



Hope in God

God offers hope to those who return to Him in repentance.

AMOS 9:5-15

The best hopes are not passive. A football team can hope to win, but those hopes must be accompanied by action. The team would be foolish to sit on the couch all week and somehow hope to win the game. A future college graduate cannot start studying the night before graduation. Four years of action must accompany those hopes. Amos earlier had expressed the hope that God would save a remnant from Israel (Amos 5:15), but that hope was to be accompanied by the repentance of Israelites.

What are some of the biggest hopes you have in this life? What are you doing to demonstrate active faith that those hopes will be realized?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

AMOS 7:1-9:10

The book of Amos has two primary sections, the words of Amos (chaps. 1-6) and the visions of Amos (chaps. 7-9). The second section contains reports of five visions Amos received from the Lord. The first two visions (Amos 7:1-6) are of the arrival of locusts and the threatening judgment of fire. Visions three and four come from wordplay visions (7:7-9; 8:1-3). Amos saw a plumb line and measured it against the people of Israel to show they were not in line with the will of God. Then he saw a basket of summer fruit that was ripened and about to begin its decaying process. Like the basket of fruit, Israel was ripe and ready for the judgment God was about to bring against them. The final vision (9:1-4) was a vision of God Himself standing beside the altar. He was there to announce the destruction of Israel.

The Lord would shake the pillars of the temple, causing it to fall upon those worshipping in pretense (9:1a). He would kill the rest with the sword, a hint of the coming Assyrian invasion (9:1b). No matter how far or at what lengths people attempted to escape, they would be unable to escape God's judgment (9:2). Even if they were to escape the temple and hide on a mountain such as Carmel or sink to the floor of the Mediterranean, God would track them down and hold them accountable for their actions. The Lord would bring harm on them rather than good because that was what their actions warranted (9:4).

The inevitability of judgment seen in the prophecy of Amos only heightens the need to share the gospel of Jesus, who bore in His body the sins of those who are willing to trust in Him (1 Pet. 2:24). The One who did not know sin became sin for us so we could be made righteous before God (2 Cor. 5:21). Even as Amos's book ended with a somber picture of judgment, it also would contain a message of hope for those who turn to God in Christ.

As you read Amos 9:5-15, notice words that point to God's justice, mercy, and grace. How does God demonstrate His justice, mercy, and grace all at the same time?

EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

THE INTRODUCTION (AMOS 9:5-6)

⁵ The Lord, the GOD of Armies — he touches the earth; it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn; all of it rises like the Nile and subsides like the Nile of Egypt. ⁶ He builds his upper chambers in the heavens and lays the foundation of his vault on the earth. He summons the water of the sea and pours it out over the surface of the earth. The LORD is his name.

VERSE 5

For both Amos, standing at the threshold of Israel's fall, and Jeremiah, standing at the threshold of Judah's fall, the *Lord, the GOD of Armies* was a favorite designation for God (Amos 4:13; 5:14-16,27; 6:8,14; 9:5; Jer. 35:17; 38:17; 44:7; 46:10). Any attacks from Assyria toward Israel or Babylon toward Judah were better seen as the activity of God's heavenly army against those who refused to repent. Those who worry more about earthly armies than the spiritual forces under God's control show a profound short-sightedness about spiritual realities.

The phrase, *the LORD, the GOD of Armies*, points to the magnitude of God's authority and power. God has authority over all things and the ability to carry out all that He says He will do. He has the host of heaven at His disposal, and no one can withstand Him or flee from His wrath. No place in all of creation is beyond His reach. The Lord merely *touches the earth*, and *it melts*, meaning to tremble and shake as in an earthquake. Those who experience it will *mourn*. The land will rise and fall like the flooding of *the Nile* when the earth quakes at the Lord's touch (8:8). God will display such awesome power in judgment through this earthquake that it will come like a flood, and its devastation will be overwhelming. Amos preached his message to Israel two years before the earthquake (1:1; see Zech. 14:5).

VERSE 6

God is not of this earth. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). However, God is not aloof because He resides in heaven. He *lays the foundation of his vault on the earth*. He touches heaven and earth with

His sovereignty; therefore, He is a just judge who acts with all information at His disposal. Nobody gets an unfair trial. Hung juries are an impossibility with a jury of One. God touches heaven and earth in His sovereignty, and His actions are pure, just, righteous, and honorable.

Amos reminded his readers that the God who made the waters can pour them out in judgment. He did it in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:17), and He could do it again to destroy Israel. This destruction would not be a flood of water but a flood of the Assyrian army.

What characteristics of God cause the greatest amount of awe and wonder?

THE SHAKING (AMOS 9:7-10)

⁷ Israelites, are you not like the Cushites to me? This is the LORD's declaration. Didn't I bring Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir? ⁸ Look, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will obliterate it from the face of the earth. However, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob — this is the LORD's declaration — ⁹ for I am about to give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations, as one shakes a sieve, but not a pebble will fall to the ground. ¹⁰ All the sinners among my people who say, "Disaster will never overtake or confront us," will die by the sword.

VERSE 7

Israel enjoyed a special place in kingdom history as the elect nation, chosen by God to be a blessing to all other nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). But the Israelites abused this privilege by refusing to live as the covenant people of God. Their lives and worship did not measure up to such a calling. In light of the Israelites' privilege, the words of Amos must have been especially shocking to them. He asked: *are you not like the Cushites to me?* These were the inhabitants of Nubia, south of Egypt. It was a great distance from Israel and may have been chosen because it represented the far boundary of their experience with the nations. This would have been especially shocking because an army of one million Cushites marched against

King Asa in Judah in the previous century (2 Chron. 14:9), but the Lord routed them with only 580,000 in Asa's army (2 Chron. 14:8). Yet God said they were no different than Israel.

