

The Minor Prophets

AMOS

- I. Central Message: Impending Divine punishment for Israel's sins.
- II. Introduction
 - A. About Amos
 1. name means "Burden Bearer"
 2. a farmer prior to becoming a prophet (7:14,15)
 3. prophesied in the kingdom of Israel, primarily in the capital city of Bethel during the reign of Jereboam II
 4. lived in Tekoa, a village about six miles south of Bethlehem (12 miles south of Jerusalem) in the kingdom of Judah
 5. not mentioned by name anywhere else in the Bible
 6. contemporary of Hosea (and also Isaiah and Micah in the southern kingdom)
 - B. Date of writing
 1. mid 8th century BC
 2. Israel was in a very prosperous era but there were many abuses in the government and the poor were being mistreated
 3. within 40 to 60 years, Israel was taken captive and carried away by Shalmanezar, king of Assyria and his troops
 - C. About the book
 1. 5:25-27 referred to in Acts 7:42,43 and 9:11 referred to in Acts 15:15,16
 2. three sections
 - a. chapters 1-2
 - b. chapters 3-6
 - c. chapters 7-9
- III. First Section (Amos 1-2)
 - A. 1:1
 1. Amos was a herdsman
 - a. being this, he was among one of the lower classes of people
 - b. yet God used him to proclaim His message
 - c. if man had chosen the messengers, he likely would have picked the best educated, best known and perhaps the wealthiest of men
 - d. but God looks not on the outward appearance (I Samuel 16:7)
 - e. in using Amos, God demonstrates to the people that it is HIS message, not man's message, that is being delivered
 2. the earthquake
 - a. earthquakes had certainly taken place before, but that one is singled out as THE earthquake and that Amos uses this to date his book indicates that this earthquake must have been a most serious one
 - b. this earthquake again referred to in Zechariah 14:5 (written 400 years later)
 - c. Josephus ("Antiquities," Book 9, Chapter 10, Paragraph 4) said that this earthquake came when Uzziah, king of Judah, was lifted up with pride and entered temple unlawfully (II Chronicles 26:16-21)

- B. 1:2-2:5 - God's punishment against the kingdoms surrounding Israel
1. vs. 2 - "the Lord will roar from Zion"
 - a. Amos, being a keeper of sheep, would understand the fierceness of a lion's roar and the destruction that the lion could do to his flock
 - b. this represents the terror of God's judgment against these nations
 2. the phrase, "for three transgressions and for four" which precedes the announcement of the punishments of each nation signifies repetition, abundance, excess; hence, a multitude of sins
 3. the judgment against Damascus (1:3-5)
 - a. Damascus was the capital of Syria
 - b. Gilead was an Israelite territory east of the Jordan river (home of Elijah - I Kings 17:1)
 - c. Syria's sin was that they had "threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron"
 - i. these instruments were carved slabs of wood, studded with iron teeth and drawn by horses or mules over heaped corn to chop up the straw and separate the grain
 - ii. some suggest that the Syrians had literally run over some of the inhabitants of Gilead with these tools
 - iii. others say that it is figurative, representing the horrible manner in which Syria treated Gilead
 - iv. in either case, we see here the serious crime of cruelty against man, a sin for which God will not stand
 - v. see II Kings 8:12;13:7
 - d. their punishment
 - i. "fire" seems to represent war
 - ii. II Kings 14:28 - Jereboam II recovered Damascus in battle
 4. the judgment against Gaza (1:6-8)
 - a. Gaza was an important city of the Philistines
 - b. the Philistines' sin was that they had mercilessly captured and carried away a nation of people
 - c. their punishment was to suffer the fires of war
 5. the judgment against Tyrus (1:9-10)
 - a. Tyrus (Tyre) was a city of Phoenicia
 - b. the Phoenicians' sin was the same as that of the Philistines
 - c. it is added that they "remembered not the brotherly covenant," perhaps referring to the peaceful relationship once had between Tyre during Hiram's reign and Israel during Solomon's reign (I Kings 5)
 - d. their punishment also was the fires of war
 - i. see Ezekiel 26
 - ii. Tyre was destroyed by the Assyrians, later by Nebuchadnezzar in a siege which lasted thirteen years and finally by Alexander the Great who captured and sold 30,000 of its inhabitants into slavery
 6. the judgment against Edom (1:11-12)
 - a. Edom was constantly at odds with Israel (see Obadiah)
 - b. their sin was that they had forgotten pity, were grudge holders and did all they could to hurt Israel
 - c. again, the agony of war was their punishment

