

AMOS

THE ARGUMENT

IF we might be allowed to make a conjecture at the quality of our prophet's sermons by the signification of his name, we must conclude that they contain heavy tidings and grievous judgments coming upon them to whom he is sent to preach; Amos in the Hebrew coming from a word which signifies to burden, to lay a weight or load on one. But we have a surer rule to judge the contents of his prophecy by. He is by some ancient writers, erring in this point, said to be the father of Isaiah; but besides that Isaiah was contemporary with Amos, which fairly argues it unlikely that Isaiah should be Amos's son, Amoz the father of Isaiah is quite another name, different from Amos, both in letters wherewith each is spelt, and in signification also. And if Isaiah were of the royal line, (as some say he was,) nephew to either Amaziah or Uzziah by a brother, it cannot be conceived how Amos, a plain herdsman of Tekoa, should be his father. It is certain he was either by birth, or education, or employment, or in all these respects, of the tribe of Judah, and as certain that by an immediate call from God he was taken off the herdsman's work and made a prophet, **#Am 7:14,15**. He did in deed, as he professed in word, come from the Lord, and in his name delivered his message to all those whom God sent him unto. And pursuant hereto he preacheth first against those nations who were borderers, and had been bitter, oppressive, and old adversaries to Israel and Judah, **#Am 1:3**, to the end, and **#Am 2:1-3**. By this express course, declaring future just executions upon Syria, Palestine, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, the prophet doth much prevent the prejudices which Israel and Judah might have had against his person and doctrine. Now he may more freely and plainly reprove and threaten the sins of God's own people, since he hath so plainly reproved and threatened their enemies; and they who easily believed him a prophet in his predictions against foreigners, must in reason as easily believe him a prophet in his reproofs and predictions against themselves. He doth bestow the far greater part of his discourses on Israel, or the kingdom of the ten tribes, to whom he was principally sent; yet he doth prophesy against Judah also; and

to both he is very sharp in his reproofs, impartial in his censures, earnest in his persuasions to repent, very full in his encouragements to this duty, and demonstratively evident in his charging sin upon them. He had Isaiah, Joel, and Hosea contemporary with him, though it appear not how long.

He is in many places sententious and concise, which makes the passages the more obscure. Though he do bring with him many things from his country employment in his reproofs, allusions, and arguments, yet fitted with admirable skill, and beautified with an unimitable eloquence, and fortified with that loftiness of style that proclaims itself to be from Him who gave man both judgment, fancy, and tongue, which is an intrinsic character of divinity in our prophet's writing. He was a person of most undaunted resolution, of a prudent conduct, and of spotless integrity, as appears by the contest he had with Amaziah chief of the priests of Beth-el, **#Am 7:10**, &c.

He lived when Judah's affairs were tolerably well and prosperous, but when Israel's were in the highest meridian, when they thought themselves secure against all the dangers he foretold: Uzziah had pretty well recovered Judah, and settled it; Jeroboam had highly advanced Israel's fame, riches; and power. With their growth in these, sin grew as fast and as exorbitant, and called for judgments, which our prophet foretells very plainly in express words, **#Am 7:11,17**, and in very significant hieroglyphics, **#Am 7 Am 8 Am 9**. He foretells the earthquake, **#Am 1:1**; an emblem of those civil dissensions which shook their foundations, and half ruined them before the Assyrian conquered and captivated them. Which miseries lasted through an interregnum of eleven years, say some; to be sure through the reign of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea, in whose time all these miseries were swallowed up in a greater, their perpetual captivity, which came upon them about fifty-four or sixty-five years after the death of Jeroboam the Second, near to whose court and within their hearing Amos preached many, perhaps most of his sermons; and therefore you may observe his reproofs, threats, and predictions seem to be calculated for that court, which was highly guilty of the sins he reprov'd, and were called to repent of them, which because they did not, they did deeply suffer both in the civil wars

under those four usurpers and conspirators, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, and most deeply in the Assyrian captivity. In the annotations you will find there is some reference to those times, with somewhat more particular application of the prophetic text to the circumstances of times he aimed at, than hath been by any learned pen I have happened to peruse; and would the brevity to which these annotations are bound have borne a larger account of those times, and a fuller accommodation of them to the prophetic discourses, I do not doubt but the truth of the prophet's charge, reproof, threats, and predictions against Israel would appear to every reader. Lastly, our prophet, as others, closeth the sad tragedy of this fleshly, sinning Israel with promise of a spiritual state under the Messiah, full of grace and peace.

AMOS CHAPTER 1

The time when Amos prophesied, **#Am 1:1,2**. He showeth God's judgments upon Syria, **#Am 1:3-5**; upon the Philistines, **#Am 1:6-8** upon Tyre, **#Am 1:9,10**; upon Edom, **#Am 1:11,12**; upon Ammon **#Am 1:13-15**.

Ver. 1.

The words: the Holy Ghost doth in this expression comprehensively take in all the sermons, visions, and predictions which Amos preached and published; all the exhortations to duty, the menaces against sins, the warnings of dangers coming, and the promises of mercy to them that hear and obey his words: see **#Hag 1:12**. And so what Jeremiah preached to his auditors are the words of Jeremiah, **#Am 1:1**; and the instructions and counsel of Solomon are the words of the Preacher, **#Ec 1:1**. Both the things spoken and the words wherein they are spoken are included.

Amos: those who think this was father to the prophet Isaiah, either discern not the difference that is in the two Hebrew words, or pronounce hastily without considering what each is in the Hebrew, in which tongue these words have but two letters the same, i.e. M and O, the other are quite different; as also is the signification of each, for the one imports strength or might, the other imports a burden or heavy weight.

Among the herdmen, or shepherds, but whether one of the meaner or one of the chief, whether a master herdman or a servant, the word imports the former, yet because the Scripture doth not say, we shall not inquire, since it conduceth little to our profiting, nor will it add to his authority, since it is God who sent him.

Tekoa; whether it belonged to Zebulun, Asher, or Judah is not much material, though this last be most likely, for, **#2Ch 11:5,6**, we read of Rehoboam's building fortresses in Judah, among which Tekoa is mentioned. It was situate on a hill on the north of Judah, as a learned pen describeth it.

He saw; received by revelation: this tells us that the things as well as words were to be understood, when it is said that these were the words of Amos.

Israel; the kingdom of the ten tribes, revolted from the house of David, and now under the government of Jehu's great-grandson.

Uzziah; called also Azariah, who was smitten with a leprosy for intruding into the priest's office, **#2Ch 26:16,19**.

Judah; including the tribe of Benjamin, and such of the Levites as did adhere to the house of David, the kingdom of the house of David. Jeroboam; not son of Nebat, but grandson of Jehu. Joash; who had some successes against Syria, according to the prophecy of Elisha, by which successes Israel was raised from a declining to a thriving, prosperous state.

The earthquake; of which only this text, and **#Zec 14:5**, do make particular mention, and where somewhat is spoken of it; which see. It is the tradition of the Jews, that this earthquake happened when Uzziah usurped the priest's work and offered incense in the temple, against which violation of Divine rites God testified thus from heaven, say they. Further than this we need not inquire in this matter. It was a great and dismal earthquake, and perhaps by this God did smite the winter and summer houses, as **#Am 3:15**; however, as it was foretold two years before it came, so we are sure it did come according to the time prefixed by the Lord.

Ver. 2.

He; Amos.

The Lord; the Almighty and Eternal, whom you of the ten tribes have forsaken, and thereby have provoked to displeasure.

Will roar: the prophet, alluding to what was dreadful, dangerous, and most rousing to shepherds, the roaring of a hungry lion that comes out of his den for prey, doth express the danger of Israel, and would awaken them to a sense of it, that they might prevent it by repentance, before the Lord tears them in pieces as a lion tears his prey.

From Zion; either the temple, in opposition to Jeroboam's idolatrous chapels; or intimating their defection and sin in leaving Zion for Dan and Beth-el.

Utter his voice: this explains and confirms the former metaphorical expression of God's wrath.

From Jerusalem; the city God had chosen, where he dwelt, the seat of God's instituted worship in the matters of religion, and the royal seat of the kingdom as God had settled it, from which in both respects the ten tribes had revolted. This whole paragraph you have **#Joe 3:16**, which see; and **#Jer 25:30**.

The habitations of the shepherds: where the shepherds found convenient pasturage they pitched their tents, or built them cottages, and dwelt therein, that they might attend the care of their flocks, for which they also made folds; and this was the delight and wealth of these men: now by allusion to these Amos expresseth all the wealth, greatness, and delightfulness of the kingdom of Israel. Princes are, in the Greek dialect, shepherds of the people, people are the flock, towns and cities are the habitations of both; and so the Scripture useth the expression, **#Jer 2:8 3:15 Eze 34:2,7-9 Na 3:18**, which see.

Shall mourn; be made desolate, and reduced to a sad, mournful, and lamentable state, in which men shall see nothing but matter of sadness and tears.

Carmel; there were two places of this name, and though distant from each other, yet both very fruitful, and much used by shepherds; the one was in the northern parts of Canaan, whither

Elijah resorted; the other in Judah, the southern parts of Canaan: now this was nearer Tekoa, better known to Amos, and therefore some think this to be here intended; but the other was in Israel, which is here threatened, and therefore fitter to be the emblem of the ten tribes, and meant here, say others: whichever you choose, it is no hard thing to accommodate it to the prophet's purpose of Carmel: see #Na 1:4.

Shall wither; either blasted, or else dried up with drought, and turned into barrenness. So the whole kingdoms of the people threatened, and of the ten tribes, though as fruitful and pleasant as Carmel, should be made horrid and desolate as a dry and barren wilderness. See #Joe 1:12,17.

Ver. 3.

Thus saith the Lord; Amos speaks not by conjecture, or of his own head, but as he comes in the name of the Lord, so he assures us of it by this most solemn attestation.

Three transgressions: this certain number is put for an uncertain; three, i.e. many, especially when, as here, it is joined with four; their transgressions are so multiplied, grown to such height and number.

Damascus was the chief city of the kingdom of Syria, and very ancient; Abraham's steward was of this city. It was north-east from Canaan; conquered by David, lost by Solomon, recovered by Jeroboam the Second, though soon after lost again, and was in Ahaz's time the royal seat of Rezin, whom Tiglath-pileser slew, #2Ki 16:9. While it was in its power and greatness it mightily oppressed Israel. It is here by a synecdoche put for the whole kingdom of Syria.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: some refer this to the suffering Damascus to be quiet, God threatens that she shall not have rest; others say it is a threat that God would not convert it, but leave the Syrians to their impenitent heart; but our version is full and plain, it is a threat of punishment which they should certainly fall under. God would no longer continue to be patient and gracious towards such sinners, nor divert the menaced punishment foretold by the prophet, deserved by the people, and which shall be executed by an impartial hand. Because they, the

Syrians, comprised in the word Damascus, by a synecdoche, have threshed; first gathered, (as husbandmen gather sheafs into a floor,) next trod them under foot, beat them small, i.e. with utmost cruelty destroyed the persons, towns, and cities.

Gilead: of this name there was a great mountain fifty miles in length, saith my author; there was also a country of this name, and a city possessed by the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites; now the Gilead in this text is by a very usual figure put for the inhabitants of this country and city, whom Hazael king of Syria, as was foretold by Elisha, **#2Ki 8:12**, did most barbarously murder, as appears by the words of this text.

With threshing instruments of iron; rakes, or flails, or harrows, or saws, or heavy wheels of iron; whichsoever of these were the instruments intended, it is most certain it was a very barbarous and cruel manner of using them.

Ver. 4.

I the Lord, avenger of mine oppressed Israel, Jehovah, as **#Am 1:3**.

A fire; either literally understood, or figuratively, famine, pestilence, wars foreign or intestine, effects of God's great but just displeasure, which destroys all like fire.

The house of Hazael; the family, or the material house in which he dwelt, or both; Hazael's stately dwelling-place should be consumed by fire, and his whole family be cut off.

Devour; eat up, so as to leave nothing remaining of either.

The palaces; the royal palaces, or those that descended from Hazael, and dwelt in them.

Ben-hadad: whether this were some one of the Syrian kings before Hazael, or the Ben-hadad slain by Hazael, or son and successor to Hazael, is uncertain; nor can we know particularly who this was by this name Ben-hadad, which to the Syrian kings was a common name, as Pharaoh to the ancient Egyptian kings, Caesar to the Roman emperors, and Czar to the Muscovite at this day: three Ben-hadads are mentioned in the books of the Kings, as **#1Ki 15:18 2Ki 8:7 13:3**.

Ver. 5.

I, the mighty God, as **#Am 1:4**,

will break, weaken and shake into pieces,

the bar; literally, the bar with which the city gates were shut, and both fastened and strengthened, **#Jud 16:3 Ne 7:3 Ps 107:16**. Metaphorically it contains all the munitions, fortresses, and strength of a place or people: so here. *Damascus*: see **#Am 1:3**. It is put here, as before, for the whole kingdom, of which it was the metropolis.

Cut off, by the judgments of war, pestilence, famine, or diseases, all commissioned to do this. The inhabitant, for inhabitants, the singular used for the plural; and may possibly denote the universal excision and destruction of the Syrians, who shall perish as one man: see the like use of the singular number, **#Ex 8:6 Jer 8:7**.

The plain of Aven: it is possible this may refer to, some peculiar manner which the Syrians observed in their choosing the valley or champaign for the place of worship to their idols; Israel chose high places, the Syrians chose valleys it is likely, and therefore though beaten in the hills, where they thought the gods which Israel worshipped were strongest, yet are confident that in the valleys, where Syrians worshipped their gods, the Syrians would find their gods the stronger, **#1Ki 20:23** for this reason the valley or plain hath its name the plain of liven, of iniquity and vanity, because in it they worshipped vain gods, and their religion was highest idolatry; or it may be that Bikath-aven was the name of some city of Syria well known then, but whose memory is perished with it a great while ago.

Him that holdeth the sceptre; a description of the king of Syria. whose royal dignity shall be no security to him.

The house of Eden; some royal seat, where the kings of Syria did think good to build them a house or palace, for pleasure and delights, and therefore gave it this name, *Beth-eden*, or the house of pleasure; all their pleasant seats, the king's summer-houses, shall be laid waste.

The people of Syria; the main body of the subjects and people of Syria; this explains *Damascus*, **#Am 1:3**, and in this verse.

Kir; Cyrene of Egypt, say some, but without any probability in this place: there was also Kir of Moab, #Isa 15:1; but this was not the Kir in the text: this was Kir of Media, #Isa 22:6, now under the Assyrian yoke; and thither did Tiglath-pileser carry the conquered Syrians, #2Ki 16:9, and placed them captives in that barren, mountainous country about fifty years after it was foretold by Amos.

Saith the Lord: this gives us an assurance that all here threatened should at last be executed.

Ver. 6.

Three transgressions: see #Am 1:3.

Gaza; the principal city of the Philistines; all the rest are to be understood; and here the city is named, but the inhabitants are meant also with the city; ancient and strong, the seat of the Anakims, conquered by Judah, yet lost soon after to the old inhabitants.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: see #Am 1:3.

They carried away captive: this refers to the inroad by the Philistines and Arabians made upon Judah in the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the violence and cruelty of which is set forth #2Ch 21:16,17, about A.M. 3116; and this is that which is here threatened, as a sin that should be punished.

Edom; the posterity of Esau, who were inveterate enemies to the posterity of Jacob, and as ill neighbours are, so were these, the worst enemies the Jacobites had, as appears #Eze 25:12 Ob 10-14 Ps 137:7. These Edomites were ever ready to Oppress, enslave, and tyrannize over the Jews, if by any means they could by force or fraud get them into their hands.

Ver. 7.

I will send a fire; see #Am 1:4; desolating judgments, expressed here by fire.

On the wall; which was strong, and a mighty defence to the city; this only mentioned, but all the power and strength of Gaza, and of whole Palestina, is here included, and the judgment denounced is here intended against all the munitions of that people: Gaza: see #Am 1:6.

Devour: see #Am 1:4.

The palaces thereof: see #Am 1:4. What is here foretold was fulfilled partly by Uzziah, #2Ch 26:6-8, and partly by Hezekiah, #2Ki 18:8, and partly by Sennacherib, #Isa 20:1.

Ver. 8.

The inhabitant: see #Am 1:5.

Ashdod: see #Zep 2:4 Zec 9:6. This was one of the five cities of the Philistines, and had its roitelet. it was afterwards called

Azotus, #Ac 8:40. In this city was Dagon's temple and statue, #1Sa 5:1-3. The like threat against Ashdod did Jeremiah denounce, #Jer 25:16, with #Jer 25:20.

Him that holdeth the sceptre: see #Am 1:5. *Ashkelon*; another city of the Palestine pentarchy, and a very strong one, of which see #Zep 2:7 Zec 9:5,6, which shall perish with the king and inhabitants thereof; which (besides what Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, or Sargon, kings of Assyria, did, and besides what Hezekiah did against Ashkelon) had some accomplishment in Nabopolassar's and Nebuchadnezzar's time, and in Alexander the Great, to whom this city, as well as Gaza and Ashdod, became subject.

