

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Amos, Session 8, Amos 9, Shaken in a Sieve, A Happy Ending Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome to the Deep Dive. We're all about cutting through the noise, digging into the information, and hopefully finding those aha moments. That's the goal.

Today we're diving into a text usually known for its pretty strong language: the Book of Amos. Right, thunderous stuff, mostly. But here's the twist: we're looking right at the end, the last bit, chapter 9, verses 7 to 15.

And what's really fascinating, why we're doing this Deep Dive, is how Amos, after just pages and pages of judgment. Yeah, really severe warnings. Exactly.

He suddenly pivots. It's, well, it's basically a happy ending. It's quite remarkable.

A happy ending in Amos. Okay. Our mission today is to unpack what that tells us, you know, about God's judgment, his reach over everything, and these frankly surprising promises of restoration.

Someone called it blood and iron come up lavender and roses. I like that. It's a great line, isn't it? Captures the shift perfectly.

We'll see how these ancient ideas still speak to that need we can't see a bigger plan, find hope when things look bleak. Okay. Blood and iron come up lavender and roses.

Let's do it. Where do we start? You mentioned a sieve of judgment. Yeah, let's start there.

Amos 9, verses 7 through 10. Right away, we hit this issue of false security among the Israelites. I mean, they knew they were God's covenant people.

Delivered from Egypt, got the law in Sinai. They felt special. Which they were, but they took it to mean they were sort of immune, untouchable.

Like no matter what they did, judgment wouldn't apply to them. That sounds dangerous. Reminds me of Jeremiah's time, people thinking Jerusalem couldn't fall just because the temple was there.

It's exactly that mindset. Complacency, presumption, and God just shatters it here. How so? He asks them this, like, really, as a rhetorical question.

Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites? Whoa. The Cushites from Ethiopia, right? Way out there on the edge of their world. Precisely.

The distant foreigners. God's basically saying, hey, in my eyes, you're no different from them. Ouch.

That must've landed hard. So much for being exclusively special. It completely dismantles that idea of God being just their local deity.

He says, "Yeah, I brought you out of Egypt. Sure. But guess what? I also moved the Philistines from Caphtor, the Arameans from Kerr.

Ah. So he's orchestrating everyone's movements. He's the God of all nations, not just Israel.

That's the point. He has absolute sovereignty. So you can't just flash your covenant card and expect to get away with acting like everyone else.

He judges. Right. Which leads into the next verse, verse eight.

It sounds pretty severe. It is. Surely the eyes of the sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom.

I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But then there's a yet. Yet I will not totally destroy the descendants of Jacob.

Okay. Destroy it, but not totally destroy. How does that work? Seems contradictory.

It's the language. The Hebrew is incredibly emphatic. Literally, destroying, I will not destroy.

It's this powerful assurance. Assurance of what? That a remnant will survive. This whole remnant theme is huge in the Old Testament.

Think Noah and the flood, or God telling Habakkuk the righteous would live through judgment. So even in the worst destruction, there's this promise for a faithful few. Yeah.

And then comes the sieve. Right. The central image, verse nine.

I will shake the people of Israel among the nations. As grain is shaken in a sieve, not a pebble will reach the ground. Shaking is exile, I assume.

Definitely represents exile. But the sieve isn't just chaos. It's purposeful.

It separates. Separates what? The good grain, the righteous from the worthless chaff, the sinners. And those sinners.

Verse 10 spells it out. Yeah. All the sinners among my people will die by the sword.

All those who say disaster will not overtake or meet us. So it comes back to that attitude that we're fine, nothing bad will happen to us mentality. That's the arrogance he was hitting right at the start with the Cushite comparison.

Exactly. It's the root of the problem. So what does this tell us about God's judgment? Well, it seems pretty harsh.

Bitter, you said. Tragically bitter. Yes.

Also appropriate. The punishment fits the crime. It's inescapable.

You can't hide. But crucially, it's discriminating. Discriminating, meaning it sorts people out.

That sounds like the hopeful part, weirdly. It is. It's not just wiping everyone out.

It's carefully separating the godly from the unrepentant because God has future plans for that remnant. And that separation, that remnant, is what allows for the next part, the sudden turn. Precisely.

It sets the stage for this astonishing shift in verses 11 to 15. This is where we get the blood and iron come up lavender and roses. Okay.

So talk about whiplash. How did people react to this shift historically? You mentioned scholars questioning it. Oh, yeah.

Big time. Figures like Julius Wellhausen, a major scholar back in the day, basically argued this couldn't be Amos. Why not? Just too different.

Pretty much. The argument was, look, Amos is all about judgment, doom, gloom. How could he possibly end with this vision of lavender and roses, total restoration? The tone felt inconsistent to them.

Makes sense on the surface. So how do we answer that? Well, you just have to look at other prophets. This pattern judgment, then salvation- is actually pretty common.

Isaiah does it all the time, back and forth, these panels of judgment and hope. Hosea too. So it's not that weird.

Not in the grand scheme of prophecy. Yeah. Amos just does it sequentially.

He delivers the hardens first, then the hope. He doesn't weave them back and forth quite as much. Okay.

And this leads to a deeper point, right? About judgment itself. A really profound one. That judgment, ironically, often becomes the very path to salvation.

How does that work? Judgment seems like the opposite of salvation. It's a purifying process. Yeah.

It's painful, yes, but it refines. It creates that righteous remnant God needs for his future plans. Think about the ultimate example.

Jesus. Jesus. Enduring God's judgment for our sin was the act that brought salvation.

So judgment isn't the enemy of salvation. Sometimes it's the necessary prelude. It makes salvation possible.

Wow. Okay. That's a heavy thought.