7. the judgment against the Ammonites (1:13-15)
 - a. Ammon bordered Gilead on the east
 - b. their sin was that they had slaughtered the unborn
 - i. sound familiar?
 - ii. notice that the Holy Spirit, who inspired the words of Amos, called the unborn a child, recognizing that the unborn are humans and not just masses of tissue)
 - c. their punishment was to be that they would be taken into exile (done by Nebuchadnezzar)
 8. the judgment against Moab (2:1-3)
 - a. the Moabites were descendants of Lot and lived southeast of the Dead Sea
 - b. their sin was apparently digging up the bones of a dead man, the king of Edom, and burning them (a serious crime against humanity, a desecration in the eyes of the Eastern world then and many more today)
 - c. their punishment
 - i. the fire of war
 - ii. Kerioth, chief city of Moab, would be destroyed completely
 - iii. the government shall be wiped out
 9. the judgment against Judah (2:4-5)
 - a. their sin is self-explanatory: they hated God's law, did not obey Him and followed false teachers
 - b. their punishment would be the fire of war (which they suffered at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar - II Chronicles 36)
- C. 2:6-16 - the address to the Israelites
1. the sins of Israel
 - a. "sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes"
 - i. they abused the poor
 - ii. perhaps took those who owed them money and sold them to anyone who would give them just any little thing, just so they would get something out of the poor debtor
 - iii. they were forbidden to sell a brother under these conditions (Nehemiah 5:8,9)
 - iv. notice Deuteronomy 15:11 for instructions on how to treat the poor
 - b. "that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor"
 - i. shows the greediness of the Israelites
 - ii. they were so greedy for land possessions that they even wanted the dust that settled on the head of the poor
 - c. "turn aside the way of the meek"
 - i. the meek were those who were following God faithfully (Matthew 5:5)
 - ii. they tried to misguide the faithful
 - d. "a man and his father will go in unto the same maid" (immorality)
 - e. "they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar"
 - i. a poor man might pledge his garment to the one he owes as a token of his will to repay
 - ii. Exodus 22:26,27 - the one to whom the money was owed was to return the garment before sunset "For that is his

- covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?"
- iii. but these in Amos' day were keeping the clothes
 - iv. again, an indication of their materialism and abuse of the poor
- f. "they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god"
- i. they were drunkards
 - ii. they were idolaters
2. in short, the Israelites at this time were extremely materialistic and godless
- a. they wanted all they could get for themselves, even if it meant robbing from those already poor
 - b. other evidence of their sins
 - i. Amos 2:12 - they stopped the mouths of those who spoke against them
 - ii. Amos 3:15 - they built themselves lavish houses
 - iii. Amos 5:11 - while the poor suffered, these built houses and planted vineyards
 - iv. Amos 5:12 - they took bribes in order to pervert justice
 - v. Amos 6:1-6 - they relaxed themselves, seeking pleasure and caring nothing about the needs of others
 - vi. Amos 8:5,6 - they cheated in business deals
 - vii. they went through the act of worshipping God but their hearts were far from them
3. 2:9-11 - a reminder of God's goodness to Israel
- a. He had given them victories over their enemies
 - b. He had delivered them from Egyptian captivity
 - c. He had taken good care of them in the wilderness during their forty year period of wandering (see Deuteronomy 8:4)
 - d. He had given them the prophets and the Nazarites as holy men to influence and direct them
4. 2:12 - but now they had forgotten God's goodness, were trying to get the Nazarites to break their vows and to tell the prophets to keep quiet
5. 2:13-16 - God's judgment
- a. vs. 13 marginal reading - "I will press your place, as a cart full of sheaves presseth"
 - i. a loaded cart would press down the ground underneath it, crushing stones and making a definite impression
 - ii. God would crush Israel for their disobedience even as a loaded cart presses down the ground
 - b. vss. 14-15 - the destruction shall be so widespread that no one shall escape
 - i. the fast runners shall not be able to get away
 - ii. the strong men shall not be able to defend themselves
 - iii. the archer shall have no desire
 - iv. the horseman shall not escape on his horse
 - v. in short, there is no sense trying to escape the judgment of God
 - c. vs. 16 - the strongest among them shall be as a coward in that day

