The Book of Amos

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 9**

* **9:1-10– Vision of the Lord by the Altar: Judgment Unavoidable**
* The 5th and final vision is a unique one when compared to the other four. It stands alone with only God speaking on this occasion. Amos simply sees the LORD and observes what transpires. This differs from the other visions in which God showed Amos an object or scene and Amos interceded or made a statement.
* In v. 1, Amos sees the Lord standing by the altar (Isa. 6:1). The altar mentioned here seems to be referencing the stronghold of Bethel (3:14) where their wicked worship took place and of which God had said previously he would destroy.
* The text continues by stating God spoke. It never specifies to whom He said the proceeding words to. Some suggest it could have been addressed to the prophet, to a number of heavenly host, or to God Himself (speaking in an emphatic singular manner). Whatever the case is, what follows is what our attention should be drawn to.
* God continues in v. 1 by commanding that the *“capitals”* or *“doorposts”* be destroyed. The threshold is the strongest part of the structure and the capitals or doorposts is what upholds the roof of the shrine. Thus, if the capitals are destroyed then the whole edifice will crumble. The heads of the people will be crushed with the debris of the capitals (Psa. 68:21; Hab. 3:13).
* The judgment is severe, and no one will be able to escape since God will ensure there will be no refugees or fugitives. Those who have acted sinfully will die and God will make certain they do not escape the judgment (2:14-16; 5:18-20).
* In vv. 2-4, God describes the inevitability of His judgment but also the impossibility of escaping it with the use of 5 conditional scenarios. In v. 2, if they dig into the grave God will find them and if they go to the heavens, there He will bring them down (Job. 26:6; Psa. 139:7-10). God’s omnipresence is the emphasis.
* In v. 3, if they ascend to the summit of Carmel (1,800 feet above sea level) God will find them and if they should be at the bottom of the sea, God will command that the serpent will bite them (Job 34:22; Jer. 23:23-24). Carmel was a common hiding place for thieves because of its dense forests and multiple caves. The merism is used to once again suggest they simply cannot run nor hide from the LORD.
* In v. 4, even in captivity God would command they be slain by the sword and He would set Himself against them for evil and not good. It would seem as if God is suggesting that when the time of exile does come around, some of the people would look at it as a form of escape from His judgment.
* Given that God has already stated He would be silent in captivity (8:11-12) and no prophets or people of God would come to them, maybe they would find refuge. But God assures them that that will not be the case (Lev. 26:36-39; Deut. 28:63-64). God’s eyes being over people is often used in a positive light (2 Chron. 16:9; Psa. 34:15; Jer. 24:6) but in this instance it is used in a negative light. God will set His eyes against His people for they have done evil (Deut. 28:63; Psa. 34:16; Jer. 44:11).
* The Lord’s pronunciations are now ended and in vv. 5-6 a doxology (4:13) is done so as to describe God’s stamp of approval and certainty about what He has stated. In v. 5, similar to the manner of 4:13 and 5:8-9, God’s sovereignty and power is stressed. He is the LORD of hosts (controls all peoples and all hosts).
* If He touches the land it melts, and the people mourn (Psa. 46:6; Isa. 64:1; Hab. 3:10). It seems to parallel the thought of 8:8 where an earthquake is described. God can cause the upheaval of the earth with a single touch and the people of earth tremble with fear and awe of what He can execute. If He has the power to do that, He certainly has the ability to carry out the statements of vv. 1-4.
* In v. 6, God is extolled as creator and sustainer of the cosmos. He is pictured as building His chambers in the heavens (the invisible heavens) and establishing His vaulted dome over the earth (the visible heavens). He pours forth water on the earth (Psa. 104:13). YHWH is His name.
* In v. 7, God introduces a series of rhetorical questions that emphasizes His impartiality especially among all nations of the earth. Israel relied on their special relationship with God as a means of exemption from judgement (5:14). God puts an end to such thoughts illustrating that what He has done for Israel, He has also done for other nations.
* Ethiopia, a distant nation from Israel, was under the control of God as well (Isa. 20:4). God says their sons mean to Him just as much as Israel’s does. Perhaps one of the greatest acts of God’s mercy and love shown to the Israelites was the exodus.
* But God says He also did the same for the Philistines and Arameans. He brought some of Israel’s most brutal enemies out of bondage just as He did for Israel (Jer. 47:4; Amos 1:5). Thus, God is implying Israel deserves no special treatment.
* In v. 8, the reason why is stated. The LORD looks on all who sin, and He will repay them according to what they have done (Psa. 11:4-6; Ezek. 18:4, 20). However, although He will inflict severe judgment to His people, God will not completely destroy Israel (Jer. 30:11; Joel 2:32). Through this remnant, the Messiah will come.
* In v. 9, the idea of the verse seems to point to God scattering His people among the nations (Deut. 28:64). Those who get through the sieve are those who God will preserve and the others He will destroy. The kernel which does not drop probably refers to the remnant that God will preserve (Zeph. 3:11-13).
* In v. 10, the sinners among the Israelites will die (Ezek. 20:38). God says these are the very ones who have denied any form of calamity coming upon them (5:18; 6:1, 3). They will experience a rude awakening.
* **9:11-15– God restores Israel after Judgment**
* In v. 11, God promises that the day will come when He will raise up the fallen booth or tent or tabernacle (dynasty, empire, lineage) of David (Isa. 16:5). This find its ultimate fulfillment in the Christ (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jer. 23:5-6; 30:9; 33:14-16; Ezek. 34:23-24; Hos. 3:5 Acts 15:15-17). Breaches will be covered, and the ruins will be raised up and rebuilt. A people ravaged by sin and its consequences will find freedom and relief in Jesus Christ.
* In v. 12, James uses this passage to speak of the inclusion of the gentiles into the Messianic kingdom (Acts 15:13-21). The idea seems to be that when David’s tabernacle is rebuilt, it will be open to all and it will possess all people who are called by God’s name. (2 Chron. 7:14). Edom is probably used as a figure of how Israel once possessed them, so God will possess all nations.
* In v. 13, there will be days of great blessings. Plowing and reaping took place roughly 6 months from each other. Thus, the picture of the plowman overtaking the reaper paints a picture of such great blessings since there is much to harvest. Treading of grapes and sowing of the seed likewise took place a couple months apart from each other. Blessings upon blessings is the idea of the verse.
* The hills where the vineyards are planted will drip sweet wine. There will be so much the hills will dissolve (Joel 3:18). A time of numerous blessing is to come in the future.
* In v. 14, God will bring the people out of captivity (Jer. 30:3; Ezek. 16:53) and they will rebuild the cities (Isa. 65:21; Ezek. 36:33-36; 37:25-28) plant vineyards and eat fruit (Jer. 29:5; Ezek. 28:26). The picture is one of blessing if God’s covenant is followed (Deut. 28:1-14). When sin is not involved, good things take place and curses are reversed (5:11).
* In v. 15, the people will be firmly rooted (Jer. 24:6; Matt. 7:24-27) and they will no longer be uprooted. In this great age of blessing, God uses all these agricultural terms to illustrate the importance and beauty of the Kingdom His Son would bring about. The book ends on the note that God gives this to them. God is the sole reason we have life and through Jesus all things are made possible.