them anymore.

These expressions mean that instead of passing by, he's going to pass through just like he did through the land of Egypt. He's not going to pass over them when he judges. They're going to receive judgment and not be exempt.

Okay, back to chapter 5, verse 18. Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord. For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness and not light.

It will be as though a man fled from a lion and a bear met him, or as though he went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him. Inescapable, in other words. Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light? Is it not very dark with no brightness in it? Now, there were people saying, oh, that the day of the Lord would come.

What does the day of the Lord mean? Well, the day of the Lord is when God really comes and sets everything right. But sometimes in the Old Testament it means a particular judgment on a particular nation. The day of the Lord is upon Egypt.

The day of the Lord is upon Edom. The day of the Lord is upon whoever. That means they're in trouble.

That means it's the day of reckoning. They have their day in court with the judge, the Lord. The day of the Lord often means their day in court, as it were, standing judgment before God.

And the Jews, or the people of Israel, were so self-righteous, and they believed themselves to be religious and obedient to God, even though they were paying no attention to what their prophets were saying, that they thought the day of the Lord would be okay for them. They thought everyone else would suffer, but they wouldn't, because they were God's people. After all, they were offering their sacrifices at Bethel and so forth, and their tithes and everything.

They were continuing in their empty religion thinking that that made a difference with God. He says, listen, you think the day of the Lord is going to be a tolerable thing for you, and it's not. It's going to be darkness.

It's not going to be light. I sometimes, when I read this passage, think of the way a lot of modern Christians are who are always talking about the coming of Jesus and how excited they are about the coming of Jesus, but when you look at the way they live, I think if Jesus came back right now, they'd be in big trouble. They don't seem to realize that Jesus isn't coming back just to congratulate everybody.

He's coming back to judge the world. And one of the reasons that He hasn't come back yet is He's waiting for His people to get their act together so He doesn't have to judge them too. That's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

He says that God chastens us now so that we won't be condemned with the world. In other words, He's correcting us, trying to get our act together here through chastening so that we won't have to be judged and condemned with the world. Paul says to the Corinthians that he was forestalling his visit to Corinth.

2 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 6, he says that the reason he hadn't come yet to Corinth was because he wanted to wait until the righteous in Corinth got their act together more. He says, I'm willing to come and execute vengeance on the disobedient when your obedience is fulfilled or is complete. That is to say, someday He's going to come and set things right in Corinth, Paul is.

But He's going to wait until the true Christians have really got their act together so there's a clear distinction between the ones who need to be judged and the ones who don't. God is waiting. He hasn't come yet because the people that He wants to see saved have not yet gotten their act together.

God's not slack concerning His promise. Some people accuse Him of being slack in His promised return, 2 Peter 3 tells us. But He's longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The only reason God hasn't come back sooner is because He's waiting for more people to repent. Now, the day of the Lord had not yet come upon Israel as it was going to. But they assumed that it would be all right.

In fact, they even longed for it. They wanted God to show up and judge all their enemies. But they didn't realize that if God came and judged the enemies, they're going to get judged too because they're no different than the men that they want to see judgment upon.

They're just as wicked as any other nation. He says, you who desire the day of the Lord, woe unto you because it's not going to be light for you. It's going to be darkness.

And it's going to be inescapable judgment. It's like a man who runs from a bear and falls into the mouth of a lion, or vice versa. Runs from a lion and falls into the victim to a bear.

Or he manages to escape into his house, having escaped a lion and a bear. He slams the door behind him and he feels safe in his house so he leans against the wall and there's a deadly serpent there that bites him. You know, there's no getting away from the judgment of God, he's saying.

It's going to be dark. And it's going to be a very dark day for you. No brightness in it.

Verse 21, he says, I hate, I despise your feast days. I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fatted peace offerings.

Take away from me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. Again, God implies, he doesn't care about religion, he wants justice.

He doesn't care about religiosity, what he wants to see is right living. Yeah, they can stake worship and play musical instruments, same as us. They can bring their offerings and their sacrifices of praise to God, like we do.

But just like us, and just like them, it's a universal thing, God is not pleased with sacrifices that are offered or music that is played for him if it is not accompanied by just dealing. Fair dealing. Righteous living.

And so he says, now listen, I hate all this religious activity of yours, what I want to see is let justice prevail. Let justice roll down like mighty rivers from your midst. Let you flood the earth with influence for righteousness and justice rather than for ritual, empty religiosity.

He says in verse 25, Did you offer me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? You also carried Sikuth, which means the tabernacle of mulk, I believe it is. And he says, And Sheehan, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves. Now what he's saying is that even during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, they didn't offer sacrifices exclusively to the Lord.

They did offer sacrifices at the tabernacle, but they also lapsed into idolatry. And he's saying, you guys have never really faithfully been worshipers in my eyes. Even though you still worship me now, you're still not faithful to worship me exclusively.

You're worshiping idols. He says it's been that way right from the beginning, right from the time of the Exodus, those forty years in the wilderness. You weren't worshiping me exclusively.

You had your idols with you too. Therefore, verse 27 says, I will send you into captivity on Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. Then we go on.

The sermon continues. Woe unto you who are seated in Zion and trust in Mount Samaria. Here we see both the northern and the southern kingdom are represented in this doom.

Mount Zion, of course, is Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom. And Samaria would be the capital of the northern kingdom. Notable persons in the chief nation to

whom the house of Israel comes go over to Calna and See, and from there to Hamath the Great, and go down to Gath of the Philistines.

Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory? These cities that are mentioned, Calna, Hamath, and Gath, have already fallen to the Assyrians. And he's saying, listen, Assyria has already eaten up these ones. Are you any better than them? Are you going to be able to survive any better than they do against the Assyrians? The answer is no.

Now, the interesting thing is, his question is the kind of question they would normally answer yes, we are better than them. Because we're Jews, and those are Gentiles. And he's saying, listen, as far as God's concerned, you're not any better than them.

Yes, you have seen one Gentile city after another fall to the Assyrians. But you feel smug and complacent and secure because you are God's people, you think. But he's saying, essentially, you're no different.

You're just like the Gentiles. God's not going to make any distinction between you and the Gentiles when you're not living any different than the way they live. You're no better than those kingdoms that have already fallen.

Verse 3, Woe to you who put far off the day of doom. That is, they think the day of doom is far off in their thinking. They cause the seat of violence to come near.

That is, because they think that the day of judgment is distant. They draw near to sin and violence and injustice. This reminds us of what Jesus said about the servant who says, My master delays his coming.

He thinks the day of reckoning is far off. So what does he do? He begins to eat and drink with the drunk and beat his fellow servants, Jesus said. And then the Lord will come and admit that he thinks not, and will cut him in two and give him his portion with the hypocrites.

This is what Jesus says in, I believe it's found both in Luke chapter 12 and also in Matthew 24. Matthew 24 is verses 45 through 51 where Jesus talks about this. The man who says, My master delays his coming.

Actually, 48 through 51. They have a parallel in Luke. So the ones who think that judgment is far off and not coming soon often are tempted to do more sinful things, of course.

They think they're going to get away with it longer. It's better to realize that we all may stand judgment at any moment. Not necessarily that we believe Jesus is going to come back today, but we might stand before Jesus today.

We might die. He may come for us, as far as that goes. And therefore, an awareness of the imminence of judgment and of reckoning with God goes a long way toward motivating you to keep far from violence and evil.

But they were the opposite. They put far off the day of doom, and they caused the seed of violence and wickedness to come near. He says, You who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs of the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, you who chant to the sound of stringed instruments and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David, who drink wine from bowls and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but you are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

Those who are at ease, living comfortably, but are not aware of the evil that has come upon even the afflicted in their own land already, the poor and the desolate. And of course, that great evil and affliction is going to come on the whole nation shortly. They're not grieved about that.

They're not concerned about that. All they're concerned about is the here and now. They're comfortable now, so what do they care about what anyone else is suffering or what they're going to suffer in the future? Therefore, they shall go now captive as the first of the captives.

And those who recline at the banquet shall be removed. Usually it's in those captivities that took place by way. It's usually the most noble and rich classes were taken first and the poor were left behind in the land.

And you remember that was true of Judah. The Babylonians took the rich and the ruling class of people first and left the poor in the land. He says essentially, you rich, unconcerned, comfortable people are the first to go into captivity.

The Lord God has sworn by himself. The Lord God of hosts says, I abhor the pride of Jacob and I hate his palaces. Therefore, I will deliver up the city and all that is in it.

Then it shall come to pass that if 10 men remain in one house, they shall die. And when a kinsman of the dead or an uncle, literally in the Hebrew, an uncle of the dead with one who will burn the bodies picks up the bodies to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, Are there any more with you? Then someone will say none. And he will say, Hold your tongue, for we dare not mention the name of the Lord.

This is the most difficult passage in the book of Amos to understand as evidenced by the variety of explanations that commentaries have tried to give it. Commentators basically are at a loss to know what this is talking about. And if they can't, I certainly don't flatter myself to think that I can tell you what it means.

It's obviously talking about wholesale death and destruction in the city when it says that if there's 10 people living in a house, they'll all die. Essentially what it means is no



matter how many there are, 10 would be an unusual large number of people living in a house, but no matter how many there are, they'll all die. There's not going to be much of a remnant to speak of.

Now there will be a few people in the city left to burn the bodies. It's interesting that the Jews normally didn't burn carcasses. It was considered to be a great indignity to burn a carcass.

They only burned the carcasses of great offenders and criminals. But generally they would give people a decent burial. Here there seems to be an extremity.

So many dead people and so few survivors to bury them or to deal with their remains that burial is out of the question. I mean, how many graves would have to be dug by hand by these few survivors to bury all these corpses? Instead they just make big bonfires and burn the bodies. The idea that they're going to burn the bodies suggests that there are so many dead and so few left over that the customary burials will have to be dispensed with and the bodies will just be burned.

