
עמוס • AMOS

INTRODUCTION

The *Book of Amos* falls into three parts: Chs 1–2, oracles against Israel’s neighbours; Chs 3–6, indictment of Israel itself for sin and injustice; and Chs 7–9, visions of Israel’s coming doom. Amos became the first in a brilliant succession of prophets whose words, now preserved in written form, have left their indelible stamp on later thought about God and human history.

During the long and peaceful reign of Jeroboam II (786–746 BCE), Israel attained a height of territorial expansion and national prosperity never again reached. The military security and economic affluence that characterised this age were taken by many Israelites as signs of Yahweh’s special favour, which they felt they deserved because of their extravagant support of the official shrines. Into this scene stepped the prophet Amos, probably sometime during the decade 760–750 BCE. A native of the small Judaeian village of Tekoa, Amos was called by God from a shepherd’s task (7:14–15) to the difficult mission of preaching harsh words in a smooth season. He denounced Israel, as well as its neighbours, for reliance upon military might, and for grave injustice in social dealings, abhorrent immorality, and shallow, meaningless piety. Amos’ forceful, uncompromising preaching brought him into conflict with the religious authorities of his day. His personal confrontation with the priest Amaziah (7:10–17) remains one of the unforgettable scenes in Hebrew prophecy.

In the *Masoretic Text*, the *Book of Amos* is 3rd among the 12 ‘Minor Prophets’ but, in the *Septuagint*, it is 2nd. Significant parts of the book are preserved in *Qumran MSS*, 4QX11^c & 4QX11^s.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

Expelled from the royal sanctuary at Bethel and commanded not to prophesy there again, Amos perhaps returned to Judah and wrote down the essence of his public preaching in substantially its present form. He was active *circa* 750 BCE. Scholars have long recognised that Amos utilized text from an ancient hymn within his prophecy, verses of which are found at 4:13, 5:8–9, 8:8, and 9:5–6. Though there may have been *some* editing to the text and structure of the book at a later date, there is little reason to doubt that the work is (essentially) that of Amos.

עמוס פרק א

AMOS 1

^א דְּבַרִּי עָמוֹס אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה בְּנִקְדִּים מִתְּקוּעַ אֲשֶׁר
חָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָמָיו עֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וּבִיָּמֵי
יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנָתַיִם לִפְנֵי הָרָעָשׁ:
^ב וַיֹּאמֶר | ¹ The word of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa: the
visions he had concerning Israel, in the time of Uzziah king of Judah
and Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earth-
quake. ² He said:

יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׁאָג
וּמִירוּשָׁלַם יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ
וְאָבְלוּ נְאוֹת הָרָעִים
וַיִּבֶשׂ רֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל: {פ}

Yahweh roars from Zion
and utters his voice from Jerusalem;
the shepherds' pastures wither
and the crown of Carmel dries up.

^ג כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ³ Yahweh says this:
עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי דַמָּשֶׁק
וְעַל־אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֶשְׁיִבֶנּוּ
עַל־דּוֹשֶׁם בַּחֲרָצוֹת הַבָּרוֹל
אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד:
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּבֵית חֲזָאֵל ^ד
וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמְנוֹת בֶּן־הַדָּד: ⁴ I shall send fire down on the House of Hazael
to devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.

AMOS 1

¹ Uzziah reigned 783(767)–742(740) BCE and Jeroboam II 786(782)–746(753) BCE.

² In place of 'wither', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'mourn'; lexicographers debate whether אָבַל forms two roots: one signifying 'mourn' and the other 'be dry', or simply one (the former). The parallel verb ('withers') might favour the first option and have the meaning 'wilt away'; it is interesting to note, however, that the root appears later in the book in the context of lament (5:16, 8:8, 10, 9:5). Here, it is possibly a wordplay to alert the reader to the death that will accompany the judgment (the option of two roots).

³ The literal translation of 'I will not relent' is 'I shall not reverse it', the pronoun 'it' standing for the divinely ordained penalty.

⁴ 'Hazael' and his son 'Ben-Hadad III', kings of Aram, were bitter enemies of Israel.

וְשִׁבַּרְתִּי בְרִיחַ דַּמְשֶׁק ^ה
וְהִכַּרְתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מִבְּקַעַת-אָוֶן
וְתוֹמֵךְ שֶׁבֶט מִבֵּית עֶדֶן
וְגִלּוֹ עַם-אַרָם קִירָה
אָמַר יְהוָה: {פ}

⁵ I shall break the gate-bar of Damascus,
I shall destroy the inhabitants of Bikath-Aven,
the holder of the sceptre of Beth-Eden,
and the people of Aram will be deported to Kir,
says Yahweh.

⁶ Yahweh says this:

עַל-שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי עֲזָה
וְעַל-אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ
עַל-הַגְלוֹתָם גְּלוֹת שְׁלֹמָה
לְהַסְגִּיר לְאֲדוֹם:
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בַּחוּמֹת עֲזָה ^ז
וְאָכְלָה אֶרְמֹנֶיהָ:
וְהִכַּרְתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מֵאַשְׁדּוֹד ^ח
וְתוֹמֵךְ שֶׁבֶט מֵאַשְׁקֶלֶן
וְהִשְׁבֵּיתִי יָדַי עַל-עֶקְרוֹן
וְאָבְדוּ שְׁאֵרֵית פְּלִשְׁתִּים
אָמַר אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה: {פ}

For the three crimes, the four crimes of Gaza,
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have deported entire nations
as slaves to Edom,

⁷ I shall send down fire on the walls of Gaza
to devour its palaces.

⁸ I shall destroy the inhabitant of Ashdod,
the holder of the sceptre in Ashkelon;
I shall turn my hand against Ekron
and the remnant of the Philistines will perish,
says the Lord Yahweh.

⁵ 'Bikath-Aven' ('Valley of Wickedness') and 'Beth-Eden' ('House of Pleasure'), otherwise unidentified, are probably symbolic names for Damascus, then the capital of Aram (Syria).

⁶ The literal translation of 'entire nations' is 'a group of exiles'; here, we take this as a collective singular and translate with a plural (as *NJB/NRSV*).

⁷ The 'walls' symbolise the city's defences and security.

⁸ Gath, the fifth Philistine town (along with Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron), is not mentioned; it had already been destroyed by Hazael (2K 12:18, cf. Am 6:2). The word here translated as 'remnant' was later to acquire strong theological overtones (see #Is 4:3) but is here used in its primary sense of the survivors of a group decimated by catastrophe.

^ט כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ⁹ Yahweh says this:

עַל-שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי-צָר
וְעַל-אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ
עַל-הַסְגִּירָם גְּלוֹת שְׁלָמָה
לְאֵדוֹם וְלֹא זָכְרוּ בְרִית אֲחִים:
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחוֹמַת צָר
וְאָכְלָה אֶרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ: {פ}

For the three crimes, the four crimes of Tyre,
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have handed hosts of captives over to Edom,
heedless of a covenant of brotherhood,

^י ¹⁰ I shall send fire down on the walls of Tyre
to devour its fortresses.

^{יא} כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ¹¹ Yahweh says this:

עַל-שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי אֲדוֹם
וְעַל-אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ
עַל-רֹדְפוֹ בַּחֶרֶב אָחִיו
וְשָׁחַת רַחֲמָיו
וַיִּטְרֹף לְעַד אָפוֹ
וְעִבְרָתוֹ שְׁמֶרָה נָצַח:
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּתִימָן
וְאָכְלָה אֶרְמְנוֹת בְּצָרָה: {פ}

For the three crimes, the four crimes of Edom,
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because he has pursued his brother with the sword,
because he has stifled any sense of pity,
and perpetually nursed his anger
and constantly cherished his rage,

^{יב} ¹² I shall send fire down on Teman
to devour the palaces of Bozrah.

^{יג} כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ¹³ Yahweh says this:

עַל-שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי בְנֵי-עַמּוֹן
וְעַל-אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ

For the three crimes, the four crimes of the Ammonites,
I have made my decree and will not relent:

⁹ This verse suggests that the victims of the slave-trade were Israelites captured during the campaigns of Hazael and Ben-Hadad III.

¹⁰ In place of 'fortresses', here following NETB, the NJB has 'palaces' and the NRSV has 'strongholds'.

¹¹ On Israel as the 'brother' of Edom, see Gn 25:21-24, 29-30. 'Nursed his anger' follows the Peshitta; the MT has 'his anger rends'.

¹² 'Teman' (תִּמָּן) is a poetic name for Edom (see Jr 49:7, Ob 9); 'Bozrah' (בְּצָרָה) was a city located in northern Edom.

¹³ The Ammonites 'ripped open Gilead's pregnant women' in conjunction with a military invasion designed to expand their territory.

עַל־בִּקְעָם הָרוֹת הַגָּלָעַד
 לִמְעַן הִרְחִיב אֶת־גְּבוּלָם:
 וְהִצַּתִּי אֵשׁ בַּחוּמֹת רַבָּה ^{יד}
 וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ
 בַּתְּרוּעָה בַּיּוֹם מִלְחָמָה
 בְּסַעַר בַּיּוֹם סוּפָה:
 וְהִלָּךְ מִלִּפְנֵי בַּגּוֹלָה ^{טו}
 הוּא וְשָׂרָיו יַחְדָּו
 אָמַר יְהוָה: {פ}

because they have ripped open Gilead's pregnant women
 in order to extend their own frontiers,

¹⁴ I shall light a fire against the walls of Rabbah
 to devour its palaces
 amid war cries on the day of battle,
 in a whirlwind on the day of storm.

¹⁵ Their king shall go into captivity,
 he and his chief men with him,
 says Yahweh.

¹⁴ 'Rabbah' (now Amman) was the capital of Ammon (see 2S 11–12). A 'whirlwind' is a metaphor for judgment and destruction in the OT (see Is 29:6, Jr 23:19) and ancient Middle Eastern literature.

¹⁵ Alternative translations for 'chief men' (following the NJB) are 'officials' (NRSV) and 'princes' (NETB).

