

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?

Session 8: Amos 9:7-10 Shaken in a Sieve, Amos 9:11-15 A Happy Ending: Blood and Iron Come up Lavender and Roses

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, 4) FAQs – NotebookLM AI

1) Abstract:

This document contains excerpts from **Dr. Robert Chisholm's** eighth session on the **Book of Amos**, titled "**Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?**" The session specifically focuses on **Amos 9:7-10**, referred to as "**Shaken in a Sieve**," and **Amos 9:11-15**, called "**A Happy Ending—Blood and Iron Come Up Lavender and Roses**." Chisholm explains that despite Israel's covenant with God, their **sinfulness makes them subject to divine judgment**, similar to other nations, though **God promises to preserve a righteous remnant**. He then discusses the **prophet Amos's conclusion** which, contrary to some scholarly views, **portrays a future of restoration and abundant blessings**, aligning with earlier **Mosaic and Davidic covenants**. The lecture also **summarizes key principles from the entire book of Amos**, highlighting **God's sovereignty, justice, and the importance of relationships over ritual**.

2) Briefing Document:

Briefing Document: Main Themes and Key Insights from Amos 9:7-15

Source: Excerpts from "Chisholm_Amos_Ses08.pdf" - Dr. Robert Chisholm, "Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear? Session 8: Amos 9:7-10, Shaken in a Sieve, Amos 9:11-15: A Happy Ending."

I. Overview of Amos 9:7-10: "Shaken in a Sieve" - God's Universal Sovereignty and Discriminating Judgment

This section of Amos addresses Israel's misguided assumption of immunity from judgment due to their covenant status. Chisholm highlights that God challenges this perception, asserting His sovereignty over all nations, including Israel.

Key Themes and Ideas:

- **Challenging Israel's Sense of Special Privilege (Amos 9:7):** Israel, as the "covenant people of the Lord," believed they were "insulated from judgment just because they were the Lord's people." Chisholm compares this to Jeremiah's later experience where people thought "the Lord lives in Jerusalem. He would never destroy the city." However, God declares, "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites... Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt? Yeah. You know, you're my covenant people. I brought you up from Egypt, but I've been moving people around for a long time."
- **God's Universal Sovereignty (Amos 9:7-8a):** God's control extends beyond Israel to all nations. He states, "I've been moving people around for a long time," citing the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir. This demonstrates that God is "not some local deity. I control all nations." When Israel acts like "pagan nations" and disobeys His covenant, they are "no different than the Kushites" in terms of divine oversight and accountability.
- **Remnant Theology and Discriminating Judgment (Amos 9:8b-10):** While judgment is severe ("I will destroy it from the face of the earth"), God promises not to "totally destroy the descendants of Jacob." This introduces the critical theme of the remnant, where God "will always preserve a remnant" – a pattern seen from Noah to Habakkuk.
- **The Sieve Metaphor:** The judgment is described as God shaking "the people of Israel among the nations. As grain is shaken in a sieve, not a pebble will reach the ground." This implies a separation, where "the righteous who are going to be preserved, because notice in verse 10, all the sinners... will die by the sword." Those who die are the "sinners among my people" who arrogantly say, "disaster will not overtake or meet us."
- **Discriminating Nature of Judgment:** Chisholm emphasizes that God's judgment is "discriminating." It "will separate the sinners from the godly, and

he will use the godly to fulfill his future purposes." This provides a "positive turn" and "signal" of hope leading into the next section.

II. Amos 9:11-15: "A Happy Ending" - Restoration, Abundance, and Covenant Fulfillment

This concluding section of Amos radically shifts from judgment to a portrayal of future salvation and blessing, which Chisholm strongly argues is an authentic part of Amos's message, despite scholarly objections.