- IV. Second Section (Amos 3-6)
 - A. God's judgments announced in greater detail; three different discourses by Amos, each beginning with, "Hear this word"
 - B. First discourse (chapter 3)
 - 1. vs. 1
 - a. the LORD has spoken it
 - b. the whole family probably includes Judah as well for as Israel suffered at the hands of Assyria, Judah would later suffer at the hands of the Babylonians
 - 2. vs. 2
 - a. they were God's chosen people
 - b. the Lord had loved them, provided for them and helped them every step of the way
 - c. but they rebelled and as a rebellious child must be punished, so Israel was to be punished
 - 3. vs. 3
 - a. God tells them that He and they are now walking in opposite directions
 - b. He is holy; they want to be unholy
 - c. they no longer are in agreement
 - i. God's way is right (Deuteronomy 32:4)
 - ii. those who do not walk with Him, who are not in agreement with Him, are due punishment
 - 4. vss. 4-8 - they certainty that the things which Amos is prophesying will come to pass
 - a. a lion roars when he attacks
 - b. the young lion growls as he feasts on his prey
 - c. a bird is not snared unless the snare is set (God is the one who has set the snare for Israel)
 - d. a hunter leaves the snare until his quarry is trapped (God's punishment will continue until all have paid)
 - e. the trumpet sounds the warning of attack (Amos was God's "trumpet")
 - f. the Lord is the author of the punishment
 - g. God has revealed His plans to the prophets and they shall surely come to pass
 - 5. vs. 9 - instruction to the heathen enemies of Israel to witness Israel's destruction and learn from it
 - 6. vs. 10
 - a. Israel had become so accustomed to doing evil that they had no knowledge of the right (see Jeremiah 4:22)
 - b. this does not mean that they had not been taught what was right for surely they had
 - c. means that they ignored the instruction in righteousness
 - d. the materialism and covetousness which characterized the nation is again seen
 - 7. vss. 11-15 - description of the punishment
 - a. for details regarding the destruction of Israel, see II Kings 15:29; II Kings 17; II Kings 18:9-12 and for details regarding the destruction of Judah, see II Kings 24-25; II Chronicles 36

- b. vs. 11
 - i. the enemy would surround them so that none would escape
 - ii. Israel's strength would be taken away and the riches which they loved so much would be taken as well
 - c. vs. 12
 - i. illustration of a lion attacking a sheep
 - A. the shepherd might be able to salvage just a few pieces of the sheep (two legs or a piece of an ear)
 - B. this was used to show that only a small remnant, a shred of evidence of Israel's existence in that place, would remain
 - ii. second half of verse difficult to explain but perhaps further illustrates the extent to which the destruction would go
 - d. vs. 14
 - i. this had also been prophesied in I Kings 13:2
 - ii. fulfilled in II Kings 23:15-16
 - e. vs. 15
 - i. this verse illustrates the great wealth which many had stored up for themselves (they had summer and winter houses, houses of ivory, "great houses")
 - ii. all of their riches in which they placed such great trust and admiration would be taken away
 - iii. is there a lesson here for us today regarding storing up earthly wealth? (see Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:15-21; James 5:1-5)
- C. Second discourse (chapter 4)
- 1. vss. 1-3
 - a. "kine" = "cattle"
 - i. shows them as people who have fattened themselves and are lazy
 - ii. could refer to the women of the land ("her" in verse 3)
 - iii. could refer to effeminate males (as opposed to the "bulls of Bashan" of Psalm 22:12)
 - b. again, their sin involves abuse of the poor
 - i. it is sin enough to not try to help the truly needy (James 2:15-16) but these Israelites were crushing them
 - ii. in living their luxurious lifestyles, they were providing abundantly for themselves but neglecting the needy (cf. Luke 16:19-21)
 - c. the certainty of their coming punishment is seen in God's oath (see Hebrews 6:13-18)
 - d. "hooks" likely a reference to tools used to lead cattle around by the nose
 - e. their children shall be led away also
 - f. "ye shall go out at the breeches" = you will try to hide behind the walls of Samaria but the very walls which you think will protect you will be broken down and you shall be carried away through the openings
 - g. alternate reading of end of verse 3: "ye shall cast away the things of the palace" (upon your capture, you will be forced to abandon all of these luxuries in which you now revel)

