

## CbC to July 11

July 5 Su Reading B186 — Amos 7 — Three Visions of Disaster

Audio: [Amos 7 \(ESV\)](#)

**Following Orders** — God gave Amos three visions in this chapter. For the first two, of locusts and fire, Amos pleaded for divine forgiveness, and God relented (vv. 2-3, 5-6). This showed Amos' concern for his sinful relatives to the north, much unlike Jonah, who wanted God to punish Nineveh's people. The third vision of the plumb line against the wall, however, showed that Israel's "wall" was sure to fall, so Amos didn't plead for divine forgiveness, nor did God relent. The paid prophet of King Jeroboam II, Amaziah, ordered Amos to go home to Judah and never again prophesy at Bethel. Amos had higher orders, however, and prophesied against Amaziah's family future, and he declared decisively, "*Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land*" (v. 17). Amos was not deterred from obeying God's directions by the pressure of false religious leaders or powerful governments. That is serving the Lord with determination. "If God said it, I will do it!" Is that your determination, too? Our directions are given to us in God's Word. That is why we read and study it—to know what to do and say.

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July 6 M Reading B187 — Amos 8 — The Ending Fruit

Audio: [Amos 8 \(ESV\)](#)

**Famine of Hearing** — God was at the end of His patience with Israel. He said, "*The end has come upon my people Israel*" (v. 2). The presence of the basket of "*summer fruit*" (v. 1) was used as an illustration here because there is a play on words in Hebrew, with the words for "*summer fruit*" (*qayis*) and "*end*" (*qas*) in verse 2 being very similar. God said that the shallow songs in their compromised temples "*shall become wailings*" (v. 3), and that He would "*darken the earth in broad daylight*" (v. 9). The people would mourn like they had lost their only son (v. 10) as Jesus' disciples did when He died on the cross. Part of the judgment would be "*a famine ... of hearing the words of the LORD*" (v. 11), which "*they shall not find*" (v. 12). They had exhausted God's patience, so God would pull the plug on their ability to connect with Him. The reason for this terrible punishment was Israel's continued focus on themselves instead of on God. They trampled the needy (v. 4) and were anxious to get finished with their worship duties so they could get back to work at cheating others (v. 5). Worship did nothing for them because they put little into it. Their hearts were not there. When you are in church this weekend, please make sure that your heart is not focused on other things, but that you are completely present in your relationship with the Lord.

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July 7 Tu Reading B188 — Amos 9 — Concluding Judgment

Audio: [Amos 9 \(ESV\)](#)

**A Window of Mercy** — The final vision of Amos was that of "*the Lord standing beside the altar*" (v. 1a). This would be the altar in Bethel that represented the distorted worship that was remotely tied to Yahweh. God's first words were about inescapable judgment, saying, "*not one of them shall escape*" (v. 1b). It sounds so absolute. God, however, opened a window of mercy later when he added, "*except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob*" (v. 8). He would punish the wicked but preserve a remnant for the sake of David and the future Messiah. He declared, "*In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen ... and rebuild it as in the days of old*" (v. 11); "*I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel*" (v. 14); and "*they shall never again be uprooted*" (v. 15). It seems that we are living in that time promised by God. Israel's land was returned to them in 1948 where they still stand firmly in spite of being hated and attacked by many surrounding Muslim nations. God's hand of protection lies upon them while His heart continually calls out to them to recognize and submit to the Messiah they rejected in the first century. Pray for Jerusalem!