עמוס פרק ב

AMOS 2

^א כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ¹ Yahweh says this:

עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי מוֹאָב
וְעַל־אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ
עַל־שָׂרְפּוֹ עֲצָמוֹת מֶלֶךְ־אֲדָוִם לְשֵׁי־ד:
וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי־אֵשׁ בְּמוֹאָב ^ב
וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמְנוֹת הַקְּרִיּוֹת
וַיָּמָת בְּשֹׁאוֹן מוֹאָב
בְּתִרְוּעָה בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:
וְהִכֹּרְתִי שׁוֹפֵט מִקְרָבָה ^ג
וְכָל־שָׂרֵיהֶּ אֶהְרֹג עִמּוֹ
אָמַר יְהוָה: {פ}

For the three crimes, the four crimes of Moab,
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have burnt the bones of the king of Edom to ash,

² I shall send fire down into Moab
to devour the palaces of Kerioth,
and Moab will die in the tumult,
amid war cries and the blare of the ram's horn.

³ I shall destroy the ruler there
and slaughter all the chief men there with him,
says Yahweh.

^ד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ⁴ Yahweh says this:

עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי יְהוּדָה
וְעַל־אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ

For the three crimes, the four crimes of Judah,
I have made my decree and will not relent:

AMOS 2

- ¹ Incineration would prevent the dead man's happiness in the afterlife and was regarded by Semitic people as a detestable crime.
- ² The word 'tumult' refers to the harsh confusion of sounds that characterised an ancient battle – a mixture of war cries, shouts, shrieks of pain, clashes of weapons, *et cetera*; the 'ram's horn' (used as a trumpet) was blown to signal the approaching battle.
- ³ Yahweh reproaches Moab for its conduct towards a gentile. Israel had no connexion with this crime. We may deduce that, in the other prophecies also, criminal conduct is condemned as such, not because Israel is the victim. For Amos, the moral law binds all humanity.
- ⁴ 'Falsehoods' (the NRSV has 'lies') may very well be a derogatory term for idols (perhaps also in Ps 40:4 & Heb 40:5); elsewhere, false gods are called 'vanities' (Dt 32:21, 1Kg 16:13, 26) and 'a delusion' (Is 66:3). In no other prophetic passages, however, are they called 'lies'. The term could refer to the deceptions of false prophets (Ezk 13:6–9, cf. Hab 2:3).

עַל־מַאֲסָם אֶת־תּוֹרַת
 יְהוָה וְחֻקּוֹ לֹא
 שָׁמְרוּ וַיִּתְּעוּם
 כְּזָבִיָּהֶם אֲשֶׁר־הִלְכוּ אֲבוֹתָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם:
 וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בִּיהוּדָה ה
 וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמְנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

because they have despised Yahweh's Law
 and not kept his commandments,
 since their Falsehoods, which their ancestors followed,
 have led them astray,

⁵ I shall send fire down on Judah
 to devour the fortresses of Jerusalem.

⁶ Yahweh says this:

עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וְעַל־אַרְבַּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ
 עַל־מִכְרָם בַּכֶּסֶף צְדִיק
 וְאֲבִיוֹן בַּעֲבוּר נַעֲלִים:
 הַשֹּׂאֲפִים עַל־עַפְר־אֶרֶץ בְּרֹאשׁ דָּלִים ז
 וְדֹרֹךְ עֲנָוִים יָטוּ
 וְאִישׁ וְאִבּוֹ יִלְכוּ אֶל־הַנְּעִרָה
 לְמַעַן חַלֵּל אֶת־שֵׁם קֹדֶשִׁי:
 וְעַל־בְּגָדִים חֲבִלִים יָטוּ ח
 אֶצֶל כָּל־מִזְבֵּחַ

For the three crimes, the four crimes of Israel,
 I have made my decree and will not relent:
 because they have sold the righteous for silver
 and the poor for a pair of sandals,
⁷ they who have crushed the heads of the weak into the dust
 and thrust the rights of the oppressed to one side,
 father and son sleeping with the same girl
 and thus profaning my holy name,
⁸ lying down beside every altar
 on clothes acquired as pledges,

⁵ In place of 'fortresses', here following NETB, the NJB has 'palaces' and the NRSV has 'strongholds'.

⁶ By including Israel among the idolaters, Amos must have astounded and enraged his listeners.

⁷ 'Have crushed' (הַשֹּׂאֲפִים – the NRSV has 'trample') assumes that the root שֹׁאֵף is a form (in fact well attested) of the root שׁוּף, rather than of the more frequent root שָׁאֵף ('eager for', 'panting for'). Before 'the heads', the MT has 'with' or 'by', here omitted. 'Into the dust' is perhaps additional. The whole line is obscure.

⁸ 'Their god' (אֱלֹהֵיהֶם) is certainly Yahweh but they debase him to the rank of an idol when honouring him by feasting on goods exacted from the unfortunate under and appearance of legality, whether by 'fine' or, in the case of insolvency, confiscation (cf. Si 34:20).

וַיֵּין עֲנוּשִׁים יִשְׁתּוּ
בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
וְאֲנֹכִי הִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי ט
מִפְּנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר כְּגֹבַהּ אֲרָזִים גְּבוּהוּ
וְחֹסֶן הוּא כְּאֵלֻנִּים
וְאֲשַׁמִּיד פְּרִיָּו מִמֶּעַל
וְשָׂרְשָׁיו מִתַּחַת:
וְאֲנֹכִי הֵעֲלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם י
וְאֹלֶךְ אֶתְכֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה
לָרֶשֶׁת אֶת־אֶרֶץ הָאֱמֹרִי:
וְאִקִּים מִבְּנֵיכֶם לְנָבִיאִים יא
וּמִבְּחֹרֵיכֶם לְנָזִירִים
הֲאֵף אֵין־זֹאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
נֹאמְרֵיהֶם:
וְתִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַנָּזִירִים יין יב
וְעַל־הַנְּבִיאִים צִוִּיתָם לֵאמֹר
לֹא תִנְבְּאוּ:
הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מַעִיק תַּחְתֵּיכֶם יג
כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעִיק הָעֲגֻלָּה הַמְּלֵאָה לָהּ עָמִיר:

and drinking the wine of the people they have fined
in the house of their god.

- 9 Yet, I destroyed the Amorite before them,
he who was as tall as the cedars,
as strong as the oaks;
I destroyed his fruit above ground
and his roots below.
- 10 I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and, for forty years, led you through the desert
to take possession of the Amorite's country.
- 11 I raised up prophets from your sons
and Nazirites from your young men.
Israelites, is this not true,
says Yahweh?
- 12 Nevertheless, you have made the Nazirite drink wine
and given orders to the prophets,
"Do not prophecy."
- 13 Behold: Like a cart overloaded with sheaves,
I shall crush you where you stand.

⁹ The translation 'before them' (as NJB, NRSV, NIV) takes מִפְּנֵיהֶם in a spatial sense; another option is to read the phrase 'for their sake' (as NETB).

¹⁰ The NJB lacks 'the land of', here following the MT (& NRSV).

¹¹ The term נָזִיר ('Nazir') refers to one who was consecrated or 'devoted' to God (Nb 6:1-21).

¹² The Israelites' behaviour is condemned not only as a breach of the law but also as opposition to God's concern for them as his chosen people.

¹³ The precise meaning of this verse is unclear; various suggested meanings have been proposed: 1 One option (as NJPS) is to relate the verb here

יד וְאַבְדַּ מְנוּס מִקָּל
 וְחִזֵּק לֹא־יֵאֱמָן כָּחוֹ
 וְגִבּוֹר לֹא־יִמְלֹט נַפְשׁוֹ:
 טו וְתַפֵּשׁ הַקֶּשֶׁת לֹא יַעֲמֹד
 וְקַל בְּרַגְלָיו לֹא יִמְלֹט
 וְרֹכֵב הַסּוּס לֹא יִמְלֹט נַפְשׁוֹ:
 טז וְאַמִּיץ לְבָבוֹ בַּגִּבּוֹרִים
 עָרוֹם יָנוּס בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא
 נֹא־יִהְיֶה: {פ}

- 14 Flight will be cut off for the swift;
the strong will have no chance to exert his strength,
nor the warrior able to save his life.
- 15 The archer will not stand his ground,
the swift of foot will not escape,
nor will the horsemen save his life.
- 16 Even the bravest of warriors
will jettison his arms and run away, on that day,
says Yahweh!

translated as ‘crush’ to an Arabic verb, meaning ‘to hinder’, ‘to hamper’, and translate, “I am making you immobile, like a cart filled with grain is immobile.” In this case, Yahweh refers to Israel’s inability to escape his coming judgment (vv. 14–16). **2** Another view relates the verb to a different Arabic verb meaning ‘to cut in pieces’, translating “I will cut you in pieces as a cart cuts in pieces (the earth),” referring to the ruts and rifts in the ground caused by an earthquake. **3** Some (as *NLT*) relate the verb to an Arabic root meaning ‘to groan’ with the idea that Yahweh causes the ground underneath Israel to groan. **4** Here (following the *NJB*, *NRSV* & *NIV*), the translation connects the verb to an Aramaism signifying to ‘press down’. The *NJB* opens with ‘Very well’ in place of ‘Behold’.

14 The literal translation of the first line is, “and a place of refuge will perish from the swift.”

15 The last two lines read literally, “the one fast in his feet will not rescue (his life), and the rider of the horse will not rescue his life.” The phrase ‘his life’ does double duty in the parallelism and should be understood in both lines.

16 For the 1st line, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* reads, “and those who are stout of heart among the mighty.”

עמוס פרק ג

א שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל כָּל־הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלִיתִי
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר:

ב רק אֶתְכֶם יָדַעְתִּי
מִכָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה
עַל־כֵּן אֶפְקֹד עֲלֵיכֶם
אֶת כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם:
ג הֵילְכוּ שְׁנַיִם יַחְדָּו
בְּלִתִּי אִם־נוֹעֵדוּ:
ד הִישָׁאג אַרְיֵה בַיַּעַר
וְטָרַף אֵין לוֹ
הֵיתָן כְּפִיר קוֹלֹ מִמַּעַנְתּוֹ
בְּלִתִּי אִם־לָכַד:
ה הִתְפַּל צֶפּוֹר עַל־פַּח הָאָרֶץ
וּמִוֶּקֶשׁ אֵין לָהּ
הִיעֲלֶה־פַח מִן־הָאָדָמָה
וּלְכוּד לֹא יִלְכּוּד:

AMOS 3

¹ Listen, O people of Israel, to this prophecy that Yahweh pronounces
against you, against the whole family that I brought up from the land of
Egypt:

- ² You alone have I known
of all the families of earth;
that is why I shall punish you
for all your wrongdoings.
- ³ Do two people travel together
unless they have agreed to do so?
- ⁴ Does the lion roar in the forest
when it has no prey?
Does the young lion growl in his lair
if it has caught nothing?
- ⁵ Does a bird fall on the ground in a net
unless a trap has been set for it?
Will the net spring up from the ground
without catching something?

