

The Last Days of Israel(10 Tribes)

Review:

After Jehu executed God's wrath on Ahab and Jezebel, God promised Jehu his sons would reign in Israel until the fourth generation.

And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." 2Kings 10:30-31

Jehu reigned 28 years, but he rejected God and continued to worship in the manner of Jeroboam. None of his sons changed this course. His son Jehoahaz reigned 17 years, and after his death, his son Jehoash/Joash reigned for 16 years, they too did evil in God's sight. When Jeroboam II came upon the throne, he too rejected God to follow his namesake Jeroboam I for his entire 41 year reign. His son Zechariah only reigned for 6 months and the time of Jehu was complete.

This was the word of the Lord which He spoke to Jehu, saying, "Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." And so it was. 2 Kings 15:12

This was a combined reign of 101 years. But conditions in Israel had continued to deteriorate, and God's patience was coming to an end. During the reign of Jeroboam God sent two prophets into Israel to proclaim their doom and offer them one final opportunity to repent.

But the end was near. With the death of Jeroboam, the stability of Israel's leadership began to crumble and in a little over forty years, they would be taken into Assyria. Here are the kings and their length of their reign after the death of Jeroboam.

Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned six months. 2 Kings 15:8	<u>6month</u>
Shallum the son of Jabesh reigned a full month in Samaria. 2 Kings 15:13	<u>1month</u>
Menahem the son of Gadi reigned ten years 2 Kings 15:17	<u>10</u>
Pekah the son of Remaliah reigned twenty years. 2 Kings 15:27	<u>20</u>
Pekahiah the son of Menahem reigned two years. 2 Kings 15:23	<u>2</u>
Hoshea the son of Elah reigned nine years. 2 Kings 17:1-2	<u>9</u>
Ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria carried Israel away to Assyria, 2 Kings 17:5	<u>41 years</u>

While the five kings in the dynasty of Jehu lasted over a hundred years, in quick succession the final five kings only reigned 41 and then Israel was no more.

God Sent the Prophets

God had been sending prophets to His people since the day they came out of Egypt. In several places in the prophets He revealed that though He had done all that He could to warn them of their danger, they never listened.

Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. Jer. 7:25-27

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. 2 The more (the prophets) called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Hos 11:1-2

Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. 11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not even thus, O you children of Israel? say the Lord. 12 But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not. Amos 2:10-12

A New Method: Literary Prophets

At this point in the history of Israel, God moved to a new method of using the prophets. Not only

did they preach and teach them, but they also wrote books that would then become a permanent record of their efforts. These could be read long after they were gone in hopes that others seeing how things came out exactly as they had prophesied would be influenced to repent.

And the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; 23 until Jehovah removed Israel out of his sight, as he spake by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. 2Kings 17:22-23

With the exception of a few, most of the prophets gave a record of who they preached for and the kings who reigned while they did their work. This is how we date them, and how we can compare the events recorded in the Kings and Chronicles with the events recorded in their books.

The Genealogy of Jesus, given in Matthew, gives us the list of kings that will help us as we go through the literary prophets to place the time of their work.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. 7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. 8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. 9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. 11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. Mt 1:6-11

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah

When we compare this genealogy with the opening words of Amos Hosea, Isaiah and Micah we see exactly where they fit. By looking at the kings they worked under we can see the chronology in which they worked.

*The words of **Amos**, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of **Uzziah** king of Judah, and in the days of **Jeroboam the son of Joash**, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. Amos 1:1*

*The word of the Lord that came to **Hosea** the son of Beeri, in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, and in the days of **Jeroboam the son of Joash**, king of Israel. Hos 1:1*

*The vision of **Isaiah** the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning **Judah and Jerusalem** in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah. Isa 1:1*

*The word of the Lord that came to **Micah** of Moresheth in the days of **Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning **Samaria and Jerusalem**. Mic 1:1*

When we look at the lives of these kings in 2Kings and 2 Chronicles, we learn the length of their reign and their relationship with God. Remember that the prophets who prophesied under the reign of a good king would be well received, but persecuted during the reign of an evil king.

Uzziah(Amaziah)	(reigned 52 years; did what was right)	Amos	Hosea	Isaiah
Jotham	(reigned 16 years; did what was right)	Hosea	Isaiah	Micah
Ahaz	(reigned 16 years; did what was evil).	Hosea	Isaiah	Micah
Hezekiah	(reigned 29 years; did what was right)	Hosea	Isaiah	Micah

Amos made it clear that his book focused on what “*he saw **concerning Israel.***” Hosea on the other hand only says “*the word of the Lord came,*” but he mentions Israel many times so his primary work appears to be with the ten tribes. Micah says “*he saw **concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.***” While Isaiah “*he saw **concerning Judah and Jerusalem.***”

Since they worked while Jeroboam and Uzziah were reigning and it was in the “**twenty-seventh** year of Jeroboam, that Azariah(Uzziah) became king(2Kings 15:1-2), we know that Amos and Hosea both began their work in the final years of Jeroboam. It was therefore about 50 years before the end that God sent them to offer one last chance.

Amos

God had Amos begin his book with words of judgement and condemnation for all the nations that Israel had dealings. He begins with those nations that Israel would feel some relief that they were

to be punished, then he moved to Judah and finally to Israel.

The expression for three, yea for four expresses that their iniquity was now complete and God was just to punish them for such sins. This is what God told both Abraham and Israel.

But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Gen. 15:16

5 Not for your righteousness, or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that he may establish the word which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Duet. 9:3-6

27 (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); 28 that the land vomit not you out also, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. Lev. 18:2

Amos begins with the fearful roar of God. Later in the book he repeats this fearful warning.

And he said: "The Lord roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers." Amos 1:2

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? 4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing? ... 8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy? Amos 3:3-4, 8

Thus says the Lord

For three transgressions of Damascus ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:3</u>
For three transgressions of Gaza ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:6</u>
For three transgressions of Tyre ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:9</u>
For three transgressions of Edom ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:11</u>
For three transgressions of Ammon ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:13</u>
For three transgressions of Moab ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>2:1</u>
For three transgressions of Judah ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>2:3</u>
For three transgressions of Israel ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>2:6</u>

Each of these nations will be punished by Assyria.

Damascus: threshed Gilead with implements of iron.

Gaza: took captive the whole captivity

Tyre: delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,

Edom pursued his brother with the sword, cast off all pity; anger tore perpetually, kept his wrath forever.

Ammon: ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory.

Moab: burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

Judah: have despised the law of the Lord, And have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed.

Israel: (1) sell the righteous for silver (2) the poor for a pair of sandals (3) pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor (4) pervert the way of the humble (5) man and his father go in to the same girl (6) defile My holy name (7) lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge (8) drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god

God then reminds Israel (and all in Judah who later read this book) about their history. He had destroyed the Amorite when they took the land of Canaan after He had brought them out of Egypt. He had led them in the wilderness for forty years.

"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was as strong as the oaks; Yet I destroyed his fruit above And his roots beneath. 10 Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you forty years through the wilderness, To

possess the land of the Amorite. Amos 2:9-10

God Sent Nazirites and Prophets

He also reminded them of His efforts to avoid this fate. He had sent both Nazirite and Prophet.

I raised up some of your sons as prophets, And some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?" Says the Lord. Amos 2:11

Although we have met many prophets, beginning with Moses and continuing through the times of Israel and Judah, this is the second time in the Scriptures that God has mentioned the Nazirite. Samson is specifically mentioned as a Nazirite, and he was very much aware of the importance of keeping that vow.

For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Judg 13:5

that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." Judg 16:17

A Nazirite was an individual who took a vow of separation. We generally link it to the prohibitions of cutting hair, drinking or eating anything from the vine, and no contact with a dead body. Yet God here gives them a much higher position. The true meaning of the Nazirite was a separation to Jehovah(LORD).

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman **consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord,** 4 **All the days of his separation** he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. 5 '**All the days of the vow of his separation** no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which **he separated himself to the Lord,** he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6 **All the days that he separates himself to the Lord** he shall not go near a dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because **his separation to God is on his head.** 8 **All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the Lord.** Num 6:1-7*

Clearly the vow of the Nazirite was a complete separation and consecration to the Lord. While those days are in effect, he is "holy to the LORD." It is clear from this passage that while these people were separated to the LORD, God was using them to bring His people to repentance.

Two of the most noteworthy men who were separated and consecrated to God were Samuel and John the Baptist. Yet a careful reading doesn't make this conclusive.

*And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will **give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life,** and there shall **no razor come upon his head.** 1 Sam 1:11*

*For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and **shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.** He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. Lk. 1:15-16*

While God had called His people through Nazirites and prophets. The response of Israel was despicable. They tempted or forced the Nazirites to break their vow and commanded the prophets not to prophesy and reveal God's will to them.

*'But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, And commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!'
Amos 2:12*

Warning Proverbs From the Prophets

God gave Israel some proverbs to consider in hopes it will strike fear in their hearts. He begins with a basic statement of fact that God and Israel could not walk together because Israel will not agree with God about the direction they should go. Then God speaks of a roaring lion, a bird trapped in

a snare, and the trumpet blown in the city.

*Can **two walk together**, unless they are agreed? 4 **Will a lion roar in the forest**, when he has no prey? **Will a young lion cry** out of his den, if he has caught nothing? 5 **Will a bird fall into a snare** on the earth, where there is no trap for it? **Will a snare spring up** from the earth, if it has **caught nothing** at all? 6 **If a trumpet is blown in a city**, will not the people be afraid? If there is **calamity in a city**, will not the Lord have done it? Amos 3:3-6*

All of this God has done through his prophets. Yet Israel has not feared nor changed directions. The Lion is now roaring just as God revealed it to the prophets, but they are commanding them not to prophecy.

*Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. 8 **A lion has roared!** Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy? Amos 3:7-8*

God then described the punishment they would receive after the lion has roared. First, there will be very little left of them after the lion has finished. just two legs or even just a piece of an ear.

*Thus says the Lord: "**As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion Two legs {(OR)} a piece of an ear, So shall the children of Israel be taken out Who dwell in Samaria** — Amos 3:12*

Strong Words

I often wonder how the prophets eyes must have widened with some dismay as such words come from their mouths. We learned from Jonah that sometimes even with inspiration, the prophet doesn't want to proclaim the inspired message the Holy Spirit gave them. What must Amos have felt as he prepared to deliver these words? After describing the prosperity of those in Israel. He begins with sarcasm and quickly moves into some of the strongest and plainest words in the prophets.

I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; The houses of ivory shall perish, And the great houses shall have an end," Says the Lord. Amos 3:15

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, "Bring, let us drink!" 2 The Lord God has sworn by His holiness: "Behold, the days shall come upon you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with fishhooks. Amos 4:1-2

With this idiom, the Holy Spirit through Amos rebuked the selfish women whose demands kept their husbands involved in wickedness and covetousness. The "winter" and "summer houses," the "houses of ivory" and "great houses" were not enough. Day by day they heard the demands of their wives for more.

A cow of Bashan is a "well fed, fat cow."

The cows of Bashan are well-fed, fat cows, ... as Bashan had fat pastures, and for that reason the tribes that were richest in flocks and herds had asked for it as their inheritance (Num 32). (Keil and Delitzsch OT Commentary)

Amos concluded with the powerful condemnation and punishment, which the Lord has sworn by His holiness to accomplish. Both the women and their children will have fishhooks embedded into their bodies and they will be drug away into Assyrian captivity.

Sarcasm

Amos is then given words of sarcasm from God. An exhortation to continue in the sins they had practiced since the says of Jeroboam.

"Come to Bethel and transgress, At Gilgal multiply transgression; Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days. 5 Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, Proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; For this you love, You children of Israel!" Says the Lord God. Amos 4:4-5

Bethel is the very city where Jeroboam set up one of his calves. Gilgal is not mentioned in the kings, but Hosea also mentioned it.

"Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Let not Judah offend. Do not come up to Gilgal, Nor go up to Beth Aven, Nor swear an oath, saying, 'As the Lord lives' — Hos 4:15

"All their wickedness is in Gilgal, For there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more. All their princes are rebellious. Hos 9:12

God details how meticulous they were in their idolatrous sacrifices. Sacrificing every morning and tithing every three days. Yet mingling their sacrifice with leaven which was unlawful. But these were the things that pleased them.

Prepare to Meet Your God

God now outlines how He had responded to their “*adulterous idolatry.*” He explains in detail some of the things He did to bring about their repentance. The list seems to increase in intensity until it ends with their final destruction.

Famine and Drought — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

A lack of food (cleanness of teeth) had been sent from God. He had taken away their blessings and they felt their want, but did not repent and return. He sent drought at the worst times to certain cities, and gave rain to others, but they did not repent and return.

6 "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. 7 "I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered. 8 So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. Amos 4:6-8

Pests — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

The crops escaped drought had been blasted with small (bacteria) and large (locusts) pests. They thought they would get a harvest, but in the end there was nothing.

9 "I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord.

Plague and War — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

God “*sent,*” for this was not by chance. The thing God had promised would not happen if they feared Him had happened. There were terrible plagues and war that cost them their sons.

"I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, Along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. Amos 4:9-10

*If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, **I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians.** For I am the Lord who heals you. Ex 15:26*

*If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59 then **the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues** — great and prolonged plagues — **and serious and prolonged sicknesses.** 60 Moreover **He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt,** of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61 Also **every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you** until you are destroyed. Deut 28:58-61*

God has the power and will to do things like this to bring about the repentance of His people. These are small problems if they lead to repentance compared to complete destruction that will come without it.

Complete but limited Destruction — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

Some cities either by earthquake or some other “*natural*” disaster were completely destroyed with no one left alive.

"I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. Amos 4:11

Prepare to Meet your God O Israel!

There was nothing left for God to do. He had done everything He could to avert this end. He had sent prophets and Nazirites whom they had ignored and sought to ruin. He had sent every type of "natural" disaster, but they too had failed. So, since they had rejected every appeal to repent and return to God, the greatest of all catastrophes would occur. A foreign army would overrun the land and kill, rape, pillage and destroy at will.

12 "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" 13 For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth — The Lord God of hosts is His name. Amos 4:12-13

More Proverbs of the Coming judgment

Some were seeking the day of the Lord to come. Perhaps in sarcasm they sought to see it come since Amos and Hosea were both speaking of it. But God warns them, when it comes it will be darkness. He used three cascading proverbs to describe it. A man escapes a lion and meets a bear. Or he flees the lion and escapes into the house only to be met by a serpent who bites him.

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light. 19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him! 20 Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it? Amos 5:18-20

God expressed His true Feelings toward their False Worship

God expresses not just distaste but actual hatred for their false worship. They were offering feast days and sacred assemblies, but only those in accord with Jeroboam's sin. What God really wanted was justice and righteousness toward Him and toward one another. Such justice would force them to worship and honor Him according to the Law.

"I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. 22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. 23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. 24 But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.

Their False Worship had Plagued them since Sinai

God takes them all the way back to their wandering in the wilderness to charge them with this unfaithfulness. We can pinpoint it even to the time Moses was on the Mount getting the Law and they were building the golden calf. Even before they even entered the promised land, they had been worshipping idols.

"Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? 26 You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves. 27 Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus, " Says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. Amos 5:25-27

Some of this started with Rachael who stole her father Laban's gods and then continued while they sojourned in Egypt. God reveals some terrible things about this early time in the history of Israel.

Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers. 5 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, 'I am the Lord your God.' 6 On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands. 7 Then I said to them, 'Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.' 8 But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They

did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' 9 But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they were, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. 10 "Therefore I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11 And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them.' 12 Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. 13 Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them'; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. 14 But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 15 So I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands, 16 because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. 17 Nevertheless My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness. 18 "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19 I am the Lord your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20 hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.' 21 "Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them'; but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness. 22 Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 23 Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, 24 because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols. 25 "Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live; 26 and I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire, that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the Lord." Ezek 20:4-26

This is what Joshua had charged them with.

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh 24:14-15

They had been in contact with this idolatry all the way back to their fathers beyond the river(Laban, etc.). They had also been infected with the gods of Canaan and Egypt. How far back Joshua noticed these things is unknown, but it was obvious to him after some time in the promised land.

Stephen quoted this passage when he was preaching to the Jews just prior to his death. He begins with Moses and then stated clearly that these wouldn't obey Moses, because they had already turned their hearts back to Egypt. The Holy Spirit specifically used the calf as the proof that they had already deserted God and gone back to Egypt. When God witnessed this, He gave them up. This didn't happen then because the Moses intercession and Joshua's leadership. But as Joshua's generation passed from the earth, God began the process of giving them up, which culminated here at the time of the preaching of Amos and Hosea.

"This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, 39 whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 41 And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 43 You also took up the tabernacle

of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.' Acts 7:38-43

Three Visions

From the context of the passage, this sermon was preached to the people and after hearing it the priest in Bethel responds.

I The Vision of Locusts

Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings. 2 And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: "O Lord God, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!" 3 So the Lord relented concerning this. "It shall not be, " said the Lord. Amos 7:1-3

As we read these words, we can only get a glimpse of what Amos actually saw. If what we read here doesn't sound bad enough for him to respond like this, we only have to remember that terrible things can be revealed in visions. Yet this must be different from what God revealed earlier in the book (Amos 4:9). This was so terrifying that Amos pleaded with God for he could see that if this were to happen Jacob would not longer stand. At his pleading, God relented.

II The Vision of Fire

Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, the Lord God called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. 5 Then I said: "O Lord God, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!" 6 So the Lord relented concerning this. "This also shall not be, " said the Lord God. Amos 7:4-5

This vision comes with a much clearer terror. This time there is a fire which has already devoured the ocean and the land where Jacob lived, so Amos again pleads with God to relent of this terrible judgment as well.

III The Vision of the Plumb Line

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line. " Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. 9 The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam. " Amos 7:7-9

Although this vision is much tamer and Amos doesn't plead with God, the results will be the same. God is standing on a wall that was made by a plumb line and is thus a perfect wall. There is no way to identify this wall as God gives no clue. Later when speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the remainder of Judah, God again used this term, but again without any way to identify it.

And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, 15 because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day." 2 Kings 21:13-15

Although we may not be able to identify the wall or the plumb line, whatever it was God intended to do with them, once it had been accomplished, "I will not pass by them anymore." The reason God will have no reason to pass again is that "high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste." When this vision has been accomplished Israel will be no more. Since Amos trusts God and God hasn't told him, Amos holds his peace.

The final point of the vision is what leads to the next section. "I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam" is also the completion of the words God had given to Jehu when he said that his children would reign on the throne to the fourth generation was then completed. Six months after the death of Jeroboam, the sword did remove the house of Jeroboam through Jehu.

Amos is Rebuked

Amaziah, the priest of Bethel has no tie to Aaron as he is part of those whom Jeroboam had chosen from all the people who wanted to be priests. Amaziah generalizes false charges against Amos. There is no conspiracy, Amos is only preaching the truth, but this is how truth is twisted to create persecution.

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos has said: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive From their own land.' " 12 Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy. 13 But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence." Amos 7:10-13

Amos response is all we know about him. He was a common man breeding sheep and caring for sycamore fruit. This tree is not grown in America. It is a large tree that produces small clusters of fruit that taste like figs. The wood was used for utensils and also for the mummy coffins used in Egypt. The tree remains green all year long and often has fruit throughout the year. The book began with "The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa." (Amos 1:1). Tekoa was located about six miles south of Bethlehem and about 12 miles south of Jerusalem.

Amos was not seeking this office. God had assessed his heart and knew he was prepared and spiritual minded enough to do it. God himself responds to Amaziah. Because he has not listened and taken warning, telling the people to repent, the terrible consequences that will come when Assyria arrives will hit hard on the family of Amaziah.

Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit. 15 Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.' 16 Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac.' 17 "Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by survey line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.' " Amos 7:14-17

The Coming Famine

Another terrible consequence of this judgment will be the loss of contact with God and His word. When they are taken into another land, God warns that there will not be the opportunities to hear His word spoken. They had rejected it when it was readily available and when they were ready to hear it, there would be a famine. now

"Behold, the days are coming, " says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord. 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 shall not find it. Amos 8:11-12

A Messianic Prophecy

He begins with the promise that David's tabernacle will be rebuilt. James quotes this verse nearly verbatim in Acts 15 to prove the Gentiles were to be allowed into the kingdom. This tabernacle is not his palace or God's dwelling place, but his own house. Though God had promised a son to sit on his throne forever, at the time of Jesus that prophecy seemed hopelessly unfulfilled. But Amos is clear, yes it will have fallen down and need repairs, but God' had promised it will happen.

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name, " Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:11-12