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**The Right Focus** — Jotham was a good king, sandwiched between his father, Uzziah, and Jotham's son, Ahaz. Uzziah was good at the beginning but sinned greatly and was punished in the end. As we will see later, Ahaz appeared to have done nothing good. Jotham made God his focus, as can be seen by two significant statements in this short chapter. First, the resulting evaluation by God was that *"he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD"* (v. 2). That is similar to the greeting we all hope to receive when we enter heaven: *"Well done, good and faithful servant"* (Matt. 25:21). The second statement about Jotham was that he *"became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God"* (2 Chron. 27:6). This was Jotham's compass that set his course for life: *"he ordered his ways."* He decided how he was going to live. The first part of his reign was as a co-regent with his father, Uzziah, who was living out the rest of his life with leprosy because he had blatantly disobeyed God by attempting to offer incense in the temple. He was not following the compass of God's commandments regarding the holiness of the temple. With his father, Jotham had a frequent reminder of the importance God places on obedience. The result of his obedience was that he *"became mighty,"* the same Hebrew word used for Uzziah in his earlier years (26:16). When Uzziah became mighty, however, his response was a destroying pride instead of blessed obedience.

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**Coming Peace** — This chapter opens the door of light on the northern kingdom of Israel, who had gone so far from God that they didn't recognize Him anymore. For three kinds of offenses, Isaiah concludes, *"For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still"* (vv. 12, 17, 21). The offenses were (1) their pride in thinking that they could easily recover from any disaster (v. 10), (2) their leaders who *"have been leading them astray"* (v. 16), and (3) that *"no one spares another"* (v. 19) as they fought against themselves and their brothers in Judah. Isaiah looked ahead, however, when *"The people ... have seen a great light"* (v. 2) and God has *"multiplied the nation"* (v. 3). That would come first through the introduction of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, when *"to us a child is born ... a son is given"* (v. 6), and finally when Jesus would return to set up His kingdom on earth. We live in the in-between, semi-peaceful era of Christ's reign, when He dwells within our hearts and uses us to influence people in the national culture around us to recognize and follow His way.

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**Punished but Preserved** — The three kinds of offenses of Israel in the previous chapter are extended to a fourth at the beginning of this chapter: *"Woe to those who decree iniquitous [grossly unfair] decrees"* (v. 1). These likely referred to crooked lawyers, who made laws to hurt the disadvantaged people in order to benefit themselves. Isaiah's attention then turned to the invading and threatening Assyrians. God used them to punish sinful Israel: *"Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger ... Against a godless nation I send him"* (v. 6). Assyria was powerful but arrogant. After defeating Israel, they anticipated conquering Judah as well, saying, *"...shall I not do to Jerusalem ... as I have done to Samaria...?"* (v. 11). But God said that *"he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes"* (v. 12). Assyria would fall 110 years after they defeated and exiled the nation of Israel, but they would not conquer Judah's Jerusalem (v. 32). Even after Israel's disastrous downfall, God gave some future hope for Israel: *"A remnant will return ... to the mighty God"* (v. 21). They were still His people, and He had promised them their land forever. Jews now occupy the Promised Land in partial fulfillment of His promises.

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**In That Day** — Both of these chapters from Isaiah point ahead to the coming Messiah, Jesus. He was the “*shoot from the stump of Jesse*” (11:1), the special One descended from the people of Judah who returned from exile in Babylon. At His baptism by John (Matt. 3:16), the descending dove symbolized what Isaiah predicted: “...*the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding ... counsel and might ... knowledge and the fear of the LORD*” (11:2). Four times in these two chapters, Isaiah referred to something happening “*in that day,*” i.e., in some undefined time after the Messiah would come. First, He will “*stand as a signal for the peoples*” (11:10). He would come not only regarding His people, Israel, but also for the Gentiles, “*the peoples.*” Second, similar to how He rescued Israel from Egypt, “*the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people ... from the four corners of the earth*” (11:11-12). That already happened, in part, when the State of Israel was formed in 1948, but it may also point to something greater even later. Third, His people “*will give thanks to you, O LORD*” (12:1) for His forgiveness. Finally, “*in that day,*” believers will “*make known his deeds among the peoples ... [and] proclaim that his name is exalted*” (12:4). That is our present assignment. The time when “*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb*” (v. 6) is certainly still in the future for us.