AMOS 3

- ¹ In the last part of this verse, the prophet seems to be addressing the twelve tribes.
- ² 'Known' (יָדַעְתִּי) is here used in the biblical sense of chosen or loved (Gn 18:19, Dt 9:24, Ws 10:5, Jr 1:5, Ho 13:4).
- ³ The literal translation of the 2nd line is 'without having met' (MT) or 'without knowing each other' (LXX - ἐὰν μὴ γνωρίσωσιν ἑαυτούς).
- ⁴ NETB conjecturally translates the 2nd line as 'when it has not cornered its prey'; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.
- ⁵ Alternative translations for 'trap' are 'bait' or 'sling'.

אִם־יִתְקַע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר וְעַם לֹא יִחָרְדוּ אִם־תִּהְיֶה רָעָה בְּעִיר וַיְהִי לֹא עָשָׂה: כִּי לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה דְּבַר כִּי אִם־גָּלָה סוֹדוֹ אֶל־עַבְדָּיו הַנְּבִיאִים: אֲרִיָּה שָׁאֵג מִי לֹא יִירָא אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה דְּבַר מִי לֹא יִנְבֵּא: הַשְּׁמִיעוּ עַל־אַרְמְנוֹת בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וְעַל־אַרְמְנוֹת בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם וְאָמְרוּ הָאֲסָפוּ עַל־הָרֵי שִׁמְרֹן וְרֹאוּ מִהוֹמַת רַבּוֹת בְּתוֹכָהּ וַעֲשׂוּקִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ: וְלֹא־יָדְעוּ עֲשׂוֹת־נִכְחָה נֹאִם־יְהוָה הָאֲזַצְרִים חֲמָס וְשָׂד בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵיהֶם: {פ} לִכְן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה צָר וְסָבִיב הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹרִיד מִמֶּךָ עֹז וְנָבְזוּ אַרְמְנוֹתֶיךָ:	ו ז ח ט י יא	6 Does the horn blow in the city without the people trembling? Does misfortune come to a city if Yahweh has not caused it? 7 No indeed, Lord Yahweh does nothing without revealing his secrets to his servants the prophets. 8 The lion roars: who is not afraid? Lord Yahweh has spoken: who will not prophecy? 9 From the palace roofs of Ashdod and from the palace roofs of Egypt, proclaim aloud: "Assemble on the hills of Samaria and observe the grave disorders inside her and the acts of oppression there!" 10 Little do they know of right conduct, says Yahweh, who cram their palaces with violence and extortion. 11 This is why – Lord Yahweh says this – an enemy will soon surround the land: he will bring down your strength and your palaces will be looted.
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⁶ Israel's God is operative in history, sending calamity (misfortune) as corrective discipline (Job 2:10, Is 45:7).

⁷ This verse is a prose gloss.

⁸ The lion's roar is here a metaphor for impending judgment (1:2, cf. 3:4,12).

⁹ In place of 'Ashdod' (אַשְׁדּוֹד) – following the MT & NRSV, the LXX (& NJB) has 'the Assyrians' (Ἀσσυρίοις).

¹⁰ The expression 'violence and extortion' stands (perhaps metonymically) for the goods the oppressors have accumulated by their unjust actions.

¹¹ In place of 'surround' (וְסָבִיב), here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural emendation 'besiege' (יְסוּבֵב).

יב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה בְּאֲשֶׁר יִצִּיל הָרֶעָה מִפִּי הָאָרֶץ
שְׁתֵּי כְרָעִים אוֹ בְדֹל־אֶזֶן כִּן יִנָּצְלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשִׁמְרוֹן בְּפֶאת מֶטָה וּבְדִמְשֶׁק עָרָשׁ:

יג שִׁמְעוּ וְהָעִידוּ בְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב
נְאֻם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְבָּאוֹת:
יד כִּי בְיוֹם פִּקְדֵי פִשְׁעֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו
וּפִקְדָתִי עַל־מִזְבְּחוֹת בֵּית־אֵל
וְנִגְדְעוּ קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וְנָפְלוּ לָאָרֶץ:
טו וְהִפֵּיתִי בֵית־הַחֶרֶף עַל־בֵּית הַקִּיץ
וְאָבְדוּ בְתֵי הַשֶּׁן
וְסָפוּ בְתִים רַבִּים
נְאֻם־יְהוָה: {ס}

¹² Yahweh says this: As the shepherd rescues two legs or the tip of an ear from the lion's mouth, so will the children of Israel in Samaria be salvaged, with the corners of a beds, on their divans of Damascus.

¹³ Listen and testify against the House of Jacob,
says Lord Yahweh, God Sabaoth.

¹⁴ The day when I punish Israel for his crimes,
I shall also punish the altars of Bethel;
the horns of the altar will be hacked off
and will fall to the ground.

¹⁵ I shall blast winter house with summer house;
ivory houses will be destroyed
and many mansions cease to be,
says Yahweh.

¹² The literal translation of 'their divans of Damascus' is 'the Damascus of a divan'; the word 'Damascus' perhaps designated a luxurious material as the derived English word 'damask' does today.

¹³ These words are spoken to either the unidentified heralds addressed at the beginning of v. 9, or to the Egyptians and Philistines (see v. 9^b). Alternatively, one should not look for a specific addressee but rather appreciate the command simply as a rhetorical device to grab the attention of the listeners and readers of the prophetic message.

¹⁴ Fugitives could seek asylum by grabbing hold of these horns (Ex 21:14, 1K 1:50, 2:28).

¹⁵ The 2nd line refers to houses in which the furniture or walls were overlaid with ivory; such decorations have been discovered in the course of excavation in Samaria.

עמוס פרק ד

א שִׁמְעוּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה
פְּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר בְּהָר שַׁמְרוֹן
הָעֹשִׂקוֹת דָּלִים הִרְצִיעוּת אַבְיוֹנִים
הָאֹמְרֹת לְאֲדֹנֵיהֶם הִבִּיֵּאָה וְנִשְׁתָּה:
ב נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ
כִּי הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים עָלֵיכֶם
וְנִשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם בַּצְּנוֹת
וְאֶחָרִיתְכֶן בְּסִירֹת דֹּגָה:
ג וּפְרָצִים תִּצְאָנָה
אִשָּׁה נִגְדָה
וְהִשְׁלַכְתֶּנָּה הַהֶרְמוֹנָה
נֹאֵם יְהוָה:
ד בָּאוּ בֵּית־אֵל וּפָשְׁעוּ
הִגְלִגְלוּ הָרְבוּ לַפֶּשַׁע
וְהִבִּיאוּ לַבִּקֹּר זִבְחֵיכֶם
לְשִׁלֶּשֶׁת יָמִים מִעֲשֻׁרְתֵיכֶם:

AMOS 4

- 1 Listen to this saying; you cows of Bashan
living on the hill of Samaria,
exploiting the weak and ill-treating the poor,
saying to your husbands, “Bring us something to drink!”
- 2 The Lord Yahweh has sworn by his holiness:
Look, the days will soon be on you
when he will use hooks to drag you away
and fish-hooks for the very last of you.
- 3 Through the breaches in the wall, you will leave,
each one straight ahead,
and be herded away towards Harmon,
says Yahweh.
- 4 Go to Bethel, and sin,
to Gilgal, and sin even harder!
Bring your sacrifices each morning,
your tithes every third day.

AMOS 4

- ¹ In Ps 22:12, ‘cows of Bashan’ symbolise frightening power; here, the cows symbolise the reckless luxury of the women of Samaria.
- ² The meaning of the word translated ‘hooks’ (as NJB, NRSV, NIV) is uncertain; other options are: ‘shields’ (NEB), ‘ropes’, ‘thorns’, ‘baskets’ (NETB) and ‘boats’ (derived from baskets). The LXX has ‘kettles’ (λέβητας).
- ³ ‘Be herded’ follows the LXX (ἀπορριφήσεσθε); the MT has ‘herd’. The meaning of the word הַהֶרְמוֹנָה is unclear: many (NRSV, as here) understand it as a place name (‘towards Harmon’), though such a location is not known; some (NJB) emend to ‘Hermon’.
- ⁴ An alternative translation for ‘every third day’ is ‘on the third day’ (after the worshipper’s arrival at the shrine).

וְקָטַר מִחֶמֶן תֹּזֶה ה
 וְקִרְאוּ נִדְבוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם
 כִּי בֶן אֲהַבְתֶּם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 נָאֻם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה:
 וְגַם־אֲנִי נָתַתִּי לָכֶם נִקְיוֹן שִׁנַּיִם ו
 בְּכָל־עִירְכֶם וְחֶסֶר לֶחֶם בְּכָל מְקוֹמֵיכֶם
 וְלֹא־שָׁבַתֶם עָדִי
 נָאֻם־יְהוָה:
 וְגַם אֲנֹכִי מִנְעַתִּי מִכֶּם אֶת־הַגֶּשֶׁם ז
 בְּעוֹד שְׁלֹשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים לִקְצִיר
 וְהַמָּטָרִתִּי עַל־עִיר אַחַת
 וְעַל־עִיר אַחַת לֹא אֶמָּטֵר
 חֲלָקָה אַחַת תִּמָּטֵר
 וְחֲלָקָה אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־תִמָּטֵר עָלֶיהָ תִּיבֹשׁ:
 וְנָעוּ שְׁתֵּי־שָׁלֹשׁ עָרִים אֶל־עִיר אַחַת ח
 לִשְׁתּוֹת מַיִם
 וְלֹא יִשְׂבָּעוּ
 וְלֹא־שָׁבַתֶם עָדִי
 נָאֻם־יְהוָה:

- 5 Burn your thank-offering of leaven
and widely publicise your free-will offerings,
for this, children of Israel, is what makes you happy,
says the Lord Yahweh.
- 6 I even gave you clean teeth in all your towns
and a shortage of food in all your villages,
and still you would not come back to me,
says Yahweh.
- 7 I even withheld the rain from you
full three months before harvest time;
I caused rain to fall in one town
and caused no rain to fall in another;
on field was rained on
and the next, for want of rain, dried up.
- 8 Two towns, three towns went tottering
to one town for water and drink
but went unsatisfied,
and still you would not come back to me,
says Yahweh.