I will turn mine hand against Ekron; having destroyed these, saith the Lord, I will proceed on to Ekron, another of the five cities of the Philistines, strong, but, as the rest, cruel to Israel, and very sinfully idolatrous, worshipping Baal-zebul, for which this shall be destroyed also: see #Zep 2:4 Zec 9:5.

The remnant of the Philistines; what remaineth either of cities, towns, or people, not already expressly mentioned and threatened.

Shall perish; be cut off, and wasted utterly.

Saith the Lord God; when all this shall be done, though perhaps ye may not know, yet know ye this, that assuredly it shall be done in its time, for the Lord hath said it.

Ver. 9.

The prophet having foretold the destruction of the Syrians and the Philistines, for their inhumanity and barbarous cruelty against the

Jews, he doth now in the same manner and words foretell the destruction of the Tyrians. See #Am 1:3.

Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom: see #Am 1:6, where these passages are already explained.

And remembered not the brotherly covenant, which was between Hiram on the one part, and David and Solomon on the other part, on account whereof these Tyrians ought to have befriended the Jews, and not betrayed them; so some: others thus, The nearness of blood between Israel and Edom should have been remembered by the Tyrians, and they should therefore have persuaded Edom to carry it as became a brother, and by their mediation the Tyrians should have made peace between Israel and Edom; but they did not so, they took advantage of times, and made merchandise of Israel, sold such as either fled for refuge from other enemies, or such as fell into the hands of the Tyrians, joining with Hazael and Ben-hadad in their wars against Israel. What other sins Tyre added to this between this time and Nebuchadnezzar's besieging and subduing Tyre were then punished, when after thirteen years' siege it was taken, of which see #Eze 26\$ 27\$ 28\$, where at large Tyre is spoken of.

Ver. 10.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Ver. 11.

Three transgressions: see #Am 1:3.

Edom: see #Am 1:6.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: see #Am 1:3. *He did pursue*; watch for and lay hold on every occasion to oppress Israel.

His brother; Jacob and his posterity here are meant, as is Esau and his posterity. Esau personally considered was an enemy to the person of Jacob, and vowed his ruin, forced him to flee into Padan-aram, and on his return thence frightened Jacob too by coming out with four hundred men armed; the posterity of Esau behaved themselves no whit more friendly.

With the sword; either joining with the enemies, as **#Ps 83:6-8 137:7**, or setting a war on foot on their own account, as **#2Ch 28:17**, against them.

Cast off all pity; common humanity was by Edom cast off, when Jacob's posterity needed it, as appears by their denial of passage and selling to them necessaries for their relief in travelling by their country, **#Nu 20:14-21**; nay, they armed against Israel, **#Nu 20:20**. Common pity would have forborne strangers travelling by our coasts; how much more brethren. The inhumanity of the Edomites appeared yet further in this, that they were chapmen to buy all the captive Israelites, and to sell them to the heathen for slaves, which is certainly the height of inhumanity.

His anger, which is expressed by fierceness, and with vehemency,

did tear, as a ravenous, hungry, and fierce lion tears the prey; so the word.

Perpetually; though sometimes this anger did intermit for want of opportunity, yet on every occasion it revived, and showed itself again.

Kept his wrath for ever; lest the fire of his wrath should extinguish, Edom did record, treasure up, and reserved the seeds of his displeasure, as men rake up fire in ashes to blow it up into a flame; such was Edom's wrath, a wrath that exceeded all bounds, as the word imports, and never ceased.

Ver. 12.

I will send a fire: see **#Am 1:4,7**.

Teman; metropolis of Idumea, called from Esau's grandson of that name; of this see **#Eze 25:13 Hab 3:3**. And this here taken synecdochically implieth the inhabitants of this city, and of the whole country, which shall perish when the judgment here threatened shall be executed.

Which shall devour the palaces: see **#Am 1:4**.

Bozrah; a city bordering on Moab and Idumea, and which sometimes belonged to the one, sometimes to the other, as events of war determined. It may be there might be two cities of this

name, the one in Moab, the other in Edom, or Idumea; however, this was a very strong city, and one of the chiefest in the whole kingdom, so that in the menace against Bozrah and Teman the strength and glory of Edom is threatened with an utter overthrow, as of that which is burnt up by fire.

Ver. 13.

The children of Ammon: this is the fourth kingdom threatened; a people descended from Lot, by his younger daughter, of near kin to Israel, and much-like neighbours as the Edomites, bitter enemies to the Jews: see #Eze 25:2.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof: see #Am 1:4.

Ripped up the women with child; a most inhuman practice, yet usual in those times and places, of which mention is made #2Ki 8:12 15:16 Ho 13:16: which see. When, or in what particular place, this was done, is not reported in the history of the Bible. Probably it was when Hazael harassed Israel, #2Ki 8:12, with whom the Ammonites perhaps joined; but the thing was done, though we read not in any particular story when and where; all could not be written which was done in those ages.

Gilead: see #Ho 6:8 Zec 10:10: name both of city and country about it, and very rich in excellent spices and balms.

Enlarge their border, by destroying all that dwelt in it, and that hereafter might claim or pretend a title to it.

Ver. 14.

I will kindle a fire in the wall: see #Am 1:4, where the phrase is explained: as to the time when this prophecy was fulfilled, it was partly when the Assyrian kingdom flourished, and partly by Nebuchadnezzar, as was foretold by Ezekiel, #Eze 25:1-3, &c., which see.

Rabbah; the chief city of the kingdom of Ammon, #2Sa 11:1 12:26, which by a usual figure compriseth all the Ammonites, and all their strength, wealth, and glory, all which shall be devoured. It shall devour the palaces thereof: see #Am 1:4.

With shouting in the day of battle; a mixed and horrid noise of trumpets, and alarms of war, with howlings of the distressed, groans of the dying, and acclamations of the conquerors.

With a tempest in the day of the whirlwind, i.e. with irresistible force, and surprising swiftness, as the similitude imports.

Ver. 15.

Their king; or Milchore, or Moloch, the idol of the Ammonites, so it signifieth, as well as king. I suppose the prophet may intend both, their god as well as their king shall be carried captive, as was customary with conquerors, **#1Sa 5:2 Isa 46:2**.

He: this repeats and confirms the threat, whether it refer to the idol or the king.

His princes; either nobles and ministers of state, who attend and serve the king, or the priests and ministers of the idol; here both may be included, and the utter overthrow of their affairs in religion and state be signified and foretold.

Saith the Lord: this, as elsewhere, doth ratify and insure all; it shall so be, for God hath spoken it.

AMOS CHAPTER 2

God's judgments upon Moab, **#Am 2:1-3** upon Judah, **#Am 2:4,5**, and upon Israel, **#Am 2:6-8**. God complaineth of Israel's ingratitude for past kindnesses, and threateneth them for it, **#Am 2:9-16**.

Ver. 1.

For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: in this form the prophet began, **#Am 1:3**, which see. Here he doth threaten a nation of some kin to Israel, &c., as was Ammon, and almost as much an enemy: they appeared early enemies to Israel, and took most wicked ways to ruin Israel; first hired Balaam to curse them, **#Nu 22 Nu 23**; when this did not succeed, he next acts a vile part, and by lewd harlots draws Israel to sin, **#Nu 25:1,2**, &c., that so he might do against sinful Israel what could not be done against innocent Israel. Moab also was the second oppressor of Israel, who for their sins were delivered into the hands of Eglon king of Moab, who oppressed them eighteen years, **#Jud 3:14**; for which, and other hostile carriages, they are here threatened; yet their inhuman cruelty to

Edom's king is only expressed, the other hostilities to Israel are implied.

He; the king of Moab; who particularly this was is not here nor elsewhere mentioned, though some say it was Mesha, and refer this to #2Ki 3:4; yet it is not very likely that this was the king who acted such cruelty.

Burned the bones; it had been barbarous to have burned the flesh and nerves of an enemy, but to make the fire so hot, and continue it so long, as to burn bones into ashes, is much more barbarous.

Of the king of Edom: this somewhat aggravates the cruelty, he was no common man, but a king, who was so used: his name, and the time when it was done, whether it were some king alive or dead, and his bones digged up, is not mentioned, but every way it was barbarous, though it were done to bones digged out of the grave, as some conjecture.

Into lime, or ashes, calcined the bones, reduced them by fire into fine dust, and (as others conjecture) used these ashes instead of lime to plaster the walls and roofs of his palace; and this was done in hatred and contempt of the king of Edom.

Ver. 2.

I will send a fire: see #Am 1:4.

Moab; some think, but I know not on what ground, that there was a city of this name, and meant here, but on better reason we conclude it to be the whole country, or by a metonymy the people, who were the posterity of Lot by his elder daughter.

It shall devour the palaces: see #Am 1:4.

Kerioth; a strong and principal city of this country; or the cities, so the word will bear, and then the threat is against all their cities.

Moab, the Moabites, all sorts and ranks of them, shall die, be destroyed, and perish utterly, with tumult; such as soldiers in fight or assaults make, when they carry all by force, bearing down all opposition, and slaying all opposers, with that rigour which in such cases is very usual.

With shouting; as conquerors shout, to the end they may dishearten the enemy, and animate their fellow soldiers.

With the sound of the trumpet: this added partly to explain, and partly to confirm, what the prophet had foretold.

Ver. 3.

I will cut off, by the sword of the enemy, the judge; the governor, i. e. every one of them; the singular being put for the plural, to intimate the destruction of all of them.

From the midst thereof; either of Kirioth the metropolis, or of every city in which were judges appointed to govern and minister justice to the people; and these should be cut off in these cities, and in the midst of their government.

The princes; either by birth, or by office, or by excellent endowments, the chief among the Moabitish people.

With him; with the supreme governor, before threatened.

Saith the Lord; noting to us the certainty of the thing, the irrevocable sentence passed upon Moab, its king, princes, and judges, who being cut off, the people must needs perish, and come to nothing.

Ver. 4.

God hath in the former verses threatened the enemies of his people for their outrages against his people; now he does threaten his people for their obstinacy in reiterated sins: see **#Am 4:3**.

Despised; first slighted it, as if no excellency were in it, and next rejected it, as if it were not worthy of their observance; thus they refused with an abhorrence and detestation

the law of the Lord, the whole law, partly by their immoralities and transgressions against the just commands of it, and partly by their false worship and idolatry: that law which was given with so much majesty and terror. on Mount Sinai; from which they should not have departed either to the right hand or to the left; that law which was perfect, holy, and useful, with which no fault could be justly found. So much the greater were their sins, because committed against so clear, full, and pure a law. Have not kept his

commandments, i.e. they have greatly violated, as the Hebrew phrase importeth, #Ne 9:34 Da 9:5,10,11.

Their lies; idols, which are a lie, whether commended to them by their false prophets, or chosen according to their own humour and fancy; all their false, superstitious, and idolatrous worship. Caused them to err; their idolatry was first their error, and this blinded them, made them more sottish and brutish, which was partly from the natural tendency of this sin, and partly from the just judgment of God, #Ro 1:24 2Th 2:10 -12.

After the which, idols or lies,

their fathers, first in Ur of the Chaldees, before Abraham was called, afterwards in Egypt, the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan itself, have walked, successively, one generation after another; idolatry, and superstition, and will-worship have been old hereditary sins, and now shall be punished.

Ver. 5.

I will send a fire: see #Am 1:4.

Judah; the kingdom of the two tribes; Benjamin is to be included with Judah, as elsewhere hath been already often observed. It shall devour the palaces: see #Am 1:4.

Jerusalem; the chief city of Judah's kingdom, the city of God, where was the temple of God, and where were the seats of judicature; the holy city, but now to be destroyed for its sins, as well as other incorrigible nations. Now this was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar, about two hundred years after this prophecy of Amos.

Ver. 6.

For three transgressions: see #Am 1:3.

Israel; the kingdom of the ten tribes, under the government of Jeroboam the Second at this time, against which the prophet was chiefly sent, though he began with Syria and others, by the threats against which nations he prepared both Judah and Israel to hearken and consider.

I will not turn away the punishment: see #Am 1:3.

They; those who by the appointment of the law had power to hear and decide causes between man and man; judges and witnesses, like the corrupt judges,

sold, for bribes were their aim, and they would at any time sell justice to the highest bidder.

The righteous; the innocent, or those who had a just and righteous cause, for the prophet here speaks of the justness of the cause, not of the exact justice or absolute righteousness of the person.

For silver: money was the most current and prevailing commodity with these judges, but money's worth would do the feat too, if money were out of the way.

The poor: when poor men went to law with poor men before these judges, and the thing they contended for was of small value, the contenders too had light purses, and could not give a considerable bribe;

a pair of shoes, a very poor bribe, expressed here proverbially, would sway with these judges, who gaped still after somewhat of gain from all.

Ver. 7.

That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor; or swallow up, as the word is most frequently turned by our interpreters; and so perhaps more plainly is their cruelty and violence set forth, in that they make a prey of the poor, who walk with dust on their heads by reason of distresses that are upon them, and, without any compassion towards them, greedily, and as at once, swallow up and devour the poor, whom, by the law of God, and the office they bear as judges, they should deliver out of the hand of the oppressor.

Turn aside the way of the meek; perversely and maliciously misinterpret the actions, words, and designs of the humble and meek, of the compassionate and merciful, who pity the poor in these straits and dangers. These corrupt judges and violent oppressors are also shameless adulterers and fornicators, they commit that lewdness which the better-tutored heathens abhor and forbear; a kind of incestuous pollution; the father and son keep the

same harlot, and go in unto her. Thus they profanely dishonour me, by casting off my law, and doing that which is so shamefully indecent and unlawful; and giving heathens occasion to blaspheme my name, and either think, or say, Like people, like God.

Ver. 8.

The Jews of old did not, as we, sit upright at their feasts, and meals, but in a posture of greater ease did lean, or lie on one side; so here

they lay themselves down, i.e. put themselves in a feasting posture,

upon clothes laid to pledge, of which the law had expressly said none should detain files all night, **#De 14 12,13**.

By every altar: impudent sinners, who dare thus before the altar, where they suppose that God is present, bring their crying, inexcusable oppressions; and feast in sacred places, on sacred viands, with bloody minds and oppressive practices; and seek mercy from God when they show, no mercy to the poor!

They drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god; to complete their wickedness, they offer their drink offerings in wine which they bought with the fines and pecuniary mulcts laid on the innocent and guiltless, and thus rejoice in their violence, whilst God hates robbery for a burnt-offering.

Ver. 9.

Yet destroyed I, whom they have ungratefully forgotten and forsaken, and set up idol's in competition with me; nay, cast off my law and worship, and embraced idolatry, worshipped idols that never could do them good, nor destroy their enemies; this they did after I had destroyed their enemies.

The Amorite; the mightiest nation of all the Canaanites, and therefore expressly mentioned as an instance of God's great mercy, and Israel's great ingratitude: by this nation mentioned all the rest of the Canaanitish nations are to be understood. These Amorites dwelt beyond Jordan, between that and Moab, and their land fell by lot unto Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. Before them, the children of Israel under the conduct of Moses, **#De 2:24**, &c.; **#De 3:1-14**, at the very sight of whom these

mighty men fled, for God had struck them with terror that they might not stand before Israel.

Whose height was like the height of the cedars: the Amorites were men of largest size, they were of the race of the giants, #Nu 13:32,33. This is a proverbial speech, and sets out the Amorites, exceeding ordinary men in stature as much as the cedar exceeds ordinary trees in height.

Strong as the oaks; another proverbial speech, denoting their great strength above the strength of other men.

I destroyed; utterly rooted them out.

His fruit from above: trees propagated by fruit are diminished by destroying the fruit which is the seed of them; so God cut off the children of the Amorites, and thereby prevented all succession.

His roots from beneath: this refers to the destroying the old standards, that present generation: this last clause refers to the command God gave, #De 7:2.

Ver. 10.

You did not rescue yourselves out of the hands of your enemies, I did in mere mercy with a mighty arm save and rescue you, and brought you up from the land of Egypt, where you were oppressed servants, and exposed to ruin.

Led you, as a shepherd leads his flock: nay, miraculously conducting by the pillar of a cloud and fire, and feeding with manna from heaven.

Forty years, reckoning from their coming out of Egypt.

Through the wilderness: they passed through many wildernesses, named in Scripture according as they were then called, but all these lay so contiguous to each other, that they all made up one great wilderness, as the many names given to parts of the sea make us know what particular part is spoken of, but all make one sea.

To possess, as an heir possesseth that he hath a hereditary right to, the land of the Amorite, including all the rest of the accursed and dispossessed nations.

Ver. 11.

I raised up; gave prophetic endowments, stirred up their minds, commissioned them to prophesy, and carried them through by an undaunted courage given to them, that they, should not fear to set upon, or faint in attending to, their office.

Of your sons for prophets; did not employ strangers, whose affections you might with some colour of reason suspect, but your own sons, whose affections to you and to their own country are unquestionable, were sent prophets to tell you of your sins, to foretell your dangers, and to importune you to repent of your sins, and to prevent your dangers.