But what is meant in this place where it says when the one comes to gather the bodies to burn them he'll say to one in the house are there any more with you and someone inside will say none then he'll say hold your tongue for we dare not mention the name of the one. This is the most confusing part of the verse and I've read a whole bunch of different suggestions none of them make very much sense to me. Not all commentators agree who this one who says none is.

Is it two men working in concert gathering the bodies one stays outside and one goes inside and throws the bodies out and after the bodies stop flying out the window the guy on the outside are there any more in there and his companion says nope that's all or is it that there's just one person in view here who's going around from house to house and he's calling into each house saying anyone alive in there anyone alive in there and from this one house the person says nope no one in here that's chickens you know there's none of us alive in here but someone who's hiding among the dead you know says no there's none alive even though obviously he's alive and speaking it's not different commentaries that I've consulted have taken different positions about what's going on here and most particularly what is meant when he says hold your tongue for we dare not mention the name of the Lord some people some commentators feel like what this means is when he says none the other person says don't say anything else the danger's not over stay in hiding don't mention anything even the name of the Lord others feel like it has some other meaning I actually don't have any idea what it means except that perhaps it's saying that well one commentator felt that by mentioning the name of the Lord they had a superstitious idea that by mentioning the name of the Lord it would draw God's attention and that God was the one who got through and ravaged the city and that the person who survived had been a lucky one that God had overlooked and that he dare

not mention the name of the Lord unless he called God's attention the fact that he'd been overlooked and God come back and kill him too some have thought that that's what it means I won't attempt to tell you what it means because I don't know and it's obvious that the commentators are grasping too it's a very obscure statement and as I said it's probably the only statement in the whole book of Amos that's very, very difficult to understand we just have to leave it at that verse 11 for behold the Lord gives a command he will break the great house into bits and the little houses into pieces do horses run on rock? does one plow there with oxen? yet you have turned justice into gall or bitterness and the fruit of righteousness into wormwoods which means bitterness you who rejoice over low debar and say have we not taken carnaeum for ourselves by our own strength carnaeum is a plural word for horns it might be a reference to a place or it might just be the reference to horns meaning power sometimes in the prophets and psalms horns represent are a symbol of power they might be claiming to have gained power from themselves from their own strength but he says behold I will raise up a nation against you O house of Israel says the Lord God of hosts and they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath to the valley of Arabah so again he protests that they have perverted justice and therefore they've got to be judged by captivity these three sermons are thus ended we go on now to the final section of the book which is comprised of five visions interrupted in their midst by a brief historical parenthesis these visions are very brief chapter 7 thus says the Lord I'm sorry thus the Lord God showed me behold he formed the locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings and so it was when they had finished eating the grass of the land that I said O Lord God forgive I pray O that Jacob may stand for he is small so the Lord relented concerning this it shall not be said the Lord thus the Lord showed me behold the Lord God called for conflict by fire and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory and I said O Lord God cease I pray O that Jacob may stand for he is small so the Lord relented concerning this this also shall not be said the Lord God now these first two visions he saw of things that never really transpired he saw a vision of what God was intending to do but the so because the prophet protested that if these things were brought on the nation it would totally destroy them there would be nothing left of them and he asked God to forgive them of their iniquity and to hold off God said okay I won't do this he basically showed Amos what he wanted to do and this may have been over a period of time he may have just listed these all at one time but at various points in his ministry he may have seen these different visions and there may have been different times when he interceded for the people and God forstalled judgment one more time first it was a locust plague next a fire that would go through and destroy everything but the intercession of the prophets God withheld them and didn't send them I just might make a comment in verse one he talks about the locust had eaten the crop indeed the late crop after the king was mowing suggests that the king for his family had got to go through and take the first harvest or mow an early mowing of the grain harvest for himself and then whatever grew up afterwards was for everyone else he got to take the first pick of the harvest but after the king had gotten his

