

Amos 8:1-14

Amos 8:1 – “This is what the Lord God showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit.

8:2 And he said, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “A basket of summer fruit.” Then the Lord said to me,

**“The end has come upon my people Israel;
I will never again pass by them.**

1. Just as in Amos 7:7-8 the Hebrew word for “tin” (translated as a guess “plumb line”) sounds like the Hebrew word for “moaning”, here the word for “summer fruit” **qayis** is similar in sound to the Hebrew word **qes** which means “end”.
2. The harvest of summer fruit was a time of celebration, but this time the end, or the harvest is judgment. This vision may be sarcastic mockery of Israel.
3. The Hebrew **ba haqqes** is translated in the NIV as “the time is ripe”, but the literal translation is “the end has come”. Notice the Hebrew includes the word **qes**, the similar sound as **qayis**, “summer fruit”.

**8:3 – The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day,”
declares the Lord God.**

“So many dead bodies!”

“They are thrown everywhere!”

“Silence!”

1. Summer fruit was to remind Israel the end was coming, so also the joyful, celebratory temple music switches to wailing.
2. Another translation of the second part of 8:3 is “Many are the corpses – they are flung (**hislik**) everywhere – Silence.”
3. Silence could be similar to **Selah** in the Psalms which means stop singing the lyrics and meditate about what you have just sung. Or, in this case, stop talking and contemplate the terrifying wrath of Yahweh.

**8:4 – Hear this, you who trample on the needy
and bring the poor of the land to an end,**

**8:5 saying, “When will the new moon be over,
that we may sell grain?**

And the Sabbath,

that we may offer wheat for sale,

**that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great
and deal deceitfully with false balances,**

**8:6 that we may buy the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and sell the chaff of the wheat?”**

1. The crimes against society are restated here in order to connect once again the horrible judgment with Israel’s horrible crimes. This is similar to Amos 5:11
 - a. “trample on the needy” –
 - b. “bring the poor of the land to an end” –
 - c. Religious days are a burden because these days interrupt business – the people are corrupt, but yet very committed to their religion

- d. “make the ephah small and the shekel great” – simply means put less product in the package, but yet increase the price in the market.
 - i. The ephah was a bulk measurement about half bushel, but shrinking.
 - ii. The shekel was the standard weight about 2/5 of an ounce, but here it was getting heavier.
 - iii. So, when the merchant measured out the grain (which was less) it would seem to have weighed more (since the weights were heavy) and the cost would go up.
 - e. “deal deceitfully with false balances” –
 - f. “buy poor for silver” –
 - g. “buy needy for a pair of sandals” – the price the poor were paying for food is the same price the poor were being sold for to pay their debt.
 - h. “sell the chaff of the wheat” – the chaff was the useless part of the stalk that was separated from the grain in the threshing process. In this case the wealthy merchants are selling the useless chaff as if it were the valuable grain.
2. The people are responsible for creating the need for this destruction Amos is describing.
 - 3.

8:7 – The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob:

“Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

**8:8 Shall not the land tremble on this account,
and everyone mourn who dwells in it,
and all of it rise like the Nile,**

and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?”

1. The “pride of Jacob” is Yahweh himself.
 - a. Psalm 34:2, “My soul will boast in the LORD; let the oppressed hearer and rejoice.”
 - b. Jeremiah 9:23, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the wealthy man in his riches. But, let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, who exercises loving devotion, justice and righteousness on the earth.’”
 - c. 1 Corinthians 1:31, “so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”
2. Israel should have been boasting in Yahweh and living righteously before him. But, instead they were boasting in their riches, military and religion while forsaking Yahweh.
3. “The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob” means “the Lord has sworn by himself” just as it is said directly in Amos 6:8, “The Lord GOD has sworn by himself, declares the LORD, the God of hosts: ‘I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds, and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it.’”
 - a. Here the “pride of Jacob” is listed along with “strongholds”, “the city” and possessions in the city. So, the Lord is saying here he:
 - i. Abhors the false religion (this is “pride of Jacob” here if “pride of Jacob” is Yahweh in 8:7)
 - ii. Hates the military which is the “strongholds” Israel is trusting
 - iii. Deliver up their city (people, government)
 - iv. Deliver up their possessions
4. The sin will be remembered and dealt with by Yahweh.
5. The method of judgment here sounds like the pronouncement of an earthquake
 - a. (This earthquake is said to have taken place two years after Amos spoke according to Amos 1:1 and is dated geologically to about the year 760 BC.