Key Themes and Ideas:

- **Authenticity of the "Happy Ending":** Chisholm refutes scholars like Julius Welhausen who deny that Amos could have written this ending because "it's been blood and iron, judgment, blood and iron, the whole book, and now lavender and roses, a happy ending." Chisholm asserts this pattern (judgment followed by salvation) is common in other prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Hosea, Micah). He posits that "judgment, ironically, is often the avenue to salvation" as "God's judgment has a purifying feature to it."
- **Foundation in Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10):** The prophet Amos is "building on Moses." Deuteronomy 30 outlines that after experiencing curses and exile, if the people "return to the Lord your God, and they begin to obey him with all their heart and with all their soul," then "the Lord your God will restore your fortunes... and gather you again from all the nations." This includes a spiritual transformation where God "will circumcise your hearts."
- **Restoration of David's Fallen Shelter (Amos 9:11-12):** God promises, "On that day... I will restore David's fallen shelter. I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins, and will rebuild it as it used to be." This signifies the revival of the "Davidic empire to its former glory."
- **Davidic Covenant Fulfillment:** This prophecy directly addresses God's promises to David. Chisholm interprets this as referring to "the new David, the ideal David, the descendant of David, Jesus," who "is going to rule on earth" and "rule over the nations."
- **Universal Scope of God's Ownership:** The phrase "all the nations that bear my name" (literally "all the nations over whom my name is called") indicates

God's ownership and sovereignty over all peoples, aligning with the beginning of Amos where God held all nations accountable. This points to a future where God "is someday going to extend his kingdom directly over all of them through this revival of the Davidic throne."

- **Salvation Portrayal: Unprecedented Abundance and Security (Amos 9:13-15):** This section vividly describes the blessings of the restored kingdom:
- **Agricultural Hyperbole:** "The reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes." This hyperbole signifies an "abundant harvest" where "the prior harvest isn't even in, and the harvesters can't get it all in before the plowing starts again." New wine will "drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills," indicating overflowing bounty.
- **Return from Exile and Permanent Settlement:** God declares, "I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine. They will make gardens and eat their food." Crucially, God states, "I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them." This fulfills the "Abrahamic promise" of the land being irrevocably given.
- **Irrevocable Covenants:** Chisholm emphasizes that God is "in the business of fulfilling his irrevocable covenants" (Abrahamic, Davidic, and Mosaic vision).

III. Overarching Theological Principles from the Book of Amos

Chisholm concludes by summarizing key theological lessons from the entire book, providing a holistic understanding of God's character and interaction with humanity.

Core Principles:

1. **God's Universal Accountability and Sovereignty:** "God holds nations accountable when they violate his universal standards of morality and ethics." He is "the God of the entire world and all nations," sovereign, just, and good, with a "moral standard" rooted in respect for His image in humanity (Noahic covenant).

2. **Higher Standard for God's Covenant People:** God "places a higher moral standard upon his people, to whom he has clearly revealed his will" (special revelation). "To whom much is given, much is required."
3. **Divine Discipline and Opportunity for Repentance:** When God's people fail, He "offers an opportunity to repent." God uses "drastic measures in an effort to bring his people to repentance," viewing discipline as an act of a good Father.
4. **Relationships Over Ritual:** God "places a higher priority on relationships than ritual"—vertical with God and horizontal with others. Religious activity is meaningless if accompanied by idolatry (putting anything above God) or neglecting "loving others."
5. **God Opposes Pride and Arrogance:** "God hates arrogance and actively opposes the proud," as self-sufficiency generates "negative activities and actions."
6. **Understanding Judgment from God's Perspective:** To understand "seemingly harsh judgment," one "must look at reality from his perspective" and focus on *why* God is bringing judgment, not just the consequences.
7. **Judgment is Bitter, Appropriate, Inescapable, and Discriminating:** God's judgment is "tragically bitter," "appropriate" to the sin, "inescapable," yet "discriminating" (preserving a righteous remnant).
8. **God's Faithfulness Guarantees a Happy Ending:** "God's faithfulness to his promises and his commitment to his people... guarantee that history will have a happy ending, and that his ideal for his people will be realized." This ideal is for people to "obey him and experience his blessing."
9. **Extended Covenant to Gentiles:** While Amos focuses on Israel, Chisholm notes that the "new covenant... isn't just for Israel. It's not just for the Jewish people. We all benefit from it as well," pointing to the New Testament's expansion of God's kingdom to Gentiles.

