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Amos Overview (Part 2)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this overview of the book of Amos, Steve Gregg highlights the three major sections of the book: oracles against nations, sermons against Israel, and visions. He emphasizes God's special relationship with Israel and how their failure to keep the covenant led to judgment and disasters. Gregg also delves into the themes of justice, righteousness, and the impending judgment that will befall Israel. Finally, he discusses the prophecy about the Messianic age and how it was fulfilled in Jesus.

Transcript

I'm just going to do a brief survey now through the book of Amos. Actually, in your notes, if you happen to have the notes, there is an outline of the book under Roman numeral 3. It's on the back side of the first page of the notes. And after you have the first two verses introducing the book, you have the next two chapters have these eight oracles against these different nations, as I mentioned.

Six of them against pagan nations, one against Judah, and one against Israel. We've looked at those. We won't look at them again, but I just want to see that's the first major division of the book.

The second major division of the book is going to be the next four chapters. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, and these contain three separate oracles against Israel. Chapter 3 has one of them.

Chapter 4 is another one. And chapters 5 and 6 are the third one. And each of these begin with the words, hear the word.

Like in chapter 3, verse 1, the first of these starts, hear this word that the Lord has spoken. In chapter 4, the next oracle begins, hear this word, you cows of Bashan. We'll have something to say about them.

And then chapter 5, the third oracle begins, hear this word which I take up against you. So he kind of starts a new sermon, as it were, with this expression, hear this word, hear this word, hear this word. And these are separate sermons, kind of self-contained.

They're independent from each other. But they continue to build the case against Israel and the legitimacy of God bringing judgment upon them. Then after that, there come five visions.

And they make up most of the rest of the book. This is the last major section. This section is interrupted with the passage we read together in chapter 7, where Amaziah the priest confronts Amos.

That little section there at the end of chapter 7 kind of interrupts the flow of these five visions. But the first vision is in chapter 7, 1 through 3, and it's a vision of grasshoppers, or locusts, coming to destroy all the crops. The second one is of fire bringing horrendous damage to the land.

That's in chapter 7, verses 4 through 6. The third one is also in chapter 7, verses 7 through 9, and that's the vision of the plumb line. He sees God holding a plumb line, which anyone in the building trades knows what that is. It's a string with a plumb bob on it.

And when you're trying to assess the vertical trueness of a wall, you want to hold a string up from the top, and hopefully the plumb line lays against the wall. But if it doesn't, the wall is not upright. And God is looking for the uprightness, or measuring the uprightness of the nation of Israel, so to speak.

After the interruption with the interference from the priest of Bethel, there's two more visions. One is of ripe summer fruit in chapter 8, verse 1, and through that chapter. And then chapter 9, he sees in chapter 1, through 10, he sees the Lord standing over the altar.

And this is no doubt the altar of the temple in Bethel, not the altar in the temple in Jerusalem. And so those are the five visions. One of locusts, one of fire, one of the plumb line, one of the summer fruit, and one of God over the altar.

And then that last one goes through chapter 9, verse 10, which is almost to the end of the book. There's only a few verses remaining at the end, chapters 9, well, chapter 9, verses 11 through 15. And that is a prophecy about, I would say, about the Messianic age.

Almost all the prophets have at least one passage about the Messianic age, and you actually get almost to the end of Amos without having one. He hasn't mentioned the Messiah, he hasn't mentioned the kingdom era in the earlier chapters, but he gives a bit of one, and a good one, because the New Testament quotes it, and it's kind of an interesting one. We'll look at it.

But that's how the book is laid out. You've got the eight oracles in the first two chapters. You've got three sermons in chapters 3 through 6. Then you've got five visions in

chapters 7 through 9, and at the very end, a Messianic prophecy.

So that's pretty much how the book is laid out. We've said probably all we need to say about the first eight short oracles in the first two chapters. But let's look at chapter 3. We've even read some of these verses in making the point about the use of rhetorical questions.

Chapter 3 says, He says, Now that's interesting. He says, Of all the nations, all the families of the earth, you, Israel, you're the only one I've ever really known. And by known, it doesn't mean that God didn't have information about other nations.

But he's known them in a relational sense. He's had a relationship with them. They've been his people.

But he says, He says, We've walked together at one point. His next line says, Well, I have known you, but you haven't known me. People can't have a relationship.

They can't fellowship. They can't walk together if they're not going to agree to be in that relationship. But God had given them far more advantages than any other nation in the world ever has, at least up until up until Jesus came.

And those privileges were to know what his ways were to have his law, to have his prophets, and to therefore know what good is and what evil is. And yet they kind of spurned that they didn't agree to walk with God, according to those terms. And so he says, Can two walk together unless they are agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out in his den when he's caught nothing? Again, this probably is referring to God roaring through the prophets, because in chapter 1, verse 3, he says the Lord has roared.

And so this is no doubt depicting God as a lion about to pounce on this nation. The references to the birds in verse 5, Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth where there's no trap for it? Will a snare spring up from the earth if it has caught nothing at all? I suppose this, if it has a specific reference to the situation, and isn't just one of those things saying, you know, is the Pope a Catholic kind of thing? He may be saying, you've seen you have fallen into traps from your enemies. And there are things bad happening to you.

This is because I have laid those traps for you. Traps don't spring up and bring down birds and so forth, unless somebody has set those traps. You should realize this isn't just bad luck on your part.

This is me laying traps for you to get your attention. When he says in verse 6, If a trumpet is blown in a city, will the people not be afraid? The blowing of a trumpet in a city usually is, you know, the watchman on the wall sees the enemy coming. And they sound the trumpet to wake up everybody and get them to their arms and to their

positions to defend the city.

If you hear a trumpet blast in the middle of the night and realize, oh, that's the call to arms. You know, you're searching, you're going to be alarmed. You're going to be afraid.

He says, does the trumpet sound in the city and people not be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it? Now, this is a statement that suggests, if it's unmodified, that every disaster that happens in a city is God's doing. You know, whenever there's a calamity, you all remember when New Orleans was overrun by Katrina some years ago. One of the things that people kept asking me on the air and just asking Christians in general, was that, did God do that? I think they'd scheduled a gay pride parade that very day or something like that.

It was kind of, kind of got rained out. And people are like, well, that's an act of God for sure. Is that, did God do that? And I always had to say, well, I don't know.

You know, I don't know if God did it. I'm not a prophet. But some people would say, well, yeah, anytime anything like that happens, it's God's doing.