mowing when the people's harvest was still ripening the locusts were going to come and then he prayed and it didn't happen the third vision is in verse seven thus he showed me behold the Lord stood on a wall made with a plate with a plumb line in his hand now a plumb line of course is a string with a weight on the bottom and it's used by those in the building trade to determine whether a wall is plumb or whether it's erect in a perpendicular at a perpendicular angle from the foundation and of course when you hold the string next to the wall if the string is equidistant to the wall at the top and at the bottom then you know the wall is plumb so that's what the plumb line is for now this is of course symbolic Israel is being compared to a building and God is measuring to see if it's upright uprightness of course in the Bible means righteous and it's sort of the figure of speech that he's checking the uprightness of Israel with a plumb line he's seeing whether they measure up to the standard or whether they're going to have to be destroyed and he's going to have to start over again from scratch so he's measuring Israel with a plumb line he says he said to me in verse 8 Amos what do you see and I said I see a plumb line then the Lord said behold I am set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel I will not pass by them anymore the high places of Isaac shall be desolate the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam so he's saying essentially the same kind of thing that Daniel said to Belshazzar the guy who says you've been laid in the balances and found walking there's been a standard by which Israel has been measured and it falls short of that standard the plumb line represents a measure that determines you know the uprightness or the degree of whether or not Israel is consistent with the with the blueprint God gave a blueprint in his law and now he's checking to see whether that which has been built upon it is consistent with what the blueprint calls for and of course he's saying essentially that the wall is not plumb and therefore it's going to be torn down now at the end of verse 9 he says I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam well Jeroboam was the king of Israel therefore he was pronouncing judgment by the sword on the house of Jeroboam this called for a response and that was apparently after he uttered this third vision and this third oracle with this vision that Amaziah the priest of Bethel reacted verse 10 says Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel saying Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel the land is not able to bear all his words for thus Amos has said Jeroboam shall die by the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land so he reported to the king this priest of Bethel reported to the king that this prophet from Judah had come to Bethel and was pronouncing judgment on the king's house now we have no response from Jeroboam mentioned apparently Jeroboam didn't take Amaziah or Amos very seriously and he didn't even think it was anything to bother himself with he might have been distracted with more important matters so Amos never was punished by Jeroboam for this but nonetheless a report against Amos was sent to the king then Amaziah said to Amos go you seer flee to the land of Judah there eat your bread and there prophesy but never again prophesy at Bethel for it is the king's sanctuary and it is the royal residence as if the king has more authority than God I mean Amos was sent there by God Amaziah is protesting this is the

king's property this is the king's residence don't come here anymore well obviously Amos can't heed that command because it means that he has to the king and the wishes of the king and of the priest at Bethel above God so Amos responds to Amaziah and says I was no prophet or was I the son of a prophet probably meaning I wasn't one of the sons of the prophets namely a member of the prophetic guild but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit as I mentioned earlier this fruit had to be punctured or pinched or pierced at a certain point in the season to ripen properly and he was a seasonal worker in that as well as herding sheep then the Lord took me as I followed the flock and the Lord said to me go prophesy to my people Israel now therefore hear the word of the Lord you say do not prophesy against Israel and do not spout against the house of Isaac now notice what he said he says God told me to go prophesy against Israel but you say not to who am I supposed to obey you are God God the Lord said to me go and prophesy to my people Israel now you say do not prophesy against Israel now I've got a bit of a problem here I've got to make a choice between you and God therefore thus says the Lord verse 17 this is a personal prophecy of judgment against Emma Zion because of his forbidden amos which I told him to do says your wife shall be a harlot in the city your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword your land shall be divided by a survey line and you shall die in a defiled land and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land it's an awful thing to happen to a person but that's what's going to happen the man himself will be carried away captive and die in a foreign land his wife will become a harlot probably in the city of Samaria in other words the suggestion is made that she will be a widow because this man will be killed and carried away captive she will be left behind with nothing to support her so she will have to sell herself into prostitution and her sons will be dead also by the sword so she will lose her husband of course it's not prostitute to her but this is basically what will happen to her her husband will be killed and carried away to a land and die in that land her sons will be killed she will be left desolate so she will have no recourse but to become a prostitute and stay alive this is a miserable fate come on the woman who was a wife of a priest who would be of a privileged class at that particular time she will be brought very low chapter 8 we come to the fourth vision which has been interrupted by this historical parenthesis thus the lord god showed me behold a basket of summer fruit amos knew about fruit as he tended fruit near the summer time summer fruit means ripe fruit the fruit ripened so it means fruit that was ripe the idea is that this fruit is ripe just like israel is ripe for judgment and so he said amos what do you see i said a basket of summer fruit a ripe fruit then the lord said to me the end has come upon my people israel their right for judgment like this fruit is ripe i will not pass by them anymore just as he said in the previous chapter and the songs of the temple shall be wailing in that day says the lord god many dead bodies everywhere they shall throw them out in silence hear this you who swallow up the needy and who make the poor of the land fail saying when will the new moon be passed we may sell grain and the sabbath that we may trade our wheat making the ephah small and the shekel large falsifying the balances by deceit that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals even sell the bad wheat now what he says here is that the new moons

