

Amos

Introduction

¹ This is the message of Amos, one of the shepherds from the city Tekoa. He saw visions about Israel during the time that Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel. This was two years before the earthquake.

Punishment for Aram

² Amos said,
“The LORD will shout like a lion in Zion.
His loud voice will roar from Jerusalem.
The green pastures of the shepherds will turn
brown and die.
Even Mount Carmel* will become dry.”

³ This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the people of Damascus for the many crimes they did.[†] They crushed the people of Gilead with iron threshing tools. ⁴ So I will start a fire at Hazael’s[‡] house that will destroy the great palaces of Ben-Hadad.[§]

* **1:2** Mount Carmel A mountain in northern Israel. The name means “God’s vineyard.” This shows that it was a very fertile hill. [†] **1:3** for the many crimes they did Literally, “for three crimes ... and for four” This shows that these people were very sinful—and it was time to punish them. Also in verses 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6. [‡] **1:4** Hazael Hazael was the king of Aram (Syria). He murdered Ben-Hadad I so that he could become king. See 2 Kings 8:7. [§] **1:4** Ben-Hadad Ben-Hadad II, the son of Hazael, king of Aram (Syria). See 2 Kings 13:3.

⁵ “I will also break open the gates of Damascus* and remove the one who sits on the throne in the Valley of Aven.† I will remove the symbol of power from Beth Eden,‡ and the Arameans will be defeated and taken back to Kir.§” This is what the LORD said.

Punishment for the Philistines

⁶ This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the people of Gaza* for the many crimes they did. They took an entire nation of people and sent them as slaves to Edom. ⁷ So I will start a fire at the wall of Gaza that will destroy the high towers in Gaza. ⁸ And I will destroy the one who sits on the throne in Ashdod. I will destroy the king who holds the scepter in Ashkelon. I will punish the people of Ekron.† Then the Philistines who are still left alive will die.” This is what the Lord GOD said.

Punishment for Phoenicia

⁹ This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the people of Tyre‡ for the many crimes they did. They took an entire nation and sent them as slaves to Edom. They did not remember the agreement they had made with

* **1:5** Damascus The capital city of Aram (Syria). † **1:5** the Valley of Aven A name that can mean “Restful Valley” or “Empty Valley of Misfortune.” ‡ **1:5** Beth Eden The royal city of Aram (Syria) on Mount Lebanon. This name means “House of Pleasure” or “Paradise.” § **1:5** Kir Or “Kur,” an area controlled by the Assyrians. See Amos 9:7. * **1:6** Gaza An important city of the Philistines. † **1:8** Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron Important cities of the Philistines. ‡ **1:9** Tyre The capital city of Phoenicia.

their brothers. § 10 So I will start a fire at the walls of Tyre that will destroy the high towers in Tyre.”

Punishment for the Edomites

11 This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the people of Edom for their many crimes. Edom chased his brother with the sword, and he showed no mercy. His anger never stopped. He kept tearing and tearing at Israel like a wild animal. 12 So I will start a fire at Teman that will destroy the high towers of Bozrah.”

Punishment for the Ammonites

13 This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the Ammonites* for the many crimes they did. They killed the pregnant women in Gilead. The Ammonites did this so that they could take that land and make their country larger. 14 So I will start a fire at the wall of Rabbah† that will destroy the high towers of Rabbah. Troubles will come to them like a whirlwind‡ into their country. 15 Then their kings and leaders will be captured. They will all be taken together.” This is what the LORD said.

2

Punishment for Moab

§ 1:9 brothers The people of Israel. * 1:13 Ammonites The Ammonites were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, son of Lot. Read Genesis 19:38. † 1:14 Rabbah The capital city of the Ammonites. ‡ 1:14 whirlwind A strong wind that blows in a circle.

¹ This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the people of Moab for the many crimes they did. Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime. ² So I will start a fire in Moab that will destroy the high towers of Kerioth.* There will be terrible shouting and the sounds of a trumpet, and Moab will die. ³ So I will bring an end to the kings[†] of Moab, and I will kill all the leaders of Moab.” This is what the LORD said.

