

# Amos 7 - 3 Visions; Opposition of Amaziah

## IV. Five visions of judgment against Israel (Amos 7:1—9:10)

- (1) Locusts (7:1-3)
  - (A) Vision (7:1)
  - (B) Amos' prayer (7:2)
  - (C) Judgment averted (7:3)
- (2) Fire (7:4-6)
  - (A) Vision (7:4)
  - (B) Amos' prayer (7:5)
  - (C) Judgment averted (7:6)
- (3) Plumb line (7:7-9)
  - (A) Vision (7:7)
  - (B) Judgment (7:8-9)
    - (a) Judgment cannot be averted (7:8)
    - (b) High places to be made desolate (7:9a)
    - (c) Sanctuaries to be laid waste (7:9b)
    - (d) House of Jeroboam to be attacked by God (7:9c)
- (4) Parenthetical insertion: illustration of the plumb line vision (7:10-17)
  - (A) Opposition of Amaziah the priest to Amos (7:10-13)
    - (a) To Jeroboam concerning Amos (7:10-11)
    - (b) To Amos (7:12-13)
      - (i) Prophecy in Judah (7:12)
      - (ii) Do not prophesy in Bethel (7:13)
  - (B) Amos' response to Amaziah (7:14-17)
    - (a) Regarding his calling (7:14-15)
    - (b) Regarding Amaziah (7:16-17)
      - (i) Rehearsal of Amaziah's attack (7:16)
      - (ii) Prophecy concerning Amaziah (7:17)
        - (a) Wife will become a harlot (7:17a)
        - (b) Children will be killed (7:17b)
        - (c) Land will be divided (7:17c)
        - (d) To be killed (7:17d)
        - (e) Nation will be exiled (7:17e)

## Amos 7

### IV. Five visions of judgment against Israel (Amos 7:1—9:10)

#### (1) Locusts (7:1-3)

##### (A) Vision (7:1)

**1** This is what the Lord GOD showed me, and behold, He was forming a swarm of locusts when the spring crop began to sprout. And behold, the spring crop *was* after the king's mowing.

**1** Thus the Lord GOD showed me, and behold, He was forming a locust-swarm when the spring crop began to sprout. And behold, the spring crop *was* after the king's mowing.

**1** This is what the Lord GOD showed me: Look! He was forming locust swarms as the latter plantings were just beginning to sprout. Indeed, the king had just taken his first fruit tax.

**1** Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.

- God showed Amos a swarm of hungry locusts swarming toward Israel in the springtime, after the first harvest ("king's mowing") and before the second harvest

— The first crops harvested in the spring went to feed the king's household and animals (Cf. 1 Kings 18:5)

— The crops that the people harvested later in the spring fed their own animals and themselves. If anything happened to prevent the second harvest, the people would have little to eat until the next harvest in the fall.

— Swarming locusts were a method of discipline that God said He might use if His people proved unfaithful to His covenant with them (Cf. Deut 28:38,42; Cf. Joel 1:1-7; Amos 4:9)

##### (B) Amos' prayer (7:2)

**2** And it came about, when it had finished eating the vegetation of the land, that I said, "Lord GOD, please pardon! How can Jacob stand? For he is small."

**2** And it came about, when it had finished eating the vegetation of the land, that I said, "Lord GOD, please pardon! How can Jacob stand, For he is small?"

**2** And so it came about that when the swarm had finished eating the grass of the land, I was saying, "Lord GOD, forgive—please! How will Jacob stand, since he is small?"

**2** And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.

- In his vision, Amos saw these locusts strip the land of its vegetation

— Amos then prayed and asked the Lord to pardon Israel for its covenant unfaithfulness; Jacob (the northern kingdom) was only a small nation and could not survive such a devastating judgment if the Lord allowed it to happen as Amos had seen in his vision.

— Amos' view of Israel as small and weak stands in contrast with the view of Israel's leaders, who believed it was strong and invincible (Cf. 6:1-3,8,13; 9:10)

(C) Judgment averted (7:3)

3 The LORD relented of this. "**It shall not be,**" said the LORD.

3 The LORD changed His mind about this. "It shall not be," said the LORD.

3 So the LORD relented from this. "This will not happen," said the LORD.

3 The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

- "...It shall not be" - Amos intercedes, like Moses did (Ex 32:12-14; Num 14:11-21), and the Lord changed His mind: the prophesied event never happened

— The prayers of righteous individuals, like Amos, can alter the events of history (Cf. James 5:16-18)

— Some things that God intends to do are not set in stone, He is open to changing His mind about these things

— However, He has firmly decreed other things, and no amount of praying will change His mind (Cf. Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11-12; Acts 1:11; Rev 22:20). Thus, it is important to understand from Scripture what aspects of His will are fixed and which are negotiable.

