

## Amos 8

**Read Amos 8:1-4:** The Bible is broken down into eras of time; such as the pre-flood, the formation of nations, the children of Abraham, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all nations. God provided time and opportunity for man to have fellowship with God in their own ways during those times. The objective has always been to convert the estranged mind of the natural man into a God-loving saved soul. That fellowship between God and man is the actual referred to as the sweet harvest. Jeremiah 24 compares a salvageable life to good fruit; and a lost cause rebel against God to a basket of rotten fruit. One is worth setting aside; and the other is trash.

God compares tree fruit to the spiritual harvest of souls. Like tree fruit; God has appointed planting (preaching) and harvest (salvation) seasons of time for men to become saved in Israel, and also separately times in the Gentile world. The period of the church (Gentiles) began on the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts. Prior to that, it was the time of Israel to experience its spiritual harvest. Israel did not have much of a harvest.

Israel began to became an actual nation as they exited Egypt. Israel produced a disappointing return on God's investment; without any sizable harvest of souls. That entire Hebrew population came up to the land of Canaan; without having any faith to move forward.

*The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: <sup>27</sup> "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. <sup>28</sup> So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: <sup>29</sup> In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. <sup>30</sup> Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. <sup>31</sup> As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. <sup>32</sup> But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. (Numbers 14:26-32)*

Nothing changed during the period of the Judges, the Kings, the captivity, or in the New Testament.

<sup>51</sup> “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! <sup>52</sup> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— <sup>53</sup> you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.” (Acts 8:51-53)

The LORD tells Amos that the summer harvest is now complete. In other words; time is up. He shows him a basket of summer fruit. This is not a reference to wheat or barley, since they are harvested in spring in Israel. Is he referring to figs or olives?

### **Seven “fruits” of Deuteronomy 8:8:**

1. Barley (April): Harvested by winnowing.
2. Wheat (May): Harvested by threshing.
3. Grapes (June—September): Harvested by hand.
4. Pomegranates (August—September): Harvested by hand.
5. Figs (August—September): Harvested by hand.
6. Olives (September—November): Harvested by shaking.
7. Honey (Summer—Fall): Harvested by hand.

Let's add another fruit to present:

8. Almonds (August—September): Harvested by shaking.

It is interesting to note that figs are actually known as a *false fruit*. True fruit comes from a blossom that is pollinated. Figs form a bulb; which is a collection of flowers...a tiny wasp enters into the tiny hole...the movement of the tiny wasp pollinates the flowers...the wasp lays its larvae there...over time the fruit of the flowers grow together and congeal into a single mass.



Figs are used to describe Israel in a number of ways.

### **Scriptures referring to withered figs and fig trees:**

1. In Matthew 21:18–19 and Mark 11:12–14,20, Jesus curses a fig tree for not bearing fruit. The Mark account states that figs were not in season. But, the tree should at least had bulbs with the flowers inside.
2. In Isaiah 34:4, the LORD uses shriveled figs as part of description of what will happen to the nations of the world.
3. In Jeremiah 5:17, the LORD uses a fig tree to describe what He will do the Israelites who keep turning away from Him.
4. In Luke 13:6–9, Jesus tells a parable about a man who planted a fig tree in a vineyard.
5. In Luke 19:1–6, tells about Zacchaeus who climbed a sycamore [fig] tree (*ficus sycomorus*) to see over the crowd. Jesus saw him and called him out of the fig tree. Zacchaeus came down in a hurry!

One of the most well-known comparisons of figs to Israel was the account of Jesus cursing the fig tree that had no fruit. That fig tree had many leaves.

<sup>18</sup> Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. <sup>19</sup> Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. (Matthew 21:18-19)

The fruit of the fig-tree appears before the leaves, so the tree produced leaves it ought also to have had fruit. It ought to have had fruit if it had been true to its "pretensions," in showing its leaves at this particular season. In other words **the children (who bragged about being God's chosen people) of Israel were supposed to be the first to produce fruit in their season.** The leaves (their public proclamations) were a sign that by now the tree should be loaded with fruit. It had none. The religious Jews were prideful about being the blessed children of Abraham; and they considered the Gentiles to be idolaters. Paul clarified that it is people of faith (from all nations) who are the *spiritual children* of Abraham.