Punishment for Judah

⁴ This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish Judah for the many crimes they did. They refused to obey the LORD’S teachings and they did not keep his commands. Their ancestors believed lies, and those same lies caused the people of Judah to stop following God. ⁵ So I will start a fire in Judah that will destroy the high towers of Jerusalem.”

Punishment for Israel

⁶ This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish Israel for the many crimes they have done. They sold honest people for a little silver. They sold the poor for the price of a pair of sandals. ⁷ They pushed their faces into the ground and walked on them. They stopped listening to suffering people. Fathers and sons had sexual relations with the same woman. They ruined my holy name. ⁸ They took clothes from the poor, and then they sat on those clothes while

* **2:2** Kerioth A city in Moab. This might be Ar, the capital city of Moab. † **2:3** kings Literally, “judges.”

worshiping at their altars. They loaned money to the poor, and then they took their clothes as a promise for payment.[‡] They made people pay fines and used the money to buy wine for themselves to drink in the temple of their god.

⁹ “But it was I who destroyed the Amorites[§] before them. They were as tall as cedar trees and as strong as oaks, but I destroyed their fruit above and their roots below.*

¹⁰ “I was the one who brought you from the land of Egypt. For 40 years I led you through the desert. I helped you take the Amorites’ land.

¹¹ I made some of your sons to be prophets and some of your young men to be Nazirites. People of Israel, it is true.” This is what the LORD said.

¹² “But you made the Nazirites drink wine. You told the prophets not to prophesy. ¹³ You have become more than I can bear. I am bent low like a wagon loaded with grain. ¹⁴ No one will escape, not even the fastest runner. Strong men will not be strong enough. Soldiers will not be able to save themselves. ¹⁵ People with bows and arrows will not survive. Fast runners will not escape. People on horses will not escape alive.

¹⁶ At that time even very brave soldiers will run away. They will not take the time to put their clothes on.” This is what the LORD said.

[‡] **2:8** as a promise for payment. See Deuteronomy 24:12-13 for the rules about making loans to the poor. **§ 2:9** Amorites One of the nations who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came. They were the people who scared the Israelites while Moses was leading them in the desert. See Num. 13:33. * **2:9** fruit above ... below This means the parents and their children.

3

Warning to Israel

¹ People of Israel, listen to this message! This is what the LORD said about you, Israel. This message is about all the families that I brought from the land of Egypt. ² “There are many families on earth, but you are the only family I chose to know in a special way. And you turned against me, so I will punish you for all your sins.”

The Cause of Israel's Punishment

³ Two people will not walk together
unless they have agreed to do so.

⁴ A lion will roar in the forest
only if it catches its prey.

A young lion roaring in his cave
means he has caught something to eat.

⁵ A bird doesn't fly into a trap
unless there is food in it.

If a trap closes,
it will catch the bird.

⁶ If people hear the warning blast of a trumpet,
they shake with fear.

If trouble comes to a city,
the LORD caused it to happen.

⁷ When the Lord GOD decides to do something,
he will first tell his servants, the prophets.

⁸ When a lion roars, people are frightened. When
the Lord GOD speaks, a prophet must prophesy.

9-10 Go to the high towers in Ashdod* and in Egypt and announce this message from the LORD: "Come together on the mountains of Samaria. See the great confusion there because the people don't know how to live right. See how cruel they are to others. They take things from people to hide in their high towers. Their treasures are filled with the things they have taken in war."

11 So the Lord GOD says, "An enemy will surround your land. They will break down your strong walls and take the things you have hidden in your high towers."

12 The LORD says,

"A lion might attack a lamb,
and a shepherd might try to save the lamb.
But the shepherd will save
only a part of that lamb.
He might pull two legs
or a part of an ear from the lion's mouth.
In the same way, most of the people of Israel will
not be saved.
Those who live in Samaria will save only a
corner from a bed,
or a piece of cloth from a couch."

13 This is what the Lord GOD All-Powerful says:
"Warn the family of Jacob about these things.

14 Israel sinned, and I will punish them for their sins. And when I do, I will also destroy the altars

* **3:9-10** Ashdod An important city of the Philistines.

at Bethel.[†] The horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground. ¹⁵ I will destroy the winter house with the summer house. The houses of ivory will be destroyed. Many houses will be destroyed.” This is what the LORD said.