5 The prophet's insistence on 'your' sacrifices, 'your' offerings, what makes 'you' happy, is to point out that the pilgrims to the shrine are more concerned with their own inclinations than they are with honouring God.

6 'Clean teeth' is a metaphor for having nothing to eat – e.g. famine conditions.

7 The first two lines refer to the rains of late March – early April.

8 An alternative reading of 'for water and drink' (following NJB) is 'to drink water' (as NRSV).

ט
הִכִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּשֹּׁדֶפֶן וּבִירְקוֹן
הִרְבֹּת גְּנוֹתֵיכֶם וְכַרְמֵיכֶם וּתְאֵנֵיכֶם
וַיִּזְיֶיכֶם יֹאכַל הַגָּזָם
וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי
נֹאם־יְהוָה: {ס}
י
שְׁלַחְתִּי בְכֶם דָּבָר בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם
הִרְגָּתִי בַחֶרֶב בַּחֲוָרֵיכֶם
עִם שְׁבִי סוֹסֵיכֶם
וָאֵעֲלָה בְּאֵשׁ מַחֲנֵיכֶם
וּבִאֲפֹכֶם וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי
נֹאם־יְהוָה:
יא
הִפַּכְתִּי בְכֶם
כַּמֶּהֱפַכְתָּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה
וַתְּהִי כְאֹד מִצֵּל מִשְׁרָפָה
וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי
נֹאם־יְהוָה:
יב
לָכֵן כֹּה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַקֵּב כִּי־זָאת אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ

- 9 I struck you with blight and mildew,
I dried up your gardens and vineyards;
the locust devoured your fig trees and olive trees,
and still you would not come back to me,
says Yahweh.
- 10 I sent plague on you like Egypt's plague,
I slaughtered your young men with the sword
and, at the same time, your horses were captured;
I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps,
and still you would not come back to me,
says Yahweh.
- 11 I overturned you
as God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah;
you were like a brand snatched from the blaze
and still you would not come back to me,
says Yahweh.
- 12 Therefore, this, Israel, is what I plan to do to you.
Because I am going to do this to you,

9 'I dried up' (הִרְבֹּת) is a conjectural translation, following the NJB; the MT has 'to increase' (הִרְבֹּת). Or, the infinitive can be taken adverbially ('kept') and connected to the locusts (NJPS), or with the preceding sentence and related to God's interventions ('I kept destroying', NRSV).

10 The literal translation of 'like Egypt's plague' (בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם) is 'in the way of Egypt'.

11 The first two lines probably allude to an earthquake (see 1:1) affecting only part of the country; the divine name (אֱלֹהִים) may be used in an idiomatic superlative sense here, in which case one might translate, "like the great overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah."

12 Now Israel would truly meet Yahweh – not at the sanctuaries, but face-to-face in judgment.

הִכּוֹן לִקְרֹאת אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
כִּי הִנֵּה יוֹצֵר הָרִים וּבֹרֵא רוּחַ יג
וּמַגִּיד לְאָדָם מֶה־שָׁחַו
עֹשֶׂה שָׁחַר עֵיפָה
וְדֹרֵךְ עַל־בִּמְתֵי אֶרֶץ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {פ}

prepare to meet your God, Israel!

¹³ For look, he it is who forgets the mountains, creates the wind,
who reveals his mind to humankind,
changes the dawn into darkness
and strides on the heights of the world:
Yahweh, God Sabaoth, is his name.

¹³ This verse is a hymnal fragment (cf. 5:8–9, 9:5–6) added later, probably for liturgical use. In its present context, it makes the threat more impressive by emphasising God’s power over the elements, and hence over all life.

עמוס פרק ה

א שִׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי נֹשֵׂא עֲלֵיכֶם קִינָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ב נָפְלָה לֹא־תוֹסִיף קוֹם
בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
נֹטְשָׁה עַל־אֲדָמָתָהּ
אֵין מִקִּימָהּ:
ג כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה
הָעִיר הַיֹּצֵאת אֶלֶף
תִּשְׁאִיר מֵאָה
וְהַיֹּצֵאת מֵאָה תִּשְׁאִיר עֶשְׂרֵה
לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ד כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוֹה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל
דִּרְשׁוּנִי וְחִיּוּ:
ה וְאַל־תִּדְרְשׁוּ בֵּית־אֵל
וְהִגְלַגְל לֹא תָבֹאוּ
וּבְאֵר שֶׁבַע לֹא תַעֲבְרוּ

AMOS 5

- 1 Listen to this word that I utter against you;
it is a dirge, House of Israel:
- 2 She has fallen down, never to rise again,
the virgin Israel.
There she lies on her own soil,
with no one to life her up.
- 3 For, the Lord Yahweh says this:
The town that used to put a thousand in the field
will be left with a hundred,
and the one that used to put a hundred
will be left with ten, to fight for the House of Israel.
- 4 For, Yahweh says this to the House of Israel:
Seek me out and you will survive,
- 5 but do not seek out Bethel,
do not go to Gilgal,
do not journey to Beersheba;

AMOS 5

- 1 In place of 'it is a dirge', following the MT (literally, 'a funeral song') and NJB, the NRSV has 'in lamentation'.
- 2 The nation is compared to a girl carried off by death in the flower of her youth before fulfilling herself by marriage and childbearing.
- 3 'To fight' has been supplied, following the NJB; the NRSV omits 'for the House of Israel', assuming it a dittography from v. 4.
- 4 Visiting shrines may indeed be called 'resorting to' of 'seeking out' God (cf. v. 5, Dt 12:2, 2Ch 1:5).
- 5 'Beersheba' was renowned as a shrine used by the Patriarchs (Gn 21:31-33, 26:23-25). Alliteration links 'Gilgal' (גִּלְגָּל) and the fate in store for it ('is going into captivity' - גָּלָה יְגָלָה) and there is wordplay between 'Bethel' (בֵּית־אֵל - 'House of God') and 'house of nothing' (cf. Ho 4:15).

כִּי הַגִּלְגָּל גָּלָה יִגְלָה
 וּבֵית־אֵל יִהְיֶה לְאוֹן:
 דִּרְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וַחֲיוּ ^ו
 פֶּן־יִצְלַח כָּאֵשׁ בַּיִת יוֹסֵף
 וְאָכְלָה וְאִין־מִכְבָּה לְבֵית־אֵל:
 הַהֹפְכִים לְלַעְנָה מִשְׁפָּט ^ז
 וְצִדְקָה לָאָרֶץ הַנִּיחוּ:
 עֲשֵׂה כִימָה וּכְסִיל וְהַפֹּד לְבָקָר ^ח
 צִלְמוֹת וַיּוֹם
 לַיְלָה הַחֲשִׁידִי הַקּוֹרֵא לְמִי־הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפֹּכֶם
 עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ
 יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ:
 הַמְבַלִּיג שָׂדַע עַל־עֵז ^ט
 וְשָׂדַע עַל־מִבְצָר יָבֹוא:
 שֹׂנְאֵו בַשָּׁעַר מוֹכִיחַ ^י
 וְדֹבֵר תָּמִים יִתְעָבוּ:
 לִכֶּן יַעַן בּוֹשְׁסֵכֶם עַל־דָּל ^{יא}
 וּמִשְׁאֵת־בֶּרֶךְ תִּקְחוּ מִמֶּנּוּ

for, Gilgal is going into captivity
 and Bethel will be brought to nothing.

- 6 Seek out Yahweh and you will survive
or else he will sweep like fire on the House of Joseph
and burn it down, with no one at Bethel to quench the flames.
- 7 They turn justice into wormwood
and throw uprightness to the ground.
- 8 The one who made the Pleiades and Orion,
and turns shadow dark as death into morning
and day to darkest night, who summons the waters of the sea
and pours them over the surface of the land:
Yahweh is his name.
- 9 He flashes destruction on the strong
and ruin comes on the fortress.
- 10 They hate the man who teaches justice at the city gate
and detest anyone who declares the truth.
- 11 For taxing the poor man
and for extorting levies on his wheat:

6 Here, 'Joseph' (= Ephraim & Manasseh), as the most prominent of the Israelite tribes, represents the entire Northern Kingdom.

7 Perhaps the 1st line should be emended so that for 'they turn' it reads 'alas to those who turn' (cf. v. 18 and 6:1).

8 The 4th line refers either to flooding the earth to return it to its primitive condition or to imparting to it a fertile rain.

9 The precise meaning of the verb בִּלַּג ('flashes') is uncertain, as is the text of the 2nd line but the theme of bringing low the powerful is clear.

10 In ancient Israelite culture, legal disputes were resolved 'at the city gate', where the town elders met.

11 In place of 'taxing' (בּוֹשְׁסֵכֶם), here following NETB, the NJB, NRSV (and most translations) have 'trample on', deriving the verb from בּוֹס.

בְּתֵי גִזִּית בְּנִיתֶם
וְלֹא־תִשְׁבוּ בָם
כִּרְמֵי־חֶמֶד נִטַּעְתֶּם
וְלֹא תִשְׁתּוּ אֶת־יַיִנָם:
יב כִּי יִדְעֹתִי רַבִּים פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם
וְעֲצָמִים חֲטָאֵתֵיכֶם
צָרְרִי צָדִיק לְקַחֵי כָפָר
וְאַבְיוֹנִים בַּשַּׁעַר הָטוּ:
יג לָכֵן הַמִּשְׁכִּיל בַּעַת הַהִיא יָדָם
כִּי עַת רָעָה הִיא:
יד דְּרֹשׁוּ־טוֹב וְאַל־רָע
לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶוּ
וַיְהִי־לָן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת
אֲתֶכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם:
טו שְׂנֹאוּ־רָע וְאַהֲבוּ טוֹב
וְהָצִיגוּ בַשַּׁעַר מִשְׁפָּט
אוֹלֵי יַחֲנֹן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת
שְׂאֵרִית יוֹסֵף: {ס}

although you have built houses of dressed stone,
you will not live in them;
although you have planted pleasant vineyards,
you will not drink wine from them.