(2) Fire (7:4-6)

(A) Vision (7:4)

4 So the Lord GOD showed me, and behold, the Lord GOD was calling to contend *with them* by fire, and it consumed the **great deep** and *began to consume* the farmland.

4 Thus the Lord GOD showed me, and behold, the Lord GOD was calling to contend *with them* by fire, and it consumed the great deep and began to consume the farm land.

4 This is what the Lord GOD showed me: Look! The Lord GOD was calling for judgment by fire, and it was drying up the great depths of the ocean and consuming the land.

4 Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part.

- God next showed Amos a vision of a great fire that was burning up everything all the water and all the farmland in Israel. This may have been a scorching heatwave that resulted in drought.

- "...great deep" - subterranean waters that feed springs (Cf. Gen 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; 49:25; Deut 8:7; Ezek 31:4)

— So intense was the fire that it dried up even these underground water reservoirs. Great heat with consequent drought was another of the punishments that the LORD warned of for covenant unfaithfulness (Deut 28:22).

(B) Amos' prayer (7:5)

5 Then I said, "Lord GOD, please stop! How can Jacob stand? For he is small."  
5 Then I said, "Lord GOD, please stop! How can Jacob stand, for he is small?"  
5 So I kept on saying, "Lord GOD, forgive—please! How will Jacob stand, since he is so small?"  
5 Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.  
- Amos again intercedes on behalf of Israel (Cf. v2) and again, the Lord relented and this horrible judgment did not come to pass (Cf. v3,5)

(C) Judgment averted (7:6)

6 The LORD relented of this. "This too shall not be," said the Lord GOD.  
6 The LORD changed His mind about this. "This too shall not be," said the Lord GOD.  
6 So the LORD relented from this. "This will not happen, either," said the Lord GOD.  
6 The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

(3) Plumb line (7:7-9)

(A) Vision (7:7)

7 So He showed me, and behold, the Lord was standing by a vertical wall with a plumb line in His hand.  
7 Thus He showed me, and behold, the Lord was standing by a vertical wall with a plumb line in His hand.  
7 This is what he showed me: Look! The Lord was standing upon a wall that stood straight and true, with a plumb line in his hand.  
7 Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

(B) Judgment (7:8-9)

(a) Judgment cannot be averted (7:8)

8 And the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Amos?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold I am about to put a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel. I will not spare them any longer.  
8 The LORD said to me, "What do you see, Amos?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold I am about to put a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel. I will spare them no longer.  
8 And the LORD was asking me, "What do you see, Amos?" I replied, "A plumb line." So the Lord said, "Look, I have set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel. I will no longer spare them.

8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

(b) High places to be made desolate (7:9a)

(c) Sanctuaries to be laid waste (7:9b)

(d) House of Jeroboam to be attacked by God (7:9c)

9 "The high places of Isaac will become deserted, And the sanctuaries of Israel will be in ruins. Then I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

9 "The high places of Isaac will be desolated And the sanctuaries of Israel laid waste. Then I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

9 Isaac's high places will be destroyed, and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined. I will rise in opposition to the house of Jeroboam with my sword."

9 And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

Removal of false religious system ("Isaac" = Israel).

- The means of judgment that God would use would not be a locust invasion or a great fire, but "the sword"

— Another hungry army, this time a human enemy rather than locust, would invade Israel (Cf. Deut 28:49-50)

— This enemy, as Yahweh's agent, would destroy the outdoor "high places" on the hilltops, and the temple "sanctuaries" at Dan and Bethel, where the people worshipped God and idols, namely, all their worship centers

— Note there is no intercession from Amos here as the patience of God is at an end...

### **Opposition of Amaziah**

The event described in v10-17 evidently followed out of the preceding visions that Amos announced (v1-9). The historical incident is an example of God's plumbline in operation, but here it judged individuals.

(4) Parenthetical insertion: illustration of the plumb line vision (7:10-17)

(A) Opposition of Amaziah the priest to Amos (7:10-13)

(a) To Jeroboam concerning Amos (7:10-11)

**10** Then **Amaziah**, the priest of Bethel, sent *word* to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is **unable to endure** all his words.

**10** Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent *word* to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is unable to

endure all his words.

**10** So Amaziah priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel. It said, "Amos has been conspiring against you in the very heart of the house of Israel! The land cannot bear everything he has to say,

**10** Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

- "...Amaziah" - one of the apostate priests who served at the Bethel sanctuary (1 Kings 12:26-33) believed that Amos was unpatriotic in what he was prophesying

— So Amaziah sent a message to King Jeroboam II, charging Amos with conspiring against the king within the land. He felt that Israel could not afford to endure Amos' prophesying any longer.