*...it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring (Romans 9:8)*

**Read Amos 8:5-8:** There is a difference between going through the motions of religious rituals and having a personal relationship with God. The Law of Moses laid out various offerings and holy feasts to be observed as part of an appreciative life under God's grace. God is telling them that they are anxious for the various monthly and special observances to pass; so that they can get back to making money and putting deals together. Do I get anxious for church to be over, so that I can watch football? Is my spiritual intake coming from what my pastor prepares; or am I feeding my own spirit? Is Christmas about receive gifts; or is it about Jesus? Is Easter about the resurrection, or a family feast?

The Israelites were taking advantage of each other; and making one-sided business deals. Their balances and items of exchange were less than what their customers had agreed to trade. The quality was a misrepresentation. They had so little regard for their fellow man; that they would trade a slave for a pair of sandals. In other words, there was no evidence of God's hand on their hearts or consciences.

God set apart the land of Canaan for Abraham to start a line of godly men. It is God's land. God is disgusted with the evil actions of the residents on his property. Even the land and nature recoils at the actions of filthy and cruel men. God had to purge the land, once it became so infected with sin. It became impossible to produce good spiritual fruit in the land; before the sinful (diseased) were removed.

**Read Amos 8:9-14:** Sometimes we can learn from words of advice. At other times in our life we need the school of hard knocks to produce something so awful that we will never do it again. God is done talking; because it is only adding to the accountability of the hearer.

People have used these verses of darkness and anguish to describe the tribulation. It may instead refer to the fall of Samaria. There will not be a lack of prophecy in the tribulation; and the everlasting gospel will even be proclaimed throughout the world directly from an angel in the sky.

*“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. <sup>29</sup>Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. <sup>30</sup>I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>32</sup>And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.” (Joel 2:28-32)*

*Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. <sup>7</sup>He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” (Revelation 14:5-7)*

If this is not the tribulation, what is Amos saying about the days leading up to Samaria falling? It will be a dark time. That is bad. God is light. Light represents communications, understanding and clarity. When a people push God aside they are pushing common sense and wisdom away. Hell is a dark place and heaven is a bright place for a reason.

It will be a time of deep mourning. It is equivalent to the sorrow of losing an only child. It will be a time of bitterness with no hope. The prophets have been talking to the people until they are blue in the face. There are no hearers with ears to hear. God is moving on; from where he is not wanted. We see that after the last book of the Old Testament was written (Malachi) that there was a 400-year silence of prophecy (until John the Baptist).

We only control our response to God’s call, and his word. The consequences that follow are completely out of our control. You can get stuck on a seemingly-endless bad road when you push God aside for the world. The judgements can go

on for generations. There is nothing more sad than a sinner who has gone as far into sin as he can get...and then grow tired of every known means of stimulation...and then to see he has let his world fall down around him...without any hope of recovery.

## Amos 9

**Read Amos 9:1-4:** God is going to bring judgement on all of the northern 10 tribes (Israel). God is tearing down a structure. He is at an altar. His own altar is in Jerusalem. This altar may be one the places of idolatry in Bethel or Dan.

*All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods <sup>8</sup>and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. <sup>9</sup>The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. <sup>10</sup>They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. <sup>11</sup>At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that aroused the LORD's anger. <sup>12</sup>They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, "You shall not do this."<sup>[5]</sup> <sup>13</sup>The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup>But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the LORD their God. <sup>15</sup>They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do." <sup>16</sup>They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. <sup>17</sup>They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sought omens and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger. <sup>18</sup>So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, <sup>19</sup>and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. <sup>20</sup>Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence. <sup>21</sup>When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they*

*made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin.<sup>22</sup> The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them<sup>23</sup> until the LORD removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there. (2 Kings 17:7-23)*

*In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years.<sup>28</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.<sup>29</sup> In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maakah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria. (2 Kings 15:27-29)*

Our enemies can be anybody when we sin against God. Our own family and friends can turn against us. The issue to solve is our offense against God; not the particular offending enemy. We can even solve our at-hand issues with our enemies; and God will send someone else to do the damage.