Can there be disaster in a city and God didn't do it? And I think what we have to modify our extremism on this a little. I recognize that the cities of Israel and Judah were not like cities of America or any other land in the world. Because God had a covenant with them that he would protect them from all their enemies.

And he'd protect them from disasters if they were faithful to his covenant, which they were not. And he's saying, listen, disasters have come upon you Israel. The promise of God in his covenant in Deuteronomy 28 or in Leviticus 26 was that if you keep my covenant, I won't let any of these disasters happen.

And they're happening. Don't you think that's the Lord doing it? Now, that doesn't mean that nations that don't have that kind of covenant with God have some kind of promise protection from him against all disasters. There were special promises made to Israel.

And if they were coming under disaster, that's exactly what God said he would do to them in those prophecies. Frankly, Deuteronomy 28, where it says in verse 15, if you don't keep my covenant, you break my laws and so forth, and all these curses will come upon you. He says, I will bring this on you and I'll bring that on you and so forth.

So Israel was under God's direct management. If they were doing well, he protected them and all blessings came on them. If they were doing badly, he was cursing them.

So Israel should realize if there's disaster in their cities, it is the Lord doing it. I don't know that every pagan or secular nation can assume the same because God doesn't have that kind of a relationship with any other nation than Israel. And he doesn't have that relationship with Israel now because they don't follow him.

Israel today is not a religious country. It's a secular state. And so it's not like Israel and the Bible.

Israel and the Bible was a nation that existed in a covenant with God. And they existed because of the covenant with God. God brought them out of Egypt, made them a nation, made a covenant with them.

And he said, if you keep my covenant, you'll be a holy nation. You'll be my people. You'll be my kingdom of priests.

But they didn't keep the covenant. So as we know, historically, they were eventually wiped out by the Assyrians and by the Babylonians and then by the Romans eventually, and then they were gone. Yeah, there's a nation there now, but it's not in covenant with God.

The Knesset is not a religious body. It's a democratic, secular body. Israel is not a religious nation in covenant with God.

So although it's people in the same land, it's not the same country. Not even the same in kind as the country in Old Testament times. So to say if there's disaster in a city, isn't it God's doing, I think is his way of saying Israel should be able to see that if they have disaster in their cities, God is trying to get their attention.

And he says, verse 8, A lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord has spoken, who shall not prophesy? Or who can but prophesy? This roaring of the lion seems to be almost equated with the prophets speaking. And that would make sense because, you know, the Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem, but through the prophets is where he does that. Now, verse 9, proclaim in the palaces of Ashdod, and in the palaces of the land of Egypt, and say, assemble on the mountains of Samaria to see great tumults in her midst, and the oppressed within her.

For they do not know to do right, says the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. Now, he calls on Ashdod, which is a Philistine city, and Egypt, to come and watch what's going to happen, what he's going to do to Samaria, because of the judgment he's going to bring on them. He's actually inviting their enemies to gloat over their downfall.

And he says in verse 10, they don't know to do right. Well, why not? God gave them his laws. How could somebody have God's laws and not know to do right? Well, come to think of it, how can churches have the Bible and not apparently know to do right? How can they have gotten so far from the ways of God in so many of their practices? Especially now, where churches, many of them, not all of them, thank God, but many churches are ordaining gay clergy, they're marrying gay couples, they're supporting things that are in principle totally against the Bible, totally against God.

Why don't they know to do right? Well, God knew us, but he can't walk with us if we're not agreed. And when God's word is neglected, what wisdom is left in us? Nothing. You soon lose the knowledge of right and wrong when you lose God's revelation or when you ignore it.

Verse 11, Therefore says the Lord God, an adversary, meaning Assyria, 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, here again from his own experience, no doubt, 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.

Now, what he means by that is Assyria is going to do so much harm to them that they'll be shredded. Just like, you know, if a lion takes a lamb from a shepherd's flock and the shepherd catches up with it and drives the lion off, what he gets with the lamb is a couple of legs, maybe a piece of an ear. Only a small remnant of the animal remains.

And that's what he's saying about the people of Samaria, which is the capital of Israel. They're going to be torn up and only remnants of them will be left to testify that they once existed there. He says, in a corner, oh, I should read the whole sentence.

So shall the children of Israel be taken out who dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed on the edge of a couch. Now, I had to read more than one translation to figure out what that was talking about, a few commentaries, and it's really quite simple. It's just not worded very clearly here.

And that is that he's saying the people in Samaria, they're sitting on their beds and their couches quite comfortably. And yet they're going to be torn to pieces. And they seem to be oblivious to that.

They're just relaxing on their couches and their beds. Hear and testify against the house of Jacob, says the Lord God, the God of hosts. In the day that I punish Israel for their transgressions, I also will visit destruction on the altars of Bethel.

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. Now, I don't know if this is referring to the temples in the two locations in Dan and Bethel, or if it's talking about the king's summer house and king's winter house.

The kings of Israel had different palaces. They ruled from different times of the year because of the temperatures and comfort and so forth. But he's going to wipe them all out.

He's going to destroy them. And the great houses shall have an end, says the Lord. So that's that first sermon.

The second sermon begins with the same words in chapter 4. Hear this word, you cows of Bashan. Hear this word is the same beginning, but cows of Bashan is unique to this passage. Now, who's he talking about, the cows of Bashan? He's talking about the women of Samaria.

Cows of Bashan. Bashan was a region over called Gilead on the eastern side of the Jordan. When Joshua brought the people in the land, the tribe of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh wanted to remain on the east side of the Jordan because there was a lot of pasture land and they had a lot of cattle.

And so the cattle of that region, Bashan and Gilead, and that was that region there, they were known for their fatness. In fact, in Psalm 22, where there is a messianic psalm, where it talks about strong bulls, certainly bulls of Bashan have surrounded me, it says in Psalm 22. Bulls of Bashan, cows of Bashan.

Bashan was simply known for its fat cattle. Now he's not talking to people who are in Bashan. He's talking to people in Samaria on the west side of the Jordan.

But he's saying, you're like the fat cows of Bashan. If you want to talk about cows, the fattest ones are in Bashan. So I'm going to call you the cows of Bashan.

That's just how he addresses them to obviously insult them. They probably, in many cases, were fat because he describes them as just lazy, sitting around and eating and drinking wine. The main problem here is these are women, the wives, who become just as dissolute in their lifestyles as their husbands.

He speaks to them as those who, he says, they oppress the poor, they crush the needy. They say to their husbands, bring wine and let us drink. They don't even want to get up and serve their own wine.