and sabbath which were supposed to be sacred days for the jews they weren't ignored by these people they were religious they kept the new moons and sabbath but all the while they were waiting for that to end they were reluctantly obeying the sabbath it was sort of what society called them to do to be respectable citizens they had to do that but all the while they were eager to get back to their corrupt business of selling inferior products selling slaves and buying slaves falsifying the balances in the marketplace using a false standard of ephah and shekel in other words we talked before about what false balances were in the marketplace the person has a false set of weights the bible says in proverbs that just balances are god's delight but false weights are an abomination to him talking about the deceptive use of a weight pretending like this is a shekel weight but it really isn't pretending like this basket is an ephah basket but it really isn't and selling a different quantity for a different price than you're representing it to the customer as very much the same in principle as someone who sells well to an advertiser who advertises a sale on something and what they do is they jack up the normal price of the thing and say that's its normal price and they ask for the regular price but they say that's a sales price they misrepresent the actual value of the thing they're selling they pretend like it's usually more costly and now that they're giving you a great deal but really the price they're asking is really what they'd ordinarily ask anyway or when someone's selling something like used cars or something and he knows the product's inferior but he always talks it up like it's really great that's falsifying the product or the value of the product and that's essentially the same thing as using false balance now what he's saying is these people of course they have to think from their work on the new moons and sabbaths they're not irreligious but all the while they're just waiting for the next day to come so they can go back to their corrupt business dealings again they resent having to keep the sabbaths but they do it anyway they don't do it out of love for God and certainly not out of any concern for pleasing him because the rest of their week they're doing things that are displeasing to him without any fear verse 7 the Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob surely I will never forget any of your works shall the land not tremble for this and everyone mourn who dwells in it all of it shall swell like the river heathen subside like the river of Egypt not sure exactly how that's to be understood and it shall come to pass in that day says the Lord God I will make the sun go down at noon and I will darken the earth in broad daylight I will turn your feasts into mourning and your songs into lamentation I will bring sackcloth on every waist instead of those ornamental sashes they wear sackcloth around their waist and baldness on every head a sign of mourning they'd shave their heads when they mourned I will make it like mourning for an only son and its end shall be a bitter day notice this imagery verse 9 I will make the sun go down at noon and I will darken the earth in broad daylight this is not literal he makes it very clear what he means he's talking about the time of the judgment on the city well that those literal heavenly phenomena didn't occur the sun didn't go down at noon that day but it means essentially that he'll make their light darkness we have the light dark motif in Isaiah also and in the other prophets we have it here basically light represents blessing and prosperity whereas darkness represents

calamity and cursing and that is quite frequently the case we saw earlier in chapter 5 remember he said in chapter 5 verse 18 woe to you who desire the day of the Lord what good is that day to you it will be darkness and not light the day of the Lord is not going to be a blessing it's going to be a calamity to you light and darkness simply referring to blessings and cursing or calamity earlier when it was described in the mighty works of God in chapter 5 verse 8 chapter 5 verse 8 it says he made the polities in the Orion he turns the shadow of death into morning and he makes the day dark as night well he doesn't really make the day dark as night he's done it a few times like in Egypt and such but that's not to be understood necessarily literal I don't think I think what he's saying is that he's the one who reverses the fortunes of people he controls who's going to experience blessing and cursing even at a time like day time when you expect it to be blessing or light he can bring darkness he can interrupt your prosperity he can interrupt your comfort and your security unexpectedly like causing the sun to go down at noon and that's what I believe he means in chapter 8 when he says I'll cause your sun to go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight the destruction of the city is compared to the again the cessation of the light of the sun which as we've seen is a repeated kind of image in the Bible okay verse 11 behold the days are coming says the Lord God that I will send a famine on the land not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water but of hearing the words of the Lord and they shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east and they shall run to and fro seeking the word of the Lord but it shall not find it in that day the fair virgins and the strong men shall faint from thirst and those who swear by the sin of Samaria who say as your God lives O Dan where there was another golden calf and as the way of Beersheba lives they shall fall and never rise again no no no no no here he talks about a famine for hearing the words of the Lord and a time when people will actually wish they had the word of the Lord they'll seek it they'll travel from sea to sea they'll they'll be dying of thirst spiritually speaking and many of them will be aware of it and seek the word of the Lord Saul experienced this earlier in an earlier generation Saul was forsaken by the Lord the prophet Samuel was no longer available and the prophets weren't getting any word for Saul and the Ur of the Thulim weren't producing any information either finally he went to a witch because he wanted to get some insight God wasn't talking that was God's judgment the man had earlier rejected the word of the Lord and therefore God said I'm not going to give you any more word but he he was desperate to get a word from the Lord desperate enough to actually go to a witch hoping to get a word from the Lord and there he got the word of judgment that the next day he'd be dead and he was but the people of Israel now pretty much the same way they've shown their their unconcern for the word of the Lord they've told the prophets not the prophets they've rejected the commandments of the Lord they've made their own religion in the place of those things that God commanded their hatred for the word of the Lord is now going to result in his withdrawing it suddenly they're going to be desperate to hear from God and he won't be talking there won't be any more prophets they'll be looking for someone to consult to find out the mind of God but God won't have anything to say to them it's a famine for hearing the words of the Lord this comes upon

