

Amos is given 5 visions in the final three chapters of his oracle that reveal the judgment of God. However, even in the midst of the telling of impending doom, God reveals His mercy both at the moment and in the future when HE would set all things right from His altar and bring abundant life and peaceful security in straight strong walls.

1. Mercy in the Midst of Judgment – Amos 7:1-6

- a. First Rejected Vision: Devouring Locusts - too much
- b. Second Rejected Vision: Consuming Fire - too great

2. Poor Foundation – Amos 7:7-17

- a. Plumb Line of judgment
 - i. God will divide, section off, measure out and remove some of Israel.
 - ii. Rather than total destruction of locusts or fire, God chooses to be precise, somewhat minimal. How gracious of God!!
 - iii. What Parts Removed?
 1. High Places erased (places of worship)
 2. Sanctuaries decimated (sacred places)
 3. House of Jeroboam by sword (king)
 - iv. Why these places?
 1. Imagery of a wall and a plumb line indicates that wall-building is the image here:
 2. These places are the foundation stones of the "wall" or "building" of Israel. When they are not set level (righteous), then the entire building is at risk of tumbling. It is insecure, unstable, and in danger of toppling down to its utter destruction.
 - a. The religious leaders and political leaders of Israel are “perverted” and out of square. They will be removed by the Master Builder.
 - b. This, of course, troubled Amaziah, a priest (religious) in the king’s court (political) for it threatened his power.
 - i. Amaziah complains to the King that Amos is saying bad things about him.
 - ii. So, he tells Amos to go back to Judah where they will feed him well and he can collect his earnings, but to stop preaching bad news about Bethel *because it is the sacred place of the king and his home*
 - iii. Amos then notes his humble beginnings and shows that he didn't choose this job, but that the LORD chose him for the task. Amaziah's family would be utterly destroyed and shamed and he would end up in exile alone and bereft of his wife and children. Those are harsh words, *begun with "This is what the LORD says..."*
 3. God is standing at a plumb wall and He is the one building it plumb. He will no longer "pass by" (Exodus 33:19ff?) without moving to attain plumb with His people and He is going to do this by removing the places of abused power within His people.
 - v. Note that the wall in the vision is plumb level, indicating that the future holds a wall built straight by the LORD

3. Fruit of Death – Amos 8:1-10

- a. Basket of fruit indicative of judgment and death, “ripe” for judgment
 - i. Fruit that should have brought pleasant thoughts of sweetness, sustenance, and life instead bring images of judgment

- ii. The Hebrew word for “summer fruit” (*qayez*) is phonetically similar to the word for “end” (*qez*), so that God uses a word play to show that his people’s sins have reached their boundary, their completion for judgment to fall
- b. Amos’ words are bathed in the image of death and insecurity, no safety, no permanence of peace
 - i. When we turn to our idols, we find that they cannot save us, but only deliver us over

4. Famine of God’s Word – Amos 8:11-14

- a. Famine of God’s Word in judgment (sorrow!!)
 - i. Note the “apocalyptic” language of 8:9 and the true judgment that it implies in v11 – the separation of the knowledge of God from the people (see famine below)
 - 1. The sun not rising is not literally true, but is symbolic of judgment and destruction, as smoke blots out the sun
 - 2. But the greatest judgment lies in the famine of God’s word
 - ii. One could say that this judgment was fulfilled within two kingdoms of Amos’ times, when the 400 years leading up to the birth of Jesus was silent for there was no prophet in Israel: God’s Word was silenced, He was not revealing Himself
 - iii. It is also related to the Final Judgment, when God removes His presence, or rather, removes the unrepentant from His presence and no longer reveals His glory/goodness to them (Matt 25:41)

5. Judgment in the Space for Mercy (ALTAR) – Amos 9:1-10

- a. Usually the altar was the place of mercy, where a substitute for man’s sins was laid out and slain in man’s place
- b. Here the altar is pictured as the place from which God sends His judgment
- c. We are left in Amos’ vision with a place of tension between that which should be a picture of mercy and the reality of a scene of judgment
 - i. It leaves us waiting for a resolution, or a Resolute One, a substitute to obtain mercy
 - ii. That Resolute One is Jesus, the One sent by the Father to satisfy both His justice and His mercy on the altar of the Cross
 - iii. In fact, Amos uses the phrase ‘in that day’ in v11 and tells of the promise to restore the breach, rebuild His city, bring in the nations, grant abundant life and joy, and to grant security and permanence to His people (11-15)

