

# Amos

Chapter 7:1-9 & 8:1 – 9:15

## Introduction

I like simple illustrations of spiritual truth. In the last three chapters of Amos, the Jews of the Northern kingdom of Israel are compared to workers on a wall and farmers in a field whose work was being *reviewed* so that God could *reward* their **faithfulness** and their **fruitfulness**:

1. In chapter seven the Jews are portrayed as workers on a wall upon God's foundation. God reviewed their work by applying a plumb-line to the wall. It was out of plumb so, instead of a reward for faithfulness, they would suffer loss.
2. In chapter eight the Jews are portrayed as farmers in God's field. They produced a basket of summer fruit. God reviewed their work by testing the fruit. It was over-ripe and rotten so, instead of a reward for fruitfulness, they would suffer loss.

It sounds bleak and, for the Jews of the Northern kingdom of Israel, it was bleak. The "loss" they would suffer was the destruction of their nation at the hands of the Assyrian Empire.

But all was not lost. As Amos closed his book he spoke of a future hope for the Jews when God would establish them on the earth in their land. In the next to the last verse of the book, God said,

Amos 9:14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall **build** the waste cities and inhabit *them*; they shall **plant** vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

Though they had failed as workers on God's foundation and as farmers in God's field, He would restore them. In the future they would build and plant with success and enjoy God's promised reward.

Let's apply these principles to ourselves as believers. Jesus told the Church, "... behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12).

Jesus is coming quickly. The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the rapture of the Church from earth to heaven, and it could occur at any moment.

After the rapture you will be *rewarded* following a *review* of your life and its **works**. The apostle Paul describes that review of your works in the third chapter of First Corinthians. He compares **you** to a farmer working in a field, and to a builder working on a foundation. Then he says,

1 Corinthians 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

1 Corinthians 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.

1 Corinthians 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

I don't know about you, but I'd rather receive the Lord's reward than suffer loss!

As we close-out Amos, we'll organize our thoughts around two points:  
#1 God Reviews Your Works For Faithfulness And Fruitfulness, and  
#2 God Rewards Your Works With Faithfulness And Fruitfulness.

## #1 God Reviews Your Works For Faithfulness & Fruitfulness (7:1- 9:7)

The faithfulness of the worker on the wall is the subject of chapter seven. Amos becomes an example for you. He was faithful while others were unfaithful. You see this first in two visions God gave Amos, and in Amos' response to God's visions.

Amos 7:1 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.

Amos 7:2 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!"

Amos 7:3 So the LORD relented concerning this. "It shall not be," said the LORD.

Amos 7:4 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.

Amos 7:5 Then I said: "O Lord GOD, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he *is* small!"

Amos 7:6 So the LORD relented concerning this. "This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.

The Lord showed Amos two visions of destruction He intended to bring upon the Northern kingdom. He was preparing a plague of

locusts who would destroy the second harvest, after the people gave the firstfruits as taxes to their king. Thus they would starve. He was also preparing a “conflict by fire.” We don’t know exactly what this means... *And I’m sure the Jews didn’t want to know!*

In each case, Amos proved faithful by interceding for God’s sinning people. God “relented” at the request of His faithful servant. In heaven I think you will be amazed at how much sin you and I held back through our presence on earth and our prayers.

God gave the Jews space to repent, but they did not.

Amos 7:7 Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall *made* with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand.

Amos 7:8 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.

Amos 7:9 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.”

The Jews are depicted as workers building a wall upon a firm foundation that God had established. Their wall was out of plumb; it was crooked. The foundation God had established was the Law He had graciously given them. By disobeying God’s Law they were out of plumb and crooked. They had literally built “high places” and “sanctuaries” of pagan, idolatrous worship. These were symbols of the out of plumb spiritual wall they built.

Was it asking too much for them to be faithful? No, it wasn’t; faithfulness was possible by God’s strength and help. Amos was faithful. You see his faithfulness as he was challenged by Amaziah the priest.

Amos 7:10 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.

Amos 7:11 For thus Amos has said: ‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land.’”

Amos 7:12 Then Amaziah said to Amos: “Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy.

Amos 7:13 But never again prophesy at Bethel, for it *is* the king’s sanctuary, and it *is* the royal residence.”

Amos 7:14 Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: “I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a shepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.

Amos 7:15 Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’

Amos 7:16 Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not spout against the house of Isaac.'

Amos 7:17 "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.'"

We looked at this confrontation in some detail in our very first study in Amos. Today I only want to point out that they compare and contrast Amos in his faithfulness and Amaziah in his unfaithfulness. Amos represents all that God intended for His people; Amaziah represents all that the people had become.

In chapter eight the illustration switches from workers on the wall to farmers in the field.

Amos 8:1 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, a basket of summer fruit.

Amos 8:2 And He said, "Amos, what do you see?" So I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me: "The end has come upon My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore.

Amos 8:3 And the songs of the temple shall be wailing in that day," says the Lord GOD - "Many dead bodies everywhere, they shall be thrown out in silence."

There is a play on the Hebrew words for "fruit" and "end" which indicate that this is a basket of fruit that has gotten over-ripe and is now rotten. Instead of being fruitful, the Jews were spiritually rotten. After the Assyrians were through with them, their rotting, decaying corpses would be an illustration of their true spiritual condition.

They appeared fruitful, but you see what was inside them in verses five and six.

Amos 8:5 Saying: "When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scales by deceit,

Amos 8:6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals - even sell the bad wheat?"

The businessmen among them were singled out. They observed the feasts and Sabbaths, but despised them because they could not transact business. Instead of thinking upon God and His holiness they were thinking about their own worldly gain. Furthermore, they were plotting how to cheat their customers – especially the poor.