... “See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer (Jeremiah 51:1)

This judgement was not something that was for a short-term moral lapse. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat built the first idolatrous altars in Dan and Bethel to prevent the children of Israel from traveling out of country to Judah to worship in Jerusalem. This happened around 922 B.C. The Assyrian invasion did not come until 721 B.C.; around 200 years later. There were prophets speaking out against these ridiculous altars of idolatry from their inception.

*By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering.<sup>2</sup> By the word of the LORD he cried out against the altar: “Altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: ‘A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.’”<sup>3</sup> That same day the man of God gave a sign: “This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.”<sup>4</sup> When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, “Seize him!” But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back.<sup>5</sup> Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD. (1 Kings 13:1-5)*

Young King Josiah (who was not even in Israel, as he was King over Judah) fulfilled these prophecies. He wiped out all idolatry. In Judah and Israel. Israel had long been deported; but their wicked altars were left, with some attendants.

*Even the altar at Bethel, the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin—even that altar and high place he demolished. He burned the high place and ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole also.<sup>16</sup> Then Josiah looked around, and when he saw the tombs that were there on the hillside, he had the bones removed from them and burned on the altar to defile it, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who foretold these things.<sup>17</sup> The king asked, “What is that tombstone I see?” The people of the city said, “It marks the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and pronounced against the altar of Bethel the very things you have done to it.”*

*<sup>18</sup> “Leave it alone,” he said. “Don’t let anyone disturb his bones.” So they spared his bones and those of the prophet who had come from Samaria.<sup>19</sup> Just as he had done at Bethel, Josiah removed all the shrines at the high places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria and that had aroused the LORD’s anger.<sup>20</sup> Josiah slaughtered all the priests of those high places on the altars and burned human bones on them. Then he went back to Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:16-20)*

Our problem is not Covid, racial unrest, poor political representation, drugs, or anything else. These are all the fruit of our actions. Do the American people respond to the gospel any different than ancient Israel?

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**Read Amos 9:5-10:** God points out that he is the creator of the heavens and the earth. The earth and the heavens shake in his presence.

*Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place; he comes down and treads on the heights of the earth.<sup>4</sup> The mountains melt beneath him and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope.<sup>5</sup> All this is because of Jacob’s transgression, because of the sins of the people of Israel. What is Jacob’s transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah’s high place? Is it not Jerusalem?<sup>6</sup> “Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble, a place for planting vineyards. I will pour her stones into the valley and lay bare her foundations.<sup>7</sup> All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images. (Micah 1:3-7)*

*On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.<sup>17</sup> Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they*

*stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup>Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain<sup>19</sup> trembled violently. (Exodus 19:16-18)*

God compares what he has done with the idol-worshipping Egyptians to the children of Jacob. The mightiest kingdom fell hard, when they got in the way of God's plans. Israel is nothing in comparison; and they will follow the way of Egypt. God has providential control on where countries migrate from; and their destiny. God will not let one soul escape what they have coming to them. Though they may escape to other countries, God will pick them out; and follow through as he has said.

Jonah thought that he could run from God and defy him. He could not.

*The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amitai: <sup>2</sup> “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” <sup>3</sup>But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish...Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. <sup>5</sup>All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god...Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah... He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” <sup>10</sup>This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) <sup>11</sup>The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” <sup>12</sup>“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied (Jonah 1)*

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. (Psalm 139:7-8)*

One day, after the tribulation and millennium, the entire universe will be gone. It will just be our eternal spirit and God. We will be with him or we will not. There will not be any place to hide.

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup>Then*

*death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-16)*

**Read Amos 9:11-15:** This is a vision into the future millennium. Israel will be in control over all nations; and Jesus will be sitting on the throne for 1,000 years. Israel will expand to its intended boundaries. The earth will be like the Garden of Eden. There will be such a large harvest that there is not enough time to get all of the crop off; when they are forced to get the planting done.