Hey, bring me some wine here, I can't get up. Too lazy. The Lord God is sworn by His holiness.

Behold, the day shall come upon you when He will take you away with fishhooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. Now the word fishhooks, twice down here, is not the same word in the Hebrew. The first hooks is just hooks.

It refers to hooks used to pull animals, usually cattle, a ring through the nose, and a hook through to pull cattle on. But the second word is fishhooks. He's saying to these women, who are apparently the affluent, comfortable, lazy women, they're going to be dragged out with hooks.

Actually, that's what the Assyrians did. It's well known that the Assyrians were pretty cruel to their prisoners once they captured a nation. They would take some of them away, capture them, and put hooks through their noses and lead them off.

And it says, you will go out through the broken walls, meaning the enemy has broken down your walls, so you're defenseless and you're captured. You'll go out through broken walls, each one straight ahead of her, and you will be cast into Harman. That's kind of an unknown place to scholars today, but apparently a place obviously associated with being in captivity, says the Lord.

Come to Bethel and transgress at Gilgal, which was also a site of idolatry. Multiply transgression. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days.

Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven. Proclaim and announce the freewill offerings. For this you love, you children of Israel, says the Lord God.

Now he's being sarcastic. He's not really saying you should go to Bethel and worship these golden calves. He's just saying, go ahead.

You love to do this kind of thing. Do what you want to do. Worship at Bethel.

Worship at Gilgal. Put leaven in your sacrifices. Make it up as you go along.

Make up your own religious practices. That's what you love to do. Go ahead and do it.

Now we know that he doesn't mean it, of course, because over in chapter 5 and verse 5, which is the next sermon, he says in Amos 5.5, Do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, nor pass over to Beersheba. For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing. So he obviously is not inviting them to go to Bethel.

It's a sarcastic remark in chapter 4, verses 4 through 5. Verse 6. Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all of your cities, and lack of bread in all your palaces. There's places, excuse me. Yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord.

I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. Which means that's a bad time to not have the rains to come and ripen the harvest, before the harvest. So you're going to lose the harvest.

I made it rain on one city, and I withheld rain on another city. From another city. One part was rained upon, where it did not rain, that part withered.

So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied. Yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. I blasted you with blight and mildew.

When your gardens increased, your vineyards, your fig trees, your olive trees, the locusts devoured them. Yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. So in other words, you're having crop failure, you're having not sufficient rain for your crops, or even for your drinking water, for your animals and yourselves.

You don't have much food, obviously. And this is supposed to, you're supposed to get a clue. God's trying to get your attention.

Why haven't you turned to me? I sent among you plague after the manor of Egypt. Your young men I killed with a sword. Along with your captive horses, I made the stench of your camps come into your nostrils.

Yet you have not returned to me, says the Lord. Now, I don't know what plague after the manor of Egypt he's talking about. Because the plagues of Egypt were pretty unusual.

Frogs, you know, darkness all day, you know, water turning to blood. I'm sure he didn't do those kinds of things on this occasion to Israel. But he may just say, I'm bringing plague and disaster on you.

In principle, it's like what I did to Egypt, because you're like another Egypt. You're just as bad as Egypt. And he says something similar in verse 11.

I overthrew some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Now, once again, God didn't send fire and brimstone down on Israel and kill them that way. He's basically saying the judgment I brought upon you, Israel, is in principle like what I did to Egypt and to Sodom and Gomorrah.

In other words, they deserved it, and you deserve it just as much as they do. You've become as bad as them, and so I've treated you as harshly as I treated them. What's interesting is that he would compare Israel with Egypt and Sodom, because in the book of Revelation, in chapter 11 and verse 8, it's not talking about Israel, but it is talking about Judah or Jerusalem.

And so it would be true of Israel and Jerusalem, apparently. In Revelation 11.8, it says about the two witnesses, Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Well, our Lord was crucified in Jerusalem.

So he says that great city where our Lord was crucified is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. And we see Amos saying, my judgment of you is like my judgment on Egypt or my judgment on Sodom. It's not the kind, it didn't take the same form, but in principle, it's the same to me.

Because you're so wicked, you become as bad as Sodom and Egypt. He says in verse 11, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning. I'm not sure exactly how he means that.

A firebrand, of course, is made of iron or something like that, so it doesn't burn up. You put a firebrand in the fire to heat up so you can brand your cattle. He may simply be saying, you've gone through the fire, you haven't burned up.

You've been plucked out and you still exist, but you certainly have borne the heat. I don't know how many of you have studied anything about John Wesley, but when he was a child, his bedroom was upstairs in the house, and it caught a house caught on fire. And the family escaped, but he was still trapped inside and almost certainly would have died.

Somehow someone rescued him, and his mother always called him the brand plucked from the burning. After that, that was sort of her nickname for him, obviously taken from this verse. 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. Ever heard that phrase before? Prepare to meet your God. Interesting, he said, I knew you.

You alone among the nations have I known, but you don't know me. You don't know to do right or wrong. You don't know what's right or wrong.

You're like clueless. Well, I'm going to meet you. You don't know me very well, but you're going to get to know me up close and personal here.

And it's going to be through the Assyrians coming and slaughtering you people. You're going to find out what kind of God I am. Not that he's a wrathful God.

He put up with this nonsense from them for hundreds of years. But eventually he has to judge sin, and he says, you're going to find that out. You're going to meet God in a way you've never met him before.

For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness, who treads the high places of the earth, the Lord of hosts is his name. Now this is where we expect the sermon to end, but it doesn't because it goes on for another chapter. This sermon is twice as long as the other two that were before it.

The third sermon in chapter 5 begins again with the words, hear this word, which I take up against you, this lamentational house of Israel. The virgin of Israel has fallen. She will rise no more.

She lies forsaken on her land. There is no more, no one to raise her up. Now, she's called the virgin Israel, perhaps sarcastically.

Ezekiel in chapter 16 and in chapter 23 gives parables about Israel and Judah being like two young girls, virgins, that God rescued from death. And he grew them up, they became mature, they became beautiful, he clothed them, he treated them well, and he married them. And this is a reference to God making a covenant with Israel at Sinai.

But then he says, but then when they saw how beautiful they were, all the pagan princes

were interested in them, so they went out and slept with all the men around. And so he gives this very graphic picture of how lewd they were and how promiscuous they were. And yet they were supposed to be his wife, which Israel was.

And he called them, you know, they were virgins when he found them. But now he says, oh, virgin of Israel. Of course, Israel is not really very virginal anymore.