God desired to reward them, but instead they would suffer great loss:

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

Amos 8:8 Shall the land not tremble for this, and everyone mourn who dwells in it? All of it shall swell like the River, heave and subside like the River of Egypt.

Amos 8:9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight;

Amos 8:10 I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, and baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, and its end like a bitter day.

This is bad! God wasn't talking about the future Day of the Lord. This was the imminent judgment of His sinning people at the hands of the invading Assyrians.

Things would go from bad to worse:

Amos 8:11 "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.

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 shall not find it.

Amos 8:13 "In that day the fair virgins and strong young men shall faint from thirst.

Amos 8:14 Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, who say, 'As your god lives, O Dan!' And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives!' They shall fall and never rise again."

There would be a "famine... of hearing the words of the Lord." Between Malachi and the coming of John the Baptist there was a four hundred year period during which God sent no prophets to His people. It was a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

When God spoke of "fair virgins and strong young men [fainting] from thirst," it is a reminder that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. They had preferred to "words" of idols in the temples and sanctuaries they had built at Dan and Beersheba. The "words" of dumb idols were simply the words of dumber men!

God had established a foundation and given the Jews an opportunity to build upon it. He had given them a field – the world and the nations of the world – in which to sow His word. They proved *unfaithful* and *unfruitful*. After much longsuffering, instead of reward they must suffer loss.

Amos 9:1 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, and break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, and he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.

Amos 9:2 "Though they dig into hell, from there My hand shall take them; though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down;

Amos 9:3 And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, from there I will search and take them; though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, from there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;

Amos 9:4 Though they go into captivity before their enemies, from there I will command the sword, and it shall slay them. I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."

Amos 9:5 The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell there mourn; all of it shall swell like the River, and subside like the River of Egypt.

Amos 9:6 He who builds His layers in the sky, and has founded His strata in the earth; Who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth - The LORD *is* His name.

Amos 9:7 "Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me, O children of Israel?" says the LORD. "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"

They could not stand up under God's review and they would not withstand God's wrath.

Here is what I glean from this:

1. God has given you a foundation to build upon. It is Jesus Christ, as He is revealed to you in the Bible. You can be faithful, and "build" your life by relying upon God's Word. Or you can be unfaithful and try to build by relying upon the wisdom of this world. If you choose the Word, God will reward you both now and in the future. If you choose the wisdom of the world, well, you're in for trouble in this life and you will suffer loss at the reward seat of Jesus Christ.
2. God has given you a field to sow into. The field is that part of the world you find yourself in right now – those places God has called you to work in. Your home... your church... your school... your job... You sow into those fields by applying the God's Word. Or you can apply the wisdom of the world. If you choose the Word, God will reward you both now and in the future. If you choose the wisdom of the world, well, you're in for trouble in this life and you will suffer loss at the reward seat of Jesus Christ.

**Rely and apply!** Can it really be that simple? It is – except that our sin nature, our flesh, wars against the Spirit within us.

Let me say one more thing about fruitfulness. You are only responsible for bringing forth fruit in your own life; you cannot bear fruit for others. You are called upon to sow into the lives of others

and then it is up to God to bring forth fruit depending upon the soil they present Him with.

## #2 God Rewards Your Works With Faithfulness & Fruitfulness (9:8-15)

God is not through with Israel:

Amos 9:8 "Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD *are* on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," says the LORD.

Amos 9:9 "For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as *grain* is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.

Amos 9:10 All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.'

The Lord would scatter the Jews, and visit them with calamities, as the corn is shaken in a sieve; but he would save some from among them. The astonishing preservation of the Jews as a distinct people is here foretold.

Amos looked even further into the future of Israel, beyond our own day, to the glorious kingdom age, the Millennium:

Amos 9:11 "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;

Amos 9:12 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.

The phrase "in that day" refers to the last days of Israel. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." Listen to James in Acts 15 where he quotes this prophecy of Amos:

Acts 15:13–18 "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Today God is calling out a people for His name among the Gentiles. After this He will raise up the tabernacle of David. In other words, he is speaking of the kingdom age, the Millennium, the greatest day which is yet in the future.

Amos returns to the illustrations which began this section – the farmer and the builder:

Amos 9:13 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow *with it*.”

Amos 9:14 “I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them*; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.”

They will plant and build and prosper in all that they do. They will be fruitful in the field and faithful building on the foundation that the Lord will establish.

Amos 9:15 I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God.

God’s promises to the nation of Israel, to the physical descendants of Abraham, are unconditional and must come to pass.

We saw that God reviews your life for faithfulness and fruitfulness. Now we see that He rewards you **with** faithfulness and fruitfulness! In other words, if He sees you are faithful, He rewards you with more building projects; and, if He sees you are fruitful in your sowing, He rewards you with more fields to sow into.

The Millennial kingdom on earth is described as full of spiritual activity in serving the Lord. So is eternity after the creation of the new heaven and the new earth. Your faithfulness and fruitfulness here on earth set the stage for your future and eternal service unto your Lord.

Even now you are rewarded *with* faithfulness and fruitfulness *for* faithfulness and fruitfulness! In the Parable of the Talents the Lord rewards His servants who were faithful over a few things with more things to be faithful over.

Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said,

John 15:2 “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

You are rewarded for fruitfulness with more fruit!

Conclusion

The Lord will review your life and reward you according to your works. You can review your own life and be rewarded now with more faithfulness and more fruitfulness.

Build upon the Lord's foundation by relying on His Word. Apply His Word in the fields you sow into and you will bear much fruit.