

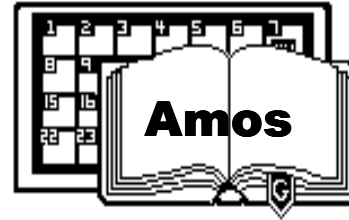
Summary and Lessons

1. Summer fruit, very ripe, doesn't last long, it soon perishes. "The end" was coming upon Israel. (Jeremiah 8:20).
2. "As long as you're green, you're growing, as soon as you ripe, you start to rot."
3. Summer fruit is late and poor, the last crop of the year -- then comes the end. (A picture of Israel's situation.)
4. Those only interested in their businesses are destined to lose (the business men of Israel regarded the feast days and sabbaths as only interruptions to their business.)
5. Songs of joy at the idol shrines would be turned into lamentation for the dead.
6. God is indignant over the corruption and wickedness he sees in business.
7. Amos says, Picture a Sad Day coming [darkness in the middle of a clear day-- seen literally at the crucifixion of our Lord, but a metaphor also for Amos' day.]
8. God promises no lasting happiness or blessing to those who are corrupt and wicked. (Keep yourself green and growing, and not ripe and rotten!)
9. If we want to be happy and be blessed, live right, be fair, and keep God's Word.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the texture and smell of a basket of late summer fruit? How did this represent Israel?
2. What did God mean, "He would not pass by anymore?"
3. Why would Israel be surprised at the coming "Day of the Lord"?
4. What was one of the great injustices that prevailed in the land?
5. What was Israel more interested in than in the worship of God?
6. How were they deceitful in their business dealings?
7. What did they do to the poor who couldn't pay their debts?
8. What metaphor pictures a "Sad Day" that is literally fulfilled at Jesus' crucifixion?
9. What kind of a famine did Amos predict?
10. How were the children like their fathers when Christ came?
11. When a man rejects God why is he possibly also bringing disaster on others he loves dearly?
12. What was Amos' message for the nation of Israel (vs. 13)?

-- Windell Gann



AMOS

Lesson # 5

A Basket of Summer Fruit

Text: Amos 8:1-14

Verses 1-3. The vision of the summer fruit foreshadows the approaching end of Israel. Imagine viewing a basket of late summer fruit. It is very soft fruit, extremely ripe. Perhaps a lot of gnats and small flies swarming around it. And we can imagine the smell of some rotten fruit near the bottom of the basket. This is what Amos saw. Just as this fruit marks the end of the summer, so the vision marks the end of Israel.

The first three visions of Amos concerned judgments that were averted because of the intercession of Amos. But God now proclaims He will not pass by anymore (vs. 3). There is no reason for Amos to try and intercede.

The festive songs in their great magnificent palaces will be turned into songs of lamentation for the dead on the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord was thought by them to be a day of God's vengeance upon their enemies, but instead of it being a day of joy, it would be their funeral day. We can almost "feel" Amos' message as he pictures the awful silence with which the dead bodies will be case out of all the houses up and down the streets of Israel.

Reasons for the Judgment -- 8:4-6

Like a beast devourers its prey, so the rich of Israel had devoured the poor of the land. They were not interested in the Lord's word, but only in their business and in making money. They could hardly wait for the time of religious observances to pass so they could get back to their business of selling grain and other commerce.

But their business dealings were also deceitful! They had weights for their scales that cheated their customers, and their volume measurements were small (vss. 4-5).

The poor were compelled to pay their debts or else be sold into debtors bondage for trifling amounts. The chaff was mixed with the wheat in selling. It might look like good clean wheat on the top of the basket, but in the bottom was chaff (vs. 6).

The Lord Would Not Forget Them -- 8:7-10

The Lord assures us that he does not forget justice. Sometimes we may think that time causes God to forget, but not so! The whole land is pictured in an earthquake and is used to picture God's wrath.

Another metaphor of a sad day and a sudden calamity is the picture of a clear day turning into darkness, i.e., the sun going down at noon and the earth being darkened (vss. 8-9).

This is also a prophecy of the day of our Lord's death when a great injustice is done by wicked men and the Lord laments the terrible deed.

Verse 10. Their feasts will become funerals. They will lament instead of rejoice. Sackcloth speaks of bitter times and baldness where they have plucked out their beards and hair in grief over their tragic misfortunes. It will be as bitter as parents weeping over the death of their only son.

A Famine of the Word of the Lord -- 8:11-14

Verse 11. Times are bad when the people will not hear the word of the Lord, but here is an indication from the Lord that he would not even send his word to them. There would be no prophets or revelation from God to them. This exactly came to pass for four hundred years between the Old and New Testament times.

Only the inspiration of God could have so accurately foretold the true course of events in the future of Israel.

Verse 12. They roamed restlessly about the world, from one end to the other seeking Word from the Lord but they could not find it. Then when the Incarnate Word came from God, their children killed Him and rejected the written word left by Him through his apostles and prophets.

Verse 13. Even the flower and glory of Israel would not be spared from the disaster brought on by their leaders in Israel. Every people which forgets God and rejects Christ suffer the fate of turning their innocent families children away from the One who could offer so much to them here and save them in the world to come. What judgment must be reserved for such leaders!

Amos helps us to see he is particularly addressing the calf-worship that took place in Israel at such places as Dan and Bethel. Israel also enjoyed other idolatrous shrines like the one at Beersheba. And God's judgment against them is clear, "they shall fall, and never rise again."

The plain truth is that Israel never returned again as a separate nation from the Assyrian Captivity which came on her in 721 BC.

During his time, Hezekiah summoned the remaining Israelites in the land to return and worship at Jerusalem and re restored to the Lord under one government (2 Chron. 30:1-5).

After the return of Judah from Babylonian Captivity and against in the time of our Lord, we find references made all twelve tribes. But never again were the people of the north a separate nation. Only a remnant which the Lord indicated through the prophet Amos survived.