people who have rejected the word of the Lord enough they become dull of hearing it and can't hear God's word anymore anyway historically this probably refers to the fact that there came a period where God didn't send any prophets for 400 years it was a lengthy famine after Malachi stopped prophesying there was a 400 year period longest ever in Israel's history where they didn't have any prophets no word came from the Lord until John the Baptist appeared and broke that silence and announced that the kingdom was at hand but that is very possibly the historical fulfillment of what he's talking about here it's a famine in principle the idea is you reject the word of the Lord when it's available it won't always be available God will judge you by stopping sending prophets by ceasing to give you an opportunity to hear the word of the Lord and then you'll be sorry then you'll faint for thirst you'll spiritually die and dry up and this probably as I said was fulfilled when God ceased to send prophets to the Jewish people for 400 years in what we call the intertestamental period in chapter 9 we have the fifth vision I saw the Lord sending prophets by the altar the first was grasshoppers or locusts the second was fire the third was a plumb line the fourth was a basket of ripe fruit and the fifth is the Lord standing by the altar probably the altar in Bethel against which certain judgments had already been announced and God said strike the doorposts apparently of the temple there at Bethel destroy the door apparently so that people won't be able to get into the temple of the golden calf let it fall down on their heads I will slay the last of them with the sword he who flees from them shall not get away he who escaped from them shall not be delivered though they dig into hell from there my hand shall take them though they climb up to heaven from there I will bring them down and I will hide themselves at the top of Mount Carmel from there I will search and take them so they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea from there I will command the serpent and it shall bite them though they go into captivity before their enemies and think that they're now safe in captivity yet from there I will command the sword that it may slay them now notice this is the third time that certain images have been given to show that when God sends his judgment it is not going to be escaped the first time he said that was at the end of chapter 2 verses 14-16 the way he expressed this idea in chapter 2 verses 14-16 that no one was going to escape judgment was this the swift shall perish from the swift those who are usually swift of foot will not find themselves swift enough they won't be able to get away the strong shall not strengthen his power the strong who could usually defend himself won't be able to get away through his strength nor shall the mighty deliver himself he shall not stand who handles the bow the swift of foot shall not deliver himself nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself even a fast horse he won't be able to get away the most courageous men of might shall flee away naked in that day so he makes it clear that no one even the great warriors the fast runners the mighty men no one will escape he also said it in chapter 5 verse 19 which we saw chapter 5 verse 19 it will be as though a man fled from the lion and a bear met him as though he went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him again the idea is there's no getting away from the judgment of God and now we see it again in a lengthy statement in chapter 9 verses 2 through 4 though they dig into hell they won't get away from me

there I'll find them there if they climb up to heaven I'll get them there too remind us of the psalm I think it's psalm 139 or 138 where it says where can I flee from your presence where shall I go to escape from your spirit if I make my bed in hell you're there if I ascend into heaven you're there if I take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost islands of the sea you're there your hand will guide me same thing only that was I think spoken of in the sense of that he was unable to escape the blessing of God here it's quite clear the same kind of image is used you can't get away from the judgment of God either verse 5 the Lord God of hosts who touches the earth and it melts and all who dwell there mourn all of it shall swell like a river and subside like the river of Egypt he who builds his layers in the sky and it has founded his strata in earth he who builds his waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth the Lord is his name sounds a lot like some passages in Job and in the Psalms talking about God and his great wonders and sovereignty over the sea and the sky and the earth just trying to paint a very awesome picture of what kind of God it is who is making these threats verse 7 he says are you not like the people of Ethiopia to me O children of Israel says the Lord did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt the Philistines from Kathdor which is the island of Crete and the Syrians from Kher now what he says here is this you think you're special because I brought you out of Egypt that is I gave you a land and brought you to Egypt well couldn't the Philistines claim that their gods or I even I brought them out of Kathor they left Crete and came to the promised land or the Syrians who left Kher and came here in other words really how are you different than any of these Gentiles you claim you're special and you might have called the fact that I called you out of Egypt and brought you to Crete well couldn't other nations make similar claims didn't they leave one place and come to another place successfully I mean what makes you different aren't you just like the Ethiopians to me Ethiopians being very unclean Gentiles as far as they were concerned uncircumcised black skinned non-Jewish all the things that would make them the epitome of an unclean non-Jewish person which ironically was the first Gentile race to be converted an Ethiopian eunuch in the book of Acts and so on and so on and so forth and so I will command and I will sit the house of Israel among all nations as grain is sifted in a sieve and yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword who say the calamity shall not overtake us nor confront us now what he's saying here is and he said it for the first time here really is that all this judgment he's been predicting is really just a sifting process it's not going to totally obliterate the nation of Israel it's more it's going to the separation of the wheat from the chaff just as grain would be put in a sieve and the chaff would fall through and the grain would remain in the sieve and therefore they would isolate the good grain from the chaff so this judgment is like that he's going to preserve the grain that is the good Jews the righteous will survive not one of them will fall through the sieve he's not going to lose one of those that the father has given him Jesus said he said to God of all that you have given me I have not lost any of it I have kept them all God knows who his own are he's got his remnant they'll survive this they'll come through it they'll experience restoration but this judgment is a sifting process a means by which God will eliminate