Your young men; though that age be generally inclined to please their own fancies, to walk after the sight of their eyes, **#Ec 11:9**, yet did God change the mind of some of them in their youth, and inclined them to eminency in religion, to be examples to others.

Nazarites; which were religious persons under vow bound to a very sober, abstemious, and holy life; either for some certain limited time, or for their whole life: see **#Nu 6:1,2**, &c. These were not to drink any strong or intoxicating liquors.

Is it not even thus? God appeals to them in this matter whether he had not done this for them, given prophets to teach them, and Nazarites to be examples to them, in both which God showed his love and care of them.

Ye children of Israel; apostatized Israel, you of the ten tribes.

Saith the Lord: this is added to excite them to serious pondering what is said to them.

Ver. 12.

But ye, for whose benefit both Nazarites and prophets were raised, you who should have heard their word, and imitated their example,

gave the Nazarites wine; importuned, urged, or it may be (as is the custom of excessive drinkers) forced them to drink wine, to violate their vow, and contemn God's law too, **#Nu 6:3,4**.

Commanded: by this passage it appears that they were men in authority who did this; it is not probable that mean persons who

had no authority would enjoin silence on the prophets, **#Isa 30:10 Am 7:13 Mic 2:6**. It is evident Amaziah was chief priest in Beth-el, and by virtue of his jurisdiction there silenceth the prophet.

The prophets; the true, faithful, and plain-dealing prophets, who rebuked their sins, required them to repent, and threatened judgments if they did not repent.

Saying, Prophesy not: see **#Isa 30:10 Am 7:13 Mic 2:6,11**;

Ver. 13.

Hitherto the Lord by the prophet had declared the sins of the kingdom of the ten tribes, now he is about to pronounce judgment against them; he calls for their attention, and diligent weighing what he is about to speak.

I, the Lord, who have so multiplied mercies to this people,

am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves: some read this passage actively, and make this the sense, I will lead you with these judgments as a cart is loaded, and you shall cry and groan under these judgments, as a cart heavy loaded makes a noise in its motion under such pressures. Perhaps sheaves, the loading of a harvest season, are mentioned, to intimate the ripeness of their sins, and God's reaping them or cutting them down by his judgments, and carrying them together to be thrashed by further judgments.

Ver. 14.

Therefore; because they first loaded God with their sins, and now he loads them with punishments, no way of escape shall be left.

The flight shall perish from the swift; not by swiftness of foot fleeing from the judgments, for their enemies shall be swifter than they, **#Isa 30:16**.

The strong shall not strengthen his force; natural strength of body shall not deliver; such, though they might do more than weaker men, yet shall not save themselves, for they shall not know how to use their strength they shall want courage to do it.

The mighty, the valiant, and man of greatest courage, shall not be able to deliver himself, his courage shall fail.

Ver. 15.

Neither shall he stand; though at distance from the enemies, yet shall not dare to keep his place.

That handleth the bow; much used in the wars of those times, and used by strong and valiant men, but now both strength and valour should fail Israel's bow-men.

He that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself: this is the same, and explains that in the 14th verse.

Neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself: here the prophet foretells that the swiftness of the horse, which some will make use of, shall as little avail, nor his strength joined with his speed shall deliver the rider; neither the strength of the horse shall carry him through, nor his swiftness carry him away from the hand of the pursuer.

Ver. 16.

This verse is not a bare repetition of what he had said before, to confirm it, but he doth foretell an inevitable ruin to those who were the most likely to escape, and a most shameful manner of flight.

Courageous among the mighty; a description of the most famous warriors amongst Israel, such as were known for valour among the mighty and valiant ones, like David's worthies, such as had the heart of a lion.

Shall flee away naked; either without his clothes and furniture, or without his weapons and arms, which were cast away to expedite his flight.

In that day; when God will by the Assyrians, under the conduct of Tiglath-pileser first, and finally under the conduct of Shalmaneser, straiten these sinners. and besiege them in their cities.

Saith the Lord; all confirmed under the seal of Heaven.

AMOS CHAPTER 3

The necessity of God's judgment against Israel, #Am 3:1-8. The publication of it, with the causes thereof, #Am 3:9-15.

Ver. 1.

Hear, with ear and mind, consider it well, for this is to hear indeed.

This word, which is spoken, and the thing decreed too, of God.

The Lord hath spoken; the Lord, who did show you greatest kindness, and whom you have repaid with greatest ingratitude, the everlasting God, who changeth not, hath determined and declared his determinate purpose; against you; or to, or concerning; for if menaces are words against them, yet advice, exhortations, and promises are to, and concerning, those to whom they are spoken.

O children of Israel; subjects of Jeroboam the Second, now king of the ten tribes.

Against the whole family: and let the two tribes consider too how far they are concerned in the prophet's reprovng for sin, calling to repent of sin, and threatening it they do not repent.

Brought up from the land of Egypt: see #Am 2:10.

Ver. 2.

You only have I known; chosen, made near to myself adopted to be my peculiar ones, to be sons and daughters to me; to you only have I revealed my whole will, and given you my law for your rule and direction, and my promises for your encouragement, and required you to have no other gods before me. Of all the families of the earth: this possibly may intimate God's choosing them when they were but a small family, as in Abraham's day, and when other families were as considerable as that of Abraham was; the growth of which into a mighty nation was from the favour and blessing of God, performing his promises to their forefathers; and this will aggravate their apostacy from God, which in the next words he threatens to punish.

Therefore: here is an elliptic speech, for God doth not punish his peculiar people because they are so near and dear to him, but for that, being so, they had forgotten their duty and obligations to God, and had abused all these his mercies.

I will punish you; my hand shall punish certainly, whoever are the means, and whatever is the manner, of which you shall hear more, but I will certainly visit for it. For all your iniquities; all

your idolatries, and sins against the precepts of the first table, and all your injustices, and sins against the second table; all your desertings of the law of piety and justice; none of their works shall ever be forgotten, #Am 8:7.

Ver. 3.

Here the prophet threatens this people that God would begin his visitations and their punishments in his forsaking them, and doth by this interrogatory endeavour to convince them that they could not with any reason expect better from him; it could not be they should long have God's presence with them, or that he should walk among them and bless them, while they walk so contrary to him; they could not in reason hope that there should be any friendly commerce where was so little agreement and friendship; a retaliation they must expect from the Lord; he will forsake them who have forsaken him.

Ver. 4.

In this verse, by a double similitude, Amos certifieth the Jews of near and inevitable punishment; first, by similitude of a lion roaring at sight of his prey, which seldom escapes when the lion roareth against it. The lion usually is so nigh to his prey when he roareth, that he leapeth on it presently, and teareth it: so here God would have sinning Israel know that their sins had provoked him to wrath, and that his judgments were near at hand. Nay, nearer yet; like a prey dragged by the old lion into the den for the young lions to feed on, so was their case, their enemies the Assyrians should as certainly devour them as the young lions in the den do devour the prey which is brought to them. If the departure of God from them affect them not, perhaps the fierceness of lion-like enemies may affect them.

Ver. 5.

A bird; a sparrow properly, one kind put for all sorts.

Fall in a snare: these are taken by nets spread on the earth for that end, and these nets are watched by the fowler, attending till the birds are within the shrape, then he draws the net over them: so here, For your sins, O Israel, God will spread his net, he will as a watchful fowler attend and keep his eye upon you, and cast the net over you.

Shall one take up a snare, and have taken nothing at all? flatter not yourselves as if you should finally escape because you have so long been safe and prosperous; though the fowler doth long wait, he will not take up the snare before all the prey, or some of it at least, be taken in it: so the Lord, against whom you have sinned, and who hath spread his net for you, will certainly let it lie till you are taken in it.

Ver. 6.

Shall a trumpet be blown, when an alarm is sounded, by which notice is given of danger approaching, of an enemy invading the land, in the city, any city, but particularly in a frontier city, in which were watchmen on the walls and towers to give notice of an enemy, #Isa 52:8 Eze 3:17 33:7,

and the people not be afraid; affected with the danger, to weigh how great it is, how near it is; whether it be best to prepare to resist it, or to flee from it? Such-like affections doth the alarm of war work in the minds of men ordinarily, and there is good reason for it: but though God hath sounded the alarm, yet brutish, stupid, and sinful Israel fear not, neither consult what is the best course to prevent the danger.

Shall there be evil, of affliction and sorrow, such as plague, famine, &c., in a city, or any where else, and the Lord, the eternal, holy, and righteous Governor of all in heaven and on earth, hath not done it, either immediately by his own hand, or mediately by the hands of those he employs? the evil of punishment he will execute and bring upon Israel; he will by the hands of the Assyrians in due time execute it.

Ver. 7.

Surely, since that, or, forasmuch as, the Lord God will do nothing; usually the Lord doth no great tiring for or against his people, neither brings great judgments upon them for sin, nor bestows great good upon them for their encouragement to duty,

but he revealeth, but he foretelleth the one and the other by his prophets to his people, that they may by repentance prevent the evil threatened, and by constancy in obedience attain the good promised.

His secret; his purpose and determinate counsel, which would never be known aforehand if he did not reveal it.

Unto his servants; who fear the Lord, and do his will in the midst of worst of times; they are holy men of God to whom the Lord revealeth his will.

The prophets; by office called of God to this, and by gifts fitted for this, and by extraordinary assistance carried through this work.

Ver. 8.

The lion hath roared; God hath threatened; and, as a lion roareth when near his prey, so God hath terribly threatened what is near to be done. Amos lived and prophesied in Jeroboam's time, about A.M. 3150, and these threatened judgments began to come upon Israel when the conspiracies and usurpations of Shallum, Menahem, &c. filled all with blood and confusions, about A.M. 3177.

Who will not fear? what wise man, who that is solicitous for his own good and safety, or that hath any affections for the good of others, will do less than reverence and fear, and prevent by a speedy repentance?

The Lord God hath spoken: this is plainly what was before figuratively set forth, God had spoken to his prophets but dreadful things against Israel. Who can but prophesy? they dare not conceal them, Amos cannot but speak what he had heard, **#Jer 1:17 Ac 4:19 5:25.**

Ver. 9.

Publish; you prophets whom I have sent to threaten the sins of my people Israel, now invite strangers to come and observe what just cause I have to do what I threaten.

In the palaces at Ashdod; one of the principal cities of the Philistines, **#Am 1:8 Zep 2:4;** let those that are in the court at Ashdod, and have a mind to travel a while out of their own land, let them know what strange sights they may see in their neighbour land.

And in the palaces in the land of Egypt; let the young noblemen of Egypt come too, yea, let as many as will come.

Assemble yourselves; by an appointment (if it may be) let them meet together, and make their observations, and then judge between their doings and their sufferings, my judgments and the causes of them.

Upon the mountains of Samaria; either the whole kingdom of Samaria or the ten tribes, or else it may denote the great men and cities of Samaria; let Egyptians and Philistines in their travels up and down over the kingdom of Israel associate themselves with the great men, and converse in the cities.

Behold; take an exact view of all done by them and in them.

The great tumults; the seditious counsels and rebellious conspiracies, begun amongst them on the death of Jeroboam the Second, and continued one after another for many years, like madmen, bent on ruining one another, to the undoing of all: besides all former violences of Baasha, Zimri, Omri, and Jehu, who took the kingdom out of the hands of their masters; those of Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, acted in the times Amos pointeth at.

The oppressed; multitudes of oppressed ones in those times, when the usurpers took it to be their interest to crush all they feared or suspected.

In the midst thereof; Samaria, the chief city of the kingdom, and in other cities; yea, rather through the whole kingdom of Samaria.

Ver. 10.

For they know not; those who oppress others do it as unlearned lawyers and judges do, they are shamefully ignorant of the law of God.

To do right; what is equal between man and man they will not consider, nor do they care whether it be done or not.

Store up; as men lay up wealth in their treasures, they fill their houses.

Violence; perverting judgment, first condemning the innocent, next seizing all as forfeited by law; so they did, no doubt, in those times of rebellion and usurpations; sequestrations and decimations, &c. were then too.

Robbery; the true name of all their proceedings, however palliated.

In their palaces: this intimates to us that the greatest among them were chief actors herein; see **#Zep 1:9**; but as they stored up violence, they also treasured up misery and desolation too, as the Hebrew elegantly imports.

Ver. 11.

Therefore; because of all the violence and rapine, with other crying sins, multiplied against God in the midst of them.

An adversary, the Assyrian with united forces, shall be even round about the land, on all sides shall beset thee; the whole land shall be but as one besieged city, out of which none, or so few as next to none, shall escape.

He shall bring down thy strength from thee; lay low all thy fortresses, break all thy power, kill thy valiant men, destroy thy armies, and by force take thy strong holds.

Thy palaces shall be spoiled; where thou laidst up thy spoils gotten by violence and oppression, there thy enemy shall find them, and take them away as lawful plunder; and when thy riches are carried out, they shall burn the palaces themselves too.

Ver. 12.

In brief, this verse foretells how few and with what difficulty they shall escape who are not swallowed up of the approaching judgments, and it is elegantly expressed in the following similitude.

As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth; as the shepherd doth hardly rescue a small part of a sheep or lamb, when the lion hath seized and torn it.

The lion; the fiercest, strongest, and boldest creature, not a bear or wolf.

Two legs; which are parts the ravening lion less regardeth and last eateth;

or a piece of an ear, less considerable than the legs.

So shall the children of Israel, some of the children of Israel, or some of the ten tribes, but the poorer, meaner, and more worthless of them,

be taken out that dwell in Samaria; shall escape when Samaria is taken.

In the corner of a bed; lying in some dark corner, and on a piece of a bed, as the poor do in most places.

In Damascus; the chiefest city of Syria, taken by Tiglath-pileser much about the time when he wasted Israel in aid of Ahaz against Rezin and Pekah.

In a couch; some few of the poorer among them also shall escape, pitied by the enemy when he findeth them weakly and sick upon their couch.

Ver. 13.

Hear ye; prophets.

Testify, publicly declare and witness, make what proof you can of this thing, in the house of Jacob; to the ten tribes, as first and most nearly concerned herein, and to the two tribes also, who, as guilty of many and great sins, so are in danger of many and great judgments, and these hastening on them.

Saith the Lord God; assure them the message comes from the Lord God.

The God of hosts, who is Lord of all, and hath all power in his hand; when he commands, all the hosts of creatures attend to execute his commands, so that what he threateneth he will surely execute.

Ver. 14.

In the day; in the appointed time, and within compass of a little time too; God will in his set time make quick work with them.

Visit the transgressions of Israel upon him; the many and great transgressions of the ten tribes, these God will, as he hath foretold by his prophets, severely punish, and in particular their idolatry.

The altars, erected unto the calves, and on which they Offered sacrifices to those idols by Jeroboam's appointment at first, and

by the continued commands of their idolatrous governors. It is possible there might be altars to other idols too: see #2Ch 34:4 Ho 8:11 10:1.

Beth-el; anciently called Luz, but afterwards Jacob, on his comfortable vision, did change its name into Beth-el; it was in the tribe of Benjamin, and one of the two places Jeroboam first set up his idolatry in.

The horns of the altar; whether a more sacred part in their account I know not, but who fled to the altar, and laid hold on the horns of it, found them a sanctuary, #1Ki 2:28; but these now should not be safety to themselves.

Shall be cut off, the altars shall be pulled down,

and fall to the ground; be cast out as common, and trodden under foot with contempt.

Ver. 15.

I will smite; by the greatness of the desolation it shall appear that God did smite, though by the Assyrian; or perhaps it may refer to the earthquake foretold two years before it came, #Am 1:1.

The winter house; which probably was in the chief city, where the rich and great men retired in the winter time, as more for their delight than the country, horrid and cold, and stripped of its glory.

The summer house; the houses of pleasure, where the nobles and rich men of Israel spent the summer time.

The houses of ivory; not built with, but beautified with ivory, or the elephant's tooth, called here and elsewhere, by way of eminency, the tooth.

Shall perish; by the violence of the enemies, these stately houses shall be ransacked first, and pulled down next, and left in rubbish.

The great houses; or many, for the word includes both. The magnificent palaces of princes and the nobles of Israel

shall have an end; shall cease for ever, either be utterly wasted, or cease to be theirs whose once they were.

Saith the Lord; all this shall infallibly come to pass and be fulfilled in due time.

AMOS CHAPTER 4

Israel reproved for oppression, #Am 4:1-3; for idolatry, #Am 4:4,5; and for their incorrigibleness, #Am 4:6-13.

Ver. 1.

This verse is an introduction to all that follows in this chapter.

Hear attentively, and consider the consequences of it; weigh both what and whose it is that is spoken. This word; prophecy, or sermon of reproof and threatening: see #Am 3:1.