God compared the Israelites to the *Philistines from Caphtor*, probably a reference to Crete or Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea. He also referenced the *Arameans from Kir*, who were the enemies of Israel. Only recently had Israel been set free from their dominion. Kir was located east of Mesopotamia, and the Arameans lived in the region north of Israel. The point was to show that God had moved them from one place to another. The God of all nations was also the God of Israel, and He could do what He desired to do with them.

How does comparing ourselves to others lead to a false sense of security?

VERSES 8-10

Even more indicting were these words of Amos: *Look, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom.* What kingdom was he describing? Was it Cush and their invasion against Judah? Was it the Philistines and their constant attacks on Israel and Judah? Was it the Arameans, who dominated Israel in their recent history? Or did that not also include Israel, a nation that also had abandoned the Lord in their worship practices and integrity? The *sinful kingdom* includes all those who have refused to turn to God in repentance. Israel was no less accountable to God than any other nation that surrounded it, whether near or far.

God declared He would *obliterate* the sinful kingdom from the face of the earth. Whether in Cush or Israel, judgment would come against sinners. However, Amos revealed with hope that God would not *totally destroy the house of Jacob*. The *sinful kingdom* and the *house of Jacob* were not identical. A remnant of the nation would survive by turning to God in repentance.

What would this judgment against sinners look like? Amos said God would give the command and would *shake the house of Israel among all the nations*. This would take place like a person shaking grain in *a sieve*. God's shaking was not punitive only but also for the purpose of separating the wheat and the chaff (Matt. 3:12). The shaking judgment will be 100 percent accurate, for *not a pebble will*

fall to the ground. God knows those who belong to Him, and no mistakes are made on the day of His sifting.

Some Israelites were saying *disaster* would never overtake them. Thinking this way shows the danger of taking sin too lightly and the holiness of God too flippantly. The only hope for Israel would be the hope of a remnant who heeded the call of God and turned to Him. Those who refused to do so would *die by the sword*. When the Assyrians captured Samaria, many died, and many others were taken away into captivity in Assyria. God gave Israel time to repent and turn back to Him, but they would not.

Why do many people consider themselves exempt from God's judgment?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Salvation (Regeneration)*

Regeneration is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

THE RESTORATION (AMOS 9:11-15)

¹¹ In that day I will restore the fallen shelter of David: I will repair its gaps, restore its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old, ¹² so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name — this is the declaration of the LORD; he will do this.

¹³ Look, the days are coming — this is the LORD's declaration — when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the one who treads grapes, the sower of seed. The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it. ¹⁴ I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel. They will rebuild and occupy ruined cities, plant vineyards and drink their wine, make gardens and eat their produce. ¹⁵ I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them. The LORD your God has spoken.

VERSES 11-12

Though Amos's message may seem pessimistic and full of gloom, it does not end on that note. The words *in that day* indicate a new day was coming. After a period of time, the exile would end and God would *restore the fallen shelter of David*. God made a promise to David that his kingdom would last forever (2 Sam. 7:16). A time was coming when it would appear that his kingdom ended. The Northern Kingdom would fall in 722 BC and the Southern Kingdom would fall in 587 BC. At that point, David's kingdom would resemble a fallen shelter, which was the word for a dilapidated dwelling place. All looked bleak for David's kingdom, as all that remained was a remnant of those who turned to God. However, God promised to *repair its gaps* and *restore its ruins*. Far from a fixer-upper, He promised to *rebuild it as in the days of old*. With the arrival of Messiah, David's house would continue (Jer. 33:15,17; Mic. 5:2).

The rebuilding of David's house would elevate the importance of Israel's mission. They would *possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear* the name of the Lord. *Edom* was a nation that constantly persecuted Israel, but through the Messiah God would create a remnant of Edom and every other nation where people turned from their sin and turned to God. The purpose of Israel would be fulfilled as God took the message of the Messiah to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6; Gen. 12:3).

What does this passage reveal about God's redemptive plan? How does the promise of God's redeeming a remnant of believers from nations of sinners affect relationships with others who may still be part of that "sinful nation"?

VERSES 13-15

God would restore the fortunes of Israel through the promise of the Messiah. Amos described this as a time of great abundance. He said, *the plowman will overtake the reaper*. How abundant is that? The harvest would be so great that the reapers would still be reaping when it was time to plant the seeds for the next cycle! The time of Messiah would signal a fruitfulness as yet unseen among the people of Israel. This time of abundance was magnified in verse 14. Cities previously abandoned would spring to life.

Vineyards that had been abandoned and left for dead would flourish again. All that was taken away by Israel's sin would be restored by Messiah. What a hopeful and encouraging thought!

God would replant His people in their own land with a fruitfulness that could never be taken away. At long last they would fulfill their calling to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42:6). They would never again be thwarted or supplanted from their place in God's story of redemptive history, as Messiah would usher in a period of spiritual peace and prosperity that could never be equaled. Sinners would repent and turn to God, and He would forgive their sin and give them peace. Amos's prophecy ends on a glorious note that he only hoped for but has been realized in our day with the coming of Jesus.

How does the promise of God's future blessing motivate believers to endure God's discipline?

BIBLE SKILL: *Review cross reference verses to gain insight.*

Review the following verses that recognize Jesus as the Son of David: Matthew 12:23; 15:22; 21:9,15; Mark 12:35-37; Revelation 5:5. What do these verses reveal about God's fulfilling His purpose to restore Israel through the "booth of David" (v. 11)? In what ways did Jesus personify the idea of "booth" during His time here on earth?