the chaff from among the wheat and he makes it clear the true grains of wheat the ones who are really worth something the real godly Jews the remnant they not one of them will fall through the cracks not one will fall through the cracks they'll be retained in God's kingdom but all the sinners of my people verse 10 that's the chaff they'll die by the sword so this judgment is really not so much an end of all Israelites so much as it is a sifting between the good and the bad of them and it's compared to the sifting of grain in a sieve now we have a messianic prediction this could be considered a separate portion of the book or an extension of the previous prophecy on that day which probably means on that day that he sifts some or that the grains are retrieved in the sieve on that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David which has fallen down and repair its damages I will raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old that they may possess the remnants of Edom and all the Gentiles who are called by my name says the Lord who does this thing behold the days are coming says the Lord when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that sows the seed and the mountains shall drip with sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it I will bring back the captives of my people Israel and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them and I will plant them in their land and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land that I have given them says the Lord your God now this obviously sounds like a prophecy of restoration in the last days taken literally it sounds like it's talking about the Jews coming back to their land and remaining permanently in it experiencing prosperity again when it says in verse 13 the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes will overtake him that sows seed what it's meaning is that the growing the land will be so lush and fruitful that the growing seasons will be of extended length so that the plowman who plows regularly at the right time of the year will still find that he's just right behind he's catching up with the people who are still harvesting from the previous year the harvest is so extended that the harvest continues on even until plowing time of the next year and the treader of grapes will overtake him who sows seeds that is it just means that the various agricultural seasons will overlap because they will be extended in length it talks about it's figurative for the fact that there will be a return to prosperity and fruitfulness and it's about gathering them back in their land and then no longer being pulled up now what is the fulfillment of prosperity of course we do have those who understand this in a strictly literal sense and believe it's yet future when they say that God's going to build up the tabernacle of David again in verse 11 raise up the tabernacle of David they understand this to be a reference to rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem which has not happened yet so they don't believe it will happen either well they believe it will happen in the last days probably during the tribulation or at least the millennium and so they would see this as a millennial passage something that will happen after Jesus comes back now their view certainly seems justified in view of the wording of the passage and if we had nothing in the New Testament to help us interpret this passage we would be compelled to see it that very way it seems to talk about rebuilding something a tabernacle of David or the kingdom of God the Jews back in their land

enjoying prosperity and so forth that hasn't happened yet at least not literally and therefore it would seem justified to say that it will have to happen in the future perhaps when Jesus returns well I don't hold that view of this passage and the reason I don't is because as near as I can tell the Apostles didn't hold that view of this passage they quoted it in Acts chapter 15 where a problem arose in the early church over the issue of whether the Gentile converts had to become circumcised like the Jews had been this was not an easily settled question and there was a tremendous dispute even among the elders in Jerusalem and maybe even among some of the Apostles initially but they finally came to an agreement that the Gentiles did not have to become Jewish that God was doing a new thing and that the new thing was not connected to the old covenant but it was a whole new covenant and therefore the sign of circumcision did not need to be circumcised and be imposed on those that were coming into it from outside and in summing up the matter and talking about the significance of the Gentiles coming into the church which was a new phenomenon at this time in the church history James the spokesman for the Apostles made this particular statement Acts chapter 15 is where the Council of Jerusalem is recorded and it was to discuss the status of Gentile converts to Christianity that this council was called and the solution was given in the words of James Acts 15 verses 13 through 17 and after they had become silent James answered saying men and brethren listen to me Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name and with this the words of the prophets agreed just as it is written now the word of the Lord and he proves it by quoting one of them in this case he quotes Amos the passage we are considering Amos chapter 9 verses 11 and 12 which says after this I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen down I will rebuild its ruins and I will set it up so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord even all the Gentiles who are called by my name says the Lord who does all these things now that is the quotation for Amos but notice what James has done with it he has made it clear that this is what was prophesied by Amos that the Gentiles would come into the church Peter has told us about it and the prophets also spoke about this and this passage in Amos is given as an example of the prophet who spoke about this what of the Gentiles coming into the church now how is it that they could say that how could they say that this passage is talking about Gentiles coming into the church well look back at Amos chapter 9 verse 11 the prediction essentially has to do with the restoration of the tabernacle of David which is fallen down and this is a figurative statement it's not talking about an actual tabernacle being built David remember was promised by through Nathan the prophet that God would build him a house and by house was meant a dynasty a household a family that would sit on the throne he said that God would establish David's seed on the throne forever and so David's house was his dynasty in the days of Amos David's house or his dynasty was totally corrupted by the or nearly so it was no longer even worthy to be called a house but a booth and that's what the word tabernacle means there a booth it's the word that was used at the Feast of Tabernacles so people would build tabernacles or booths actually lean-to's out of branches and they'd stay temporarily in the during the Feast of