Ye kine of Bashan: so Amos, bred among cattle, compares the mighty, proud, wanton, and oppressive riflers of Israel to those full-fed, strong, and wanton beasts, which in the herds did push at, hurt, and disturb the weaker cattle. Some will by this understand the court ladies of Israel in those times; but this perhaps is too nice: though, as in Ahab's time Jezebel was at court, and a promoter of oppression and violence, so there might be in aftertimes some like her, and perhaps these may be intended secondarily; yet surely Amos intends the great men and governors, whom he calls kine of Bashan, a fruitful country, of which see #Eze 39:18 Na 1:4.

In the mountain of Samaria: in a decorum to his first allusion he calls their places of power, authority, and office in the kingdom of Israel, mountains; for as those beasts grazing on mountains grew fat, so these men by their fees, perquisites, and bribes grew insolent and mischievous: see #Am 3:9.

Which oppress the poor; the meaner sort of the people, the commonalty, under their jurisdiction, by colour of law.

Which crush the needy; by force and open violence break in pieces the afflicted, who have neither power nor friend to relieve them.

Which say to their masters; husbands, say some, so the Hebrew will bear; or it may refer to some of the greatest officers in Israel, who had inferior officers under them, or the masters of the poor.

Bring; get us commission, or bring them into our court and office.

Let us drink; we will get by them to feast on and revel in drink.

Ver. 2.

I have often told you that God had spoken, now I assure you that the mighty and eternal God hath sworn the thing, and you must therefore needs conclude it sure and certain.

He hath sworn by his holiness, by himself, as he is the holy God, and cannot lie: see #Ps 89:35.

The days of darkness, slaughter, famine, desolation, and captivity, threatened against you, shall come upon you, oppressors that crush the poor.

He will take; God by the Assyrian army under Shalmaneser, nay, before that time you shall be taken, as fish are taken with the hook, during the intestine wars that are coming upon you.

You, who now live, and hear the word of Amos and Hoses, but notwithstanding do continue to act the same violence still.

With hooks, or thorns, as the Hebrew, with which they did pierce the greater fish, before they had the skill of making iron darts, as some observe.

Your posterity; the children of these oppressors.

With fish-hooks; shall be taken as silly fish, and as easily carried away; the enemy shall with delight insnare and destroy them.

Ver. 3.

And ye, kine of Bashan, oppressors distressed by the just hand of God, and by the violent hand of your enemy, shall go out, endeavour to make your escape by flight, at the breaches, which the besieging enemy made in your walls, when Samaria is besieged.

Every cow at that which is before her: it shall be a universal flight, and with great consternation, they not able to forecast where the safest, but taking which way is readiest.

Ye shall cast them into the palace; either cast away all the riches and ornaments of your palaces, or the prey and bribes you had laid up there, or ye shall abandon the palaces ye dwelt in.

Ver. 4.

Come to Beth-el, the known place of the moscholatria, calf-worship: see #Am 3:14.

And transgress: this clears it to be an irony, either throwing them up to their obstinate way of sinning, giving them over as hopeless and incorrigible sinners, or deriding their trust and dependence on idols, to which they sacrificed at Beth-el: See what will be the issue hereof, how you shall succeed herein.

At Gilgal multiply transgression; Gilgal was a place also where much idolatry was acted: see #**Ho 4:15 9:15 12:11**. Since you will not be warned, go on, try whether God likes your sacrifices there as well as you like them, and whether they will be a means to preserve from judgments, or sins hastening judgments' on you.

Bring your sacrifices every morning: in the same irony God doth by Amos express his own displeasure, reprove their sin, and threaten it, though they imitate the instituted worship at Jerusalem, #**Ex 29:38,39 Nu 28:3,4**.

And your tithes after three years; God had, #**De 14:28**, commanded every third year that all the tithe of that year should be brought, and laid up in a public storehouse; to this law, with the same irony, doth the prophet allude here.

Ver. 5.

Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven; as all the rest of your will-worship, so this also is against the express law, #**Le 2:11**, but yet you will persist in it; and do so at your peril, try whether it end in good to you.

Proclaim and publish the free-offerings; publicly, frequently, and earnestly persuade your people to voluntary sacrifices, in which you think to please me; but you offer them all to idols; this your religion is impiety.

This liketh you; as you invented it, so it pleaseth you, and you will not be reclaimed.

Ye children of Israel; ye idolatrous, apostate Israelites.

Saith the Lord God; for these you shall be punished by the Lord your God.

Ver. 6.

And I, the Lord, who gave many blessings to win you to repentance, hath also tried what might be done by judgments.

Cleanness of teeth: this is a description of famine by one effect of it; where meat fails the teeth are not fouled, as where it is eaten.

In all your cities; it was a general famine, and probably it was that long famine, #2Ki 8:1.

Want of bread in all your places; if there were some bread, yet it was very scarce every where: this passage explains the former.

Yet have ye not returned unto me; yet this starving people repented not of their idolatries, nor cast off their idols; left not their sins of oppression and cruelty, &c.; see #Joe 2:12,13; what you did like returning was partial and hypocritical, and not lasting.

Ver. 7.

I also have withholden the rain from you; your vanities could not, and because ye did so greatly sin against me I would not, give you rain; I forbade the clouds from above, and they, thus prohibited, did withhold their rain, as I threatened, #De 28:23,24.

When there were yet three months to the harvest; at a season when your country most usually had, and as then it ever did most need, rain: see #Joe 2:23. Three months drought then, as it was unusual in the course of nature, so it was an extraordinary curse and punishment on them. That you might see my hand in it and be instructed, I gave rain to one city, and withheld rain from the next neighbour city; nay, one part of a field, the same field, was watered and flourished, another part dry and withered. All this to convince and turn you.

Ver. 8.

Two or three, a certain for an uncertain number,

cities, the places for the inhabitants, by a usual metonymy,

wandered unto one city to drink water: it seems to imply that they travelled at some uncertainty, as they do who wander and rove about. It is not unlikely but that in the prophet's times the story might be well known and fresh in memory, though here no mention is made of these cities.

But they were not satisfied; either that city they went to had not enough for them, or durst not part with it; or, though they quenched their thirst, yet because they must return back to their

own dry and waterless cities, or because God withdrew his blessing, they were never the better, or else not much or long the better.

Yet have ye not returned unto me: see #Am 4:6.

Ver. 9.

To other judgments inflicted on you I have added this also, my hand hath been heavy upon you,

I have smitten you with blasting; the excessive heat and drought have turned your corn into black and parched smut or ashes;

and mildew; a bane to corn through too much wet; the seasons were extremely unkind, and all spoiled with it.

When your gardens, about your houses for convenience and pleasure.

Vineyards; planted for your support and to enrich you, to cheer your heart.

Fig trees; which were excellent, of very great use and profit in those countries.

Olive trees; a principal commodity arose from their oliveyards: all that was for delight, profit, and necessary use.

Increased, when they were seemingly most fruitful.

The palmer-worm: see #Joe 1:3,10-12.

Devoured; eat up all, as is the manner of that worm.

Ver. 10.

I have sent; you have died of plague, but I commissioned the disease, I sent it, and it swept you away in such manner that any observant eye might have seen the hand of God against you in it, and might have read the commission.

The pestilence; arrow of God, that walketh in the dark, that wasteth at noon-day.

After the manner of Egypt; in which there was somewhat extraordinary, it swept away both men and beasts, say some; probably it was this disease which by the stroke of the angel seized the first-born in Egypt. Others interpret this with particular

respect to the death of them in going down to seek aid of Egypt, or in their return from Egypt, as if the prophet minded them of many that died on the way to or from Egypt; but the phrase in the way is better rendered by our translators after the manner.

Your young men have I slain; God was their enemy, and slew their young men, the choice of their strength and hope.

With the sword; in war, and by their neighbouring enemies in Jehoahaz's time, and Syrians since that too, #2Ki 13:3, and #2Ki 15 2Ki 16, and #2Ki 17 compared.

Have taken away your horses; not by murrain, but by what was worse to you, by the hand of those who did ride them; and these being slain the horses were taken by the enemy, and added to their strength, and your danger.

I have made the stink of our camps to come up unto your nostrils; so great slaughter hath been made in your camp, that there were not sufficient to bury the slain before they stunk and offended you.

Ver. 11.

Overthrown; utterly consumed and destroyed your houses and goods.

Some of you; though it was a total consumption to those it fell on, yet it was but on some, who might be wantings to others, and by which others might see how easy it was for God to destroy them all.

As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: we no where else read of such fire from heaven, yet it is possible some such judgment might fall on some of their cities, and not be recorded; but I do rather understand it proverbially spoken, denoting most grievous and desolating fires, or judgments.

Ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; such of you as escaped were yet in very great danger, and as firebrands in midst of the fire, where you were with others burning till infinite mercy saved a remnant, and plucked you out.

Ver. 12.

Therefore, because none of my former methods have succeeded, as in reason might have been expected,

thus will I do unto thee, in some more terrible manner will I now proceed against thee, O Israel; you of the ten tribes.

Because I will do this unto thee, and therefore my last advice to you is to consider it well; if you think well of it, possibly you may see and prevent the threatened evil.

Prepare to meet thy God; if you humble yourselves, and so return, it will be mercy to you; but if you proudly and sinfully refuse to return, know ye that you must perish, for you can never make good your cause against God, and yet you must meet him, for he will ere he hath done with you end the controversy.

Thy God; who once was thy God, and whom thou still ownest for thy God, and who would yet be thine if thou repent.

Ver. 13.

To move them to act for their safety, the prophet tells them how great and dreadful God is, the most dreadful and terrible enemy, but the most desirable friend.

He that formeth the mountains; when there was not a mountain or hill, or the least dust of either, thy God, O Israel, formed them; and it is wisdom to return to him, for he can remove difficulties and pressures were they as heavy as mountains, and so he can mend all with you quickly; and if your confidences in sinful ways were as strong as mountains, he can overthrow them: return therefore and repent.

Createth; giveth being by an almighty will.

The wind; which for its instability seems of contrary nature to mountains, which doth shake them and overturn foundations; that wind which we feel and hear, though we see it not, that makes hideous noises, and works dreadful effects. The storms you are threatened with, O Israel, are like the wind, dreadful, irresistible; but, as the wind, raised and ruled by God, who can soon with one word lay them all asleep: return therefore to him.

And declareth unto man what is his thought: think not by any counsels to prevent what God determines against an impenitent

and sinful nation, as his power is infinite in creating, his wisdom is infinite too and unsearchable, and he can and will take sinners in their incorrigible wickednesses and punish them: be wise, therefore, and return to him by repentance.

That maketh the morning darkness; can as easily turn outward prosperity into extreme adversity as he can turn a glorious morning into a dark, dismal, and overclouded day, and so will do against you if you repent not; and can turn a cloudy morning into brightness, and misery into happiness, if you repent.

And treadeth upon the high places of the earth; can tread under foot the idols that are worshipped on high places of the earth, and trample on high and mighty potentates, exalted above ordinary men as highest hills are above lowest valleys.

The Lord; who alone am the Lord, the eternal and mighty God.

The God of hosts is his name; whose sovereign power and command all creatures obey, and act for or against us as he willeth.

AMOS CHAPTER 5

A lamentation for Israel, **#Am 5:1-3**. An exhortation to repentance, **#Am 5:4-20**. God rejecteth their hypocritical service, **#Am 5:21-27**.

Ver. 1.

This preface you have in the same words **#Am 3:1**, and in part also **#Am 4:1**; to which I now add, that the person here speaking may refer to the prophet and to the Lord who sent him, both speak this word.

A lamentation; which is very sad and mournful to all concerned in it, woeful news to the kingdom of the ten tribes.

Ver. 2.

The virgin: this name is given to her not for her purity and integrity, for she was an adulteress, but either ironically, or because her present riches, glory, and beauty seemed to be that of a virgin that had her portion, strength, and honour untouched; or else by a figure as properly may it be applied to Israel, as to

Babylon, #Isa 47:1, or to Egypt, #Jer 46:11, to Zidon, #Isa 23:12.

Is fallen; or shall ere long fall, the thing put as done already because of the certainty of it. Or rather, is already falling by civil wars and conspiracies, which prepared way for the final ruin of Israel: it is possible this sermon of the prophet might be about the time that Shallum or Menahem usurped the throne. Or else it may refer to the times of Jehoahaz, when that of the third verse will appear to have been fulfilled; this seems most probable.

She shall no more rise; though they might by repentance have risen again, yet the prophet, considering their obstinacy, speaks of it as a thing that should never be, as eventually it proved also, for Israel never recovered the fall by Shalmaneser.

She is forsaken upon her land; broken to pieces upon her own land, and so left as a broken vessel; or she shall be by home divisions first broken, and afterwards carried captive.

There is none to raise her up; none at home among all her princes, counsellors, and rulers, nor any friend among her allies; all leave her to sink.

Ver. 3.

Thus saith the Lord God: this solemnly attesteth the certainty of the thing.

The city that went out by a thousand, that sent out one thousand soldiers as the quota they were assessed at to help against an invader,

shall leave a hundred; shall lose nine parts of ten, so great shall the slaughter be which the prevailing enemy shall make upon Israel; and here the prophet useth a certain number to express an uncertain; or proverbially, scarce a tenth man shall escape.

That which went forth by a hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel; the kingdom of the ten tribes; and this perhaps may refer backward to Jehoahaz's time, #2Ki 13; to be sure it is fulfilled in the wars of Shalmaneser and the taking Samaria.

Ver. 4.

For, or yet, truly.

Thus saith the Lord; amidst all those threats there is still a reserve, a conditional proviso, and the Lord here does by his prophet declare it.

Unto the house of Israel; though apostate both in sacred and civil things, though polluted and defiled greatly, and this through many scores of years, yet after all repentance would help them.

Seek ye me; inquire for my law, and repent of your despising it, obey it in all things for the future, inquire diligently what promises I have made and wait for them, believe, obey, and repent; for this is to seek the Lord, when a people have turned from the Lord, as you have done, O house of Israel.

Ye shall live; it shall be well with you, your persons, families, and the whole kingdom shall prosper, as the Hebrew phrase importeth.

Ver. 5.

But seek not Beth-el; consult not, worship not, depend not on the idol calf at Beth-el; or seek not God at Beth-el, but at Jerusalem, where he will be found; cast off idolatry, return to the true God and to his instituted worship, so shall ye live.

Nor enter into Gilgal; a city of great idolatry, a place where God will not be sought nor found by you: see **#Ho 4:15 9:15 12:11**, where it is more fully explained.

Pass not to Beer-sheba; though God of old did appear there to Isaac, **#Ge 26:24**, though Abraham dwelt there, **#Ge 21:31-33**, and Jacob sacrificed there with acceptance, **#Ge 46:1-3**, yet now God appointeth Jerusalem and the temple the only places of his solemn worship, and of your seeking him.

Gilgal; the inhabitants of Gilgal, for the place could not go into captivity; it is a metonymy, the place put for the people.

Shall surely go into captivity; Shalmaneser and his Assyrians shall certainly carry them away captives.

Beth-el, both city and people,

shall come to nought; shall be vanity and disappointment to all that trust to the idols of it.

Ver. 6.

Seek the Lord, and ye shall life: the prophet repeateth his exhortation to repentance with the repeated promise of a good issue hereon: see **#Am 5:4**.

Lest he break out: this is a new argument to persuade them to do their duty, for unless they do it God's judgments will break out upon them.

Like fire; suddenly, with strength and prevalence, as the Hebrew word here rendered break out importeth. In the house of Joseph; the kingdom of the ten tribes, the chief whereof was Ephraim, who was the younger son of Joseph, and the first erector of this kingdom was an Ephraimite, **#1Ki 11:26**.

And devour it; utterly consume it, as fire useth to do where it gets head and prevaileth.

And there be none to quench it in Beth-el; if once this fire break out from God, all your idols in Beth-el shall not be able to quench it; no tears from your eyes there shed, no blood of sacrifice there offered, shall quench it.

Ver. 7.

Ye; rulers and judges.

Judgment; the righteous sentence of the law, the equity of it, which is sweet and pleasing to just men, and safe for all.

Wormwood; proverbially understood, bitterness, grief, injustice, and oppression.

Leave off righteousness; make it to cease in your courts of judicature, and tread it under foot.

In the earth; or among men, in the land: the latter part of this verse explains the former.

Ver. 8.

Seek him; though this be not in the Hebrew, it is well supplied by our interpreters.

That maketh the seven stars; a famous constellation, and whose rising about September was usually accompanied with rains and sweet showers, which, as **#Am 4:7**, had been withholden, whence

want of water and bread; now the prophet adviseth to seek the Lord, who can give them rain and corn by the kindly influences of that watery constellation, which as he made, so he guides and manageth. This I take to be the most natural meaning of the place.

Orion; which rising about November brings usually cold rains and frosts, intermixed with much uncertainty, but very seasonable for the earth, to make it fruitful; this mentioned to persuade these people to repent, who were afflicted with such barrenness and unfruitfulness as brought famine with it.

Turneth the shadow of death into the morning; proverbially, that turneth greatest adversity, which is here called the

shadow of death, into as great prosperity, here called the morning, #Ps 23:4.