It's worshipping other gods. It's like a woman sleeping with other men other than her husband. And of course, Ezekiel uses that imagery.

Hosea uses that imagery. Isaiah and Jeremiah both use that imagery. The idea that Israel is supposed to be God's wife, but when they worship idols, they're committing adultery.

And calling her the virgin is sarcastic because she once was, but she's far from that now. Oh, the virgin of Israel has fallen. She's not going to rise anymore.

The nation of Israel never rose again. Judah survived the Assyrian period and even went into Babylon later in the Babylonian period, but it came back. Judah survived and was restored, but Israel never was.

The ten tribes to the north called Israel, they disappeared from history. They basically intermarried with pagans around them and became the Samaritan people in Jesus' time. Now, many of the people of those ten tribes, before they fell, they escaped to Judah.

In fact, very early in their history, many of them were disgusted by the golden calves. I mentioned that the Levites didn't like the fact that Jeroboam picked non-Levites to be priests. So a lot of people from the northern ten tribes defected and went back and became part of Judah.

So when the northern kingdom fell, there were still remnants of all those tribes that survived because they were part of a nation that didn't fall to the Assyrians. And that's why there's still remnants of all twelve tribes today. That's why James, hundreds of years later, addresses his epistle to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

But though they were originated from the twelve tribes, they would have been originated, they had come from ancestors who had left the ten tribes to the north and moved to the south. So they survived when the southern kingdom survived and their descendants survive today. Okay, so the virgin's fall, she's not going to rise anymore.

That's the end of Israel, the northern kingdom. For thus says the Lord God, the city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left. That which goes out by a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel.

He means they go out to battle. When they send out a thousand soldiers, a hundred of them will survive. The city that sends out a hundred soldiers, they will get ten of them

back.

Not exact mathematical, but the idea is they're going to get only a tiny fragment of their soldiers surviving and coming home alive. Verse four, for thus says the Lord to the house of Israel, seek me and live. But do not seek Bethel nor Gilgal nor pass over to Beersheba.

Gilgal shall surely go into captivity. Bethel shall come to nothing. Seek the Lord and live.

Lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, which would be Ephraim and Manasseh. But probably the whole northern kingdom is met and devour it with no one to quench it in Bethel. You who turn justice to wormwood and lay righteousness to rest in the earth.

He made the Pleiades and the Orion. Now this little section is very reminiscent of Job. You know, at the end of the book of Job, when God finally shows up and talks to Job, he points out to Job all the things that God does that no one else can do.

Who feeds all the wild donkeys? Who brought out the Pleiades and the great bear and all of this, constellations and so forth. It's kind of like a passage from Job here. He says, he made the Pleiades and Orion.

He turns the shadow of death into morning and makes the day dark as night. He calls for the waters of the seas and pours them out in the face of the earth. The Lord is his name.

He rains ruin upon the strong so that fury comes upon the fortress. Now, this statement in verse 8, he makes the day dark as night. This is not literal.

This is a very common prophetic image. You'll find it in almost all the prophets. Darkness means calamity.

Light means blessing in prophetic poetic language. And we know that's true because of its use so often. In this same chapter, verse 18, he says, Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord, for what good is the day of the Lord to you? Will it be darkness and not light? I'm sorry, it will be darkness, not light.

Then down in verse 20, is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light? Is it not very dark with no brightness in it? He's not talking about physical or visual darkness. He's talking about darkness and light as images of calamity versus blessing. Later on in Amos chapter 8 and verse 9, chapter 8 verse 9, he says, It shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord, that I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight.

Now, of course, God did that at one time, but this isn't talking about that. When Jesus was on the cross, God did make it go dark in the daytime. But that's not a, this is not a prophecy about Jesus, a prophecy of judgment.

You'll find it in most of the prophets. Darkness has an image of calamity. And so I just want to make that clear because it's used at least three times that way, or four times in Amos that way, and many more times in other prophets.

Verse 9, 5, 9, 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. So they're not only doing the wrong thing, but they hate the people who do the right thing, and who tell them they're doing the wrong thing.

Therefore, because you tread down the poor, and you take grain taxes from him, though you have built houses of hewn stone, yet you shall not dwell in them. You have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink the 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. Now, apparently they say God is with us.

He says, well, he isn't with you, but he will be as you've spoken if you seek good. He's not with you now. He says, hate evil, love good, establish justice in the gate.

It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Israel. Now, seek justice in the gate. The gate is where the court hearings were held.

The judges sat in the gates of the city, because most people didn't live in the city. Most people were farmers on their rural lands outside the walls of the city. They couldn't build walls around all the farmland.

It would be too expensive. The city was a fortress. And when invaded, the people in the farmlands would come into the city, and they'd close the gates, and the city would be crowded with people.

But they didn't want everyone coming into the city and crowded at all times, so they held their courts in the gates so that people didn't have to go in looking for the king or something like that to talk to them. There were judges at the gates. And you often read of this in the Bible, the judges in the gates.

Even Absalom. Remember Absalom in the gates? When people would come to the gates to have their hearing of their case, Absalom would intercept them and say, Oh, if I was the king, I'd give you justice. He kind of won the hearts of the people, but he was in the gate of the city where people would come and bring their complaints.

Well, justice, the people had a lot of complaints, even after they'd been to the gates,

because they were not getting justice. The courts were corrupt. The rulers were corrupt.

And so he's calling on them. You want to survive? You want to be on good terms with me? Well, then stop doing injustice. Establish justice in the gate.

Now we're going to see him say something very famous along the same lines in verse 24 of this chapter. He says, But let justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. I think Martin Luther King was the one who quoted that famously.

But God's looking for justice from his people. Remember Jesus rebuked the Pharisees in Matthew 23, 23. He said, You are hypocrites.

He says, You pay your tithes of mint and anise and cumin, but you neglect the wavier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness. He said, You should be doing these and not leave the other undone. That is, Jesus wants people to be doing justice.

That's what God wanted from his people. That's the fruit he was looking for from Israel. He said that in Isaiah chapter 5. He planted Israel like a vineyard.

He looked for good grapes. He got bad grapes, he said. He says, Israel is my vineyard.

I look for justice. But what I got was oppression. The grapes he was looking for was justice.

He wants the nation of his people to produce justice in their behavior. And this justice is not some abstraction like, Oh, well, I'm imputed righteous by my faith in Christ. Well, good on you.

I am too. But God still wants you to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with your God. The fact that you are imputed righteous doesn't mean you don't have some kind of assignment here.