2. vss. 4-5 constitute sarcasm against the empty worship of the Israelites
 - a. go ahead and carry out your worship, follow your idols, transgress God's way
 - b. see what all of this will bring you when the Lord's judgment comes
 3. vss. 6-11 - God has given them several warnings to try to turn them back, but they rejected them and now must face the great punishment of defeat and captivity
 - a. after each of the five reminders of the disasters that had come upon Israel, the phrase, "yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord" is found
 - b. vs. 6 - famine ("cleanness of teeth" = clean because they have not had any food to soil them)
 - c. vss. 7,8 - drought
 - i. some rains are crucial to the success of crops; these were withheld by God
 - ii. drought brought in such a way as to evidence the hand of God behind it (one city would have rain while another would not; one piece of ground would have rain while another would not)
 - d. vs. 9 - destruction of gardens
 - e. vs. 10 - pestilence and death
 - f. vs. 11 - a destruction like that suffered by Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24,25)
 - g. yet for all of this chastising and warning, "ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord" (See Isaiah 1:3)
 4. details of some of the sufferings of Israel prior to being overthrown
 - a. II Kings 6:24-29 (famine)
 - b. II Kings 13:3,7 (invasion)
 - c. Joel 1:1-7 (the plague of insects)
 - d. Amos 1:1 (the earthquake)
 5. vs. 12 - because Israel did not return to God, they were instructed, "prepare to meet thy God" (it is as if God is challenging them to get all their gods together and come out and meet Him in battle)
 6. vs. 13 - the qualifications of this God to do the things He has said He would do
 - a. He is supreme, superior to all of creation for He Himself is the Creator and He who has the power to give life also has the power to take it away (Job 1:21)
 - b. He is the Creator of all things seen (the mountains) and all things not seen (the wind)
 - c. He knows the very heart and mind of man
 - d. the Lord is said to step from mountain to mountain ("treadeth upon the high places") - "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool..." (Isaiah 66:1)
 - e. as one commentator said, "There can be no trifling with such a God."
- D. Third discourse (chapters 5 and 6)
1. 5:1 - "lamentation" = "funeral dirge"
 2. II Kings 17:5-6 shows that Assyria besieged Samaria for three years prior to finally taking them captive, a fact which helps explain Amos 5:2,3
 - a. verse 2 shows the completeness of the destruction