4

The Women Who Love Pleasure

¹ Listen to me, you cows of Bashan* on Samaria’s mountain. You hurt the poor and crush those in need. You tell your husbands,[†] “Bring us something to drink!”

² The Lord GOD made a promise. He promised by his holiness that troubles will come to you. People will use hooks and take you away as prisoners. They will use fishhooks to take away your children. ³ Your city will be destroyed. The women will rush out through cracks in the wall and throw themselves onto the pile of dead bodies.[‡]

This is what the LORD says: ⁴ “Go to Bethel and sin. Go to Gilgal§ and sin even more. Offer

[†] **3:14** Bethel A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.” * **4:1** cows of Bashan This means the wealthy women in Samaria. Bashan, an area east of the Jordan River, was famous for its big bulls and cows. [†] **4:1** your husbands Literally, “their masters.” [‡] **4:3** throw ... dead bodies Or “You will be thrown away. People will take you to Mount Hermon.” The Hebrew text here is hard to understand. It is not clear if the women will be “thrown away” or if the women will be “throwing something away.” § **4:4** Bethel ... Gilgal Places of worship for the people of Israel. God wanted the people of Israel and the people of Judah to worship him only in the Temple at Jerusalem.

your sacrifices in the morning. Bring a tenth of your crops for the three-day festival. ⁵ And offer a thank offering made with yeast. Tell everyone about the freewill offerings.* Israel, you love to do those things. So go and do them.” This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁶ “I didn’t give you any food to eat.† There was no food in any of your cities, but you didn’t come back to me.” This is what the LORD said.

⁷ “I also stopped the rain, and it was three months before harvest time. So no crops grew. Then I let it rain on one city, but not on another city. Rain fell on one part of the country, but on the other part of the country, the land became very dry. ⁸ So the people from two or three cities staggered to another city to get water, but there was not enough water for everyone. Still you didn’t come to me for help.” This is what the LORD said.

⁹ “I made your crops die from heat and disease. I destroyed your gardens and your vineyards. Locusts ate your fig trees and olive trees. But you still didn’t come to me for help.” This is what the LORD said.

¹⁰ “I sent diseases against you, as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with swords. I took away your horses. I made your camp smell very bad from all the dead bodies, but still you didn’t

* **4:5** Offer your sacrifices ... freewill offerings All these things were against the Law of Moses. The leaders and false priests started these new festivals and different ways of worshiping God.

† **4:6** I didn’t give you any food to eat Literally, “I gave you clean teeth.”

come back to me for help.” This is what the LORD said.

¹¹ “I destroyed you as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. And those cities were completely destroyed. You were like a burned stick pulled from a fire, but still you didn’t come back to me for help.” This is what the LORD says.

¹² “So, Israel, this is what I will do to you. You people of Israel, prepare to meet your God.”

¹³ He is the one who made the mountains.

He created the wind.‡

He lets people know his thoughts.

He changes the darkness into dawn.

He walks over the mountains of the earth.

His name is YAHWEH, LORD God All-Powerful.

5

A Sad Song for Israel

¹ People of Israel, listen to this song. This funeral song is about you.

² The virgin* of Israel has fallen.

She will not get up anymore.

She was left alone, lying in the dirt.

There is no one to lift her up.

³ This is what the Lord GOD says:

‡ 4:13 the wind Or “your minds.” * 5:2 virgin The Hebrew word can mean “a woman who has not had sexual relations with anyone,” but here, it means the city of Samaria.

“Officers leaving the city with 1000 men
will return with only 100 men.
Officers leaving the city with 100 men
will return with only ten men.”

*The Lord Encourages Israel
to Come Back*

⁴ The LORD says this to the nation[†] of Israel:

“Come looking for me and live.

⁵ But don’t look in Bethel.

Don’t go to Gilgal.

Don’t cross the border and go down to
Beersheba.[‡]

The people of Gilgal will be taken away as
prisoners,[§]

and Bethel will be destroyed.*

⁶ Come to the LORD and live.