Our assignment is to preach righteousness, preach justice, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God, to seek what Jesus called the wavier matters of the law, justice and righteousness and faithfulness and mercy. So here he's calling on them to start doing justly. It's interesting that most of the things that God has complained about this is that the poor have been oppressed.

Those who can't bribe the judges get trampled on because the rich who can bribe the judges can afflict the poor and so forth. A lot of the complaints that God has against a corrupt nation is its political corruption and its legal courtroom corruption. That seems terribly mundane and not very spiritual, but that's something that matters a lot to God.

And it's something he talks about more than almost any other thing in the Old Testament. The terms justice and righteousness are twin terms that are used together in the Old Testament dozens of times. And it's always God's priority.

You need to be doing justice instead of what you're doing. Now, he says in verse 16, Therefore, the Lord God of hosts says there should be wailing in all streets. They shall say in the highways, Alas, alas, they shall call the farmer to mourning the skillful lamenters to wailing in the vineyards.

There shall be wailing for I will pass through you, says the Lord. Now, in saying I will pass through you, he means I'm going to pass through you and judge you. And it's a little like the imagery of when he passed through Egypt to strike the firstborn of Egypt, except on the homes that had the blood on the lintels in the doorpost, which he would pass over them.

Now he's going to use the expression in chapter seven and verse eight. He's going to say at the end of verse eight, I will not pass by them anymore. And then in chapter eight, verse two, he'll say, I will not pass by them anymore.

So chapter seven, verse eight and chapter eight, verse two, he says, I will not pass by them anymore. The idea is like I'm not going to pass over them anymore. When I bring judgments, I'm not going to skip over them.

I'm going to go right through. I will pass through you. He says not pass over or pass by you.

He says in verse 18, woe to you who desire the day of the Lord. For what for what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness and not light. It will be as 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 against the wall and a serpent bit him.

Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light? Is it not very dark with no brightness in it? A lot of people want the day of the Lord to come. A lot of people say they're looking for Jesus to come. Well, I am and we should be, but we should also be the kind of people that when he comes, it won't be darkness for us, but light.

Remember when Paul said in second Thessalonians chapter, no, first Thessalonians chapter five, he said, but you are not of the darkness that the coming of the Lord should overtake you as a thief. You're children of the light. Yeah, so stop getting drunk.

He says, those who get drunk, get drunk at night. He's saying we belong to the light. The wicked belong to the darkness.

But when Jesus comes, those who are in the dark or who are living in darkness are going to be, it's going to be dark, dark time for them. But the thing is that many people who call themselves Christians and who seem to be all excited about the second coming of Christ and thinking and looking forward to it, if you look at their lives, the way they live their lives, I'm not so sure they got anything to be eager about. I think there are a lot of people don't live in such a way that they can expect that to be a time of light for them

rather than darkness.

He says, I hate verse 21. 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 ocean or stream. Excuse me. Isaiah actually had a passage in his first chapter, Isaiah one.

That was very similar to this, how God's talking about the religious rituals they're doing as if they're worshiping God. But he hates them. He hates those rituals.

He finds them repugnant because the people are not practicing justice. Remember, it says three times or three times in Proverbs. It says the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God.

Now, sacrifices worship offer to God. But if it's a wicked person living a wicked life, offering that worship, it's an abomination to God. That's what he's saying.

I hate it. Hate your feasts and your sacrifices and stuff. When you need just let justice roll down like water said, then I'll be happy with that.

And I say chapter one. Verses 11 through 17. Very similar to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, says the Lord.

I've had enough of burnt offerings of rams and a fat fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or lambs or goats. When you come to appear before me, who is required this from your hand to trample my courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices, incenses and abomination to me.

The new moons, the Sabbath, the calling of assemblies. I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting your new moons and your appointed feast. My soul hates.

There are trouble to me. I'm weary of burying them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you.

Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean.

Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil. Do good.

Learn to do good. Seek justice. Reprove the oppressor.

Defend the fatherless. Plead for the widow. See, this is the same thing that Amos said.

Listing all these ritual practices that people did in worshipping God at the temple, but they're not practicing justice. So, he's not impressed. In fact, he's very negatively impressed.

He hates it. Now, Amos 5, 28. Did you offer me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness 40 years, O house of Israel? You also carried Sikuth, your king, and Cheun, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves.

Therefore, I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. This question, did you offer me sacrifice and offerings in the wilderness 40 years, sounds again like a rhetorical question. It sounds like the answer is no.

And many commentators and teachers have said this has indicated that during the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness, they didn't actually offer the sacrifices they were supposed to. But this seems very unlikely to me. Moses was still leading them during those times.

Moses is the one who gave them the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the altar, and told them what to do with it. It's very unlikely that he'd let them get by for 40 years not using the tabernacle or the altar, not doing these things at all. I think what's being said here, what's implied is, did you only offer sacrifices to me in those 40 years? No, you had other gods you worshipped too.

Quietly, secretly, says you carried Sikuth. Now, Sikuth literally means the tabernacle. And it says of your king, the word king is Moloch, the tabernacle of Moloch.

You carried some translations rendered that way. And Chiyun, which is actually the Egyptian word for Saturn. Moloch was the god associated with Saturn.

And so they were, they kind of had, they kind of had Moloch in their hearts, too. Now, I don't know if they actually had statues of Moloch. I don't think Moses would put up with that.

And I don't think they carried an actual tabernacle to Moloch. I don't think Moses would put up with that. But he may be saying, while you were offering sacrifices, allegedly to me in my tabernacle, in your hearts, it was, you had no heart for me.

You had a heart for Moloch. You might as well have been in his tabernacle as mine, that you were following, because you were idolatrous in your hearts. Therefore, I'll send you into captivity.

Now, chapter six is the remainder of this particular sermon that began in chapter five. Woe to you who are at ease in Zion and trust in Mount Sumeria. Mount Sumeria is the capital of the Northern Kingdom.

Zion or Jerusalem is the capital of the Southern Kingdom. This is the only time that anything is addressed to Jerusalem. And that's all it is.

Woe to you who are at ease. Apparently, he's saying, don't get too comfortable. You know, all these disasters that are coming on Israel.

Well, you're going to have your turn, too. And they did. They did.

I mean, Israel was taken off by the Assyrians. Jerusalem was attacked by the Assyrians. They didn't get destroyed then, but they were later destroyed by the Babylonians.

So, you know, you in Jerusalem who are paying attention, seeing what's going on up here in Israel, don't get too comfortable. Because, you know, God deals with you the same way as he deals with them eventually. I'm going to skip over a verse or two here.