- 12 For, I know how many your crimes are
and how outrageous your sins,
you oppressors of the upright, who hold people to ransom
and thrust the poor aside at the gates.
- 13 That is why anyone prudent keeps silent now,
since the time is evil.
- 14 Seek good and not evil
so that you may survive,
and Yahweh, God Sabaoth, be with you
as you claim he is.
- 15 Hate evil, love good,
and let justice reign at the city gate:
it may be that Yahweh, God Sabaoth,
will take pity on the remnant of Joseph.

12 They 'thrust the poor aside' by denying them the justice they deserve at the city gate.

13 This verse, advising the good to keep silent to avoid being persecuted by unscrupulous rulers, is perhaps a scribal gloss.

14 Relying on its special place as the Chosen People, Israel has been counting on Yahweh's unconditional protection (v. 18, 9:10, Mi 3:11).

15 The 'remnant of Joseph' is the Northern Kingdom (cf. #6) depleted by successive punishments by Yahweh (4:6–11), with more to come (5:3). In the first prophetic statement of the theme of the 'surviving remnant' (see #Is 4:3), Amos' words are tentative, sarcastic, and sceptical at best; for a more positive approach, see 9:8–9.

טז לִכְן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת
 אֲדֹנֵי בְּכָל־רַחְבוֹת מְסָפָד
 וּבְכָל־חוֹצוֹת יֹאמְרוּ הִזֵּהוּ
 וְקִרְאוּ אֶבֶר אֶל־אֲבֵל
 וּמְסָפָד אֶל־יֹדְעֵי נְהִי:
 זי וּבְכָל־כְּרָמִים מְסָפָד
 כִּי־אֵעֱבֹר בְּקִרְבָּךְ
 אָמַר יְהוָה: {פ}

יח הֲוֵי הַמֵּתָאִיִּם אֶת־יְוֹם יְהוָה
 לְמַה־זֶּה לָכֶם יוֹם יְהוָה
 הוּא־חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא־אֹר:
 יט כְּאִשֶּׁר יָנוֹס אִישׁ מִפְּנֵי הָאֲרִי
 וּפָגְעוּ הָדָב
 וּבֹא הַבַּיִת וְסָמַךְ יָדוֹ עַל־הַקִּיר
 וְנִשְׁכּוּ הַנָּחָשׁ:
 כ הֲלֹא־חֹשֶׁךְ יוֹם יְהוָה וְלֹא־אֹר
 וְאֶפֶל וְלֹא־נֶגֶה לוֹ:

- 16 Therefore, Yahweh Sabaoth, the Lord, says this:
 In every public square, there will be lamentation,
 in every street, they will cry out, "Alas! Alas!"
 The farmer will be called on to mourn
 and the professional mourners to lament.
- 17 There will be wailing in every vineyard,
 for I mean to pass through among you,
 says Yahweh.
- 18 Woe to you who long for the Day of Yahweh!
 What will the Day of Yahweh mean for you?
 It will mean darkness, not light,
- 19 as when someone runs away from a lion,
 only to meet a bear;
 he goes into his house and puts his hand on the wall,
 only for a snake to bite him.
- 20 Will not the Day of Yahweh be darkness, not light,
 totally dark, without a ray of light?

16 The term הִזֵּהוּ ('alas') is an alternate form of הָוִי, a word used to mourn the dead (1K 13:30, Jr 22:18, 34:5); a wordplay follows quickly, as v. 18 begins with הָוִי ('woe'). The word order of the last line is confused in the MT, literally reading 'lamentations to the professional mourners'.

17 'Pass through among you' alludes to Ex 12:12, where God announced he would 'pass through' Egypt and bring death to the Egyptian firstborn.

18 The term הָוִי ('woe') was used when mourning the dead (see #16); the prophet here either engages in role-playing and mourns the death of the nation in advance or sarcastically taunts those who hold to this misplaced belief.

19 At the beginning of this verse, NETB inserts 'disaster will be inescapable', though there is no textual support for this explanatory addition.

20 The NRSV translates the 1st line (here following the NJB) in the present tense, "Is not the Day of Yahweh darkness, not light?"

כא שְׁנֹאתִי מֵאַסְתִּי חֲגִיכֶם
 ולא אֶרִיחַ בְּעִצְרֹתֵיכֶם:
 כב כִּי אִם־תֵּעָלוּ־לִי עֹלוֹת וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם
 לֹא אֶרְצֶה
 וְשֹׁלֵם מִרִּיאֵיכֶם לֹא אֲבִיט:
 כג הֶסֶר מֵעָלַי הַמֶּזֶן שְׂרִיד
 וְזִמְרַת נְבִלִיד לֹא אֲשַׁמַּע:
 כד וַיִּגַּל בְּמִים מִשְׁפָּט
 וַיְצַדֶּקֶה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן:
 כה הַזְבָּחִים וּמִנְחָה הִגַּשְׁתָּם־לִי בַּמִּדְבָּר
 אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 כו וּנְשֹׂאתֶם אֶת סִבּוֹת מַלְכְּכֶם
 וְאֵת כִּיּוֹן צִלְמֵיכֶם
 כז כּוֹכַב אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם:
 וְהִגְלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵהָאָרֶץ לְדַמָּשְׁקַי
 אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {פ}

21 I hate, I scorn your festivals;
 I will take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies.
 22 When you bring me burnt offerings ...
 your oblations, I do not accept them
 and I do not look at your communion sacrifices of fat cattle.
 23 Spare me the din of your chanting;
 let me hear none of your strumming on lyres,
 24 but let justice flow like water,
 and uprightness like a never-failing stream!
 25 Did you bring me sacrifices and oblations
 those forty years in the desert, House of Israel?
 26 Now you must shoulder Sakkuth your king
 and the star of your God, Kaiwan –
 those idols you made for yourselves.
 27 For, I am about to drive you into exile beyond Damascus,
 Yahweh says – God Sabaoth is his name.

21 The literal translation of 'I will take no pleasure in' is 'I will not smell'.

22 Either a line is missing here or the beginning of this verse is an incomplete gloss.

23 In this verse, the 2P suffixes are singular and not plural like they are in vv. 21–22 & 25–27; some suggest that perhaps a specific individual or group within the nation is in view.

24 This verse expresses the heart of Amos' teaching.

25 Amos, like Hosea (Ho 2:16–17, 9:10) and Jeremiah (Jr 2:2–3), regarded the period in the desert as a time of perfect union between Yahweh and his people.

26 In place of 'king', the LXX (*Μολοχ*) and Vg (*Moloch*) have 'Molech' – the Hebrew consonants are the same (מֹלֶךְ) for both 'Molech' and 'king'.

27 The NJB has 'captivity' rather than 'exile', here following the NRSV.

עמוס פרק ו

א הוֹי הַשְּׂאֲנָנִים בְּצִיּוֹן
וְהַבֹּטְחִים בְּהַר שִׁמְרֹון
נִקְבְּלֵי רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם
וּבָאוּ לָהֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ב עֲבְרוּ כַלְנֶה וּרְאוּ
וּלְכוּ מִשָּׁם חֲמַת רַבָּה
וּרְדּוּ גַת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים
הַטּוֹבִים מִן־הַמְּמַלְכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה
אִם־רַב גְּבוּלָם מִגְּבוּלְכֶם:
ג הַמֵּנִדִים לַיּוֹם רָע
וְתַגְשׁוּן שֶׁבֶת חָמָס:
ד הַשֹּׁכְבִים עַל־מִטּוֹת שֵׁן
וְסֹרְחִים עַל־עֲרֻשׁוֹתָם
וְאֹכְלִים כְּרִים מִצֶּאֱן
וְעֹגְלִים מִתּוֹךְ מִרְבֵּק:

AMOS 6

- 1 Alas for those so comfortable in Zion
and for those so confident on the hill of Samaria,
the notables of this first of nations,
those to whom the House of Israel has recourse!
- 2 Travel to Calneh and look,
go on from there to Hamath the great,
then go down to Gath in Philistia.
Are they more powerful than these kingdoms?
Is their territory larger than yours is?
- 3 Thinking to defer the evil day,
you are hastening the reign of violence.
- 4 Lying on beds of ivory
and sprawling on their divans,
they dine on lambs from the flock
and stall-fattened veal.

AMOS 6

- ¹ 'In Zion' is perhaps a Judaeen adjustment to the text (see #Ho 1:7). On the term הוֹי ('alas') as a term of mourning, see #5:16 & 18.
- ² The text of this verse is uncertain. Here, following the *NJB*, we interpret the verse as spoken by the notables of Samaria to those who come to consult them: "You are more powerful than these kingdoms and have nothing to fear." However, the last two lines can be emended to read, "Are you more powerful than these kingdoms? Is your territory larger than theirs is?"
- ³ The precise meaning of the term שֶׁבֶת ('seat' or 'sitting') is unclear in this context. The translation assumes that it refers to a throne from which violence (in the person of the oppressive leaders) reigns; another option is that the expression refers not to the leaders' oppressive rule but to the coming judgment when violence will overtake the nation in the person of enemy invaders.
- ⁴ In place of 'beds of ivory', here following the *MT* and *NRSV*, *NETB* has 'beds decorated with ivory'.