Maketh the day dark with night; metaphorically this expresseth a change of prosperity into adversity. Ye house of Israel, think well of it, you are in a dangerous state; be advised to seek him who can turn your morning into night, or your night into morning; who can on a sudden remove all evil from you, and bring all good upon you; seek him therefore, and seek not idols.

Calleth for the waters of the sea; either to raise them to terrible swellings and rage, or rather calls up waters out of the sea, by commanding the vapour to ascend, which he turneth into rain;

and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; and then poureth out from the clouds to make the earth fruitful.

The Lord is his name; he only is God and the Lord. Who doth thus seek him?

Ver. 9.

That strengtheneth the spoiled; you have been exceedingly weakened and spoiled by your enemies; yet return, repent, seek God, for he can renew your strength, that you shall spoil your spoilers who are strong.

Against the strong; the mighty, victorious, and insolent.

The spoiled, those that had lost their strength, and were as conquered,

shall come against the fortress; shall rally, re-embolden, and form a siege against their besiegers: so God, whom you should serve, will soon turn all from dark and dismal into light and pleasing unto you and yours; in your apostacy all will be misery and darkness, but in your return all shall be well and prosperous with you.

Ver. 10.

Either this is the prophet's complaint of them without further expecting their compliance with his advice, or he foretells what they will do, judges and people.

They hate him that rebuketh; they both hate them that rebuke; judges hate the prophets, who rebuke corrupt judges; and the people hate impartial judges, if any such be among them.

In the gate; where judges sat, and where the prophets did many times deliver their message.

They abhor him that speaketh uprightly; they cannot brook any one that deals plainly and honestly with them, whether judge, prophet, or private person.

Ver. 11.

Your treading; their oppression was more than ordinarily proud and tyrannous, expressed here by treading. It was very heavy on the poor, an effect of fraud, and executed with tyrannical insolence, as the word and its paraphrase imports.

Is upon the poor, who have not power to withstand your violence, nor money to buy your friendship.

Ye take from him, receive when offered, and ye force them to offer, you extort from the poor,

burdens of wheat; great quantities of best wheat, on which the poor should live, either making bread of it to feed them, or else making money of it to serve other occasions. It is not said what burden, but probably as much as the poor man was able to carry.

Ye have built houses; perhaps these corrupt judges had built for their children; so one greedy and ravenous judge might build as many houses as he had sons, or these judges being many, had built many houses.

Of hewn stone; intimating the greatness, beauty, and strength of them, and they flatter themselves that they and their posterity shall long dwell at ease and multiply in these goodly houses.

But ye shall not dwell in them; you by oppression build, but God will by his just hand, and by the Assyrians' violence, turn you out of those houses, and make you captives in a land where your enemies please to carry you, you shall find that, #De 28:30, fulfilled on you.

Pleasant vineyards; most desirable for situation, for fruitfulness, for sweetness and goodness of the grape; every way delightful.

But ye shall not drink wine of them; either they shall not bear, or the enemy shall devour, or you shall be carried away into captivity. The threat, #De 28:39, shall be executed.

Ver. 12.

For; wonder not at the threatened severity, as if it were too rigorous; it is but proportioned to your sins.

I, the Lord, whom you provoke, who have threatened you, know, clearly, fully, and in all the circumstances of them, what moves you to do so, what pretences of law you make: all your evasions are vain and foolish.

Your manifold transgressions; the increased number of your sins, and the greatness of them too, as the word importeth.

Your mighty sins; which mightily wrong and break the poor and needy.

They afflict, besiege, or with hostile minds watch against, and gladly take any occasion to wrong and grieve, the just; not absolutely and sinlessly just, but such as are comparatively just, or those whose cause is just, or those that live with regard to all the commands of God, and follow righteousness: it was the mighty sin of the corrupt rulers in Samaria and Israel at that day, that they were enemies to all righteousness.

They take a bribe; in civil causes bribes carried it; see #Am 2:6; here bribes set criminals free, a ransom. as the word in the Hebrew, buys off the punishment appointed by the law against murderers, adulterers, &c.

They turn aside the poor in the gate; the poor, who appear in their courts for justice, they turn them away, or delay to hear, or hear and judge unjustly, and so send them away wronged and crying.

From their right: these words fully express the prophet's meaning, and are therefore well supplied in our version.

Ver. 13.

Therefore, because that men are so universally impatient of hearing reproof, and yet their sins so much abound, and so much deserve reproof; since they will sooner turn against the speaker, than turn from the sin spoken against.

The prudent; the wise men; prophets, say some, but I rather think other private men are here meant, whose private capacity alloweth them to keep silence when others must speak.

Shall keep silence; be forced to it, say some, they shall be silenced; this is true, but rather here is a voluntary, chosen silence toward vile corrupters of law and justice, who will nothing mend though reprov'd; or a silence before God, owning his justice in punishing such sinners.

For it is an evil time; both for the sinfulness of it, which provoketh God to wrath, and for the sorrows, troubles, wars, and captivity of this people, by the Assyrians.

Ver. 14.

Seek good; turn to the law of God, study it, that ye may do the good it requireth in works of piety, justice, and charity.

And not evil: you have devised evil, and done it in works of impiety, injustice, and cruelty. Or this may be the same with **#Am 5:4-6**, which see.

That ye may live: see **#Am 5:4**.

The Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you; the eternal glorious God, who is Lord of all, and can help you, having all the hosts of heaven and earth at his disposal; he will be with you to bless and save you yet, notwithstanding all your former sins.

As ye have spoken; you have boasted his being with you, you think he is bound to be with you and own you; so he will indeed, but it is if you repent, cease from idols and violence.

Ver. 15.

Slight dislikes will do little in this ease, you rulers and judges must heartily

hate, and show that you hate, the evil, both ways, doings, contrivers, and abettors of the evil among the people and yourselves;

and love the good; commend, encourage, defend, and reward all good in others, and do it yourselves; let your heart be toward good things and good men.

Establish judgment in the gate: by this it is evident the prophet speaks to governors and judges among them: what the import of the phrase is see **#Am 5:10,12**. Set up honest and upright judges in every gate, where judges did sit in those days.

It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious; possibly he will forgive, or abate or respite the evil days, possibly he may give you his gracious presence, and yet save

the remnant of Joseph; what the invasions of enemies, or the civil wars, have spared, and left in Samaria and Israel, the ten tribes: **#Am 5:6**.

Ver. 16.

The prophet foreseeing their obstinacy in their sins, and their refusing to obey his counsel from the Lord, doth proceed to denounce judgment against them.

The Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus: that there might be no doubt made of the truth of the prophet's words, he doth in most solemn manner attest it to be from the Lord; and that he might awake them to repentance and humiliation, he proclaims the majesty and power of God who calls them to it.

Wailing; lamentations uttered in words and gestures, **#Ec 12:5 Jer 4:8 Zec 12:10**, shall every where be seen and heard in the broad streets of your cities, as when the Assyrians prevailed and cut off the forces of Israel, besieged and took their strong holds. Shall be in all streets of great towns or cities.

They shall say in all the highways, abroad in the country, and on the road, all shall cry out, as undone, dispirited, and hopeless men,

Alas! alas! They shall call the husbandman to mourning: this sort of men are little used to such ceremonies of mourning, but now such shall their state be, that they shall be called upon; Leave your toil, betake yourselves to public mourning.

And such as are skilful of lamentation; and to make all sound doleful, call in those whose art lieth in acting the part of mourners, and can move hardest hearts to lament and bewail. See these **#Jer 9:17,18 Mt 9:23.**

Ver. 17.

In all vineyards shall be wailing: in these places was usually the greatest jollity, and they gathered their vintage with joy; but now it is quite contrary, either vines are blasted, or eaten up, or destroyed of the enemy.

I will pass through thee, as an incensed God, punishing all, every where, who have sinned against him; and therefore every place now shall be full of sorrow, because every place hath been full of sin.

Ver. 18.

That desire, scoffingly, or not believing any such day would come: the prophets had long threatened such a day, but these scoffers thought no such thing could overtake them, and if it did they would know the worst of it; alter their course they will not, whatever comes on it, and they are confident the prophets fright them with bugbears: but woe to such scoffers!

The day of the Lord: see **#Joe 1:15 2:1 Zep 1:14.**

To what end is it for you? what do you think to get by it? what good can you expect when darkest calamities overwhelm you?

The day of the Lord is darkness; all adversity, most black and doleful, therefore called in the abstract darkness.

And not light; no joy, hope, or comfort in it.

Ver. 19.

As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him: here proverbially is expressed the continuance and succession of evils

one after another; it will be a long calamity, when your civil dissensions waste you first, next God's armies of locusts and palmer-worms, and the Assyrians too, until all ends in final captivity; you may escape one, but shall fall into another calamity, and worse than that you escaped; abroad your miseries shall be like a lion or bear.

Or went into the house; at home you may hope for safety from such open dangers, but there other kind of mischief shall meet you.

And leaned his hand on the wall; weary and faint, shall think to ease and support himself.

And a serpent bit him; whose biting infuseth a deadly poison, which suddenly corrupts the whole mass of blood, and kills the man. If conspirators at home be lions, the Assyrians will be as bears to you.

Ver. 20.

All these things considered, ye secure, profane, and atheistical scoffers, speak yourselves, will not that day be as dark as I have described, and as little to your comfort?

Ver. 21.

I hate, I despise your feast days; impure and unholy they are, whatever they seem to be, and therefore the Lord hateth them, they are abomination to him, **#Pr 15:8 Isa 1:13,14**. Worthless and contemptible they are, and as such God rejecteth them, **#Isa 1:10-12**, &c. There is no goodness that I should value in them, there is all that vileness in them which attends deep hypocrisy, for which I do hate them. The apostate Israelites imitated the Jews in many things, amongst which they retained their festivals, in which they multiplied their ceremonial sacrifices; and yet God owns them not as his; but brands them with this, They are yours, therefore unwarrantable, will-worship, and displeasing to God.

I will not smell a savour of rest or delight, I will not accept and be pleased with, **#Ge 8:21**,

your solemn assemblies; appointed, as you think, on very weighty reasons, and by sufficient authority, and celebrated with

rich sacrifices, in mighty crowds, and in excellent order; all is yours, not mine.

Ver. 22.

Though ye, that have departed from my temple, law, and institutions, you of the ten tribes, offer me burnt-offerings; which was wholly burnt on the altar; no part due to any but God; of this these hypocrites had a high esteem, #Mic 6:6, because they accounted it an entire gift to God.

And your meat-offerings; to your burnt-offering add the other, your meat-offering also, as #Le 2:1,2 Nu 6:17. See #Joe 1:13 2:14.

I will not accept them; it may be a meiosis, I will hate them, as #Am 5:21.

Neither will I regard the peace-offerings; your thank-offerings too, of which #Le 6:12 7:15, your praises for your prosperity, are no better pleasing neither.

Of your fat beasts: in these peace-offerings, though you bring the best, the fattest, yet you bring nothing but a beast, for you leave your hearts with your sins; and you have no warrant from God to do this, nay, you are prohibited, for you are to offer only at Jerusalem, and at the temple.

Ver. 23.

The noise of thy songs; by way of contempt and loathing, God calls their songs noise; how harmonious, delightful, and ravishing soever they might be to their ears, they were not pleasing unto God.

Songs, used in their sacrifices, and their solemn feasts; herein they imitated temple-worship, but all was displeasing to the Lord.

I will not hear: this is not to be taken absolutely, for God heard the noise; but it is taken in a qualified sense, he did not hear with delight and acceptance.

The melody, the pleasing harmony, the sweet concert,

of thy viols; this one kind of musical instrument put for all the rest: in a word, your hypocrisy, idolatry, and injustice spoil all your services, and make God weary of you and them.

Ver. 24.

But, Heb. *And*

judgment: some interpret this of penal judgment, by God threatened against these hypocrites; but it is better understood of justice to be administered by rulers, whose office it was to determine between party and party.

Run down as waters; freely, constantly, speedily, and for common benefit of all, as waters run.

Righteousness; equity, relieving justice, the want of which hath been notorious among you.

As a mighty stream, which bears down all that opposeth it: be hindered by none from doing every one right; do this, and you may yet be accepted.

Ver. 25.

Their fathers and they, though at so great distance of time, are one people, and so the prophet considers them in this place.

Have ye offered? did you not frequently omit to offer, and yet were not reprov'd or plagued for the omission, when your frequent removes, and many other difficulties, made it unpracticable? so little is sacrifice with your God! and yet, when you did offer, was it to me only? or did you not sacrifice to idols and false gods, and provok'd me? Will-worship and idolatry have been hereditary diseases in your generations; and it is well known, too, that these idolaters fell in the wilderness, and are made admonitions to you.

Sacrifices of beasts slain, as the word properly speaks.

Offerings: minchah, in general, is any gift or present made, but particularly here it is a gift or present of fine flour, oil, and frankincense unto God with the sacrifice.

In the wilderness forty years: it was a broken number of years in exact account, that is, thirty-eight years and eleven months; but, as is common in such cases, the full and round number is taken and so the account runs here, and in **#Ac 7:42**, forty years.

O house of Israel; you of the ten tribes.

Ver. 26.

But ye, the idolatrous children of idolatrous fathers,
have borne, carried along with you in the wilderness,

the tabernacle, or little chapel, or shrine, or canopy, in which the image of their idol was placed. Though others conjecture this to be the proper name of an idol, I conjecture it is the name of the portable temple or chapel in which the supposed deity was placed.

Moloch; the great idol of the Ammonites, as Jupiter was of the Greeks and Romans; some ancient king among them, who was a famous founder, or raiser, and benefactor to their nation, though we know not who this was.

Chiun: perhaps if we understand the whole apparatus or storehouse of their images, We shall not err. Their grand idol was Moloch, whose image they kept, and carried about in a *sacellum*, or consecrated portable chapel, and with him the rest of their pet deities, in their images placed orderly, as they fancied, about their great deity. Others will have Chiun to be Saturn.

Your images: whatever these were, it is plain God accounts them their inventions and their gods.

The star of your god: what star this was we need not inquire; the idolaters appropriated the stars to their gods, and probably did in the roof of their gods' tabernacles frame the star over the image of their god: or, the star your god, or which you worship.

Which ye made to yourselves; all which deities you have found out and established to yourselves.

Ver. 27.

Therefore, for all your idolatry and other sins in which you have obstinately continued,

will I cause you to go into captivity; you shall certainly be subdued and captivated; and this shall be done so that my hand shall appear evidently in it.

Beyond Damascus, into Assyria, and into parts beyond Damascus: it is not certain into what corners of the world they were sent, but probably to those parts that lay about the Caspian Sea, more remote from their own country than ever to hope they

may get back again. Or thus, You shall be carried into a captivity more grievous by Shalmaneser, than was the captivity of those whom Tiglathpileser led captive when he slew Resin, took Damascus, and wasted Israel in the days of Pekah, when some Israelites were carried captives; but this shall be a more grievous captivity.

AMOS CHAPTER 6

The voluptuousness of Israel, #Am 6:1-6, shall be punished with desolation, #Am 6:7-11. Their perversion of justice and vain confidence shall end in affliction, #Am 6:12-14.

Ver. 1.

Woe! this compriseth many and great sorrows, all that God intends against these sinners.

To them that are at ease; who live in abundance, eat, drink, sleep, and are secure, that think to-morrow shall be as this day, and neither fear nor believe the threatened judgments of God. Zion, by a synecdoche put for the kingdom of the two tribes, and principally the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Zion; the ten tribes were hitherto threatened, now the prophet warns the two tribes.

And trust in the mountain of Samaria; woe to them also who rely upon the strength, wealth, and policy of the king, princes, cities, and kingdom of Samaria or Israel!

Which, which two cities, Zion and Samaria, are named chief of the nations; accounted chief cities among the known cities of that part of the world. Others refer this passage to the nobles, wise men, and great men of each place, men that were heads among their own people.

To whom the house of Israel came; to which places all Israel had recourse; so the two tribes went up to Zion, the ten tribes went to Samaria: or, to whom, i.e. to which nobles and rulers, the people of each kingdom did go on all occasions for judgment, counsel, or refuge.

Ver. 2.

Pass ye unto Calneh; run over the history of that great and ancient city; as, Go to Shiloh, #Jer 7:12. It was built by Nimrod,

#Ge 10:10, and after a long growth to power, wealth, and security, through near one thousand three hundred years, was at last ruined, as is probable, in the civil wars which ended in the utter ruin of Sardanapalus by Arbaces, and Pul-belochus, grandfather to Shalmaneser who captivated Israel; the story of which, fresh in the days of Amos, is thus referred unto for warning to Israel. *And see*; consider well what befell that city built on Euphrates, rich, delightful, and, as you, full of sin.

Hamath; head of the Syrian kingdom, lately overthrown by Tiglath-pileser; a very fresh instance of God's just indignation against secure sinners, and a very fit warning to Israel.

Gath; the chief city of the Philistines, a few years before wasted by the arms and cruelty of Hazael, **#2Ki 12:17**; by these examples learn to amend your ways, or expect to perish in them.

