

Now is the Time!

Amos 8:1-14

1. Give several one-word impressions of the tragedy of spiritual apostasy and the judgments foretold by Amos that we have witnessed in his book.

Open Your Heart: LORD, we marvel at Your grace in giving sinners more than ample time to repent and turn from their evil ways. We humbly bow before Your Holy Name—asking for Your cleansing and forgiveness.

After the interlude concerning Amos and Amaziah the account of the series of visions continues.

Vision four—Read Amos 8:1-3 from two translations.

Each year at harvest time the people of Israel kept the Feast of Booths when offerings of the abundance of the land were brought thankfully to God. The feast was a joyful occasion with happy songs associated with harvest because the blessing of the harvest was a promise of future prosperity. It is likely that this festival is the backdrop for the fourth vision God gives to Amos.

At first glance the scene looked comforting—a basket of ripe fruit that was juicy and ready to eat. But as we read on, the *real* meaning of the vision soon becomes apparent. These words along with the following prophecy are among the most solemn ever pronounced by Amos.

2. What is your interpretation of Amos' vision of the basket of ripe fruit (verses 1-3)? Ponder the symbolism before answering.

Imagine the scene in 8:3: *Dead bodies strewn across the land like the stalks and stubble left over after a harvest has been cut. The fresh field of promise which was the beginning of Israel's life would at last become a field of corpses, hung over by the stench of death.* -Craigie

3. What personal lessons do you take away from the startling truth of this vision?

Notes: 1) The “New Moon” was the festival that marked the consecration to God of each new month in the year as required under the Mosaic Law (Numbers 10:10). 2) The phrase “Pride of Jacob” (verse 7) is more easily understood from the Amplified version: “The Lord has sworn by [Himself Who once was] the glory *and* pride of Jacob.”

Review Amos 8:9-10.

10. What is your overall impression of this section?

11. Name the natural phenomenon that is prophesied by Amos in 8:9.

Scientific calculations have indicated that at least two total eclipses must have occurred during the prophet’s lifetime: one on February 9, 784 B.C., the other on June 15, 763 B.C. -Craigie

12. How would God’s coming judgment (the absence of light) affect their religious festivals (verse 10)?

13. Again, why is the relationship between the judgment and the crime an effective one? Consider Psalm 36:9.

Heart Check: Are you consistently walking in the light—sharing a living, breathing, loving relationship with the God of light? When we do, all the resources of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and all believers are at the disposal of one another. Such is the grace of our loving God.

Review Amos 8:11-12.

14. From the context we may suppose that Amos was anticipating a real _____.

15. What does Amos picture instead? Describe the agony of this judgment in your own words.

One of the fundamentals of Israel's faith was, "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Only when it was too late would the people realize its great value and the source of life they had lost. After the age of the two kingdoms of Israel there were four hundred silent years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In those centuries no prophets appeared; the Word of God ceased. It was a dreadful thing.

Pause, and thank God for the preciousness of the Word of God. Meditate on Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:105; Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Isaiah 55:10-12.

Review Amos 8:12-14.

16. Look at verses 12 and 13 together. What do you find most disquieting about verse 13? Why?

In the last chapter of the Bible we are told that there will be no further call to repentance because the age of grace will have run its course (Revelation 22:10-11). The Word of the LORD which had often called people to turn to Him will be *silent*.

17. What will take place when the people turn to the old gods of Samaria during the famine of hearing the Word (Amos 8:14)?
18. In light of this entire passage what *one* thing do you think God most desires from you right now? Get alone with God and listen to His voice. Write out your commitment to Him, completing the statement below.
Now is the time for me to: