

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Amos 8:1-14

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, June 28, 2015

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 28, 2015**, is from **Amos 8:1-14**. Please Note: Some churches will only study **Amos 8:1-6, 9-10**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. A podcast for this commentary is also available at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Amos 8:1-14

(Amos 8:1) This is what the Lord GOD showed me—a basket of summer fruit.

In addition to the Holy Spirit giving Amos words to speak, God showed visions to Amos and talked to him about their meaning. Both Joseph and Daniel interpreted the dreams and visions of others with the help of God, and God helped Amos interpret the dreams or visions that God gave him. A basket of summer fruit would be the produce right before the fall season.

(Amos 8:2) 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 them by.

God began His dialogues with Amos by asking Amos a question that verified he had seen the vision correctly, and he had. Summer fruit is ripe fruit that is picked and ready to be eaten; in the basket it was ready to be served, just as justice was ready to be served by God in Israel. For many seasons, or for many years actually, God had warned the Kingdom of Israel to repent, but the nation’s leaders had refused to repent and lead the nation to repent; therefore, the time had finally come for God to punish the nation as God had threatened: God keeps all of His promises.

(Amos 8:3) The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day,” says the Lord GOD; “the

dead bodies shall be many, cast out in every place. Be silent!”

As God had said through Amos earlier, God hated their songs because their hearts were far from Him and they were often songs of praise to their idols. When God’s punishment came, their songs would turn to wailings, not just the professional wailings of paid mourners, but real wailings at the death of a multitude of people. Paid mourners would die along with their families, and the dead bodies of a multitude would be cast out of their homes and their cities. “Be silent” or do not complain, O Israel, for you deserve your just punishment.

(Amos 8:4) Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land,

God addressed the wicked directly through His prophet Amos. Once again, God gave them the reasons He would punish them. They trampled on the needy, and God would send the Assyrian army to trample on them (though Amos did not name the Assyrian army by name, God used the Assyrian army to crush the nation in 722 BC). They ruined the poor when they stole from them and enslaved them, and the Assyrians would enslave them in exile if they survived their battles with and defeat by the Assyrian army.

(Amos 8:5) saying, “When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances,

When the wicked went to worship, because their hearts were far from God so were their thoughts. They could hardly wait for worship to finish so they could get back to their evil businesses, to increasing their wicked wealth, because their hearts and thoughts were set on power and wealth, and not on God. They also spent time in worship plotting how they could lie to and cheat others. In worship, they did the opposite of love God and learn how to love others as God commanded.

(Amos 8:6) buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”

During worship, they impatiently waited to cheat others, and they often planned how to do so during their religious festivals. Perhaps they plotted with other wicked people as they ate their festal meals together. They used bribes and plotted how to buy their fellow Israelites in order to enslave them. They plotted how to steal the land when a farmer became needy. They mixed the refuse of threshing with the wheat to cheat the buyer when he came to buy good wheat by weight and measure.

(Amos 8:7) The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

The LORD had sworn by himself when He spoke to Amos, because He could swear by no one and nothing greater than himself. “The pride of Jacob” was the LORD himself. Jacob (whose name was later changed to Israel) and the Israelites as a kingdom had taken pride in the fact that God had called them to be His people and had blessed them for centuries. Because God had blessed them continually and because they had turned from God to abuse others, God would not forget their immoral and unjust deeds but would punish them.

(Amos 8:8) Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who lives in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?

God described an earthquake to Amos. The land would rise and fall and be tossed about like the water in the Nile River. There may have been more earthquakes than the one reported in Amos 1:1. Everyone would mourn when their homes and protective city walls were demolished by an earthquake, similar to the fall of Jericho when the Hebrews entered the Promised Land. Through earthquakes and other means, God would do battle with

the Assyrian army He sent to destroy Samaria and to punish the unrepentant Israelites.

(Amos 8:9) On that day, says the Lord GOD, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight.

In the Kingdom of Israel, God would bring “the day of the LORD” in 722 BC when the Assyrians looted and burned the city. The smoke and dust from their homes being burned and shattered to bits would have blotted out the sun on the day of the LORD in their time as Amos foretold. Darkness came over the whole land from noon to 3 o’clock when the religious leaders crucified Jesus (Matthew 27:45). When Jesus talked about His coming again, He said “the sun will be darkened” (Matthew 24:29).

(Amos 8:10) I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on all loins, 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.

Amos declared what God would do in the future to the Kingdom of Israel because in spite of repeated warnings the nation would not repent. Amos emphasized that mourning would spread throughout the land, and the official sign of mourning would be putting on sackcloth and the shaving of heads, which the Assyrian army may

also have done to them to humiliate the Israelites when they stole their fine clothing as booty and shaved their beards in ridicule (see 2 Samuel 10:4-5 for an example of this type of humiliation). To lose an only son is for a person or family to lose all hope for the future.

(Amos 8:11) The time is surely coming, says the Lord GOD, when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

In addition to the famine caused by war, pestilence, and drought, the Israelites would suffer a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. The political and religious leaders had silenced the true prophets of the LORD. Amaziah silenced Amos to the best of his ability (Amos 7:10-17). Therefore, the Israelites brought the famine on themselves, and as just judgment God decided He would send them no more true prophets of God. As punishment, they would hear no words of comfort from God's prophets for they had rejected them and God.

(Amos 8:12) They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.

Because they did not want to hear the words of the LORD, there would come a time when they would not be able to

find anyone to speak the words of the LORD no matter where they went. They refused to listen when God sent them prophets who called them to repent and obey the Lord; instead they persecuted the true prophets of God. In a time of punishment, they would seek words of comfort and hope from the LORD, but God had no words of hope for the unrepentant and rebellious because of their wicked hearts and thoughts.

(Amos 8:13) In that day the beautiful young women and the young men shall faint for thirst.

Many of the beautiful young people were beautiful because of the wealth acquired through wickedness, perhaps the wickedness of their parents. They had no concern, and were not trained to have a true concern, for God and His commands. Therefore, whatever their thirst, they would faint physically and spiritually on the day of the LORD.

(Amos 8:14) Those who swear by Ashimah of Samaria, and say, “As your god lives, O Dan,” and, “As the way of Beer-sheba lives”—they shall fall, and never rise again.

Many of the Israelites swore or made promises using the names of their false gods to guarantee their truthfulness and sincerity in making their promises and to seal their solemn obligations to others. They had no intention of keeping their promises, and their mute idols would neither

condemn or commend them or help them in their deceitfulness. They worshiped idols in the places their leaders had created for them, and they and their idols would fall “never to rise again.” Their idols could not save them, and God would punish them with death and exile using their enemies.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Name some of the ways God communicated with Amos and the Kingdom of Israel.
2. What kind of vision did God give Amos when He said that the end has come upon His people?
3. Why would the songs of the temple become wailings?
4. Why did many Israelites look forward to the new moon to be over?
5. What kind of famine did Amos say God would send upon Israel? Why do you think God said He would do that and how do you think would He do it?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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