- b. verse 3 shows just how powerless Israel had become (only one-tenth of their manpower left to fight)
 - c. verse 3 also draws the sad contrast between the once proud and prosperous nation and the wasted and ruined country it had become (compare to Judah's situation - I Kings 10; Lamentations 5)
- 3. 5:4 begins repetition of exhortation to seek God and His righteous way (cf. 5:6,8,14)
 - a. even though speaking of destruction, God is still willing to forgive the people if they will immediately renounce all their evil and turn back to Him
 - b. Psalm 9:10 - "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee."
- 4. the cities mentioned in 5:5 were strongholds for Israel with Bethel being a center for idol worship and Gilgal being a place where carved images had been set up
 - a. seek the Lord and live
 - b. seek gods and earthly power and be taken captive
 - c. Bethel, the mighty center of your gods, will be ruined
- 5. 5:6 - again reminds them that Bethel is of no help to them, that their only hope is to turn to the Lord
- 6. 5:7 notes another of their sins
 - a. wormwood is a plant and is often used as a synonym for bitterness (in 6:12 it is translated "hemlock")
 - b. they had destroyed justice
 - c. they had wasted righteousness
- 7. 5:8,9 again describe the greatness of God
 - a. He created the stars in the heavens
 - b. He turns night to day and day to night
 - c. He created the water cycle of evaporation and rain
 - d. He takes the side of the oppressed
- 8. 5:10 - these Israelites went beyond just not listening to the prophets but actually hated them for trying to correct their ways (see Proverbs 9:8; 17:10)
- 9. 5:11-13
 - a. not only do they abuse the poor, they store up riches for themselves
 - b. but they shall not enjoy their riches for the Lord will take them away
 - c. added to their abuse of the poor is their lack of justice for they take bribes and pervert law
 - d. vs. 13 - the times are so evil that the wise don't even try to have justice done anymore but merely keep silent
- 10. 5:14-15 - the remedy for their problem
 - a. not just, "Stop doing evil" but "Seek good"
 - i. it's not enough to just not do wrong
 - ii. we must do what's right
 - iii. James 4:17
 - b. multitude of lessons come from the statement, "Hate the evil and love the good"
 - i. we won't give up evil until we hate it
 - ii. we won't do good consistently and fearlessly until we love it
 - iii. Jude 23

11. 5:16-20 - the certainty of the coming judgment
 - a. the husbandman shall wail and in the vineyards shall be wailing because of the destruction of their livelihoods
 - i. it seems that some were smugly saying things like, "Let the Lord come. We are not afraid."
 - ii. the Lord tells them that it will be a horrible time for them
 - iii. vs. 19 illustrates the certainty of it
 - A. they might try to escape, but will not be able to
 - B. like a man fleeing a lion
 - I. he escapes the lion and thinks all is fine
 - II. then a bear meets and devours him or a serpent bites him
 - iv. they should not want the day of the Lord to come because they are not ready and for them it will be a day of complete darkness and ruin
12. 5:21-27 - God's hatred of their "worship" and pleas to return
 - a. He hated these items of worship because they were empty and couched in hypocrisy
 - b. Adam Clarke comments that verse 23 has reference to their singing and their instrumental accompaniment
 - i. the Lord hated both
 - ii. "In the first there was nothing but noise, because their hearts were not right with God; and in the latter there could be nothing but cutting and scraping because there was no heart - no religious sense in the thing and nearly as little in them that used it." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 682)
 - c. the acts of worship alone are not sufficient to please God (see John 4:24)
 - d. God pleaded for fairness and faithfulness to become as abundant and refreshing and productive as great waters
 - e. their idolatry was so widespread that they even carried about a portable shrine to their gods
 - f. "beyond Damascus" = to Assyria for the way to Assyria from Judea was through Damascus
13. 6:1-6 - a description of the activities of the hard hearted rich of Israel
 - a. they were at ease because they had what they wanted and cared nothing for the needs of others
 - i. it is easy to have a clear conscience when we close our eyes and ears
 - ii. likewise today, those in the church who are self-satisfied and inactive are the ones who have shut out from their minds thoughts of lost souls and needy people
 - b. they had put their trust in their gods and in themselves
 - c. other nations have been punished for their rebellion, are they better than you or you than them?
 - d. you do not think seriously about the coming day of judgment but persist in your sins
 - e. you rest and pamper yourselves and care nothing for the needs of others
 - f. comment on verse 5 from Adam Clarke who himself was a Methodist (p. 684, Clarke's Commentary, Volume IV)

"I believe that David was not authorized by the Lord to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the Divine worship of which we read; and I am satisfied that his conduct in this respect is most solemnly reprehended by this prophet; and I farther believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian church, is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are sinful. If there was a woe to them who invented instruments of music, as did David under the law, is there no woe, no curse to them who invent them, and introduce them into the worship of God in the Christian church? I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity. The late venerable and most eminent divine, John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists said, in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.' I say the same, though I think the expense of the purchase had better be spared."

