

Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?

Session 7: Judgment is Inescapable (Amos 7:1–8:3; 8:4–9:10)

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Session 7

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Abstract

In Session 7 (B) on the Book of Amos, Dr. Robert Chisholm demonstrates that divine judgment against persistent human sin is completely inescapable and must be understood from God's holy and sovereign perspective. Beginning with the vision of a basket of summer fruit (qayetz), a Hebrew wordplay with qetz ("end"), the text signals that final judgment has arrived for Israel due to systemic marketplace corruption, dishonest scales, and social exploitation. Through subsequent visions of temple destruction and the futility of fleeing to extreme realms (Sheol, heaven, Mt. Carmel, or the sea), Chisholm highlights how God's absolute authority reaches everywhere, ensuring divine justice while balancing God's holiness with His deep mercy ultimately realized in Christ.

Outline

I. The Fourth Vision: The Symbolic Still Life of Summer Fruit (Amos 8:1–3)

A. Context and Connection to Previous Visions (Amos 7:1–9)

1. Recapping the first two motion-picture visions: Locusts and fire with prophetic intercession and divine relenting.
2. Recapping the third snapshot vision: The plumb line compelling a shift to God's holy perspective.
3. The historical/biographical interlude: Amos's encounter with Amaziah, priest at Bethel, demonstrating elite obduracy.

B. The Vision of the Summer Fruit (Kaluv Qayetz)

1. Description: A basket of ripe summer fruit (figs, pomegranates) represented as a still life image.
2. Hebrew Wordplay (Qayetz vs. Qetz):
 - a. Qayetz (summer fruit) sounds like Qetz (the end).

b. The literal divine declaration: "The end has come for my people Israel; I will no longer spare them."

3. Agricultural context: The Gezer Calendar places summer fruit harvest in August–September at the close of the agricultural year.

C. Theological Principle: Understanding Divine Judgment

1. Viewing judgment from God's sovereign perspective rather than human impact.

2. Balancing God's sovereignty, holiness, and goodness (addressing theological errors regarding dualism or demonic traits).

3. Pedagogical application: The letter-writing project from Dr. Chisholm's "Knowing God Through the Old Testament" course.

4. Correlation with Hosea:

a. Depriving children as a consequence of worshiping Baal for fertility blessings.

b. Predatory imagery (lions, bears) contrasted with tender wilderness restoration (Hosea 2).

c. Hosea 11: Divine emotion and internal struggle where mercy tempers holy anger ("I am God, not a man").

d. Ultimate resolution: The God-man Jesus entering human suffering and taking the penalty of sin on the cross.

II. The Announcement of Inescapable Judgment (Amos 8:4–14)

A. Condemnation of Marketplace Corruption and Social Exploitation (Amos 8:4–6)

1. Eagerness for religious observances (New Moon, Sabbath) to end so illicit trade can resume.

2. Violating the Sabbath in spirit by prioritizing economic gain over divine rest.

3. Deceptive commercial practices:

a. Skimping on the measure (making the dry ephah smaller than standard).

b. Boosting the price (making the payment shekel heavier than standard).

c. Rigging the balances and mixing chaff/sweepings into the wheat.

4. Exploiting the vulnerable: Purchasing the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals.

5. Universal application for contemporary business ethics: Honesty under God's watchful eye.

B. Divine Oath and Cosmic Repercussions (Amos 8:7–10)

1. The sarcastic oath by "the pride of Jacob" (their unyielding arrogance).

2. Cosmic/Earthly consequences:

a. The land rising and sinking like the seasonal swelling of the Nile River (earthquake motif).

b. Darkness at noon: Solar/lunar eclipse as a dramatic sign of impending judgment.

3. Transformation of life: Feasts turned into mourning, singing into weeping, wearing sackcloth, and shaving heads.

4. Intensity of grief: Comparative to mourning for an only son.

C. The Famine of Hearing the Word of the Lord (Amos 8:11–14)

1. Spiritual famine: A desperate, unfulfilled search for divine revelation from sea to sea (Mediterranean to Dead Sea).
2. Fitting retribution for rejecting prophetic words (e.g., Amaziah telling Amos to cease prophesying).
3. Exhaustion of the youth fainting from thirst while swearing by idolatrous centers (Samaria, Dan, Beersheba).

III. The Fifth Vision and the Inescapability of God's Reach (Amos 9:1–10)

A. Destruction of the Sanctuary (Amos 9:1)

1. Vision of Adonai standing by the altar commanding the destruction of temple pillars and thresholds.
2. The collapsing structure crushing worshippers; survivors slain by the sword.

B. God Always Wins at Hide and Seek: Merism of Absolute Reach (Amos 9:2–4)

1. Spatial extremes:
 - a. Depths of Sheol vs. heights of heaven.
 - b. Top of Mount Carmel vs. bottom of the sea (confronted by the serpent / Leviathan).
2. Geographical and political reach: Pursuing fugitives even in foreign exile.

C. Doxology of Judgment and Divine Majesty (Amos 9:5–6)

1. The Sovereign Lord Almighty (Yahweh Sabaoth) touching the earth so it melts and mourns.
2. Building a lofty palace in the heavens and controlling the terrestrial water cycle.

D. The Sieve of Judgment (Amos 9:7–10)

1. Shaking the house of Israel among all nations like grain in a sieve.
2. Preservation of the righteous remnant while sinners who claim "Disaster will not overtake us" perish by the sword.