Tabernacles in the streets of Jerusalem in these lean-to's just little makeshift shelters now what Amos is saying he's speaking figuratively of the house or the dynasty of David but he's saying it's no longer a house it's a booth it's a shack it's a run-down ramshackle shelter and that is simply his way of figuratively saying that the house of David or the lineage of David has been greatly degenerated the kings of David's line have not been noble and godly kings like David was and so he sees the booth of David or the dynasty of David as a booth that's been broken down needed to be restored and the prediction is there will come a time when God will restore the dynasty of David he will restore the kingdom to a son of David and all the apostles believe that that occurred in Christ that Jesus is the son of David Jesus is the king that God has brought to restore his promises to David that he's restored the booth or the house of David in the person of David's descendant Jesus Christ and that the coming of Jesus and his exaltation to the right hand of God where he sits in throne will be restored is the fulfillment of the promises that God made to David that one of his seed would be in throne forever on his throne and so the restoration of the promises to David of his house that were his dynasty occurred when God exalted one of David's sons Jesus to the highest seat of authority in the universe at the right hand of God so this occurred at the first coming of Christ and in connection with that it says if you're looking at Amos chapter 9 again verse 12 says that they may possess the remnant of the kingdom of God now this is interesting because the remnant of Edom doesn't exist anymore Edom is not around anymore there is no remnant of Edom in fact in the very days of Jesus the remnant of Edom ceased to exist the Herod family were the last of them now how then can this be fulfilled literally there are no Edomites for the kingdom of God to inherit notice how James quotes this instead of being referenced to Edom he quotes it this way in Acts 15 17 he says so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord even all the Gentiles were called by my name well basically instead of the remnant of Edom he says the rest of mankind he sees Edom as just a representative of Gentiles in general he's not talking about literal Edom being saved he's talking about mankind of which Edom is a representative non-Jewish humanity will be saved when the tabernacle of David is raised up so the remnant of and all the Gentiles who are called by my name says Lord does this thing in other words this is talking about the fact that when David's son Jesus was exalted then Gentiles began to come in and that's the very thing that they were discussing at the Jerusalem council the influx of Gentiles into the kingdom of God and their status there and in order to prove that this is a legitimate scriptural thing to happen James calls on two witnesses one is what God revealed to Peter and the other and secondly what the prophets themselves had declared and he names this prophet Amos as one who has testified of this that Gentiles would come into the church so whether we would be inclined to see it this way or not we have to acknowledge that the apostles understood this passage at the end of Amos chapter 9 as being fulfilled in the church age it is not a prediction of what will happen after Jesus returns it is not a reference to a future millennium it is not a reference it is a reference to the church age but if that is so then of course it has to be understood somewhat spiritually rather than literally because the church age has not been

characterized by the restoration of Israel in fact very early in the church age Israel was destroyed in 70 AD and come under ultimate judgment Paul said the wrath that comes upon them through the enemy so the Israel that is blessed must be the remnant Israel which is the church the remnant the believing portion of Israel became Christian since then Gentiles have flown into it too we call that the church that is the Israel that is blessed and the blessings must certainly be seen as spiritual blessings both are described as agricultural blessings natural blessings even being planted in a secure land in their own land these are this is the language of the old covenant being used because that is what the people of the old covenant could understand but referring to something which would not be understood until later namely by the apostles remember the apostles said that his message was something that God had not really made clear to the sons of the previous generations but were now made known to the apostles and prophets by the spirit in Ephesians 3:5 he states that the insight that Paul had about the scriptures was something that previous generations didn't understand because God spoke to the old testament people in language that accommodated their narrow understanding they understood the blessing of God in terms of having a secure place in the land of Israel in terms of having a lot of crops in terms of material blessing and earthly honor and so forth but we understand now that those aren't the things that make a person blessed Jesus said blessed are the poor blessed are the ones who are hated who are not honorable woe to you when all men speak well to you Jesus came and gave some new insights the real blessings from God are not natural they're not geographical they're not in terms of people respecting you that is the language of blessing in the old testament because that's the only kind of blessing people understood back then but it was a symbol of the true blessings of God that would come upon the true Israel of God when the Messiah came when God restored the kingdom of David as he did in Jesus and when the Gentiles would flow in these Gentiles combined with with believing Jews would be the remnant of Israel to whom these blessings were through the church and therefore I feel compelled although I have no I would have no interest in doing so unless I was compelled to by new testament insights I feel compelled to say that this is the prophecy about the church age the present age and it began to be fulfilled when Jesus appeared God began to raise up again the dynasty of David and established it again though it had become a corrupt degenerate booth as it were rather than a house yet God has restored it in Jesus and he has given a righteous king in David's place to reign in his bed well we've made it through the book and I really intended to go back over it and point out some motifs but I did some of that as we're going through and we ran out of time it won't be palpable or feasible for us to go through it again and look at those things but really everything I would have done probably was brought out in the course of going through the passage so that is how we will leave the book of Amos after his mission to Israel he probably went back and resumed his shepherding down in Judah again but we don't know we only have his prophecies and then it ends but he had a powerful message and it went largely unheeded by his generation and therefore judgment came but the ultimate blessings he predicted of the Messiah of the Messiah's kingdom are not wasted

on us I hope because those who heed his message also experience the blessings of the messianic age that he predicted ultimately well that's really all I have time to say about these things so we'll consider that that's as far as we'll go with Amos