14. 6:7-14 - more details of the punishment
 - a. those who are "at ease in Zion" shall be the first to go captive
 - b. God hates their works
 - i. some paint God as never getting angry, never hating
 - ii. this verse shows His anger and hatred of sin
 - iii. Revelation 2:6 shows that He continues to hate sin even in this New Testament age
 - c. the exact meaning of verse 10 is difficult to ascertain, but for sure it is illustrative of the vastness of the destruction
 - i. no funeral ceremony for the dead but a quick burning of the bodies
 - ii. the living will be afraid to say anything for fear of more destruction coming or because they are so devastated by the deaths
 - d. both the great houses and the little houses shall be destroyed and no one, regardless of social class, shall escape
 - e. vs. 12 again brings to mind their sin of perverting justice
 - i. running horses over rocks (and it is said that shoeing horses with iron was unknown in this day) and plowing with the oxen over rock are both useless and hurtful to the animals
 - ii. God tells Israel that their perversions of justice have been useless and hurtful to them
 - iii. both "gall" and "hemlock" here have reference to poisons
 - f. the idols are called "a thing of nought" for they are worthless
 - g. Israel was proud of themselves and figured they had sufficient strength to withstand any foe ("horns" in verse 13 is a term which represents power)
 - h. but they have not contended with the foe of sin, God Almighty who will raise up Assyria against them and destroy them from one end of the land to the other

- V. Third Section (Amos 7-9)
- A. This section consists of five visions seen by Amos (7:1-3; 7:4-6; 7:7-9; 8:1-14; 9:1-10), each of which illustrates the reality of God's coming judgment upon Israel
 - B. First vision (7:1-3)
 1. vs. 1 designates the time of year of the locust plague as being the time of the early growth of the year's second crop (springtime)
 2. Amos pleads for Israel and the plague ceases
 - C. Second vision (7:4-6)
 1. "fire" in verse 4 represents the various wars that would be suffered by Israel before their final destruction
 2. Amos' words in verse 5 the same as those in the first vision (vs. 2)
 3. again, the Lord ceases His destruction at the pleading of His faithful prophet
 - D. Third vision (7:7-9)
 1. centers around the plumbline
 - a. a tool used for measuring
 - b. "a lead weight hung at the end of a line, used to determine how deep water is or whether a wall, etc. is vertical"
 - c. used here, it describes how God is measuring the actions of Israel
 - d. having used the plumbline, God shows Amos that Israel's sins were very deep
 2. the high places of Isaac could refer to the altar built by Isaac in Beersheba (Genesis 26:23-25) but later desecrated by idolaters (II Kings 23:8 indicates that some were burning incense to heathen gods in Beersheba)
 3. "I will rise against the house of Jereboam with the sword" (fulfilled in II Kings 15:10 as Jereboam's house cut off from the throne of Israel)
 - E. 7:10-17 - break in the visions to give the reactions to Amos' preaching
 1. Amaziah, being the priest of Bethel, was a priest to a false god and worshipped the golden calf which had been set up there
 2. Amaziah had no power of his own to respond to Amos and so he appealed to the king
 3. then he came to Amos and told him to go back home and prophesy to his own people and leave Israel alone
 - a. Amaziah says, "This is Jereboam's land and Jereboam's religion and you are speaking against both. Stop this and get away from here."
 - b. this sounds familiar as we think of many today who don't want to hear the truth and tell us to mind our own business and leave them alone
 4. Amos tells Amaziah that he is not a professional prophet
 - a. when he returns to Judah, he will again be a shepherd and farmer
 - b. he was made a prophet for this one specific occasion
 - c. to withhold his message would be to turn his own back on God and this he would not do
 5. in verses 16 and 17, Amos speaks of Amaziah's future
 - a. his wife would become a prostitute
 - b. his children would be killed
 - c. he will lose his land
 - d. he will die in a foreign land ("polluted land")