If you don’t go to him, a fire will start at
Joseph’s house,[†]

and no one in Bethel[‡] can stop it.

⁷⁻⁹ You should go to the Lord for help.

[†] **5:4** nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country. [‡] **5:5** Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba Ancient places of worship. Abraham and Jacob built altars in these places, but God had told the Israelites that they should go to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship him. [§] **5:5** taken away as prisoners In Hebrew this sounds like the name “Gilgal.” * **5:5** destroyed The Hebrew word is like the name “Beth Aven.” This name means “House of Wickedness.” The prophets often used this name for Bethel. [†] **5:6** Joseph’s house Here, this means the ten-tribe nation of Israel. Joseph was the ancestor of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in Israel. [‡] **5:6** Bethel This name means “El’s house” or “the house of God.” There was a temple here where the people from the northern tribes worshiped.

He is the one who made the Pleiades and Orion.[§]
 He changes darkness into the morning light.
 He changes the day into the dark night.
 He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them
 out on the earth.
 His name is YAHWEH!
 He keeps one strong city safe,
 and he lets another strong city be de-
 stroyed.”

The Evil Things That the Israelites Did

You change justice to poison.*
 You throw away fairness like trash.
 10 You hate those prophets, who go to public
 places and speak against evil,
 even though they teach good, simple truths.
 11 You take unfair taxes[†] from the poor.
 You take loads of wheat from them.
 You build fancy houses with cut stone,
 but you will not live in them.
 You plant beautiful vineyards,
 but you will not drink the wine from them.
 12 This is because I know about your many sins.
 You have done some very bad things:
 You hurt people who do right,
 you accept money to do wrong,
 and you keep the poor from receiving justice
 in court.

§ 5:7-9 Pleiades and Orion Two well-known groups of stars (constellations). * 5:7-9 poison Literally, “wormwood,” a type of plant with bitter leaves. It could be used as a medicine, or if strong enough, as a poison. † 5:11 take unfair taxes The meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.

- 13 At that time wise teachers will be quiet,
because it is a bad time.
14 You say that God is with you,
so you should do good things, not evil.
Then you will live,
and the LORD God All-Powerful will be with
you.
15 Hate evil and love goodness.
Bring justice back into the courts.
Maybe then the LORD God All-Powerful
will be kind to the survivors from Joseph's
family.

A Time of Great Sadness Is Coming

- 16 The Lord, the LORD God All-Powerful says,
"People will be crying in the public places.
They will be crying in the streets.
They will hire the professional criers.‡
17 People will be crying in the vineyards,
because I will pass through and punish you."
This is what the LORD said.
18 Some of you want to see
the LORD'S special day of judgment.
Why do you want to see that day of the LORD?
His special day will bring darkness, not light.
19 You will be like someone who escapes from a
lion
only to be attacked by a bear,
or like someone who goes into the safety of his
house,
leans against the wall,

‡ **5:16** professional criers People who went to funerals and cried loudly for the dead. Families and friends of the dead person often gave food or money to these people.

and is bitten by a snake.

- 20 The LORD'S special day will be
a day of darkness, not light—a day of gloom,
without a ray of light.

The Lord Rejects Israel's Worship

- 21 "I hate your festivals;
I will not accept them.
I don't enjoy your religious meetings.
- 22 Even if you offer me burnt offerings and grain
offerings,
I will not accept them.
I will not even look at the fat animals
you give as fellowship offerings.
- 23 Take your noisy songs away from here.
I will not listen to the music from your harps.
- 24 But let justice flow like a river,
and let goodness flow like a stream that
never becomes dry.
- 25 Israel, you offered me sacrifices
and offerings in the desert for 40 years. §
- 26 But you also carried statues of Sakkuth, your
king, and Kaiwan.*
There was also that star god † that you made

§ 5:25 Or "Israel, did you offer me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for 40 years?" * 5:26 Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan Or "Sakkuth, Moloch, and Kaiwan," names of Assyrian gods. † 5:26 star god This might be to honor a special god or all the stars in the sky. Many people thought the sun, moon, stars, and planets were gods or angels. This verse might also be translated, "You carried the shelter for your king and the footstool for your idols—the star of your gods that you made for yourselves." The ancient Greek version adds the names of these gods: Moloch and Raphan.

for yourselves.