- i. From Haaretz, Israel News, Jan. 3, 2019:
 “The books of Amos, Zechariah and Ezekiel explicitly note an earthquake, which scholars agree would have been in roughly 760 B.C.E. Much later, the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus wrote in his typical hair-raising style about the same temblor and its supposed origin in the prideful King Uzziah. Indeed, support for the biblical narrative had been found in archaeological discoveries of catastrophic destruction throughout ancient northern Israel, dating to the eighth century B.C.E. (these discoveries were made over decades by a host of researchers).
 - ii. Source: <https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/.premium.MAGAZINE-fact-checking-the-book-of-amos-there-was-a-huge-quake-in-eighth-century-b-c-e-1.6807298>)
- b. Because the Lord is judging the sins of Israel this verse says the earth in the land of Israel will move like the waters rising, tossing and falling again just like the waters in the Nile:
- i. The land will tremble
 - ii. Those who dwell in the land will mourn
 - iii. The land will rise like the Nile
 - iv. The land will be tossed about while it is raised and then sink again like the Nile.

8:9 - “And on that day,” declares the Lord God,

**“I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.**

**8:10 I will turn your feasts into mourning
and all your songs into lamentation;**

**I will bring sackcloth on every waist
and baldness on every head;**

**I will make it like the mourning for an only son
and the end of it like a bitter day.**

1. This is the first of the three days of disaster following the earthquake.
 - a. 8:9-10, “on that day”
 - b. 8:11-12, “Behold the days are coming”
 - c. 8:13-14, “In that day”
2. The focus is on people seeing something (eclipse?) that causes them to mourn, lament, wear sackcloth, shave their heads and mourn the worst kind of fate. The most bitter day.
3. But, the people are not destroyed, just tormented.

**8:11 - “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God,
“when I will send a famine on the land—
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the Lord.**

**8:12 They shall wander from sea to sea,
and from north to east;
they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord,
but they shall not find it.**

1. God’s response to their mourning, lamenting, wearing sackcloth and shaving their heads is a famine of the Word of God. The word of God would be both:
 - a. Written, as in the Law and the Prophets

b. Spoken, as in revelation from the prophets

2. The Lord is gone. He has hidden himself

8:13 - “In that day the lovely virgins and the young men shall faint for thirst.

8:14 Those who swear by the Guilt of Samaria, and say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan,’ and, ‘As the Way of Beersheba lives,’ they shall fall, and never rise again.”

1. 8:13 introduces another day, not the same as 8:11-12

2. Worship in Dan is finally mentioned in the book of Amos.

3. They have been calling on false gods and false realities, now they will physically faint because these false realities (Samaria, Dan, Beersheba) will have ultimately failed.

4. Guilt of Samaria is a contrast to the Pride of Jacob (Yahweh). Could refer to:

a. Golden calf at Bethel. But, Bethel is not mentioned, so this option could be dismissed.

b. The Baal-Asherah idols in Samaria (1 Kings 16:32-33). Often the word “shame” is linked to Baal worship as in Hos. 13:1.

5. Dan – the sanctuary in Dan most likely was restored after be retaken from Aram. So, the fallen god of Dan that fell when Aram took the city could be said to live. The golden calf in Dan lives again.

6. Way of Beersheba – a site in Judah where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all worshipped. And, northern Israel still took the journey along the Way of Beersheba to the high place there. But, this would not help

God brings disaster.

God is silent/absent/hidden.

False realities prove to be vain/empty/destructive