Verse three. Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, who caused the seed of violence to come near, who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who chant to the sound of stringed instruments and invent yourselves musical instruments like David, who drink wine from bowls and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. He's obviously talking to the richer classes here because there were peasants and farmers and people who didn't fit this.

He's talking to the rich people who are fat, sassy, spoiled and comfortable. And they have their musicians come entertain them as they lay on their couches and drink their bowls of wine. But they don't have any grief for the affliction of the nation.

And I get the feeling that that's true a lot of times of the leaders of our country at times and probably every country. And that is that once you've gotten to a position where you can kind of cruise comfortable for the rest of your life, you've got it made, you don't care what condition anyone is in outside. You're supposed to be a public servant.

You're supposed to be serving God by serving the people's needs. And instead, you've gotten so comfortable, you're just apathetic about the needs of others. People are suffering.

I mean, he's already described there's famines. They have a cleanness of teeth. They don't have food.

They don't have water. But some of the fat people, the fat and sassy people, have enough. Seems like that's always the case.

No matter how bad things get, there's always some people rich enough that they are insulated from it or think they are. And so they don't really care about the state of the nation as a whole, which makes them particularly bad leaders. It says, therefore, verse 7,

they shall now go captive as the first of the captives.

So they haven't suffered first from the famines and the disasters. They're kind of insulated from that by their money. But when the enemy comes and takes them as captives, they'll take the rich and the powerful first.

They'll be the first of the captives. Those who recline at banquets shall be removed. The Lord God is sworn by himself.

The Lord of hosts says, I abhor the pride of Jacob. I hate its palaces. Therefore, I will deliver up the city and all that is in it.

Now, verse 10 is a very difficult verse. In fact, some commentators say it's the most difficult verse to interpret in the whole book. And I have to say, we can only conjecture what it means.

He says in verse 9 and 10, then it shall come to pass that if 10 men remain in one house, they shall die. That's easy to understand. This is in one of the kinsmen 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 him with you? Then someone will say none. And he will say, hold your tongue, for we dare not mention the name of the Lord. No commentator has yet been able to make very much sense of this.

It's just one of those things we just don't know what that means. But he talks about a house that has 10 people and they'll all be dead. But then there apparently is one survivor and people are coming to bring out the dead.

In times of plague, they have to burn the bodies to keep the plague from spreading. And they're collecting bodies to burn them. And they shout, is anyone alive in there? And he says, none but us chickens.

But there's no one in here. And he says, but then the response they get is even stranger. They say, hold your peace.

We dare not speak the name of the Lord. Well, what's that got to do with anything? And so some of the guesses have been like, well, they superstitiously thought that if they speak the name of the Lord, he'll get his attention. He'll notice he missed them.

They're alive still. He's trying to kill them all. So they want to lay low.

They don't want the Lord to hear him talk about him. Some think that the person who says that he alone is the survivor is intending to expect him to say something like, thank the Lord for that. And the other person, no, don't speak the name of the Lord, as if to say, don't be thanking the Lord.

He's the one who brought this disaster. It's really mixed up opinions you get from different commentators. And they actually admit for the most part that they don't know what he's talking about.

So I'll admit the same. I don't know what that's talking about. Okay, so I'm going to I'm going to skip down now to the five visions because that's what we have left.

We don't have much time left. There are five visions. The first two are very briefly mentioned in chapter seven, verses one and two, one through three.

He just sees locusts coming and destroying everything. Of course, the locust plague is a very horrible thing. When we went through Joel, we saw that the whole book was written largely about a locust plague and how devastating it was.

It was like the judgment of God on Israel. The locust plague might have been even the same one. Well, it wasn't this one, but there were locusts mentioned earlier.

Earlier, he says he brought locusts on him, and maybe that was the one Joel was talking about. In this case, he sees the locust plague in a vision. Apparently, it's being threatened.

And Amos cries out, Oh, Lord, please don't do it. Have mercy. Have mercy on Jacob.

It's small. And God says, Okay, he said in verse three. It shall not be said the Lord.

Okay, since you interceded, I'm going to say, All right, I was going to send these locusts, but now I'm not just because you've prayed for it. And then he sees fire equally devastating, or maybe more so in verses four through six. And again, Amos intercedes.

Oh, Lord, God, cease, I pray. Oh, that Jacob may stand for his small. So the Lord relented concerning this.

This also should not be says the Lord. So the first two judgments that he sees in his visions, actually, he's able to call him off by praying for God to have mercy. Even though the people deserve the judgments, God says, Okay, because you said so, I won't.

And God does that sometimes. He did that for Moses when God was going to go wipe out the children of Israel who are worshipping the golden calf under Aaron's leadership. Moses prayed for him and said, Okay, I'm not going to destroy him, but because you said so.

Then we have the next one was the plumb line in verses seven through nine. Now, not much is said to explain it, but it's kind of self explanatory. When you hold a plumb line up to a wall, you want to see if it's straight or not.

And in being upright is a figure in the Bible for being righteous. Are these people

upright? Are these people walking up rightly? Are they righteous? Let's see the plumb line. Now, what is the you need a standard to decide that? You know, we're told a lot that our nation is a very evil nation, all full of racism, all kinds of stuff like that.

We're hearing it all the time. But the people who say it, I want to ask him, what standard are you using to decide that this is a bad nation here? I mean, sure, we got a lot of bad people in this nation. We've got a lot of sins on our record.

But have you checked any other nations out? I mean, I mean, how are we going to decide who's a good nation is bad unless we have a plumb line, a standard to decide? Is this are we relatively good or relatively bad? Now, the word of God is the standard, obviously. God's word, God's laws, God's teachings, the words of the prophets, the words of Christ and the apostles. These set the standard.

These are the plumb line to measure a nation by. Or we could say an individual, though this is about a nation. This is about the nation of Israel.

They have departed from the ways of God and the plumb line demonstrates. And therefore, of course, the wall is going to be torn down. That's the point.

It's not it wasn't constructed properly. It's leaning. And so he says, I won't pass by them anymore.

Verse eight at the end of verse eight there. Now, at the end of this chapter, we have, as we saw, Amaziah, the priest at Bethel confronting Amos. We've been through that.

So we come down to verse two, chapter eight. And the fourth. Vision is that of ripe summer fruit, a basket of summer fruit.

So this is fruit that is ripe, almost to rot. It's ready to be eaten. Now, this is picturing Israel as being ripe for judgment, basically.

You know, you don't pick fruit until it's ripe or else you're sorry you waste it. You know, it's not gonna be good fruit unless it's ripe. You don't want to pick it prematurely.

