

The Final Vision—a Startling Sight

Amos 9:1-15

Amos, who had often heard God speak—now sees Him—and what he sees and hears must have been a blood chilling sight. **Read** Amos 9:1 out loud.

Open Your Heart: LORD, our hearts tremble when we behold Your holy wrath. Strengthen us as we study this vital portion of Your Word.

Chapter 9 opens with the last of Amos' five visions in which the veil is lifted and Amos sees in reality the coming destruction. Understanding the setting of this vision is key to comprehending its meaning.

1. a. **Reread** Amos 9:1. Where is the LORD standing when His words “roar” out....?
 - b. What took place at this altar years earlier that continued to this time (1 Kings 12:31-33)?
 - c. Why was a true altar essential to the worship of God in the Old Testament (Leviticus 9:7)?
 - d. Are there worshipers present in this vision? Explain.
2. From your observations of Amos 9:1 write a summary of what is being prophesied in the final vision Amos witnessed regarding the northern kingdom. *Think about what it would be like to be standing among the people gathered there.*

The destruction of the sanctuary along with the worshipers (most likely at Bethel) was no doubt representative of all the pagan centers of sacrifice scattered throughout the northern kingdom.

3. Why was this particular judgment so significant?

4. a. From Amos 9:1c-4, how are the efforts of the people to escape God's judgment portrayed?

- b. What do you learn about God from the symbolic descriptions in verses 2-4?

While there was widespread massacre throughout the land at the sanctuaries, this prophecy was not completely fulfilled until the reign of king Josiah some years after the fall of Samaria.

5. 2 Kings 23:15-20 describes the fate of those who escaped the initial assault. **Read** this passage and note the final outcome.

6. In light of the context of the book of Amos how would you interpret Amos 9:4b, "*I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good?*"

*Lest any of his hearers falsely comfort themselves that the LORD will not or cannot do what He has threatened, Amos majestically sets forth the omnipotence of our God—the LORD, the LORD Almighty (9:5-6). **Take time to behold your God—♥ Store in your heart:** Amos 9:5-6.*

Whether we acknowledge it or not the magnificent power of God is being displayed daily to us through His Word and through His creation. Meditate on Psalm 19:1-4 and Psalm 33:6-11.

7. Name some personal ways these examples of God's mighty power affect your life.

There had been a special relationship between God and Israel, but as we have seen so many times the sins of the people had damaged that sacred chord.

8. Thoughtfully **read** Amos 9:7-10. How does God rebuke their national pride in Amos 9:7a? Consider the note below before answering.

Note: Cush was a territory roughly corresponding to Ethiopia and Nubia. This country seems to have been chosen because of its great distance from Israel. It was situated at the outer extremities of the important nations of the ancient Near East. At the time of Amos it was probably considered an insignificant region. -*Gaebelein*

The other two nations whom the LORD speaks of are two of their near neighbors and their bitterest of enemies.

9. How can it be that the LORD can lump Israel together with these heathen people (9:7b)?

10. Why do you think the people might be shocked by verses 7 and 8a?

As Amos continues to speak, a prophetic paradox comes into view in Amos 9:8.

11. a. What does the Sovereign LORD say will happen to the northern kingdom (9:8b)?

- b. From 9:8c a glimmer of hope is offered the "house of Jacob"—a name used interchangeably with Israel for the whole nation. What is this glimmer of hope that Amos puts forth?

How do we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory statements in Amos 9:8? Verses 9-10 provide further insight into how verse 8 is to be understood and carried out. Reread Amos 9:8-10 from several translations. Study the imagery in verses 9-10.

12. From verse 9 what does the “shaking” of Israel among *all* nations depict? (See Leviticus 26:33-45 and Deuteronomy 28:64-67 for further insights.)

How vividly and accurately these words describe the condition of Israel—from the time of the Jewish exile in the prophetic era and particularly after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. Today we find Jewish people in almost every nation of the world.

13. Is there a righteous remnant of Israel represented in the imagery of Amos 9:9-10? If so, explain. Also recall Amos 9:8c.

14. *It is still the day of grace for us, but that day will end, and the time will come when we will see Christ by the altar. How will you meet Him in that day?*

Against the backdrop of divine judgment Amos now leaps over the centuries to the end of time and foretells in words of surpassing beauty a future restoration God has planned for the righteous remnant. **Read** and enjoy Amos 9:11-15.

To understand God’s work of restoration outlined in verses 11-12 we first need to grasp the meaning of the phrase “David’s fallen tent” (verse 11 NIV). For insights into this phrase refer to 1 Kings 11:27-33 and recall the breaches in the house of David after Solomon’s death. Then read 2 Samuel 7:8-13.

15. Share your interpretation of verses 11-12 and the promises that accompany it.

In 2 Samuel 7:16 God gave David an irrevocable promise: “*Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.*” This promise is echoed in Isaiah 9:6-7. It wasn’t until David’s royal *Offspring* entered the world of time and space in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ that it became clear that the promise given to David by God through the prophets could only be fulfilled through the Messiah.

Amos 9:12 provides the key to understanding *why* God is going to restore David’s fallen tent.

16. After considering Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 49:6; Acts 15:15-17 and Amos 9:12 explain the meaning of this awesome promise!

17. Summarize God’s special end-time promises and blessings given to Israel in Amos 9:13-15. Compare with Deuteronomy 30:1-5.

Verses 11-15 help to balance the picture of God we have seen throughout the book of Amos.

18. a. How can the portrait of God from verses 11-15 give you hope even when things seem hopeless?

b. Is there a current example in your life that is applicable?

As we leave the book of Amos we come away with the sense of having encountered one of God’s most remarkable servants.

19. What has challenged you the most about Amos’ life and his startling prophecies? How has your life and your perception of God changed while studying this prophetic book?