3) Study Guide:

The Book of Amos: Session 8 Review

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences, drawing directly from the provided source material.

1. According to Dr. Chisholm, what common misconception did the Israelites hold regarding their status as God's covenant people, and how did this affect their expectations of judgment?
2. How does God's comparison of the Israelites to the Cushites, Philistines from Caphtor, and Arameans from Kir challenge the Israelites' sense of special privilege?
3. Explain the concept of the "remnant" as discussed by Dr. Chisholm, and provide an Old Testament example he uses to illustrate this theme.
4. Describe the "sieve" metaphor from Amos 9:9 and what it symbolizes in terms of God's judgment and preservation.
5. What are the four characteristics of God's judgment outlined in the summary of Amos 8:4-9:10?
6. Why do some scholars, like Julius Welhausen, argue that the "happy ending" (Amos 9:11-15) could not have been written by Amos, and how does Dr. Chisholm refute this?
7. How does Dr. Chisholm connect the themes of judgment and salvation in the prophets, and what ultimate example does he provide for this relationship?
8. According to Deuteronomy 30:1-10, as foundational to understanding Amos, what human action is emphasized as a catalyst for God's restoration?
9. In the salvation portrayal (Amos 9:11-15), what agricultural imagery is used to describe the abundance and blessing that will come upon Israel, and how is it hyperbolized?

10. What does the idiom "nations that bear my name" (or "nations over whom my name is called") signify regarding God's sovereignty over all nations, as discussed in the context of Amos?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Israelites often assumed they were insulated from judgment simply because they were the Lord's special covenant people, similar to how people in Jeremiah's time believed Jerusalem would never be destroyed. This mentality led them to believe their status would protect them from consequences despite their rebellion and sin.
2. By comparing the Israelites to the Cushites, Philistines, and Arameans, God demonstrates His universal sovereignty over all nations, not just Israel. He reminds them that He has been moving and controlling various peoples for a long time, implying that Israel is not inherently special or exempt from His judgment when they act like pagan nations.
3. The "remnant" refers to a preserved group of faithful people amidst widespread judgment. Dr. Chisholm illustrates this theme with Noah, who, despite being an unbelievable minority, was spared by the Lord along with his family during the flood, demonstrating God's consistent preservation of the godly.
4. The "sieve" metaphor in Amos 9:9 symbolizes God's discriminating judgment, where He will shake the people of Israel among the nations. Its purpose is to separate the "grain" (the righteous or non-sinners) from the "chaff" (the sinners), ensuring that while judgment falls broadly, the godly are preserved.
5. The four characteristics of God's judgment outlined in the summary of Amos 8:4-9:10 are: tragically bitter, appropriate (punishment fits the crime), inescapable, and discriminating (positive feature, separating sinners from the godly).
6. Scholars like Welhausen argued that the "happy ending" couldn't be from Amos because the book prior to that point was characterized solely by "blood and iron" (judgment), making a sudden shift to "lavender and roses" (salvation) seem contradictory. Dr. Chisholm refutes this by pointing out that other prophets also employ "paneled structures" of judgment followed by

salvation, indicating it's a common prophetic pattern, albeit uniquely abrupt in Amos.