Be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? The reading this passage interrogatively renders it darker than if it were read assertively, Yet they were better, i.e. greater, than these kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and their borders, i.e. the bounds of those kingdoms, greater than these of Israel and Judah. But if you retain our version, it will amount to this; Are they, i.e. Israel and Judah, better, more just, thankful, and merciful than these kingdoms, that they should hope to escape? or is the border of these two kingdoms greater, that they should hope to stand by power?

Ver. 3.

Woe to you that flatter yourselves that the day of darkness and misery foretold is far off! **See Poole "Eze 12:27"**. These were great ones too, that the prophet here threateneth, who thus postponed the day of Israel's and Judah's calamities.

The evil day; not as if it should be a short calamity, as a day; but it speaks the determinate, fixed time, and the haste wherewith the execution shall be made.

The seat; the throne, or judgment-seat, which should relieve the oppressed, condemn the wicked, and acquit the innocent, this is made a seat of violence, where unjust judges condemn the just and take bribes.

To come near; thus you draw the judgments of God on yourselves, by acting violence against the poor, and contemning the threats of the prophets.

Ver. 4.

The woe is to be added to them that, either out of laziness or luxury, and to please the flesh, lay themselves to rest **upon beds of ivory;** on beautiful, rich beds, bought with the gain of bribes and oppression.

Stretch themselves upon their couches: this somewhat explains the former; they did extremely indulge their pride and luxury, and on beds or couches laid themselves to feast, when God called them to mourn and weep.

Eat, with excess, as #Mt 24:37,38 Lu 12:19,20.

The lambs out of the flock; the very best in all their flock, and probably they chose them out first, before they set out lambs for sacrifices; or else these gluttonous judges and rulers eat the best lambs, not of their own, but out of poor oppressed men's flocks.

The calves, those that were fattest too,

out of the midst of the stall; kept on purpose to make them most delicious and nourishing meat.

Ver. 5.

Woe to them that, in a time of deepest mourning, do entertain themselves with songs, and with greatest skill sing to their musical instruments, as if they had no greater thing to mind!

Viol; or lute, or gittern, one kind put for every one used in their feasting at this time of Amos.

Invent to themselves instruments of music; not content with known, old-fashioned music, they find out new instruments, new songs and tunes.

Like David; in imitation of David, as they profanely pretend, or else emulating his skill, and preferring their own feast songs and music before his temple music and songs. We may imagine what songs such ungodly, cruel, voluptuous men would sing, and what tunes they would set too, on such occasions, viz. loose, profane, and impure enough.

Ver. 6.

The prophet continues the woe still to these riotous feasters; the jovial, banqueting, dancing, and singing judges.

That drink wine in bowls; not in little vessels, not in moderate glasses or cups, as beseemed sober men, but in great vessels, called bowls; and it is likely they drank these filled as full as they could hold too, and in design to drink each other down.

Anoint themselves with the chief ointments: in those hot countries this anointing was needful to refresh and strengthen the limbs, and it was much used. But here the effeminate use of it, at such a time, and by such men, at feasts, is condemned as a great excess and provoking sin, which God will punish.

But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph; nothing affected with or troubled for the public calamities of their country, though they were sore ones, brought on them by the Syrians, and by their own divisions and civil wars: both kingdoms of Judah and Israel were in a very low, afflicted state, but these rulers and grandees live, feast, sing, and dance, as if no sad occasion called for other carriage.

Ver. 7.

Therefore; for this sin of unseasonable feasting added to all former sins; much like that **#Isa 22:14**.

Now shall they go captive, who ruled others, and whose character you have **#Am 6:1-3**, &c., who put far from them the evil day, &c., these shall certainly be carried captive.

With the first that go captive; and as they deserve by their sins, so shall they be carried away the first of any; God's hand in punishing them shall be as eminent as their hand was in sinning.

The banquet, the feastings of voluptuous ones, shall cease.

That stretched themselves: see **#Am 6:4**.

Shall be removed; God will send the Assyrians to take away the banquet, and to bring in a bill, a reckoning, for these secure sinners, who shall be removed too, as well as their banquet is; they shall go into captivity, and there in sorrows dearly pay for all their luxury, inhumanity, and security.

Ver. 8.

The secure, incredulous, and atheistical among the judges of Israel are here spoken to especially, and the prophet assures them that God had sworn by himself that they should be punished, and in the manner he had foretold.

Saith the Lord the God of hosts; God assureth his prophet, that the prophet might attest it to his hearers.

I abhor, I look with detestation, and remember with loathing,

the excellency of Jacob; all that the seed of Jacob account a glory and excellency to them, and in which they do put their trust, all their external privileges and ceremonious worship.

And hate his palaces; in which violence is stored up, in which luxury abounds.

I will deliver up the city; Jerusalem, Samaria, and all the other cities.

With all that is therein, both persons and things; Assyria first shall sweep away all out of Israel and Samaria, and Babylonians next shall carry away Judah, Jerusalem, and all in it.

Ver. 9.

It shall come to pass; the thing is decreed, and shall take effect.

If there remain, or escape the enemies' sword, or the famine of Samaria, besieged three years.

Ten men in one house; many men, for it is a certain number expressed, though an uncertain be understood.

They shall die, either of pestilence, or by some other stroke of God's hand; though they escape a while they shall not finally escape, #2Ki 17:5.

Ver. 10.

A man's uncle, or some near kinsman, shall take him up, instead of those mercenaries who were wont to do this, and were paid for it; but now none of these to be had, the next to the dead must, as well as he is able, take him up on his shoulders, and carry him, i.e. the last of the ten, the other nine being dead.

He that burneth him: though the Jews mostly buried, yet in some cases they burned the dead bodies, as in this of wasting pestilence, when they could not carry them out, either for fear of infecting others, or for want of help.

To bring out the bones out of the house; all that remained: the flesh of the dead being consumed to ashes, the bones are reserved to be buried, and laid up in some sepulchre of their ancestors.

Shall say; he that doth this office for the last of his dead friends shall inquire of one he seeth either dwelling near, and by the sides of the house out of which the bones are carried, or else of some that lay undiscerned in the corner of the house where so many died,

Is there yet any with thee? is any one living in this your house, hath any one escaped?

He shall say, No; the man of whom the uncle, or whoever carried out the bones, inquireth.

Then shall he say, then shall the inquirer say,

Hold thy tongue; either, Murmur not against God, or mourn not, for so sad is the time that the dead are happier than the living; or, Say nothing, lest all be rifled from thee; for such inhumanity was among them, that there were those who would dare to rifle infected houses. Or else, which suits the next words, Be silent under God's just displeasure.

We may not make mention of the name of the Lord; now it is too late to seek God, who its executing his immutable decree and sentence, which we were advised to prevent, but did not in season.

Ver. 11.

For, behold; consider this well: it seems to be the continued speech of him who took care of the dead, **#Am 6:10**.

The Lord commandeth; God, provoked by our sins, hath sent out thy enemies; war, famine, and pestilence all come commissioned of God, and when the arrow is shot it will hit and kill.

He will smite the great house with breaches; the palaces of great men, and their families, shall have great breaches made in them, by which they shall be ruined.

And the little house with clefts; the cottages and lesser dwellings of poor men, with their families, shall by lesser strokes be ruined, their clefts shall be enough to do this. All shall be overthrown, and we must submit to it.

Ver. 12.

Shall horses run upon the rock? would it not be dangerous to horse and rider? If prophets and pious men exhort, threaten, or advise, they endanger themselves, it does no more good than if you would run your horse on the slippery precipices of rocks. Or, all is lost labour on these hardened sinners.

Will one plough there with oxen? your hearts are hard as the rocks; my prophets' preaching, my lesser judgments warning you, all gentler means used, are but as a husbandman's ploughing the rocks. These shall therefore be torn up by the roots, your state and kingdom shall be utterly overthrown.

For ye, you judges and governors in the ten tribes, and in Judah too,

have turned judgment, see #Am 5:7,

into gall, or poison; by those laws they took away life, and forfeited estate, which, had the laws been rightly executed, had saved both.

The fruit of righteousness, all that fruit which equity and justice would have produced by due application of the law, hath been wormwood, grief, and complaints, by your wresting and perverting the law.

Into hemlock, a deadly and pernicious weed so the course of your courts have been.

Ver. 13.

Ye which rejoice, glorying with a joy and satisfaction, with hope and confidence,

in a thing of nought; in your victories, alliances, fortifications, and idols, all which draw you away from God, and from seeking him as he will be found.

Which say, tell the prophets that reprove you and foretell your downfall, you say to them, notwithstanding all that God threatens,

Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? you have raised yourselves to dominion and greatness by your wisdom, courage, and success, and by the same you will maintain it and so you put off the day of evil.

Ver. 14.

But; notwithstanding all your boasts and carnal confidences.

Behold; observe and weigh well what is said. it will raise up; awaken, call together, strengthen, succeed, and prosper in the attempt against you.

A nation; Pul hath, and Tiglath-pileser hath, or now doth, afflict and break you, but Shalmaneser shall utterly destroy you; if his strength were not enough of itself, mine arm should strengthen him to bring all your hopes to nought.

O house of Israel; kingdom of the ten tribes.

Saith the Lord the God of hosts; who doth what he saith, who commands and it is done, whom none can resist.

They, the Assyrians and their confederates, shall afflict you; distress you and press you hard on all sides, it shall be a great and a universal oppression of you.

From the entering in of Hemath, a city of Syria bordering on the land of Israel north-east, and was an inlet into Syria from the north of Canaan,

unto the river of the wilderness, which is Sichor, in the most south-west parts of Canaan towards Egypt. So all your country, Judah and all, shall be oppressed by that nation which I will raise and strengthen against you.

AMOS CHAPTER 7

The judgment of the grasshoppers, #Am 7:1-3, and of the fire, are diverted by the intercession of Amos, #Am 7:4-6. By a wall and plumbline is signified the desolation of Israel, #Am 7:7-9. Amaziah complaineth of Amos, and forbiddeth him to prophesy at Beth-el, #Am 7:10-13. Amos showeth his calling, #Am 7:14,15, and the judgment upon Amaziah, #Am 7:16,17.

Ver. 1.

Thus: sometimes this refers to what went before, here it refers to what the prophet saw and is about to declare.

Hath the Lord God showed unto me: this is the first of five visions or prophetic representations of what was coming upon this people for their sins. The Lord gave Amos a clear sight of the future calamity by this vision.

Behold; I could not but observe, and it is worthy your observance too.

He formed: it is not said he called for them, but he formed or created them, probably intimating somewhat extraordinary in them, either in their bigness or number, or rather sudden appearing of them. So the plague signified by them should suddenly come upon them.

Grasshoppers: in our country grasshoppers are not hurtful, but these in our text were locusts, and so rendered #Isa 33:4 Na 3:17; and the word used by Amos here is paraphrased by the Hebrew critics by a word that properly notes locust.

It was the latter growth: the shooting up of the first growth being too luxuriant, they did either mow off the tops, or eat it down with cattle, and this was done for preserving the corn and increase of the harvest; but if the second growth were cut off or eat up, it marred the whole harvest; and these devouring locusts were formed in such time as to do this, and so to bring a famine upon the land.

After the king's mowings; it is supposed that the first mowing of the luxuriant corn in the blade was for the king's use, and after this the second springing grew up to the harvest. It may possibly

intimate, that though the kings of Israel did as it were mow the luxuriant riches yet they grew again; but when Assyrian locusts come all is devoured.

Ver. 2.

Either visionally, the whole scheme represented both locusts, grass, herbs, and corn, and it represented the grass as almost all eaten up, and the locusts ready to fall upon the corn, and all that remained. Or else really, it was acted, and the grass was devoured. Though the former seems most likely, I leave it to every one's judgment. Amos interceded by prayer for this people in this case; and he sueth for mercy, entreats for pardon, hereby justifying God's proceedings; and though this people for whom he prays is insensible of their condition, yet the prophet is deeply affected with it, and deprecates the displeasure of God, and implores his mercy; to God belongs forgiveness, to them nothing but shame.

By whom shall Jacob arise? how shall any of Jacob escape? or if thou, O God of Jacob, dost cast him down, who will or can lift him up? he must needs perish if thou be still angry and show not pity. For he is small; weak in strength, few in number, not able to resist his enemies the Assyrians.

Ver. 3.

The Lord repented; this, spoke after the manner of man, is to be understood as becomes the immutability and omniscience of God; what a man when he repenteth doth, desisting from the thing, so God, desisting or suspending his own act, doth tell us he repenteth.

It shall not be: this explains the former; that sore famine like to be caused by these locusts came not, Amos prevailed by prayer, and the judgment was diverted.

Ver. 4.

Thus hath the Lord God showed, *in vision or hieroglyphic:* see #Am 7:1.

And, behold: see #Am 7:1.

Called to contend by fire; declared he would judge as by fire: literally, say some, God would from heaven by fire punish. Others say metaphorically, by drought which should scorch up all fruits of the earth, and dry up fountains and rivers. Or else by very sore,

wasting, and irresistible judgments, that like fire should consume all, hereby denoting the Assyrian rage.

It devoured; eat up, i.e. visionally, or in the emblem.

The great deep; not literally, but, as the other, #Am 7:2, in hieroglyphic; so it appeared to Amos.

And did eat up a part of the land too; it seemed to seize on the earth: now this in vision awakens the prophet, as before, to pray earnestly.

Ver. 5.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Ver. 6.

These two verses are almost word for word the same with #Am 7:2,3, which see.

Ver. 7.

Thus he shewed me: and, behold: see #Am 7:1.

The Lord; the great God, who had long tried Israel, and often spared.

Stood upon a wall; possibly it may denote his fixed purpose now to proceed to demolish this state.

Made by a plumbline; strongly, regularly, and beautifully built, as art could build it.

With a plumbline in his hand; ready, as an artist, to take the measures of this wall, to discover all the defects of it, and how much it was varied from what it was at first built. This shall be the last measuring it, and on this measuring, whatever is faulty shall be pulled down, though to the very foundation. This was visionally represented to the prophet.

Ver. 8.

The Lord, who did before show Amos the emblem in landscape or vision.

What seest thou? this God asketh not as if he were ignorant what Amos saw, or as if he would be informed whether he saw aright, but it is introductory to what follows.

A plumbline; or perpendicular, to which masons first build and frame walls of houses, and by which they do at any time measure them, whether they stand upright, or any way belly out and decline.

I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will exactly measure my people Israel, the whole fabric of the ten kingdoms. I will take a particular view of all, and how far it is right, or how far it is out of order.

I will not again pass by them any more; I will no more forbear, but I will pull down all that is faulty, though I pull up the very foundations; and this is confirmed in what followeth.

Ver. 9.

The high places; the temples on high mountains built to idols, or for the worship of God, though he forbade them. Of Isaac: the father is here named, but his children are intended, all the seed of Isaac. I cannot, though some do, think the prophet alludes to Isaac's being offered upon a high mountain.

Shall be desolate; shall be rased to the foundation, or left to moulder and fall with length of time, and assaults of storms and weather.

The sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste: this explains the former, and, speaking after the custom of those times, the prophet calls the idol temples sanctuaries, whether in Dan and Beth-el or elsewhere.

I will rise; God will, but not immediately, rise up: he will stir up some or other to do what he threatens.

Against the house of Jeroboam; in the days of Zachariah, (son of Jeroboam,) murdered by Shallum. With the sword, first of a conspirator, Shallum, next of civil war.

Ver. 10.

Then; after that Amos had expressly and peremptorily foretold the ruin of idolatry and kingdom of Israel for their sins. Amaziah: it appears not what family he was of, nor is it much material we should know; it is probable he might be of some mean family, or possibly an apostate priest of the tribe of Levi.

The priest, by way of eminency; no common priest, but the chief priest.

Of Beth-el; to the calf at Beth-el; and it is like he was prefect or governor for the king in the civil affairs of that city and country.

Sent; gave information by messengers sent.

To Jeroboam; the second of that name, of Jehu's race: the third from Jehu.

King of Israel; at that time living, and on the throne of Israel.

Saying, Amos hath conspired against thee: he accused the prophet of high treason, and conspiring to raise war against his sovereign.

In the midst of the house of Israel; openly and publicly, or hath endeavoured to raise all Israel into sedition or rebellion against their own king.

The land is not able to bear all his words: either thus, If what he threateneth should come to pass, it will be ruin and utter desolation to all: or thus, The people are incensed so much against this prophet for his harsh predictions, that he must be made an example to quiet and content them. What he saith will come, if it doth come, will certainly ruin all, high and low, and a well-ordered government may not bear such a prophet. Thus far the general accusation.

Ver. 11.

Thus Amos saith; so Amaziah falsely reports the prophet.

Jeroboam shall die by the sword: he no where said so, nor did he insinuate so much, but spake of his house distinguished from his person, as **#Am 7:9**.

Israel shall surely be led away captive: this indeed he foretold, but did no more contribute to it, or contrive it, than the physician doth who foretells the death of an uncounsellable patient, sick of a mortal disease.

Out of their own land: this is added to signify the greatness of the captivity.

Ver. 12.