- ²⁷ So I will send you as captives, far beyond
Damascus.”
This is what the LORD says.
His name is God All-Powerful.

6

Israel's Good Times Will Be Taken Away

- ¹ Oh, look at the people enjoying life in Zion,
and those on Mount Samaria who feel so
safe.
They are such important leaders of a most
important nation.
The “House of Israel” comes to you for
advice.
- ² Go look at Calneh.
From there, go to the large city Hamath.
Go to the Philistine city of Gath.*
Are you better than these kingdoms?
Their countries are larger than yours.
- ³ You people are rushing toward the day of
punishment.
You bring near the rule of violence.
- ⁴ But now you lie on ivory beds
and stretch out on your couches.
You eat tender young lambs from the flock
and young calves from the stable.
- ⁵ You play your harps,

* **6:2** Calneh, Hamath, Gath Powerful Babylonian, Syrian, and
Philistine cities that were all captured by the Assyrians.

and like David, you practice on[†] your musical instruments.

⁶ You drink wine in fancy cups.[‡]

You use the best perfumes.

And it doesn't even bother you
that Joseph's family is being destroyed.

⁷ You people are stretched out on your couches now, but your good times will end. You will be taken away as prisoners to a foreign country, and you will be some of the first people taken. ⁸ The Lord GOD used his own name and made an oath. The LORD God All-Powerful said,

"I hate what Jacob is proud of.
I hate his strong towers.
So I will let an enemy take the city
and everything in it."

There Will Be Few Israelites Left Alive

⁹ At that time ten people in one house might survive, but they too will die. ¹⁰ And when someone dies, a relative will come to get the body so that it can be taken out and burned.[§] Relatives will come to take away the bones. They will call to anyone who might be hiding back in the house, "Are there any other dead bodies in there with you?"

[†] **6:5** practice on Or "invent." The Hebrew word means to "think," "become skilled," or "design." [‡] **6:6** fancy cups Very large bowls used in worship rituals. [§] **6:10** And when ... burned The meaning of the Hebrew text here is uncertain.

That person will answer, “No,”*

But the relative will interrupt and say, “Hush!
We must not mention the name of the LORD.”

¹¹ Look, the LORD will give the command,
and the large houses will be broken to pieces,
and the small houses will be broken to small
pieces.

¹² Do horses run over loose rocks?
No, and people don’t use cows for plowing.
But you turned everything upside down.
You changed justice and goodness to bitter
poison.

¹³ You are so excited about defeating Lo Debar.[†]
And you boast, “We have taken Karnaim[‡] by
our own strength.”

¹⁴ “But Israel, I will bring a nation against you
that will bring troubles to your whole country
from Lebo Hamath to Arabah Brook.” This is
what the LORD God All-Powerful said.

7

The Vision of the Locusts

¹ This is what the Lord GOD showed me: He
was making locusts. This was at the time the
second crop began to grow, after the king’s
people had cut the first crop. ² Before the locusts
could eat all the grass in the country, I said, “Lord

* **6:10** No, ... The full answer might have been, “No, praise the
LORD,” but the person was interrupted. † **6:13** Lo Debar This
name means “nothing.” ‡ **6:13** Karnaim This name means
“horns.” Horns were a symbol of strength.

GOD, I beg you, forgive us! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!"

³ Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The LORD said, "It will not happen."

The Vision of the Fire

⁴ This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw the Lord GOD calling for judgment by fire. The fire destroyed the ocean and was beginning to eat up the land. ⁵ But I said, "Lord GOD, stop, I beg you! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!"

⁶ Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The Lord GOD said, "It will not happen either."

The Vision of the Plumb Line

⁷ This is what the Lord showed me: He stood by a wall with a plumb line* in his hand. (The wall had been marked with a plumb line.) ⁸ The LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A plumb line."

Then the Lord said to me, "See, I will put a plumb line among my people Israel. I will not let their 'crooked ways' pass inspection anymore.