7. Dr. Chisholm posits that judgment, ironically, often serves as an avenue to salvation, acting as a purifying feature to create a righteous remnant that can further God's purposes. He offers Jesus as the ultimate example, whose endurance of God's judgment for sins paradoxically brought about salvation.
8. Deuteronomy 30:1-10 emphasizes human responsibility and repentance as foundational catalysts for God's restoration. It states that when the people take God's words to heart in exile and "return to the Lord your God" by obeying Him with all their heart and soul, then He will restore their fortunes.
9. The agricultural imagery used to describe abundance includes the reaper being overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes, indicating harvests so plentiful that there's no break in the agricultural cycle. This is hyperbolized by picturing new wine dripping from mountains and flowing from all hills, symbolizing overflowing abundance.
10. The idiom "nations that bear my name" (or "nations over whom my name is called") signifies God's universal ownership and sovereignty. It means He owns these nations, holds them accountable for violating universal moral standards (like the Noahic mandate), and intends to extend His kingdom directly over all of them through the restored Davidic throne.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss how Dr. Chisholm's lecture on Amos 9:7-10 challenges the Israelites' perceived special status. In what ways does God assert His universal sovereignty, and how does this concept apply to contemporary understanding of God's relationship with humanity?
2. Analyze the role of the "remnant" theme in the Book of Amos, as explained by Dr. Chisholm. How does this theme provide a "nice little bridge" to the happy ending, and what theological implications does the preservation of a remnant have for understanding divine justice and mercy?
3. Evaluate Dr. Chisholm's refutation of the scholarly argument against Amos's authorship of the "happy ending" (Amos 9:11-15). What evidence does he

provide from other prophetic books to support his view, and how does he explain the unique abruptness of this shift in Amos?

4. Explore the connection Dr. Chisholm draws between the Book of Amos and foundational Old Testament texts like Deuteronomy 30 and the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. How do these earlier promises illuminate Amos's prophecies of judgment and restoration, and what does this intertextual relationship reveal about God's faithfulness?
5. Describe the "salvation portrayal" in Amos 9:11-15, focusing on its agricultural and societal imagery. How does this vision of future blessing align with God's ultimate ideal for His people, and how does Dr. Chisholm suggest this vision extends beyond ancient Israel to encompass a broader fulfillment in the New Testament?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Amos:** An Old Testament prophetic book, teaching on God's judgment against Israel and other nations, and His ultimate plan for restoration.
- **Cushites:** People from Cush (Ethiopia), representing a distant and culturally different people to ancient Israel, used by God to humble Israel's sense of unique privilege.
- **Caphtor:** The geographical origin of the Philistines, mentioned by God to illustrate His sovereignty over the movements of various nations.
- **Kir:** The geographical origin of the Arameans, also mentioned by God to show His control over all nations' migrations.
- **Remnant:** A recurring Old Testament theme referring to a faithful, preserved portion of God's people who survive divine judgment to further His purposes.
- **Sieve (in Amos 9:9):** A metaphor for God's discriminating judgment, which separates the righteous ("grain") from the wicked ("chaff") among His people.
- **Hashmid, Hashmid (Hebrew):** An emphatic construction used in Amos 9:8 ("destroying, I will not destroy"), emphasizing God's promise not to totally annihilate the descendants of Jacob, ensuring a remnant.

- **Julius Welhausen:** A 19th-century Old Testament scholar who argued against Amos's authorship of the "happy ending" (Amos 9:11-15) due to its radical shift from judgment to salvation.
- **Paneled Structures:** A term used by Dr. Chisholm to describe prophetic books that feature alternating or sequential themes of judgment and salvation.
- **Noahic Covenant:** God's covenant with Noah and all creation (Genesis 9), establishing universal moral standards that all nations are accountable to, particularly respecting the image of God in fellow human beings.
- **Deuteronomy 30:1-10:** A foundational passage in Moses' teaching, describing the cycle of curses, exile, repentance, and eventual restoration and spiritual transformation for Israel, which Amos builds upon.
- **Abrahamic Promise:** God's irrevocable covenant with Abraham, promising land, numerous descendants, and blessing to all nations through him, foundational to Israel's future restoration to the land.
- **Davidic Covenant:** God's irrevocable promise to David (2 Samuel 7) of an eternal dynasty and throne, fulfilled through Jesus and central to the vision of restored kingdom in Amos 9:11.
- **Salvation Portrayal:** A prophetic speech form that vividly describes the nature and blessings of a future salvation already in progress, distinct from a salvation announcement.
- **Hyperbole:** Exaggeration for the sake of emphasis, used in Amos 9:13-14 to describe the extraordinary abundance of agricultural blessings in the restored kingdom.
- **Natan (Hebrew):** The verb "to give," used in Genesis regarding God's giving of the land to Abraham, signifying God's legal deed and ownership of the promised land.
- **"Nations that bear my name" (or "nations over whom my name is called"):** An Old Testament idiom signifying God's ownership and sovereignty over all nations, not just Israel, holding them accountable to universal moral standards.

- **Pre-millennial:** A theological viewpoint that interprets prophecies like Amos 9:11-15 as referring to a future literal thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth.
- **General Revelation:** God's revelation of Himself through nature and human conscience, accessible to all people (e.g., Psalm 19, Romans 1).
- **Special Revelation:** God's direct and specific revelation of Himself through His Word (Scripture) and prophets, primarily to His covenant people.

4) FAQs:

Q1: How does the Book of Amos challenge the Israelites' assumption of insulation from judgment?

A1: The Israelites, as God's covenant people, wrongly assumed their special status would protect them from divine judgment, much like people in Jeremiah's time believed Jerusalem was immune to destruction. Amos 9:7 directly challenges this by stating, "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?" This comparison to a distant, foreign people on the perimeter of their known world, such as the Cushites (Ethiopians), the Philistines from Caphtor, or the Arameans from Kir, underscores God's universal sovereignty. He reminds them that He is not a local deity but controls and providentially moves all nations. Therefore, their special status does not insulate them from judgment if they act like pagan nations and disregard His covenant demands. The Lord will "pull that rug out from under them," demonstrating that even His chosen people are subject to His righteous judgment when they rebel and sin.

Q2: What is the significance of the "remnant" theme in Amos and throughout the Old Testament?

A2: Despite the severe pronouncements of judgment, Amos (9:8-9) introduces the crucial theme of a "remnant," declaring, "I will not totally destroy the descendants of Jacob." This concept signifies that God will always preserve a faithful portion of His people, a pattern seen throughout the Old Testament, from Noah's preservation during the flood to the assurances given to Habakkuk. The "sieve" imagery (Amos 9:9) illustrates this discrimination: "As grain is shaken in a sieve, not a pebble will

reach the ground." This means the righteous will be preserved ("the non-sinners among his people"), while "all the sinners among my people will die by the sword." Thus, God's judgment is not indiscriminate; it purifies, separating the godly to fulfill His future purposes. The remnant theme serves as a "positive signal" and a bridge to the "happy ending" described later in Amos.

Q3: Why is the "happy ending" (Amos 9:11-15) considered a radical departure by some scholars, and how is this view refuted?

A3: Some 19th-century scholars, like Julius Welhausen, argued that Amos 9:11-15 could not have been written by Amos because it represents a radical shift from the book's pervasive themes of "blood and iron" (judgment) to "lavender and roses" (salvation). This view is refuted by observing similar "paneled structures" in other prophetic books (e.g., Isaiah, Hosea, Micah), where judgment and salvation are intertwined. While Amos is unique in its intense focus on judgment until the very end, the idea that judgment paves the way for salvation is a consistent biblical principle. God's judgment often has a "purifying feature," creating a righteous remnant that He can use to further His purposes. This dynamic is not contradictory but rather interconnected, as seen supremely in Jesus' endurance of judgment to bring about salvation.

Q4: How does Amos's prophecy of restoration build upon Moses' and David's covenants?