ה	הַפְּרָטִים עַל־פִּי הַנָּבֵל כְּדָוִיד חֲשָׁבוּ לָהֶם כְּלִי־שִׁיר: ו	5	They bawl to the sound of the lyre and, like David, they invent musical instruments.
ו	הַשְׁתִּים בְּמִזְרְקֵי יַיִן וְרֹאשֵׁית שְׁמָנִים יִמְשְׁחוּ וְלֹא נָחְלוּ עַל־שֹׁבֵר יוֹסֵף: ז	6	They drink wine from sacrificial bowls and lard themselves with the finest oils, but, for the ruin of Joseph, they care nothing.
ז	לָכֵן עַתָּה יֵגְלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ גָּלִים וְסֵר מִרְּזַח סְרוּחִים: ח	7	That is why they will now go into captivity, heading the column of captives. The loungers' revelry is over.
ח	נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ נֹא־סִיְהוֹה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת מִתְאַב אֲנֹכִי אֶת־גְּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב וְאֶרְמֹנָתָיו שִׁנְאַתִּי וְהִסְגֵּרְתִּי עִיר וּמְלָאָה: ט	8	Lord Yahweh has sworn by his own self, says Yahweh, God Sabaoth: I detest the pride of Jacob, I hate his palaces, and I shall hand over the city and all in it.
ט	וְהָיָה אִם־יִוָּתְרוּ עֲשָׂרָה אָנָשִׁים בְּבַיִת אֶחָד וּמָתוּ: י	9	If ten men remain in one house, they will die.
י	וְנִשְׁאַל דּוֹדוֹ וּמִסְרָפּוֹ לְהוֹצִיא עֲצָמִים מִן־הַבַּיִת	10	Their relatives will be left to carry the bones from the house,

-
- 5 The meaning of פֶּרֶט, here translated as 'bawl' (following the NJB, NRSV & NETB have 'sing') is uncertain but it is probably pejorative.
- 6 The 'ruin of Joseph' is the impending collapse of Israel. Perhaps some religious rite is in view, or the size of the bowls is emphasised.
- 7 The word מִרְּזַח ('revelry') refers to a type of pagan religious banquet popular among the upper class of Israel at this time.
- 8 'The city' probably refers to the city of Samaria (cf. 6:1), which in turn, by metonymy, represents the entire Northern Kingdom.
- 9 In place of 'men', the NJB & NRSV have 'people'. In place of 'one' (following the NRSV), the NJB has 'a single'.
- 10 The 1st line here follows the LXX (καὶ λήμψονται οἱ οὐκ εἶσοι αὐτῶν) and NJB; the MT is unintelligible (literally, 'and he will lift him up, his uncle, and the one burning him') and the NRSV has 'if a relative, one who burns the dead'.

וְאָמַר לְאִשֶּׁר בִּירְכֵתִי הַבַּיִת הַעוֹד עִמָּךְ
 וְאָמַר אִפֹּס
 וְאָמַר הִס
 כִּי לֹא לְהַזְכִּיר בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה: {ס}
 כִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה מַצִּיָּה ^{יא}
 וְהִכָּה הַבַּיִת הַגָּדוֹל רְסִיסִים
 וְהַבַּיִת הַקָּטָן בְּקַעִים:
 הֲיִרְצוֹן בְּסֻלֵּל סוּסִים ^{יב}
 אִם־יִחְרוֹשׁ בַּבְּקָרִים
 כִּי־הִפְכֵתָם לְרֹאשׁ מִשְׁפָּט
 וּפְרִי צְדָקָה לְלַעְנָה:
 הַשְׂמֵחִים לֹלֵא דָבָר ^{יג}
 הָאֹמְרִים הֲלוֹא בְּחִזְקֵנוּ
 לָקַחְנוּ לָנוּ קַרְנִים:
 כִּי הִנֵּנִי מְקִים עֲלֵיכֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל ^{יד}
 נֹאֵם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְבָּאוֹת גּוֹי
 וְלַחֲצוֹ אֶתְכֶם מִלְּבוֹא חֲמַת
 עַד־נַחַל הָעַרְבָּה: {פ}

and they will say to anyone deep inside the house,
 "Any more there?" and he will answer, "No."
 Then he will say, "Hush!
 Yahweh's name must not be mentioned."

- 11 For look, Yahweh gives the command:
 as he strikes, the great house falls to pieces
 and the small house is in fragments.
- 12 Can horses gallop over rocks?
 Can the sea be ploughed with oxen?
 Yet, you have changed justice into poison,
 and the fruit of uprightness into wormwood,
- 13 while rejoicing over Lo-Debar
 and saying, "Wasn't it by our own strength
 that we captured Karnaim?"
- 14 But look, House of Israel, against you,
 says Yahweh, God Sabaoth,
 I am raising a nation to oppress you
 from the Pass of Hamath to the Gorge of the Arabah.

11 A more literal translation for 'gives the command' is 'is issuing the decree'.

12 The text of the 2nd line has been corrected, separating בְּקָרִים ('oxen') as 2 words, בָּקָר ('oxen') & יָם ('sea') and changing the vowels; the MT (using a plural instead of a collective noun) reads, "Does one plough with oxen?"

13 There is wordplay on the place names: 'Lo-Debar' (לֹא דָבָר - 2S 9:4) means 'nothing' and 'Karnaim' (קַרְנִים - 1M 5:26) means 'double horns', a common metaphor for strength.

14 The last line gives the northern and southern frontiers of the Northern Kingdom as established by the conquests of Jeroboam II.

עמוס פרק ז

א כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה
וְהִנֵּה יוֹצֵר גְּבִי
בְּתַחֲלֹת עֲלֹת הַלֶּקֶשׁ
וְהִנֵּה-לֶקֶשׁ אַחֵר גְּזִי הַמֶּלֶךְ:
ב וְהָיָה אִם-כָּלָה לֶאֱכֹל אֶת-עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ
וְאָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה סֶלַח-נָא
מִי יָקוּם יַעֲקֹב בִּי קֹטֵן הוּא:
ג נָחַם יְהוֹה עַל-זֹאת
לֹא תִהְיֶה אָמַר יְהוֹה:
ד כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה
וְהִנֵּה קִרְא לָרֶב בְּאֵשׁ אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה
וְתֹאכַל אֶת-תְּהוֹם רַבָּה
וְאָכְלָה אֶת-הַחֹלֶק:
ה וְאָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה חֲדַל-נָא
מִי יָקוּם יַעֲקֹב בִּי קֹטֵן הוּא:

AMOS 7

- 1 This is what Lord Yahweh showed me:
there was a swarm of locusts
when the second crop was sprouting,
full-grown locusts, after the king's hay had been cut.
- 2 When they had eaten all the grass in the land,
I said, "Lord Yahweh, forgive, I beg you.
How can Jacob survive, being so small?"
- 3 Then Yahweh relented;
"It will not happen," said Yahweh.
- 4 This is what Lord Yahweh showed me:
Lord Yahweh summoning fire in punishment;
it had devoured the great Abyss
and was encroaching on the land.
- 5 Then I said, "Lord Yahweh, stop, I beg you.
How can Jacob survive, being so small?"

AMOS 7

- 1 'A swarm of' follows the LXX (ἐπιρροή) and NJB; the MT (and NRSV) has 'he was forming'. 'Full grown locusts' follows the LXX (βροῦχος εἶς) and NJB; the MT (and NRSV) has 'the second growth'. Presumably, the king requisitioned part of the first growth for his cavalry.
- 2 Here, Amos intercedes only in the first two visions; in the last three, he says nothing.
- 3 An alternative reading for 'relented' (here following the NJB & NRSV) is 'changed his mind'.
- 4 'Summoning fire in punishment' is conjectural; the MT has 'calling in order to punish by fire'; many emend לרֶבב אֵשׁ to לָרֶבב בְּאֵשׁ ('calling for a shower of fire'), though this is also problematical; the LXX (ἐκάλεσεν τὴν δίκην ἐν πυρὶ - 'called punishment by fire') is not helpful. The 'fire' is drought (1:2, 4:6-8) that devours everything (cf. Jl 1:19-20, 2:3), or fire from heaven such as destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 19:24-28).
- 5 The literal translation of 'survive' is 'stand'.

נָחַם יְהוָה עַל־זֹאת
גַּם־הִיא לֹא תִהְיֶה אֲמַר אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה: {פ}

כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי
וְהִנֵּה אֲדֹנִי נֹצֵב עַל־חֹמַת אֲנָךְ
וּבִידּוֹ אֲנָךְ:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי
מִה־אַתָּה רֹאֶה עֲמוֹס וְאָמַר אֲנָךְ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנִי
הִנְנִי שָׁם אֲנָךְ בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֹא־אֹסִיף עוֹד
עֲבוֹר לִּי:

וְנִשְׁמּוּ בַּמּוֹת יִשְׁחָק
וּמִקְדָּשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִחָרְבוּ
וְקִמַּתִּי עַל־בֵּית יִרְבְּעָם בְּחָרֶב: {ס}

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲמַצְיָה כֹהֵן בֵּית־אֵל אֶל־יִרְבְּעָם מֶלֶךְ־
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר קֶשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ עֲמוֹס בְּקֶרֶב בֵּית

6 Then Yahweh relented;
"This will not happen either," said the Lord Yahweh.

7 This is what he showed me:
the Lord standing by a wall,
with a plumb line in his hand.

8 "What do you see, Amos?" Yahweh asked me.
"A plumb line," I said.

Then the Lord said,
"Look, I am going to put a plumb line
in among my people Israel;
never again will I overlook their offences.

9 "The high places of Isaac will be ruined
and the sanctuaries of Israel laid waste,
and, sword in hand, I will attack the House of Jeroboam."

10 Amaziah the priest of Bethel then sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel
as follows, "Amos is plotting against you in the heart of the House of

6 The literal translation of 'relented' is 'changed his mind about this'.

7 After 'wall', the MT adds 'of a plumb line'. This is the only occurrence of the word (אֲנָךְ) in the Bible (twice here and twice in v. 8) and, although the word from the same root in Accadian, Syriac and Arabic means 'tin' or 'lead', the exact meaning here is uncertain.

8 'Offences' is not present in the MT and has been supplied (following the NJB) for clarity (cf. Mi 7:18). This new refrain (cf. 8:2), replacing the one of the first two visions (7:3, 6) implies a hardening in sin not explicitly stated in the text.

9 The literal translation of 'attack' is 'rise up against'.

10 This prose passage, originating with the prophet's disciples and inserted between the third and fourth visions, immediately follows the prophecy against the royal house (7:9) and describes the reactions to which it gave rise.

יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-תֹכֵל הָאָרֶץ לְהִכִּיל אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרָיו:
 י^א כִּי-כֹה אָמַר עֲמוֹס בַּחֲרֹב יָמוֹת יִרְבְּעָם וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל
 גָּלָה יִגְלָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: {ס}

י^ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמַצְיָה אֶל-עֲמוֹס חֲזֵה לָךְ בְּרַח-לָךְ אֶל-
 אָרֶץ יְהוּדָה וְאָכַל-שֵׁם לֶחֶם וְשָׁם תִּנְבֵּא: י^ג וּבֵית-
 אֵל לֹא-תֹסֵף עוֹד לְהִנָּבֵא כִּי מִקֹּדֶשׁ-מִלְכָּךְ הוּא
 וּבֵית מַמְלָכָה הוּא: י^ד וַיַּעַן עֲמוֹס וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-
 אֲמַצְיָה לֹא-נָבִיא אֲנִי וְלֹא בֶן-נָבִיא אֲנִי כִּי-
 בּוֹקֵר אֲנִי וּבּוֹלֵס שִׁקְמִים: ט^ו וַיִּקְחֵנִי יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרֵי
 הַצֹּאן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה לָךְ הִנָּבֵא אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 טז וַעֲתָה שִׁמַּע דְּבַר-יְהוָה

אַתָּה אָמַר לֹא תִנְבֵּא עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וְלֹא תִטֵּיף עַל-בֵּית יִשְׁחָק:
 ל^ז לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה
 אֲשַׁתְּךָ בָּעִיר תִּזְנֶה וּבְנִיךָ וּבְנֹתֶיךָ

Israel; the country cannot tolerate his speeches. ¹¹ For, this is what Amos says, “Jeroboam is going to die by the sword, and Israel will go into captivity far from its native land.””

¹² To Amos himself, Amaziah said, “Go away, seer, take yourself off to Judah, earn your living there, and there you can prophesy! ¹³ But never again will you prophesy at Bethel, for this is a royal sanctuary, a national temple.” ¹⁴ “I am not a prophet,” Amos replied to Amaziah, “nor do I belong to a prophetic brotherhood. I am merely a herdsman and dresser of sycamore-figs. ¹⁵ But Yahweh took me from tending to the flock, and Yahweh said to me, “Go and prophesy to my people Israel.”

¹⁶ Therefore, listen to what Yahweh says:

You say: “Do not prophesy against Israel;
 do not foretell doom on the House of Isaac!”

¹⁷ Very well, this is what Yahweh says:

“Your wife will become a prostitute in the streets,

¹¹ In place of ‘for’, NETB opens with, “As a matter of fact ...”

¹² Here, the term translated as ‘seer’ (or ‘visionary’) is probably contemptuous. The literal translation of ‘earn your living’ is ‘eat bread’.

¹³ Amaziah speaks as if Amos were a professional prophet but he does not accuse him of being a false prophet.

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘nor do I belong to a prophetic brotherhood’ (here following the NJB) is ‘nor am I the son of a prophet’; on ‘prophetic brotherhoods’, see #2K 2:3. The word here translated as ‘herdsman’ is a rare one but usually meaning someone who looks after large animals rather than sheep (see 1:1, where a different term is used). Dressing ‘sycamore-figs’ involved pinching thin stalks, which helped them to ripen.

¹⁵ In place of ‘from tending to’, the NJB has ‘as I followed’ (more literally following the MT).

¹⁶ The verb here translated ‘foretell doom’ literally means ‘drip’, apparently a synonym of ‘prophesy’, but it carries a derogatory tone here, perhaps alluding to the frenzied way prophets sometimes delivered their messages; one could translate, ‘drivel’ or ‘foam at the mouth’.

¹⁷ All foreign countries are ‘polluted’ on account of their idols; the land of Israel, where Yahweh resides, is pure and ‘holy’.

בַּחֶרֶב יִפְּלוּ וְאֶדְמָתְךָ
בַּחֶבֶל תִּחְלַק
וְאַתָּה עַל-אֲדָמָה טְמֵאָה תָמוּת
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל גָּלָה יִגְלָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ: {פ}

your sons and daughters will fall by the sword,
your land will be parcelled out by measuring line,
and you yourself will die on polluted soil
and Israel will go into captivity far from its own land!"

עמוס פרק ח

א כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה
וְהִנֵּה כְּלוֹב קִיץ:
ב וַיֹּאמֶר מֶה-אַתָּה רֹאֶה עָמוֹס
וַאֲמַר כְּלוֹב קִיץ
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי
בֹּא הֲקֵץ אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֹא-אֶזְכֶּיף עוֹד עֲבוֹר לוֹ:
ג וְהִלֵּילוּ שִׁירֹת הַיֵּכָל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
נֹאֵם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה
רַב הַפֶּגֶר בְּכָל-מָקוֹם הַשְּׁלִיךְ
הֵם: {פ}
ד שְׁמַעוּ-זֹאת הַשְּׂאֲפִים אֲבִיוֹן
וְלִשְׁבִּית עֲנוּי עֲנִי-אֶרֶץ:
ה לֵאמֹר מָתִי יַעֲבֹר הַחֹדֶשׁ
וְנִשְׁבְּרָה שַׁבָּת
וְהַשַּׁבָּת וְנִפְתָּח-הַבֵּר

AMOS 8

- 1 This is what Lord Yahweh showed me:
a basket of summer fruit.
- 2 He asked, "What do you see, Amos?"
I said, "A basket of summer fruit."
Then Yahweh said,
"The time is ripe for my people Israel;
I will not continue to overlook their offences.
- 3 That day, the palace songs will turn to howls,
says the Lord Yahweh,
the corpses will be many that he will throw down everywhere.
Keep silent!"
- 4 Listen to this, you who crush the needy
and reduce the oppressed to nothing,
- 5 you who say, "When will New Moon be over
so that we can sell our corn,
and Sabbath, so that we can market our wheat?"

AMOS 8

- 1 Despite the interruption of the Bethel episode (7:10–17), this 4th vision connects to the 3rd (7:7–9), to which it is similar in structure and idea.
- 2 The literal translation for 'the time is ripe' is 'the end has come'. The MT contains a play on the words קִיץ ('summer fruit') and קֵץ ('end'): the summer fruit arrived toward the end of Israel's agricultural year; Israel's national existence was similarly at an end.
- 3 The implications of the 3rd line are not clear; the literal translation is, "many corpses in every place he will throw out."
- 4 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 5 The 'New Moon' (Lv 23:24), like the 'Sabbath' (Ex 20:8) halted business.

<p> לְהַקְטִין אֵיפָה וּלְהַגְדִּיל שֶׁקֶל וּלְעוֹת מֵאֲזַנֵּי מֶרְמָה: לְקַנּוֹת בַּכֶּסֶף דָּלִים וְאֲבִיוֹן בְּעֶבֶר נְעָלִים וּמִפֶּל בֶּר נִשְׁבִּיר: נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּגִאוֹן יַעֲקֹב אִם-אֲשַׁכַּח לְנֹצַח כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם: הֲעַל זֹאת לֹא-תִרְגַּז הָאָרֶץ וְאָבֵל כָּל-יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ וְעַלְתָּה כָּאֵל כְּלֵה וְנִגְרָשָׁה וְנִשְׁקָה וְנִשְׁקָעָה כִּי-אֵזֶר מִצָּרִים: {פ} </p>	<p> Then, we can make the ephah smaller and the shekel bigger by fraudulently tampering with the scales. 6 We can buy up the poor for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals, and even get a price for the sweepings of the wheat." 7 Yahweh has sworn by the Pride of Jacob, "Never will I forget anything they have done." 8 Will not the earth tremble for this and all who live on it lament, as it all rises together like the Nile in Egypt, it swells and then subsides like the Egyptian Nile? 9 On that day, says the Lord Yahweh, I shall make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. 10 I shall turn your festivals into mourning and all your singing into lamentation; I shall make you all wear sacking round your waists </p>
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⁶ The expression 'buy up the poor for silver' refers to the slave trade.

⁷ From the context (see 4:2 and #6:8), here the 'Pride of Jacob' could be a divine title (cf. 1S 15:29) or, as in 6:8, the arrogance of Israel, so firm that it can be used as the basis for an oath, or again the Land of Yahweh, Palestine (Ps 47:5).

⁸ 'Like the Nile' follows the LXX (ὡς ποταμὸς Αἰγύπτου – literally 'as the River of Egypt') and Peshitta; the MT has 'like a light' (כָּאֵר), which may be an error for כִּי-אֵזֶר ('like the Nile'). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁹ The Day of Yahweh (see #5:18) is accompanied by cosmic signs: earthquake (8:8, Is 2:10, Jr 4:24), solar eclipse (8:9, Jr 4:23).

¹⁰ The preposition כִּי (in 'bitterest') sometimes carries the force of 'in every respect', indicating identity rather than mere comparison.

וְעַל־כָּל־רֹאשׁ קָרַחַה
וּשְׁמָתֶיהָ כְּאַבְל יָחִיד
וְאַחֲרִיתָהּ כְּיוֹם מָר: {פ}
א הִנֵּה | יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֵם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה
וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעַב בָּאָרֶץ
לֹא־רָעַב לֶלֶחֶם וְלֹא־צָמָא לַמַּיִם
כִּי אִם־לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת דְּבַר־יְהוָה:
ב וְנָעוּ מֵיָם עַד־יָם
וּמִצָּפוֹן וְעַד־מִזְרָח
יִשׁוּטְטוּ לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־דְּבַר־יְהוָה
וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּ:
ג בְּיוֹם הַהוּא תִּתְעַלֶּפֶנָּה הַבְּתוּלֹת הַיְּפוֹת
וְהַבְּחוּרִים בַּצָּמָא:
ד הַנִּשְׁבָּעִים בְּאִשְׁמַת שִׁמְרוֹן
וְאָמְרוּ חֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ דָּן
וְחֵי דֶרֶךְ בְּאֶרֶץ־שֶׁבַע
וְנִפְּלוּ וְלֹא־יִקְוֹמוּ עוֹד: {ס}

and have all your heads shaved.

I shall make it like the mourning for an only child,
and it will end like the bitterest of days.

11 The days are coming – declares the Lord Yahweh –
when I shall send a famine on the country,
not hunger for food, not thirst for water,
but famine for hearing Yahweh’s word.

12 They will stagger from sea to sea,
will wander from the north to the east,
searching for Yahweh’s word,
but will not find it.