- e. Israel will surely go into captivity, despite Amaziah's objections and false prophecies
- F. Fourth vision (8:1-14)
1. the basket of summer fruit
 - a. summer fruit is ripe and ready to be picked
 - b. the time for Israel's destruction was ripe
 - c. "summer fruit" is a play on words as the Hebrew word for this is very close to the Hebrew word for "end"
 2. their songs are turned into howling
 3. vss. 4-6 - more on their sins
 - a. "swallow up the needy" perhaps suggests that the rich were buying up all the land and making the former owners into slaves
 - b. "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat?"
 - i. they continued to observe the feast days and the Sabbath, but their hearts were not in it
 - ii. all during these events, they were thinking about when they would be over so they could get back to making money
 - iii. do we still have this same problem today?
 - A. some who will not take any time from work to worship God
 - B. some who come to worship for an hour or so but are all the time thinking about their jobs, recreation, etc.
 - C. in modern language, considering the attitudes of some Christians, perhaps this verse would read, "When will the worship services be over so I can get to work, so I can watch the ball game, so I can eat and then take a nap?"
 - c. "making the ephah small and the shekel great"
 - i. "ephah" = about 37 quarts
 - ii. "shekel" = a monetary unit
 - iii. they were skimping on the measurements and inflating the price
 - d. they also were falsifying the scales which weighed the goods (To show that much hasn't changed over the years, there is a Norman Rockwell painting that shows a woman at a butcher shop. The butcher is putting the meat on one side of the scales and puts his thumb down on it to make it weigh heavier. The woman is pushing up on the other side of the scale trying to make it weight lighter.)
 - e. "sell the refuse of wheat" = they were selling inferior goods
 4. vs. 7 is a great passage for those who think that in the day of judgment God is going to forget about their sins and save everyone regardless of what they do
 5. the destruction shall overwhelm them as a flood overwhelms the banks of the sea
 6. vs. 9
 - a. perhaps figurative, that their day will seem so dark because of the punishment
 - b. perhaps it refers to an eclipse
 - c. one commentator believes an earthquake is spoken of here

7. there will be absolutely no joy (the depth of the mourning is seen in the phrase, "I will make it as the mourning of an only son.")
 8. the calamity would be so great that people would wander about searching for some man of God to tell them that it would all soon be over, but there would be no word from God
 9. those who had their confidence in their idols shall find no help from them in that day
- G. Fifth vision (9:1-10)
1. the alter is probably one that had been set up to the heathen gods
 - a. the Lord giving the command to smite from this place shows that He did not dwell at this altar and did not endorse it
 - b. the falling of this altar and its house would kill many and those who escaped from it would soon meet their punishment
 2. vss. 2-4 - there is absolutely no escape
 3. the melting of the land in verse 4 could be a reference to an earthquake even though God is in the highest of heavens, He works upon the earth
 4. these Israelites should not think themselves privileged to sin without punishment
 - a. sure they were delivered but so also were some others
 - b. just because they were the descendants of Abraham did not give them the right to sin
 6. Jacob would not be extinguished because of the promise (Genesis 12:2,3; 49:10)
 7. through all the destruction, there would still be some salvation
 - a. the sinners who did not fear God would lose their lives
 - b. but a remnant would be spared
- H. 9:11-14
1. a passage often used in support of premillennialism
 - a. premillennialism says that the Lord will come and rebuild Jerusalem with its temple, reinstate Israel as a world power and run the world from His headquarters in Jerusalem
 - b. why this passage is used to support this teaching
 - i. "I will raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen."
 - ii. "I will build it as in the days of old."
 - iii. "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them."
 - c. the Jews look at these verses in a similar manner
 - d. notice how their interpretation revolves around the physical; a physical restoration of a physical kingdom in a physical land
 2. Acts 15:13-18 explains the meaning of these verses
 - a. the verses have nothing to do with the restoration of Israel in a physical kingdom that will last forever
 - b. some of them would indeed be brought back from captivity but at a time after this would come the real rebuilding of the tabernacle of David as the final heir to David's throne, Jesus, established His kingdom
 - c. the passage is about the bringing together of Jew and Gentile into one, namely, Christ
 - d. this is another example of a "Divine Commentary," one inspired passage explaining another inspired passage