A4: Amos's prophecy in 9:11-15 directly builds upon foundational Old Testament covenants. It echoes Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30:1-10, which outlines a pattern of curses (exile) followed by restoration, repentance, spiritual transformation (God circumcising their hearts), and a return to the promised land, making them prosperous and numerous. This demonstrates the balance of divine sovereignty (God's work in their hearts) and human responsibility (their repentance). Furthermore, Amos speaks of restoring "David's fallen shelter" (Amos 9:11), signifying the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. This promise ensures the revival of the Davidic empire to its former glory, ultimately fulfilled through the "new David," Jesus, who will rule over the earth and gather "all the nations that bear my name," extending His kingdom globally. This reflects God's faithfulness to His irrevocable covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

Q5: What kind of agricultural abundance is depicted in the "salvation portrayal" of Amos 9:13-15?

A5: Amos 9:13-15 provides a "salvation portrayal," a vivid picture of abundant blessing in the restored land. It describes a time when the agricultural cycle is disrupted by extreme fertility: "the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes." This hyperbole indicates that harvests will be so plentiful that reapers (working in April-May) will still be gathering crops when plowmen (working in October-November) are ready to begin their work. Similarly, the grape harvest (August-September) will still be underway when planting season (November-December) arrives. The passage also depicts "new wine... dripping from the mountains and flowing from all the hills," symbolizing an overflow of blessing where vats are so full that wine cascades down the hillsides. This imagery emphasizes the overwhelming and continuous prosperity that God will provide to His people, signifying a reversal of the curses.

Q6: What does the Book of Amos reveal about God's character and His relationship with all nations versus His covenant people?

A6: Amos reveals several key aspects of God's character. First, God is sovereign over all nations and holds them accountable for violating His universal standards of morality and ethics, often referencing the Noahic mandate of respecting human beings as image-bearers (Amos 1-2). This challenges the ancient Near Eastern idea of localized deities. Second, God is just, holy, and good, setting a moral standard derived from His nature. Third, God places a higher moral standard upon His covenant people, Israel, to whom He has revealed His will "clearly and in detail" through special revelation (e.g., the Law) compared to the general revelation available to all nations through nature. This means "to whom much is given, much is required," and their rebellion is deemed more severe. Fourth, God is patient, offering opportunities for repentance even when displeased, and uses "drastic measures" (divine discipline) to bring His people back to Him, seeing the relationship seriously.

Q7: How does Amos emphasize the priority of relationships over ritual in worship?

A7: Amos strongly emphasizes that God places a higher priority on genuine relationships—both vertical (with Him) and horizontal (with others)—than on mere religious ritual (Amos 5). He is displeased by those who engage in outward religious activity while simultaneously violating His ethical standards or engaging in idolatry.

The prophet condemns the practice of worshiping God while also worshiping false gods (anything placed above God) or neglecting justice and love towards fellow human beings. True worship, according to Amos, cannot be separated from righteous living and ethical conduct. God will not be impressed by religious ceremonies if His people are not living out His principles, loving Him with all their heart and soul, and loving their neighbors as themselves.

Q8: What is the ultimate "happy ending" promised in Amos, and how does it extend beyond Israel?

A8: The ultimate "happy ending" in Amos (9:11-15) is the realization of God's ideal for His people and the fulfillment of His irrevocable covenants. This involves restoring the Davidic kingdom, returning His people from exile, and establishing a period of unprecedented agricultural abundance and peace in their land, where they are "never again to be uprooted." This depicts a world where God's blessing is abundant, and His people enjoy His presence. While initially described for Israel, the broader biblical narrative, particularly in the New Testament, reveals that this "happy ending" extends beyond Israel. Through Jesus, the "new David," the New Covenant encompasses Gentiles, bringing them into God's fold as worshipers. This future vision, seen in the Book of Acts as the gospel spreads, points to a global kingdom where God's purpose for humanity is fulfilled, allowing all who believe to live and enjoy Him forever in a world characterized by His abundant blessing.