But it gets ripe and then it's time to pick it. And so also is judgment. God doesn't want to judge a nation prematurely.

I mean, as soon as a nation sins, God could judge it righteously. But he likes to give space to repent. Remember, he said in Revelation, chapter two, that Jezebel is doing these horrible things in the churches.

I gave her space to repent, but she didn't repent. Space to repent means God doesn't bring judgment instantly when he could. But the time comes where tolerating anymore simply cannot be justified.

It's ripe. If you don't pick the fruit then, you're gonna lose it. This is the time to do it.

And so seeing this basket of ripe fruit conveys this idea. And he says in verse two, The end has come upon my people Israel. I will not pass by them anymore.

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 fall or fail. Is that fall or fail? It's fail. Saying, when will the new moon be past that 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 bad wheat.

Now, this is sort of illustrating what it said earlier about how they're keeping their religious festivals, but they're practicing injustice in their business. And, you know, this people are not following justice, but they're being religious. And that's plain enough in lots of churches, too.

People go to church, they wouldn't miss it. They put their money in the bag and so forth. But when they live the rest of their week, they're not necessarily living any differently than the nonbelievers.

And Israel was that way, too, at this point. He says they're keeping the new moons and the Sabbath. That means they're not neglecting them.

They're not selling because they're forbidden to sell on the new moons and the Sabbath. But while they're not selling, instead of thinking about God and meditating on him and worshiping him, they think, when will the Sabbath be over so I can go out and cheat in the marketplace again? I can use my false balances and my false weights and so forth because, you know, they measured commodities for sale. And a seller might have false weights to misrepresent.

Sort of like the proverbial butcher has his finger on the scale when he's selling you the meat at the butcher shop to misrepresent the weight and to take advantage of the buyer. That's what they're doing. But they're going really far.

They don't only do corrupt business practices. They're buying the poor. They're selling boys.

They're selling the needy. This seems like they're trading in human trafficking. And there is mention of human trafficking in some of the first two chapters in a couple of places, it would seem.

It says, the Lord is sworn by the pride of Jacob. Surely I will never forget any of your

works. Shall not the land tremble for this? And then he talks about heaving like the River of Egypt we saw earlier.

It should come to pass verse 9 in that day says the Lord God that I will make the sun go down at noon and I will darken the earth and broad daylight. I will turn your feasts into morning and all your songs into lamentation. I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head.

I will make it like morning for an only son and its end will be like a bitter day. Behold the days are coming says the Lord that I will send a famine on the land not a famine of bread nor of thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. 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 they shall not find it in that day.

The fair virgins and the strong young men shall faint for thirst those who swear by the sin of Samaria who say as your God lives. So Dan and as the way of your Sheba lives. They shall fall and never rise again.

Now this famine for hearing the word of the Lord. Remember that most people didn't have Bible. So he's not saying there'll be a time where you can't get a Bible.

This is back in the day when if they want to hear the word of the Lord, they needed a prophet and there won't be any prophets for them. There was actually a 400 year period between the old and the New Testament. God didn't send any prophets.

That's a longer period than they'd ever gone without prophets before. After Malachi, there were no prophets until John the Baptist. That was a 400 year gap people couldn't hear the word of the Lord because there was no prophet there to get it and he says they'll go looking for it, but they won't find it.

Remember when Saul wanted a word from the Lord because he was facing battle against the Philistines and he says God didn't answer by the room didn't answer him by dreams in answer by prophets. But he says so he went and found a witch and she conjured up Sam Samuel farm. See he was looking for a word from the Lord, but it just wasn't God wasn't in a mood to talk to Saul at that time.

And so it shows the desperation that people sometimes have when they think I need God. I need God to tell me something, but I've been neglecting him all this time and now I can't find him and that's what it'll be like. They'll be dying of thirst for lack of the word of the Lord.

So to speak. It's a famine and a drought. So we have chapter 9 the last chapter which will go through rather quickly his his fifth vision and final vision was of the Lord standing by the altar and he said strike the doorposts that the thresholds may shake and break them on the heads of all apparently is picturing someone either an angel or somebody's

maybe got himself striking the doorposts of the door to the altar.

He says the temple at Bethel to the golden calf and knocking the doorpost up. So the lintel falls on the heads of the priests and so forth who are going through that door. He says that break them on the heads of them all.

I will slay the last of them with the sword he who flees from them shall not get away. He who escapes from them shall not be delivered though. They dig to hell.

He means shield the grave probably from there. My hand shall take them though. They climb up to heaven from there.

I will bring them down and though they hide themselves on top of Carmel Mount Carmel from there. I will search and take them though. 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 from there. I will command a sword and it shall slay them.

I will set my eyes on them for harm and not for good. So nowhere to go. You can run but you can't hide.

Wherever you go, he can find you and bring the judgment that he intends. The Lord God of hosts he who touches the earth and it melts and all who dwell there more all of it shall swell like a river and subdue like the River of Egypt. He who builds his layers in the sky.

He founded the strata of the earth who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth. The Lord is his name. Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to me? Oh children of Israel.

He's already said they were like Egypt and like Sodom now like Ethiopia. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt and Philistines from the calf door? Capital means Crete. That's where they came from and the Syrians from Kerr.

So perhaps what he's saying is you Israel think you're so special because I brought you up out of Egypt. Well, the Philistines I brought them from somewhere too. And you know, these other nations the Syrians I brought them from somewhere.

You're not so unique just because you were brought out of one nation planted here. Your enemies were taken from other places to implanted here. Behold the eyes of the Lord God or on the sinful Nick Kingdom.

And I will destroy it from the face of the earth. This is his threat against Israel to destroy it from the face of the earth. I will yet not utterly destroy the house of Jacob says Lord.

There will be a few remnant survivors like the ear or the legs of a land that's taken from

a mouth of a lion for surely. I will command and will sift the house of Israel among all nations as grain is sifted in a sieve yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. For all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword who say the calamity shall not overtake us nor confront us this sifting speaking of the separation of wheat from chaff.

He's identifying this the remnant in Israel who are the very few who are righteous as the wheat and the wicked or the chaff. And we know that John the Baptist spoke that way too. He said in Matthew chapter three that the Messiah is coming in his his threshing.

He's out of threshing floor as his fan in his hand. You just separate the wheat from the chaff is going to gather the wheat into the barn and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. This time of people and so here also.