Also Amaziah said unto Amos: it is probable enough that this arch-priest of Beth-el did send this advice, or gave it to the prophet so soon as he had accused the prophet to Jeroboam; and perhaps he thus intended to insinuate a great good-will towards the prophet, presuming the prophet knew nothing that Amaziah had accused him.

O thou seer: whether this be spoken in scorn, or giving him the respect due to a prophet, I determine not.

Flee thee away into the land of Judah; be advised, stay not here, but with all speed flee out of the kingdom, get thee into Judah whence thou camest, there thou mayst be safe.

There eat bread: thou wilt never get thy bread here by this kind of preaching; in Judah it is likely thou mayst get thy livelihood by thy prophetic art; thither go,

and prophesy there; there thou mayst freely declaim against our vices, and predict our fall, which we do as little as thou dost much believe.

Ver. 13.

Prophesy not again any more at Beth-el; as a friend I advise thou do not, and as having authority from the king, I do declare thou shalt not, prophesy in Beth-el.

For it is the king's chapel, where I am by the king's authority empowered to give license, or impose silence, and to see that none but fit persons preach before the king, who doth there pay his devotions.

And it is the king's court, where all his nobles attend him, and where no ordinary, obscure, and uncourtly doctor may appear: besides, such preaching so near to the king's court will be speedily punished; therefore, as thou lovest thyself, Amos, follow my advice, and let the king's court and this country hear no more of thee.

Ver. 14.

Then answered Amos: so soon as this false accuser had under the vizard of friendship given advice, and withal intimated his resolution to use his authority to make Amos desist if he did not

do it voluntarily, Amos gives him answer readily, boldly, and yet smoothly, and outshoots the court pontiff in his own bow.

Said to Amaziah; not fearing his person or his power.

I was no prophet; not originally, or by succession, or by study, or by any human designation and preparation, as many have been;

neither was I a prophet's son; my father was no prophet, nor was I bred up in the school of the prophets, such as #2Ki 2:3,5,7,15 4:38 6:1. Though you call me seer, whether ironically or seriously, I matter not, but assure you I am not such by art, or trade, or for a livelihood.

But I was a herdman; by breeding, choice, and occupation I was and still am a herdman, and have my concerns in that mystery in or near Tekoa in Judah, on which I can live; though I prophesy without stipend or salary, I needed not to run into the prophet's work for my bread.

And a gatherer of sycamore fruit: the tree and fruit is known by one name; Palestine abounded with both; and the fruit was sweet, not large, yet good for food for man or cattle, as some fruits are with us; on these I could still, as I formerly did, live, and be content.

Ver. 15.

The Lord, the great and jealous God, whom you oppose by idols, took me; by an extraordinary power of his Spirit took me off from my old, mean, and private employment and recess, and I could not withstand him.

As I followed the flock; a description of a shepherd's employment.

The Lord said unto me; commanded, whether by voice from heaven. or extraordinary irradiation of his mind, or impulse of the Divine prophetic Spirit, comes all to one, his authority is Divine.

Go out of Judah.

Prophecy; as a prophet instruct, threaten, promise, invite. and foretell.

My people Israel; the ten tribes, which with like civility are called by Amos God's people as he is called seer.

Ver. 16.

Now; when forbidden, Amos, undaunted, prophesieth to him that forbade him.

Hear thou, Amaziah, who hast accused, yet pretendest to wish and advise my safety, the word of the Lord, who sent me, whom thou contradictest; from him I have somewhat to say to thee, and of much concern also to thee.

Thou sayest, usest thy power to silence me,

Prophecy not against Israel; preach not sedition, or what tends to it, under pretence that God speaks it against Israel: if thou canst speak good of us, and to us, this may be good for thee; but if thou wilt speak sad news against us, it will not be believed; it may hurt thee, it will do no good to others.

Drop not; distil not: see #Eze 21:2 Mic 2:6.

Against the house of Isaac; the posterity of Isaac: this explains the former, and is a hendiadis, or elegant ingemination.

Ver. 17.

Therefore; because thou hast so directly and strenuously opposed the Lord.

Thy wife shall be a harlot, which to a man of sense is a great affliction.

A harlot; a common whore. In the city; a notorious one, that plays not the adulteress in secret at home, but so that all take notice of it, and brand her for it.

Thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword; which in all likelihood doth intimate their slaughter by Shallum when he slew Zachariah, Jeroboam's son, with whom no doubt but his friends fell, among which this family was; or else by the sword of Menahem, who slew Shallum.

Thy land shall be divided by line; thy estate, which no doubt was large, shall be shared among the soldiers and courtiers of Menahem.

And thou shalt die; thy dishonour by a lewd wife, thy childless solitariness, and thy poverty, shall come on thee ere thou die; it is probable he fled to save his life.

In a polluted land; among the heathen, where thou mayst be sure my word was true. Israel, the ten tribes,

shall surely go into captivity forth of his land: see #Am 7:11.

AMOS CHAPTER 8

By a basket of summer fruit is showed the near approach of Israel's end, #Am 8:1-3. Their oppression of the poor shall cause their joy to be turned into mourning, #Am 8:4-10. A famine of God's word threatened, #Am 8:11-14.

Ver. 1.

Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and behold: see #Am 7:1,4,7.

A basket; a hook, say some, with which the gatherer might either pull down the bough, or pull off the ripe fruit; or a basket into which the ripe fruit gathered was put to be carried away.

Summer fruit; not the early ripe fruit, but that which, as it needed, so had the whole summer's heat to ripen it, and was gathered in at the end of the summer.

Ver. 2.

Amos, what seest thou? the like question you have #Am 7:8, which see.

A basket of summer fruit: see #Am 8:1. *Then said the Lord unto me:* the meaning of this hieroglyphic not being very plain in itself, the Lord doth here explain it in the following words.

The end of God's patience towards Israel, of their peace, growth, and glory; the end of their ripening, they are now as fruit fully ripe, in the end of the year, fit to be gathered.

My people Israel; so they were once, so they boast themselves, so the nations about them account Israel to be the people of God.

I will not again pass by them any more: see #Am 7:8. God had with admirable patience spared and tried, but now he will with just severity punish, neither pardon nor spare.

Ver. 3.

The songs; which were composed by choicest wits, and set to sweetest tunes, and chanted out by most skilful singers to the best musical instruments.

Of the temple; either to take in Judah, and foretell the desolation of their temple; or else, by an irony, the idol temples; or else of the palace, as the word in the Hebrew. All court mirth and jollity, balls and music entertainments.

Shall be howlings, Heb. *shall howl*; be turned into the hideous outcries of undone and despairing men.

In that day; when God shall execute his judgments threatened, as he did begin on the death of Jeroboam, and continued that day of vengeance till Shalmaneser finished the work in the ruin of Samaria and its captivity.

Saith the Lord God: this is added to assure Israel that what Amos did foretell should be accomplished, for God spake it.

There shall be many dead bodies; so there were when Shallum slew Zachariah, so there were when Menahem slew Shallum, when he came with his army against Samaria, when he ripped up the women with child in Tiphseh, #2Ki 15:16, and when other usurpers pressed through blood and treason to the crown; beside the howlings when Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmaneser cruelly wasted all.

In every place; in cities, towns, and country, in palaces and temples too, in all which the bloody effects of enemies' swords, the wastes of famine and pestilence, should be seen.

They, who howl, who see this,

shall cast them forth with silence; either shall secretly bury them, so some, or, to rid themselves of that trouble, shall cast them out wherever they can, with silence, that none may observe them; so great calamitous mortality, that the living suffice not to bury the dead; or so great cruelty by the enemy used against them,

that they dare not bury them, or if they do, it must be undiscerned: see #Am 6:10.

Ver. 4.

Though the prophet had several times told them what were the sins for which God would thus punish Israel, yet on a repeated threat he repeateth the rehearsal of the sins which draw down these judgments on their heads.

Hear this, attend, and consider it,

O ye that swallow up, greedily and cruelly devour, that do, like the greater fish, swallow up the lesser fry: in this one word the prophet includeth all the methods of their cruel oppression, wasting the poor.

The needy; such as were objects of your mercy, had you been just and honest, as well as rich and great.

Even to make the poor of the land to fail; either to root them out, or to enslave them, while their necessities force them to sell themselves for bread.

Ver. 5.

When will the new moon be gone? ye that could wish there were nothing to interrupt your marketing, your irreligious impatience, and your eagerness after the world, look on solemn times of Divine worship as very burdensome; such was the first day of every month, and the weekly sabbath.

That we may sell corn: no servile work might be done on new moons, no markets kept, or corn brought forth publicly to be sold.

And the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? they were also bound very religiously to observe the sabbath, and on that day they might not buy or sell; now they are weary of the sabbath, as of the new moon, and on the same account wish it over: here was irreligious gaping after gain.

Making the ephah small; the ephah was a measure for dry things, and contained about half a bushel and one pottle English measure. Now these covetous corn-merchants measured the corn they sold by an ephah that was too little, the poor buyer had not his due.

And the shekel great: they weighed the money which they received, and these rich men had no more pity and justice, than to make their shekel weight greater than the standard; so the poor were twice oppressed in the same way, had less than was their right, and paid more than they ought to pay; and thus they undid the poor, and ate him up.

And falsifying the balances by deceit; deceitfully pervert the balances, that the money or shekel weighed, though of full weight, yet appeared too light on the balance, and they who paid it were forced to add more silver to it.

Ver. 6.

That we may-buy the poor: either it speaks the aim of these men in oppressing the poor thus, that they might at last buy their persons for servants and drudges, or else it speaks the reason why they would have new moons and sabbaths over, that they might to market to buy the poor.

For silver, i.e. a little silver, at under value, as **#Am 2:6**.

The needy for a pair of shoes: this explains the former, and shows us that these cruel oppressors lay in wait for the needy to buy them for a very trifle; when these poor owed but for a very little and cheap commodity, as suppose a pair of shoes, these merciless men would take the advantage against them. and make them sell themselves to pay the debt. All which practices are most directly against the law of God.

Sell the refuse; that which is fitter for hogs to month, or for horses to eat, the poor must either buy at dear rate or starve; and this another kind of oppression, corrupted wares at excessive rates, sold to those that were necessitous.

Ver. 7.

The Lord; who changeth not, whose words and purposes are immutably true and stedfast, who hath often told you, that unless you repent he will punish for your sins, now he hath sworn it, and sends you word by me, that he hath in most solemn and irrevocable manner determined, published, and expressly declared that he will visit all your sins upon you.

By the excellency of Jacob; by himself, for God cannot swear by any greater, and he is called the excellency of Jacob, #Ps 47:4.

Surely, Heb. *If*; if I am a God, I will remember and punish.

I will never forget, or let pass unpunished; I will never remit the punishment by an act of pardon, nor ever omit to punish by an act of forgetfulness.

Any of their works; not one of all those their abominable injustices and irreligion, not one of these cruelties.

Ver. 8.

Shall not the land tremble? either literally, are not such sins and judgments enough to shake the very foundations of the earth? Or, metonymically, the land for the people of it, as after in the verse, they that dwell therein.

For this; this that you have done, O house of Israel, in sinning, and this that God will do in punishing, enough to melt the earth, as #Ps 46:6.

And every one mourn; since every one hath sinned too much, and every one shall suffer in this approaching calamity, every one at the news may well mourn and lament;

that dwelleth therein; in the land of Israel.

It shall rise up wholly as a flood; or, by an interrogation, shall it not? i.e. shall not the judgment, the invading troops of Assyria, the displeasure of God, rise and grow as a mighty, wasting flood? or else thus, the whole land shall rise up; soaked in these judgments, it shall seem to swell and grow greater, ready, like a hydroptic, to burst asunder: or else it is a hypallage, the land shall rise up, i.e. the flood shall rise over the land; or, which I rather incline to, the whole judgment shall rise as a flood.

It shall be cast out; the land, the state, people, and what they have, shall be, as in a shipwreck, or mighty flood which breaks all down before it, tossed in the surges and waves;

and drowned as by the flood of Egypt; and at last, by the continuance of this tempest, drowned all as the overflowing on Nilus doth drown all the plains of Egypt.

Ver. 9.

It shall come to pass, most certainly it will be,

in that day, when God begins to execute these his just and severe judgments on the ten tribes.

I will cause; the great, just, holy, and terrible God, who is provoked by these sins, and hath denounced these judgments, my hand shall be evident in it.

The sun; literally, say some, but erroneously; by *sun* I understand rather the settled state of their prosperity under their present government in the house of Jehu; or it may refer particularly to their king and court, which Jeroboam at his death left like the sun at noon in the height of their glory, as all know who know the history of those times.

To go down at noon; so Israel's sun did as at noon set under the dark cloud of home-bred conspiracies and civil wars by Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, till the midnight darkness drew on by Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmaneser.

I will darken; bring a thick cloud of troubles and afflictions.

The earth; the common people, the whole body of the nation; so the sun speaks the royalty, nobility, and great ones of this kingdom, by an allusion well known in Scripture, and the earth speaks the common sort of people; and all are here threatened.

In the clear day; when they did think (as in Jeroboam's time) all was safe, sure, and well settled, far from the night of sorrow and trouble, then will God bring all this he threateneth upon them.

Ver. 10.

I will turn your feasts, religious, though idolatrous in your temples, see **#Am 8:3**, and your ordinary civil feasts in your palaces, into mourning: see **#Am 8:3**.

And all your songs into lamentation: this ingemination doth assure the thing, and forebode the sadness of their state.

I will bring up sackcloth; as all inwardly shall be sadness, so all that appears outwardly shall speak their sorrow and sadness.

Upon all loins; all sorts of persons should put on this mourning, and gird it close to their loins that it might afflict them the more, a custom very general in those times and places.

Baldness upon every head; partly pulling off the hair of the head through anguish, or shaving the head and beard in sign of greatest sadness, as the Eastern people did: see **#Mic 1:16**.

As the mourning of an only son: this is accounted the greatest mourning, and seems proverbially to express such mourning, **#Jer 6:26 Zec 12:10**, which see; so God will afflict this people with greatest sorrows, and fill them with greatest mourning.

The end; you may hope these troubles will be over, and come to an end, but that will be little to your comfort; a bitter day, which you shall wish you had never seen, shall succeed your dark night, as indeed it doth to this day.

Ver. 11.

Behold; note well what now I shall declare to you, and consider it.

The days come, saith the Lord God; surely, speedily, and according to the threats of God.

I will send a famine in the land; by a signal hand of Divine displeasure it shall appear to be from God, that such a famine cometh upon them of Israel.

Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water: a spiritual famine joined with a corporal famine; their bodies were pined with famine, destitute of bread and water; and this God sent too. but the famine of the soul is worse and more grievous.

But of hearing the words; either the written word which Israel had among them till their captivity, but afterwards should ever want both it and those who should interpret it to them, or else the word of prophecy; now they despise it, though they have it, but then they shall desire it, and have it not. They shall hunt after prophets, to tell them when their troubles shall end, though now they hate prophets who warn them, that their troubles might not begin: now Israel despiseth a prophet's counsel, then they shall hunt for it, but not have a prophet to give them counsel, as **#Ps 74:9**.

Ver. 12.

They shall wander from sea to sea; search all places for a prophet or a preacher from the Syrian or Midland Sea to that of Tiberias, to the Dead Sea, and to the Red Sea.

From the north even to the east; that mountainous tract whither persecuted Elijah fled, and perhaps other prophets in like circumstances retired; proverbially, they shall search all corners for a prophet.

They shall run to and fro; shall diligently and speedily, on every report that a prophet is, on hearsays, in such or such a place, hasten thither, as Ahab in his search for Elijah, #1Ki 18:10.

To seek the word of the Lord; hoping to hear some good news of an end of their miseries from God by a prophet.

And shall not find it; they persecuted and slew such as foretold the beginning of this misery, and now it is come they shall neither hear the news nor see the hopes of an end. God did tell them it would be utter ruin, and no prophet of God can tell them any better news.

Ver. 13.

It is probable these in their strength and rigour would seek earnestly to know what end they might expect, whether they should outlive this famine of the word, and the famine of bread and water, but both should faint with thirst and hunger; neither finding the word of the Lord for their comfort, they should faint with despair, nor finding bread and water, should faint and die with weakness: so Israel should be extinguished.

Ver. 14.

They that swear by; who now do, as formerly they have done, trust in, sacrifice to, and swear by; who are obstinate idolaters, and trust to those lies.

The sin, that which was the sin, the occasion of the sin,
of Samaria, the calves at Dan and Beth-el.

And say, think, profess, and swear too,

Thy god, O Dan, liveth; the idol at Dan is the true and living God.

The manner of, the idols at, Beer-sheba, to which the zealous, mad, and bigoted idolaters in Israel made their pilgrimages.

They shall fall, be consumed by famine, sword, and captivity,

and never rise up again; never return out of captivity, nor recover of this consumption.

AMOS CHAPTER 9

The certainty of Israel's desolation, **#Am 9:1-10**. The restoring of the tabernacle of David, and of the captivity of Israel.

Ver. 1.