⁹ Isaac's high places will be destroyed. Israel's holy places will be made into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboam's† family with swords."

Amaziah Tries to Stop Amos

¹⁰ Amaziah, a priest at Bethel,‡ sent this mes-

* **7:7** plumb line A string with a weight on one end used to show how straight the walls of a building were. Sometimes the line was coated with paint or chalk to mark a straight line. † **7:9** Jeroboam The king of Israel. See verse 10. ‡ **7:10** Bethel A town in Israel. This name means "God's house."

sage to Jeroboam, the king of Israel: "Amos is making plans against you. He is trying to make the people of Israel fight against you. He has been speaking so much that this country cannot hold all his words. ¹¹ Amos has said, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and the people of Israel will be taken as prisoners out of their country.' "

¹² Amaziah also said to Amos, "You seer, go down to Judah and eat there. [§] Do your prophesying there. ¹³ But don't prophesy anymore here at Bethel. This is Jeroboam's holy place. This is Israel's temple."

¹⁴ Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am not a professional prophet, and I am not from a prophet's family. I raise cattle and take care of sycamore trees. ¹⁵ I was a shepherd and the LORD took me from following the sheep. The LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' ¹⁶ So listen to the LORD'S message. You tell me, 'Don't prophesy against Israel. Don't speak against Isaac's family.' ¹⁷ But the LORD says, 'Your wife will become a prostitute in the city. Your sons and daughters will be killed with swords. Other people will take your land and divide it among themselves, and you will die in a foreign* country. The people of Israel will definitely be taken from this country as prisoners.' "

§ 7:12 eat there This shows that Amaziah thought that Amos was a professional prophet who prophesied to receive food or money. * **7:17** foreign Literally, "unclean." See "unclean" in the Word List.

8

The Vision of the Ripe Fruit

¹ This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw a basket of summer fruit. ² He said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A basket of summer fruit."

Then the LORD said to me, "The end* has come to my people Israel. I will not ignore their sins anymore. ³ Their temple songs will become funeral songs." This is what the Lord GOD said. "There will be dead bodies everywhere. In silence, people will take out the dead bodies and throw them onto the pile.†"

Merchants Only Want to Make Money

⁴ Listen to me, you who trample on helpless people.

You are trying to destroy the poor of this country.

⁵ You merchants say,

"When will the New Moon be over so that we can sell grain?

When will the Sabbath be over

so that we can bring out more wheat to sell?

We can raise the price

and make the measure smaller.‡

We can fix the scales

and cheat the people.§

⁶ The poor cannot pay their loans,

* **8:2** end This Hebrew word sounds like the word for "summer fruit." † **8:3** In silence ... the pile Or "People will be saying, 'Hush!' " See Amos 6:10. ‡ **8:5** We ... smaller Literally, "We will make the ephah small and the shekel large." § **8:5** We ... people Literally, "Cheat with lying balances."

so we will buy them as slaves.
We will buy those helpless people
for the price of a pair of sandals.
Oh, and we can sell the wheat
that was spilled on the floor.”

⁷ The LORD made a promise. He used his name, “Pride of Jacob,” and made this promise:

“I will never forget what those people did.
⁸ There will be an earthquake
that will shake the whole land because of
what they did.
Everyone living there will cry for those who died.
The land will be tossed around.
The whole land will rise and fall like the Nile
River in Egypt.”

⁹ The Lord GOD also said,
“At that time I will make the sun set at noon
and make the land dark on a clear day.
¹⁰ I will change your festivals into days of crying
for the dead.
All your songs will be songs of sadness for
those who are dead.
I will put mourning clothes on every body
and baldness on every head.*
I will cause mourning everywhere,
like that for an only son who has died.
It will be a very bitter end.”

A Famine of God's Word

* **8:10** baldness ... head People shaved their heads to show that they were very sad or upset.

11 The Lord GOD says,

“Look, the days are coming
when I will cause a famine in the land.
The people will not be hungry for bread.
They will not be thirsty for water.
No, they will be hungry for words from the
LORD.

12 The people will wander around the country,
from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea,
and from the north part of the country to the
east.