Now God's pictures as sifting the grain that still has the chaff minutes and the chaff would fall through the holes in the sieve and the grain would be preserved. Jesus used that very image talking to his disciples being sifted in Luke 22 31. He said Peter Peter Satan has desired you that he might sift you like wheat meaning you plural you disciples you as plural in that place.

So Satan wants to sift you guys. See if there's any chaff among you. He wants to sit down and there was one bit of chaff in there Judas is scared.

He got sifted out but Jesus but I prayed for you. So in other words, you're not going to you're not going to fall through the cracks just like these not the smallest grain will fall through to the ground but the chaff will be removed. Now the last verses 11 through 15 are the verses about the messianic Kingdom.

Verse 11 in particular 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 remnant 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 so see the mountain shall drip with sweet wine and all the Hills shall flow with it.

I will bring back the captives of my people Israel. 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. I will plant them in their land and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land. I have given them says the Lord God now some people see this as a process about the last days when God restores Israel in the end times and they prosper again and all of that.

And you know, there could be some fulfillment in that but but the time frame that is given in verse 11 is the time when God will raise up the tabernacle of David which has fallen down and repair its damages raise up the ruins so that they may possess the

remnant of the Edom. Now the word Edom in the Septuagint the Greek Old Testament is the remnant of the Nations. So they'll possess the remnant of the Nations and all the Gentiles who are called by my name.

Now, we wouldn't know necessarily the time frame for this if it wasn't quoted in the New Testament in a very significant place and that is in Acts chapter 15. Acts chapter 15 was at the Jerusalem Council when the Apostles were trying to decide what role Gentiles would have in the church if they were uncircumcised because the Jews knew that a Gentile could be saved if they were circumcised because even in the Old Testament a Gentile could become a Jew a proselyte by being circumcised. So they had no problem with Gentiles being circumcised and becoming part of the Jewish movement called Christianity.

But Paul was bringing in Gentiles without circumcising them and this seemed like he was saying they don't have to be Jewish. They don't have to become Jews. They don't have to become proselytes.

They can just as they are be accepted by Christ on different terms than the Jews were accepted in the Old Testament or maybe on the same terms but without the law by faith. In any case that was a controversial point and the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem to discuss it try to sort it out because some were criticizing Paul for letting people who are Gentiles be part of the church without them becoming Jews and James kind of solved the problem at the end after Peter had testified Paul and Barnabas had testified and James gets up and answers in verse 13 Acts 15 13. It says after they'd all become silent James answered saying men and brethren listen to me Simon meaning Peter has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.

He's referring to the house of Cornelius there and with this the words of the prophets agree just as it is written after this. I will return to rebuild the tabernacle of David which has 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.

I was quoting from the Septuagint so it doesn't say anything about Edom. It just says the rest of mankind and the Gentiles now, here's what's being said the tabernacle of David and the word tabernacle is Sukkoth. You probably have heard of it if you know anything about the feast the Feast of Israel the Feast of Sukkoth Feast of tabernacles Sukkoth means it can mean a tent or it can mean a booth.

It's also called the Feast of booths, but it's it's talking about a not a permanent structure. It's talking about a run down temporary ramshackle kind of shelter. Now, why does it talk about the tabernacle David David didn't build a tabernacle like that, but it's referring.

It's a figure of speech because David was promised by God in second Samuel 7 that God would build a house for David. He meant a dynasty. He meant a hereditary dynasty of David's sons and grandsons over the House of David throughout the Old Testament the term the House of David refers to the dynasty of David and you and based on that.

Regular terminology Amos talked about the House of David has been a shack a booth a mere, you know, movable tent. It's not a house the the dynasty of David has been dilapidated by the immorality of the kings of Judah and so forth and and therefore God has to rebuild that tabernacle not not a building. He's got to restore the House of David that is the dynasty of David by bringing a righteous King like David instead of these wicked Kings who have dilapidated the so-called House of David into a booth.

God's going to restore that and the New Testament writers saw Jesus as the restoration of that. Jesus is the king of the House of David whom God has restored the David dynasty through. Jesus was called son of David by people when he was on the earth because that's a messianic title.

He's in throne at the right hand of God the dignity of the House of David the dynasty is is now restored by its chief member being enthroned in heaven. And this is the restoration of the tabernacle day. That's how James was understanding as he says so that the Gentiles could be added.

So the remnant of mankind could seek the Lord now. Why do you say that in Acts 15 because they were discussing whether Gentiles if it's okay for them to be Christians without being circumcised and James says, yeah, I think so. Peter told us about the household of Cornelius and the prophets agree with this.

He quotes this verse to prove what the Gentiles can be in the church now. In his own time. The coming of Gentiles into the church in James's own day was seen as a fulfillment of this the result of God restoring David's kingdom in Christ and bringing the Gentiles into that kingdom which Cornelius and others were examples of that.

So basically they're saying this is a prophecy about Jesus who has already come and restored the dynasty by being enthroned as the son of David now and Gentiles coming in now the reference all the fruitfulness and building the cities and coming out of captivity and so forth. Many people would be inclined to take all this kind of thing totally literally but in it's not uncommon for passages like this to be taken in the New Testament as spiritual. The fruitfulness is spiritual fruitfulness.

The captivity is captivity from sin. God brings back his captives from that captivity and sets them free. Jesus said if you continue in my words, you're my disciples indeed and you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free.

And so New Testament writers took a lot of passages like this. There's a lot of this kind of

passage in the Old Testament prophets and they applied it to spiritual fruitfulness spiritual freedom in Christ. And so I'm since James took verse 11 and 12 the way he did and applied it to his own time.

Not some future time not sometime in the last days, but just the church age itself with Christ reigning and Gentiles coming under his reign like us like we did when we received him. That this is time of spiritual fruitfulness former captives are now free and and God has brought security and prosperity and so forth of a spiritual sort to us. So in other words spiritualizing these things some people say you shouldn't spiritualize Scripture and I would tend to agree with them if they were right.

The truth is that the Apostles spiritualized Scripture all the time. They quoted Scriptures like this and gave it a spiritual application commonly including the building up of the tabernacle of David. They saw that is spiritually fulfilled by Jesus being, you know raining now and so.

Like many of the prophets Amos ends with a view of the coming of the Messiah. He has much less to say about the Messiah than many of the prophets do but he's too occupied denouncing Israel through most of it, but then he doesn't close his book without talking up the conclusion of God's dealings. The judgment of Israel is not the last thing of importance.

God did he restored the true house of David in the Messiah and called the Gentiles to be part of that too, which is which is where Amos leaves us and which is where I'm going to leave us to.