— Previously, internal revolt against a king had sometimes followed a prophet's pronouncements (Cf. 1 Sam 16:1-13; 1 Kings 11:29-39; 16:1-13; 19:15-17; 2 Kings 8:7-15; 9:1-28; 10:9), so we can understand Amaziah's concern.

**11** For this is what Amos says: 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'

**11** For thus Amos says, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'

**11** because Amos is saying this: 'By the sword will Jeroboam die, and Israel will surely go into exile far from her homeland.'

**11** For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

- Amaziah reported that Amos was saying that the king would die by the sword, and that the Israelites would definitely go into exile

— While we have no record that Amos said these exact words, they do represent fairly the message that Amos was announcing (Cf. v8-9)

— By claiming that Amos was predicting Jeroboam's death, the priest was personalizing the danger of Amos' ministry to the king and was emotionally inciting him to take action against the prophet

— Amaziah regarded Amos' prophecies as simply the prophet's own words; he had no respect for them as messages from Israel's God, but viewed them only as a challenge to the status quo

(b) To Amos (7:12-13)

(i) Prophecy in Judah (7:12)

**12** Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee to the land of Judah; and eat bread there and do your prophesying there!"

**12** Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying!"

**12** So Amaziah kept saying to Amos, "Get out of here, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Live there and prophesy there."

**12** Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

- Amaziah approached Amos and told him to move back to Judah and earn a living in his home country

- By telling him to "eat bread there" he was hinting the Amos needed to get a legitimate job rather than living off the contributions he received for prophesying

(ii) Do not prophesy in Bethel (7:13)

**13** But do not prophesy at Bethel any longer, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence."

**13** But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence."

**13** Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because it's the king's sanctuary and a temple of the kingdom."

**13** But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

- Amaziah told Amos to stop prophesying in Bethel because it was one of the king's sanctuaries as well as one of his residences

(B) Amos' response to Amaziah (7:14-17)

(a) Regarding his calling (7:14-15)

**14** Then Amos replied to Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs."

**14** Then Amos replied to Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs."

**14** Amos replied in answer to Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor am I a prophet's son, for I have been shepherding and picking the fruit of sycamore trees."

**14** Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit:

- Amos replied that he was not a prophet of his own choosing; he did not decide to pursue prophesying as a career

— He had previously earned his living in a completely unrelated occupation (Cf. Elisha, 1 Kings 19:19-21); he had a respectable agricultural business background before he moved

to Israel to prophesy, thus Amaziah should not think that Amos came to Israel to prophesy because that was the only work that he could do in order to make a living.

15 But the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.'

15 But the LORD took me from following the flock and the LORD said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.'

15 But the LORD took me from tending the flock and the LORD kept saying to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

15 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

- Amos went to Israel having been sent there by God to prophesy; God had given him a definite commission, and Amos left his former occupation to obey that divine calling.

(b) Regarding Amaziah (7:16-17)

(i) Rehearsal of Amaziah's attack (7:16)

16 So now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you prophesy against the house of Isaac.'

16 Now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you speak against the house of Isaac.'

16 "Very well then, hear this message from the LORD: 'You are saying, "Don't prophesy against Israel, and don't preach against the house of Isaac."

16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.

(ii) Prophecy concerning Amaziah (7:17)

(a) Wife will become a harlot (7:17a)

(b) Children will be killed (7:17b)

(c) Land will be divided (7:17c)

(d) To be killed (7:17d)

(e) Nation will be exiled (7:17e)

17 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, your land will be parceled up by a *measuring* line, and you yourself will die upon unclean soil. Furthermore Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'

17 Therefore, thus says the LORD, 'Your wife will become a harlot in the city, your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, your land will be parceled up by a *measuring* line and

you yourself will die upon unclean soil. Moreover, Israel will certainly go from its land into exile."

17 'Therefore this is what the LORD says: "Your wife will become a whore in the city, and your sons and daughters will die by the sword. Your land will be divided and apportioned, and you will die in a foreign land. Israel will surely go into exile, far from its homeland."'"

**17** Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

- Amos then announced a prophecy from the Lord for Amaziah: because the priest had told Amos to stop prophesying, what God had commanded him to do, Amaziah's wife would become a harlot in Bethel

— She would have to stoop to this level in order to earn a living, because she would have no husband or sons to support her

— Her children would die by the sword. This may also imply the end of Amaziah's family line.

— Amaziah's "land" would become the property of others ("parceled up"), presumably the Assyrians, and he himself would "die" in a foreign, pagan land ("unclean soil")

— All these things would eventually happen when the foreign enemy destroyed Israel

— Stifling the Word of God proved disastrous for Amaziah, as it still does today