Judgment as the avenue. And you said this isn't just Amos making stuff up; it connects back. Deeply rooted.

It goes right back to Moses, specifically Deuteronomy chapter 30. Deuteronomy 30. What does Moses say there? Moses predicts it all.

He predicts the exile of those curses back in Deuteronomy 28. But then right after, in chapter 30, he promises restoration. On what condition? On the condition of repentance.

If the people, even scattered in exile, turn back to God with everything they have, all their heart, all their soul. So human responsibility is key. We have to turn back.

Absolutely. But it's balanced with divine action, God's sovereignty. Moses says God's spirit will work in their hearts to enable that turning.

Okay. So it's both. Our choice, God's help.

What does Moses promise will happen after they repent? God promises to restore everything. Gather them from wherever they've been scattered, bring them back to the land he promised Abraham. And crucially- yes.

He promises a spiritual transformation. Verse six says, "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts so that you may love him and live. Circumcise their hearts."

That sounds like- like Jeremiah's new covenant, right? God changing them from the inside out. It's all connected. Moses laid the foundation.

Amos is building on it. Incredible. Okay.

So let's get into the details of Amos' vision of restoration now. Verses 11 and 12: restore David's fallen shelter. Yeah.

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. It's about reviving the Davidic kingdom.

Which had fallen on hard times by Amos' day. Exactly. It was a shadow of its former self.

This is a promise of full restoration back to its peak glory and influence, a radical comeback. And it mentions possessing the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name. What does that last part mean? Bear my name? It's an idiom, like putting your name on something.

It signifies ownership. Ah, so God is claiming ownership of all nations. Yes.

It connects back to his universal sovereignty we talked about earlier. Remember the Noahic covenant, God setting a moral standard for all humanity. This shows his future direct rule over everyone happening through this restored Davidic king.

And for Christians, that points ahead. Straight to Jesus, the ultimate son of David, who will fulfill that ideal of perfect righteous rule over the whole earth. Okay.

So it's not just saying things will be better. Amos paints a picture in the next verses, 13 to 15, a salvation portrayal. Exactly.

It's vivid. He wants you to see what this future blessing looks like. And it starts with agriculture.

Right. The farming imagery. Incredible abundance.

The reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. That's wild hyperbole. The harvest is so huge, it runs into the next planting season.

That's the picture. Non-stop overwhelming bounty. And then wine dripping from the mountains and flowing from all the hills.

It just symbolizes this immense, almost unimaginable blessing. Sounds like paradise. A constant party.

It conveys that level of overflowing goodness. Yeah. Then it talks about rebuilding cities, planting vineyards, eating the food, enjoying life securely, and the absolute clincher.

The final promise. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted. Never again.

After all the instability, the exile. That's huge. Permanent.

Utterly permanent. And the word plant there connects right back to God giving the land, the title deed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob way back when. So the whole vision pulls together God's big promises? Absolutely.

It shows God fulfilling his unbreakable covenants. Abrahamic, Davidic, Mosaic. They all converge here.

Which makes it hard to just allegorize this away, right? To say it doesn't mean a real historical fulfillment for Israel. I think it makes it very difficult. And you have to ask, why does God want this? It's not selfish.

He designed us. He wired humanity to find our deepest joy and satisfaction living in relationship with him, according to his ways. This restored world is his ultimate desire for us.

He wants us to thrive, basically. He wants us to experience the fullest life possible, which only happens in alignment with him. Okay.

What an arc. From judgment sieve to overflowing wine. So let's pull back.

What are the big enduring principles we should take away from Amos for today? What's the first major one? Number one has to be universal accountability. God's standards apply to everyone, all nations. No favorites when it comes to justice.

None. He's sovereign over the whole world, not just one group. That was shocking then, still relevant now.

And second, something about higher standards. Yeah. For those he's called, his covenant people, Israel, and believers now, we've been given more revelation, more understanding of his will.

So to whom much is given, much is required. He expects more from us. Makes sense.

What else? Divine discipline. God is patient, incredibly patient. But he will step in, sometimes drastically, when his people drift into complacency, greed, injustice.

There's always a chance to repent. Always. The door is always open for turning back, which connects to the next point.

Which is? Relationships over ritual. God cares way more about genuine connection with him and how we treat others than just going through religious motions. Worship without justice or love.

It's meaningless, even offensive to him. And he really dislikes arrogance, doesn't he? Actively opposes it. Pride, self-sufficiency- Amos shows how God sees that as the root of so much harm.

Okay. And understanding judgment itself. You have to try and see it from God's perspective.

It's not just about the consequences, the what's. Amos forces us to ask why. Why does a wholly just God act this way? It's about his character, his justice in a fallen world.

Seeing the why behind it. Okay. And the final overarching principle, the big takeaway from that happy ending.

Guaranteed hope. That's the bottom line. God's faithfulness to his promises, his commitment to his people.

It means history isn't random. It will have a good ending. His ideal will be realized.

That's powerful. And the New Testament expands on this, right? It shows this incredible blessing: this new covenant restoration isn't just for Israel. It's extended to Gentiles, to everyone who comes through Christ.

So that abundant future Amos described, it's our future too. So the journey through Amos really takes you from that roaring judgment right into this incredible blossoming hope. It makes you think, doesn't it? How does knowing God is committed to both justice and keeping his promises change how you look at things? Yeah.

How does it reshape your view of current problems or just the way the world seems to be heading? It forces you to grapple with God's character, his plans. These ancient words definitely give you a lot to chew on. A framework for hope, even when things look, well, pretty grim sometimes.

Absolutely. There's a depth here that still speaks volumes about navigating uncertainty and holding onto that guaranteed hope.