They will go back and forth looking for a message
from the LORD,
but they will not find it.

13 At that time the beautiful young men and
women
will become weak from thirst.

14 They made promises by the sin of Samaria,[†]
They said, ‘Dan,[‡] as surely as your god lives,
we promise’
And they said, ‘As surely as the god of
Beersheba[§] lives, we promise’

But they will fall
and never get up again.”

9

Vision of the Lord Standing by the Altar

[†] 8:14 sin of Samaria The calf god in Samaria. [‡] 8:14 Dan
One of Israel’s holy places was in this city. [§] 8:14 Beersheba
A town in Judah. This name means “well of the oath.”

¹ I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said,

“Hit the top of the columns,
and shake them to the ground.
Push them and they will fall
on everyone’s head.

As for those who survive,
I will kill them with a sword.
None of them will run away.
None of them will escape.

² If they dig deep into the ground,*
I will pull them from there.

If they go up into the skies,†
I will bring them down from there.

³ If they hide at the top of Mount Carmel,‡
I will find them there and take them from
that place.

If they try to hide from me at the bottom of the
sea,
I will command the snake, and it will bite
them.

⁴ If they are captured and taken away by their
enemies,
I will command the sword,
and it will kill them there.

Yes, I will watch over them,
but I will watch for ways to give them
troubles,
not for ways to do good things.”

* **9:2** ground Literally, “Sheol, the place of the dead.” † **9:2** skies Or “heaven.” ‡ **9:3** Mount Carmel A mountain in northern Israel. This name means “God’s vineyard.” This shows that it was a very fertile hill.

Punishment Will Destroy the People

⁵ The Lord GOD All-Powerful will touch the land,
and the land will melt.
Then all the people who live in the land will
cry for the dead.

The land will rise and fall
like the Nile River in Egypt.

⁶ He built his upper rooms above the skies.

He put his skies[§] over the earth.

He calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out as rain on the land.
YAHWEH is his name.

*The Lord Promises Destruction
for Israel*

⁷ This is what the LORD says:

“Israel, you are like the Ethiopians to me.
I brought Israel out of the land of Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor,*
and the Arameans from Kir.†”

⁸ The Lord GOD is watching this sinful kingdom.
The LORD says,

“I will wipe Israel off the face of the earth,
but I will never completely destroy Jacob’s
family.

⁹ I am giving the command
to scatter the people of Israel among all
nations.

§ 9:6 skies Literally, “dome” or “vault.” * 9:7 Caphtor An island west of Israel, probably Crete or Cyprus. † 9:7 Kir Where the Arameans came from and where the Assyrians sent them in exile. There are several places with this name.

But it will be like someone sifting flour.
A person shakes flour through a sifter.‡
The good flour falls through, but the bad
lumps are caught.

10 “Sinners among my people say,
‘Nothing bad will happen to us.’
But all of them will be killed with swords.”

God Promises to Restore the Kingdom

11 “David’s tent§ has fallen,
but at that time I will set it up again.
I will fix its holes and repair its ruined parts.
I will set it up as it was before.

12 Then the people left alive in Edom,
and all the people called by my name, will
look to me for help.”
This is what the LORD said,
and he will make it happen.

13 The LORD says, “A time of great blessing is
coming.

Workers will still be harvesting
when it is time to plow the fields again.
They will still be trampling the grapes
when it is time for a new crop.
Sweet wine will drip from the mountains
and pour from the hills.

14 I will bring my people, Israel,
back from captivity.

‡ 9:9 sifter Something like a cup with a screen on its bottom.
A sifter is used for removing large lumps from the good flour.

§ 9:11 David’s tent This probably means the city of Jerusalem
or the country of Judah.

They will rebuild the ruined cities,
and they will live in them.

They will plant vineyards
and drink the wine they produce.

They will plant gardens
and eat the crops they produce.

¹⁵ I will plant my people on their land,
and never again will they be pulled up out
of the land that I gave them.”

This is what the LORD your God said.

Easy-to-Read Version

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Language: English

Dialect: American

Translation by: World Bible Translation Center

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2018-08-30

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 22 Feb 2024 from source files dated 31 Aug 2018

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