13 That day, beautiful girls and stalwart youths
will faint from thirst.

14 The people who swear by the Sin of Samaria,
who say, “Long live your god, Dan,”
and, “Hurrah for the pilgrimage to Beersheba”
will all fall, never to rise again.

11 In place of ‘word’, following the LXX (λόγος) and NJB, the MT (and NRSV) has ‘words’.

12 In place of ‘they’ (following the MT and NRSV), the NJB (and NETB) has ‘people’.

13 Other readings for ‘girls’ (following the NJB) are ‘young women’ (NRSV, NETB) and ‘virgins’.

14 The ‘Sin of Samaria’ (אִשְׁמַת) is seemingly a play on words with ‘Ashima’, the name of a goddess (2K 17:30) possibly worshipped in Samaria as Yahweh’s consort – see Dt 9:21, where Aaron calls the golden calf ‘your sin’.

AMOS 9

עמוס פרק ט

- א רֹאִיתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי נֹצֵב עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וַיֹּאמֶר הִךְ הַכְפֹּתוֹר וַיִּרְעֲשׁוּ
הַסָּפִים וּבְצַעַם בְּרֹאשׁ כָּלֶם
וְאַחֲרֵיתָם בַּחֶרֶב אֶהְרֹג
לֹא־יָנוּס לָהֶם נָס
וְלֹא־יִמָּלֵט לָהֶם פְּלִיט:
ב אִם־יִחַתְרוּ בַּשְּׂאוֹל
מָשָׁם יָדִי תִקְחֵם
וְאִם־יַעֲלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם
מָשָׁם אֲוִרִידֵם:
ג וְאִם־יִחַבְאוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל
מָשָׁם אֶחְפֹּשׁ וּלְקַחְתִּים
וְאִם־יִסְתָּרוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינִי בְּקִרְקַע הַיָּם
מָשָׁם אֶצְוֶה אֶת־הַנָּחַשׁ וַיִּנְשָׁכֵם:
ד וְאִם־יֵלְכוּ בַּשָּׂבִי לִפְנֵי אֲבִיָּהֶם
מָשָׁם אֶצְוֶה אֶת־הַחֶרֶב וְהִרְגָתָם
וְשִׁמַּתִּי עֵינִי עֲלֵיהֶם
לָרָעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה:
- 1 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said,
"Strike the top of the capitals so that the thresholds shake!
Smash their head in, one and all;
and I shall put any survivors to the sword:
whoever runs away will not run far,
and whoever escapes will not make good his escape.
2 Should they burrow into Sheol,
my hand will haul them out;
should they climb to heaven,
I shall bring them down.
3 Should they hide on the top of Carmel,
from there, I shall track them down and catch them;
should they hide from me on the seabed,
I shall order the Serpent there to bite them.
4 If their enemies herd them into captivity,
from there, I shall order the sword to kill them,
and I shall fix my eyes on them
for evil and not for good."

AMOS 9

- ¹ In place of 'capitals', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'pillar' (the Hebrew singular form is collective).
² 'Sheol' was the place of the dead (Job 10:19-22, Is 14:11, 15), which offers no hiding place from God (Ps 139:7-12).
³ The 'Serpent' is here the mythological dragon inhabiting the deep sea (Job 41:1-34).
⁴ An alternative reading for 'from there' (NRSV) is simply 'there' (NJB), if the מ prefix is dittographic (note the preceding word ends in מ).

ה וַאֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה הַצְבָּאוֹת
 הַנוֹגֵעַ בָּאָרֶץ וְתִמּוֹג
 וְאִבְלוּ כָּל־יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ
 וְעָלְתָה כִּיָּאֵר כְּלֵה
 וְשָׁקַעַה כִּיָּאֵר מִצְרַיִם:
 ו הַבּוֹנֶה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעְלוֹתָיו
 וְאֹגְדָתוֹ עַל־אֶרֶץ יִסְדָּהָ
 הַקֹּרֵא לַמִּי־הַיָּם
 וַיִּשְׁפֹּכֶם עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ
 יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ: {פ}
 ז הֲלוֹא כַבְנֵי כְשִׁיִּים אַתֶּם לִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה
 הֲלוֹא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 וּפְלִשְׁתִּיִּים מִכַּפְתּוֹר וְאַרְם מִקִּיר:
 ח הִנֵּה עֵינָי אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה
 בַּמַּמְלָכָה הַחַטָּאָה וְהַשְׂמֵדָתִי אֶתָּה
 מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה
 אֶפֶס כִּי לֹא הַשְׂמִיד אֶשְׂמִיד אֶת־בֵּית יַעֲקֹב
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

- 5 Lord Yahweh Sabaoth –
 he touches the earth and it melts,
 and all living things on it lament,
 as all rises together like the Nile in Egypt
 and then subsides like the Egyptian Nile.
- 6 He who builds his mansion in the heavens,
 supporting his vault on the earth,
 and summons the waters of the sea
 and pours them over the surface of the land:
 Yahweh is his name.
- 7 Are not you the same as the Cushites, you children of Israel?
 – Says Yahweh –
 Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt
 and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Aramaeans from Kir?
- 8 Look, Lord Yahweh's eyes are on the sinful kingdom:
 I shall wipe it off the face of the earth,
 although I shall not destroy
 the House of Jacob completely,
 says Yahweh.

⁵ The 1st line of this hymnal fragment (see #4:13 & 8:8) is apparently a gloss defining the subject of the sentence.

⁶ 'Mansion' (as NJB, the NRSV has 'chambers') is conjectural (עליותו); the MT has 'staircases' (מַעְלוֹתָיו); if this is correct, the reference may be to the steps leading up to the heavenly temple of God (cf. 1K 10:19–20). The מ may be a dittography (note that the preceding word ends in ם).

⁷ The 'Cushites' are the people of Ethiopia: remote and exotic. Israel is wrong to consider itself as the 'first of nations' (6:1).

⁸ The survival of a 'remnant' is explicitly promised here, though previously hinted at in 5:15.

ט כִּי־הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מַצִּיָּה
וְהִנְעוֹתִי בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
כַּאֲשֶׁר יִנּוּעַ
בַּכְבֵּרָה וְלֹא־יִפּוֹל צְרוּר אֶרֶץ:
י בַּחֶרֶב יָמוּתוּ כָּל חַטָּאֵי עַמִּי
הָאֹמְרִים לֹא־תִגִּישׁ וְתִקְדֶּיִם בְּעַדֵּינוּ הָרָעָה:
יא בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים אֶת־סִכַּת דָּוִד הַנִּפְלֹת
וְגִדְדֵתִי אֶת־פְּרִצֵּיהֶן וְהִרְסֵתִיו אָקִים
וּבְנִיתִיהָ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:
יב לְמַעַן יִירָשׁוּ אֶת־שְׂאֲרֵית אֲדוֹם
וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם
נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה עָשָׂה זֹאת: {פ}
יג הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה
וְנִגַּשׁ חֹרֶשׁ בַּקָּצֵר

- 9 For look, I shall give the command
and he shall shake out the House of Israel among the nations
as a sieve is shaken out
without one grain falling on the ground.
- 10 All the sinners of my people will perish by the sword, who say,
"Disaster will never approach or overtake us."
- 11 On that day, I shall rebuild the tottering hut of David,
make good the gaps in it, restore its ruins
and rebuild it as it was in the days of old,
- 12 for them to be master of what is left of Edom
and of all the nations once called mine
– Yahweh declares, and he will perform it.
- 13 The days are coming, says Yahweh,
when the ploughman will tread on the heels of the reaper,

⁹ This prophecy possibly dates from the time of the first Israelite deportation in 734 BCE (see 2K 15:29).

¹⁰ The 2nd line here follows the LXX (*Οὐ μὴ ἐγγίσῃ σουδ' οὐ μὴ γένηται ἐφ' ἡμᾶς τὰ κακά*); the MT reads, "You will not hasten the disaster or make it affect us."

¹¹ In place of 'tottering hut', following the NJB, the NRSV has 'booth'; the word (סִכַּת) refers to a temporary shelter in disrepair and emphasizes the relatively weakened condition of the once powerful Davidic dynasty. Others have suggested that the term refers to Jerusalem, while still others argue that it should be emended to read 'Sukkoth', a garrison town in Transjordan: its reconstruction would symbolize the rebirth of the Davidic empire and its return to power.

¹² The literal translation of 'once called mine' is 'over whom my name has been pronounced', as in 2S 12:28 – evidently those nations once forming part of the Davidic Empire. The LXX (*ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς*) interprets the words in a more universal sense, hence the version quoted in Ac 15:16–17.

¹³ In the promised future, crops will be so abundant that they cannot be harvested before the next sowing season begins.

וְדָרַךְ עֲנָבִים בְּמִשְׁךְ הַזֶּרַע
 וְהָטִיפוּ הַהָרִים עֲסִים
 וְכָל־הַגְּבָעוֹת תִּתְמוּגְגָּנָה:
 יְיָ וּשְׁבֹתִי אֶת־שְׁבוֹת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל^{יד}
 וּבָנוּ עָרִים נְשֹׁמוֹת וַיֵּשְׁבוּ
 וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים וּשְׁתּוּ אֶת־יַיִנָּם
 וַעֲשׂוּ גִזְוֹת וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיָהֶם:
 טו וְנִטְעַתִּים עַל־אֲדָמָתָם
 וְלֹא יִנָּתְשׁוּ עוֹד
 מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם
 אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 {ש}

and he who treads grapes on the heels of he who sows seed,
 and the mountains will run with new wine
 and the hills flow with it.

¹⁴ I shall restore the fortunes of my people Israel;
 they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them,
 they will plant vineyards and drink their wine,
 they will lay out gardens and eat their produce.

¹⁵ Then I shall plant them in their own soil
 and they will never be uprooted again
 from the country that I have given them,
 declares Yahweh, your God.

¹⁴ An alternative reading of the first line is, “I mean to bring back those of my people Israel who have been held captive.” The phrase is a common idiom (Dt 30:3, Jr 30:3, Ho 6:11, Zp 3:20).

¹⁵ In the 3rd line, the MT has the pronoun ‘their’ in place of the article, ‘the’.