6. Jesus is the Cornerstone, the Vine, the Word, and the Substitute

- a. To what “day” does Amos refer in v11? I say it is the “day” of Christ Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension (with more to come into eternity!)
- b. 1 PETER 2:4-10 CORNERSTONE: Where Israel was a cracked and crooked wall, going so far as to reject the building stone of God (Jesus), God has made Him to be the chief cornerstone of the true Temple, made up of God’s redeemed people from all the nations (9:12)
 - i. God promised to raise up of the ruins of David’s Reign (9:11ff)
 - 1. Raise up the ruins into a secure and sure stronghold that is permanent, where God’s people will not have to fear enemies from without or from within
 - 2. V15 – they shall never again be uprooted out of their land
 - ii. Jesus is the foundation of this wall, not only of the wall of a city, but of the Temple of God (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4ff)
 - 1. The Son of David (9:11) has founded the True Temple, the Holy Dwelling of God within the midst of His redeemed people

- a. John 2:19 – “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”
 - b. He is speaking of Himself, the True Temple, the true means to the presence of God with boldness (Heb 10:19-22)
 - 2. And this Temple includes “all the nations” (9:12), so that every tribe and tongue and people are in that glorious multitude of God’s worshippers pictured in Revelation 7:9-10
 - iii. In Him is the community of the redeemed is at peace with God and brought into the presence of God, the way it is supposed to be
- c. JOHN 15:1-11 – VINE: Jesus is the true Vine of God, the source of fruit from which all blessings flow
 - i. Amos tells us of gardens of fruit abundantly growing in the soil of God’s Words
 - 1. Fruit basket of chapter 8 (death and insecurity) contrasted with fruit abundance of 9:14 when God replants His people in His place and produces such gardens of fruit never to be uprooted (life and security)
 - ii. Jesus is the true shoot of Jesse (Isa 11; Rev 5:5; Jer 23:5; 33:15), the vine that produces fruit that abides
 - 1. Just as God pronounced the “end” had come, so Christ shouted “It is finished!”
 - 2. Rom 14:17 – “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”
 - 3. John 15:11 – “I have spoken these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full up.”
 - iii. In Him is joy, joy the way it is supposed to be
- d. JOHN 1:1-5,14 WORD: Jesus is the true Word of God, the abundant life-giving revelation of God, the exact representation of His being
 - i. Amos tells us of the abundance of God’s Word like sweet wine that never ends (joy!!)
 - 1. The nearest “food” reference is in chapter 8, referring to the famine “not of bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the LORD” (v11). But God will one day restore Himself to His people so that there is no longer a famine of knowing Him, but an abundance that can be compared not merely to bread and water, but to wine and gardens full of sweet fruit.
 - a. (Psalm 119:103; 19:10; Joel 3:18)
 - 2. Sweet wine usually indicates joyful celebration (and often drunkenness!!)
 - a. The Word of the Lord satisfies our thirst for joy!
 - i. Psalm 119:24
 - ii. Psalm 63
 - ii. Jesus is the Word of God, being fully God, that reveals God to us that we might know Him, worship Him, and live through Him in the joy of His presence
 - 1. In Him is life, eternal life, life the way it is supposed to be
- e. 1 THESS 5:9-10: Jesus is the SUBSTITUTE on the altar of God that bears up the judgment of God for our sins
 - i. He is the offering on the altar (Eph 5:2), who died for us to bring us salvation from God’s righteous wrath (God Propitiating God)
 - ii. He is the stone that the builders rejected (1 Pet 2) that has become the cornerstone in the living Temple of God, permanent and secure
 - iii. He became sin ripened to judgment so that those ripe for judgment might live (2 Cor 5:21; John 3:16) through faith in Him
 - iv. He is the Word that men did not recognize or receive, but He gives light to eyes blinded by the corruption of sin, making those who close to Him in faith the very children of God (John 1)