I saw: as before, **#Am 7:1,4,7 8:1**; so here the prophet hath a fifth vision.

The Lord; the great, glorious, just, and holy God, in some visible tokens of his majesty.

Standing; either ready to execute sentence, or ready to depart, **#Eze 9:3 10:1,4**; indeed here he will do both, execute his own sentence, and depart from this people.

Upon the altar of burnt-offering before the temple at Jerusalem: here the scene is laid, this altar and temple Israel had forsaken, and set up others against it; and here God in his jealousy appears prepared to take vengeance: possibly it may intimate his future departure from Judah too. There Ezekiel, **#Eze 9:2**, saw the slaughtermen stand.

He said, commanded,

Smite the lintel of the door, or the chapter, knop, ornament that was upon the lintel of the door, which is supposed to be of the gate of the temple, or possibly the door of the gate that led into the priests' courts; and though the party that smites be not named, it is likely it was an angel; or possibly the prophet seemed to do it, for this is to do in vision.

That the posts may shake; which were the strength and beauty of the gate.

And cut, wound deep,

them, the people which were visionally represented as standing in the court of the temple,

in the head, that it may more fully signify the destroying of the chief of the heads of this sinful people.

All; spare not one of these.

I will slay the last; God will slay by the enemies' sword the meanest of them, or the last, i.e. the posterity of them.

He that fleeth of them shall not flee away, or get out of danger.

He that escapeth, for the present, out of battle or besieged city, **shall not be delivered**; shall yet at last fall into the enemies' hand, or by his sword.

Ver. 2.

When David would describe the omnipresence of God, #Ps 139:7-12, he doth it most elegantly in almost the same manner as our inspired herdman here doth. Wherever these seek to hide themselves from the pursuing vengeance, they shall be found; he is with them, from whom they hide.

Though they dig into hell; the deepest recesses, the heart and centre of the earth or the grave; or literally, for so we may lay the supposition, were it possible to be done, to hide in the centre of the earth, or the depth of hell.

Thence shall mine hand take them; for hell is naked to God, and the grave did not hide some of these sinners; when dead and buried, the rage of famine, or of the enemy, might dig some out of their graves.

Though they climb up to heaven; could they fly up to heaven, they would be out of the reach of men;

thence will I bring them down; but there they would meet an offended God, and he would east them down.

Ver. 3.

Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel; one high woody mountain, shelter and hiding-place for wild beasts, by a figure put for all the rest; if they think to be safe where wild beasts find a refuge, they are deceived,

I will search and take them out thence; I will, saith God, hunt them out, and take them.

Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea: this is an irony like brutish atheists, they think to hide themselves in the bottom of the sea.

Thence will I command the serpent, crocodile or shark some sea monster, and he shall bite them; devour them. Miserable Israel, to whom nor sea, nor mountains, nor heaven, nor hell will afford a hiding-place!

Ver. 4.

Though they go into captivity; those excluded from safety every where else may perhaps hope that yet the enemy may spare. Captives are the slaves, the possession of their conquering enemies; these make profit of them by selling them to others, or employing them in labour and service.

Before their enemies: this seems to intimate some voluntariness in these people going before the conqueror, whom they hope hereby to mollify and sweeten, that he may use them well; yet this hope shall fail them too.

Thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: the enemy should, either out of cruel humour and hatred against them, or on any slight occasion and disgust, slay them as if they had commission from me so to do: neither propriety in them, nor service by them, nor profit in the sale of these poor and miserable captives, should be safety to them, they should be accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

I will set mine eyes upon them; I will perpetually watch over them, and then be sure no opportunity will be let slip.

For evil, to afflict and punish them,

and not for good, for their benefit. Thus was the course of God's providence against them from the days Amos aimeth at unto this very day, and God hitherto hath, and still doth, make good his threat against this idolatrous, cruel, oppressing people.

Ver. 5.

The prophet having foretold such sad, universal desolations, miseries beyond what this secure people could think possible, and such as the atheists among them censured, and derided as impossibilities, as **#Am 9:10**; now in this and the following verses to the 10th the prophet confirms his word, and the certainty of these future judgments.

The Lord; Adonai, the sovereign Lord.

God; Jehovah, who speaks and doth, and need no more than will to work and accomplish; so he made, sustaineth, and disposeth of all.

Of hosts; all the creatures are his army, and do what he commands them to do against his enemies.

Is he that toucheth: a light touch of his hand, he needs not as man to take great pains to break and dissolve hard metals, a touch of his finger will do this.

The land; either the inhabitants, or rather the land itself in which they dwelt, the land of Canaan; or more likely the whole earth, how firm and hard soever it seem to be.

And it shall melt, as snow before the sun in its hottest influences, or as wax before a mighty fire. He who can do this, can do all that I have denounced against you, O Israel. The rest of the verse, see **#Am 8:8**.

Ver. 6.

It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven; he that threatens and will execute his just severities on you is that mighty, glorious King, whose palace inconceivably surpasseth all the royal palaces of the mightiest monarchs on earth; his chambers, as **#Ps 104:3**, are in the heavens: he by a word of his mouth prepared and garnished those rooms of state, where is glory that ravisheth the mighty angels; how easily can he demolish and ruin your cells, and with the breath of his nostrils, by one command, blow away and scatter your little dust heaps, which you call cities, fortresses, and impregnable munitions!

And hath founded his troop in the earth; he laid the foundations of this lower world, and can as easily shake or

overturn as at first he laid them. All that is below the royal pavilions of God is but as a little bundle which he can soon untie and scatter about, nor are the things tied up of such worth and value that he should lose by doing it; how much more easy is it for him to destroy (as he hath spoken) your land and cities, which are a very small thing compared with the whole world, and this as a point compared with the unmeasurable greatness of the heavens! You set a value on yourselves, and are proud, and think that God will not lose, such jewels; as if a king in his royalty should fear to lose a pin's head, or one atom of dust that lieth on his footstool.

Calleth; the easiest way a man can take to get any thing done; nothing so easy for man to do, as it is easy for God to drown a sinful nation or world: possibly God by this may mind them what seeming impossibility he did when he called for the waters of the sea to drown the old world, and would hereby make them see that he can now do the like.

For the waters of the sea; either by wholesale in judgment to drown, or by retail by vapours in mercy to give rain.

And poureth them out, in storms and violence, or in gentler showers, to punish or refresh.

Upon the face of the earth; either a particular nation, or the whole world.

The Lord is his name; eternal, unchangeable, almighty, and just: see #Am 5:8.

Ver. 7.

Are ye not, who glory in your descent from Abraham, and are in truth the natural descendants of Israel, and think very highly of yourselves on this account, slighting all other nations, and presuming that God neither will nor can, because of his covenant, destroy you, whatever prophets say,

as children of the Ethiopians? not that remote nation beyond Egypt, but those of Arabia Petrea, a wild, thievish, and servile nation, such as now inhabit those parts; base, bloody, and thievish Arabs, hated and despised of all their neighbours, and so by the Israelites their neighbours accounted at that day.

Unto me; I did make them as you, they are my creatures as you; wherein soever you excel them you owe it to me, who made you both as creatures, and have distinguished you by my free mercy and rich grace, giving most to you, of which you boast, and giving less to them, for which you despise them.

Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and whereas you boast my kindness to you, bringing you out of Egypt, and thereupon conclude God cannot leave you whom he hath so redeemed; you argue amiss, for these things aggravate your sin, and render you less capable of hoping or obtaining mercy since you abuse such grace. Remember **#Am 3:2**. You think I cannot, must not now root you out of your land, because I brought you out of Egypt, as if you were the only people that ever were brought out of bondage; but Moses tells you the Philistines were captivated by the Caphtorims, who dwelt in their land; yet the Philistines were restored, and you found them in the land when you came to possess it. Their expulsion you read **#De 2:23**, though I remember no particular mention of their deliverance in any history, yet this hint is enough to assure us of the matter of fact. *And the Assyrians*, an ancient people, inhabiting a large country, and known by several distinct names,

from Kir; conquered by some potent enemies, probably the ancient Assyrians, and sent away to Kir, a city or country of Media, yet delivered at last. Should these nations, as you do, argue themselves to be out of danger of Divine justice and severe punishments, because I had done this for them? Certainly you would not allow such argument in them, nor will I allow it in you.

Ver. 8.

Behold; consider things better, and argue more like men of reason.

The eyes of the Lord God; God of infinite purity and knowledge, whose nature hateth all sin, and whose office it is to punish sinners, his eyes behold all the children of men, they run to and fro, as **#2Ch 16:9**. Are upon the sinful kingdom; every sinful kingdom, and on the kingdom of the ten tribes as notoriously the sinning kingdom, as the Hebrew.

And I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; and I will ruin any such kingdom for their sins, that it shall cease to be a kingdom on earth.

Saving that I will not utterly destroy; and so would I do with the kingdom of Israel, but that I have by covenant with their fathers engaged to be their God for ever, which promise I will keep to a remnant of their seed for ever.

The house of Jacob; the seed of Jacob, which God will not utterly extirpate, though he do extirpate other nations, **#Jer 30:11.**

Saith the Lord: this is added to confirm the gracious word concerning the remnant which shall be spared.

Ver. 9.

For, lo: as this confirms what the 8th verse promiseth, so it requireth a very diligent and full attention of us.

I will command, or give a charge to all nations whither these exiled persons shall come, and they shall observe the charge, it shall as surely be done as it is spoken.

I will sift the house of Israel among all nations; though Assyrians and other nations be the means and instruments, yet God's hand is principal; whilst they would toss and scatter Israel with violence, yet God will hold the sieve, and guide their hands, and set bounds to their violence.

Like as corn is sifted in a sieve, by a skilful and careful husbandman, who designs to separate the chaff from the corn; to preserve this, to tread the other under foot.

Yet shall not the least grain; though covered under much chaff, though tumbled and tossed with the greatest violence, and without any regard to it, yet the smallest and least regarded good grain shall not be lost or destroyed with that fire which consumeth the chaff.

Fall upon the earth, i.e. perish, or be lost; so the phrase **#1Sa 26:20 2Sa 14:11 1Ki 1:52.** Here is a promise of preservation as great and wonderful, and as hardly comprehended, as was the threatened punishment.

Ver. 10.

All the sinners of my people, the great, notorious sinners, idolaters, oppressors, perverters of law and equity, cruel and inhuman judges and others, shall die by the sword; either at home in the wars, or abroad by barbarous men that captivate them; as **#Am 9:4**.

Which say; in their hearts thinking or hoping, or in their words discoursing, the impossibility of what Amos did foretell.

The evil, the sad, miserable, and desolating end, shall not overtake nor prevent us; as a pursuing enemy, we will flee from it: see **#Am 9:1**. It is far off, we shall die first, and be safe in the grave; a kingdom in its prosperity, and well settled, as this kingdom was in Jeroboam's time, cannot soon be brought to such confusion; we shall never see it. This savoured rank of their atheism, and these shall certainly fall and perish, and never rise.

Ver. 11.

This promise I nothing doubt hath a double aspect, both to the return out of captivity, and to the Messiah's kingdom, and each part is to be considered by us: if we would duly explain this and the following verse, let us look first to the letter and historical reference, and next to the mystical and spiritual sense of the words.

In that day; a very usual phrase in Scripture, whereby a time fixed and certain, yet unknown to us, is intended in the set time which God hath prefixed.

I will raise up; lay the foundation and build up. reduce out of captivity and re-establish in their own land. The tabernacle of David; the house of David, and those that did adhere to David's family, which are here called a tabernacle, partly for that it never did after the captivity rise to a free and independent kingdom, and partly because he would distinguish the Jews from the apostate Israelites, who did wholly forsake David's house.

That is fallen; by a revolt of ten tribes in twelve, whereby their state is low, and as fallen to the ground.

And close up the breaches, which are in it by that long division, since Jeroboam the First's time, which breaches shall, upon the return out of captivity, be made up by the voluntary union of the

remnant of the ten tribes which shall return with the two tribes out of the Babylonish captivity.

I will raise up his ruins; disposing the minds of the kings of Persia to advance David's line to the government of the restored captives, and continuing it in the Supreme power till Messiah's coming; and by rebuilding Jerusalem, and the temple, and settling true religion amongst them.

And I will build it as in the days of old; much what it was before the sack of the city and temple, and the carrying the people captive. All which, as far as they are temporal concerns, do suppose and did require a sound turning to God; as did the like promises made by other prophets. And how far soever they fell short of these promises, it was through unbelief and other sins, as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi complain in their prophecies. Now as it refers to Messiah's kingdom, it is a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, as appears **#Ac 15:16,17**; of which no more here, because our work is to give the literal sense of the text: who would see more may consult larger commentators on this place, and on **#Ac 15:16,17**.

Ver. 12.

That they; literally and historically the Jews, or they of the two tribes, and with them such of the ten tribes as did unite to them, and returned to Jerusalem.

May possess, both the lands of Edom, and some of the posterity of Edom; these as servants, the other as their propriety. The remnant, left by Nebuchadnezzar, or that fled out of his reach and lived privately where they could find a hiding-place till Israel's return.

Of Edom; the posterity of Esau, wasted by Nebuchadnezzar, and ruined so that they never did recover to be a kingdom, but who remained of them did shelter themselves as retainers to other nations, and among these some did betake themselves to the Jews, and lived under them. Though formerly they had been desperate enemies to the Jews, Edomites, who cried, Rase, rase, **#Ps 137:7**, shall now assist as servants in laying the foundations, and building Jerusalem.

All the heathen, i.e. round about, as Moabites, Ammonites, &c., by usual phrase called all the heathen.

Which are called by my name: these words either must refer to heathen and Edomites proselyted, or they are by a trajection laid here, but in construction are to be joined with the foregoing words thus. *That they which are called by my name may possess, &c.*

Saith the Lord; this immutably confirms the promise.

That doeth this; who saith and doth, who willeth and effecteth, whose command is almighty. That this is a prophecy of setting up the kingdom of the Messiah, and bringing in the Gentiles, is very certain, but appertains to the mystic sense, not to the literal, which is our work.

Ver. 13.

Here is another promise made literally for assurance of abundant plenty to the returned captives, and mystically, of abundant grace poured forth in gospel days. But of the letter and history.

Behold, mark well, ye poor captived Jews,

the days come; the time will certainly come, nay, it hasteth, and whoso lives to return shall see this word performed.

The ploughman, who breaks up the ground, and prepares it for sowing,

shall overtake the reaper; shall be ready to tread on the heels of the reaper, who shall have a harvest so large, that before he can gather it all in it shall be time to plough the ground and prepare it for the seed for next year's crop. So God will take away the reproach of famine (in Ezekiel's phrase) from the mountains of Israel.

And the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; so great shall their vintage be, that ere the treaders of grapes can have finished their work, the seedsman shall be sowing his seed against next harvest season.

The mountains: the Jews did plant the mountains and hills of Canaan with vines, **#Isa 5:1**, there were their vineyards.

Shall drop sweet wine; the vineyards shall be so fruitful, and new wine so plentiful, as if it did, like trickling streams, run down

from the mountains; and all the hills shall melt; or as if whole hills were melted into such liquors. See #**Joe 3:18**. It is a lofty strain, and very elegantly expresseth the abundance of outward blessings promised to this people here spoken of. If any will object, It appears not that ever it was so. I answer, It is certain the sins of the returned captives did in very great degrees prevent these blessings, which are here promised under a tacit condition, which they never did fulfil.

Ver. 14.

What is contained in this verse is an express promise of a return to captive Israel, and it is an implicit stating of the time when those former promises, #**Am 9:11-13**, should be fulfilled.

I will bring again: Cyrus was the person who proclaimed liberty of return to captive Israel, but God stirred up his spirit to do this, and it was God's eminent work; he was seen in it, as #**Ps 126:3,4**.

The captivity of my people of Israel; of those Shalmaneser carried captive and those Nebuchadnezzar carried captive, both falling under the disposal of Cyrus by his conquest over Babylon; by which means Israel, the remnant of the ten tribes, as well as the two tribes, had leave to return.

They shall build the waste cities, of Judah and of Israel too, as well as Jerusalem, many of which we meet with in the latter histories of the Jews and their wars.

Inhabit them; so they did from the time of their return till the Roman captivity, and were not by the space of six hundred years pulled out of their habitation.

Shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; be blessed in the increase of them and enjoy it, freed from that curse, #**De 28:39**.

Shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them; these, planted for delight, should be blessed too; both vineyards and gardens should be fruitful, and they that planted them should dwell in their houses safely, and eat the fruit of them.

Ver. 15.

I will plant, or settle them, as trees that are well rooted,

upon their land, by ancient gift, and by late restitution to it by the Lord.

They shall no more be pulled up by the violence of their enemies which promise is an implicit condition that they seek, and not forsake the Lord, and was on God's part with admirable constancy and patience to that sinful nation performed through six hundred years, perhaps the longest time of freedom from captivity they ever knew.

Which I have given, of free gift, without their merit.

Saith the Lord thy God; God, thy God and thy Lord, will do it for his covenant's sake, therefore surely and fully will he do it.