
AMOS 9: 1 I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he said, "Strike the tops of the pillars, that the thresholds may shake; and break them in pieces on the head of all of them; and I will kill the last of them with the sword: there shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape.

The first part of this chapter contains another vision, in which God is represented as declaring the final ruin of the kingdom of Israel, and the general dispersion of the people, Amo 9:1-10. The prophet then passes to the great blessedness of the people of God under the Gospel dispensation, Amo 9:11-15. See Act 15:15, Act 15:16.

Verse 1

I saw the Lord standing upon the altar - As this is a continuation of the preceding prophecy, the altar here may be one of those either at Dan or Beer-sheba.

Smite the lintel - Either the piece of timber that binds the wall above the door, or the upper part of the door frame, in which the cheeks, or side posts, are inserted, and which corresponds to the threshold, or lower part of the door frame.

And cut them in the head - Let all the lintels of all the doors of all those temples be thus cut, as a sign that the whole shall be thrown down and totally demolished. Or this may refer to their heads - chief men, who were principals in these transgressions. Mark their temples, their priests, their prophets, and their princes, for destruction.

He that fleeth - shall not flee away - He shall be caught before he can get out of the reach of danger.

And he that escapeth (that makes good his flight) shall not be delivered - Captivity, famine, or sword, shall reach him even there.

AMOS 9: 2 Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them; and though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down.

Verse 2

Though they dig into hell - Though they should get into the deepest caverns; though they climb up to heaven - get to the most inaccessible heights; I will drag them up from the one, and pull them down from the other.

AMOS 9: 3 Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out there; and though they be hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent, and it will bite them.

Verse 3

Though they hide themselves - All these are metaphorical expressions, to show the impossibility of escape.

AMOS 9: 4 Though they go into captivity before their enemies, there I will command the sword, and it will kill them. I will set my eyes on them for evil, and not for good.

Verse 4

I will set mine eyes upon them for evil - I will use that very providence against them which before worked for their good. Should they look upward, they shall see nothing but the terrible lightning-like eye of a sin-avenging God.

AMOS 9: 5 For the Lord, the LORD of Armies, is he who touches the land and it melts, and all who dwell in it will mourn; and it will rise up wholly like the River, and will sink again, like the River of Egypt.

Verse 5

The Lord God of hosts is he - So powerful is he that a touch of his hand shall melt or dissolve the land, and cause all its inhabitants to mourn. Here is still a reference to the earthquake. See the note Amo 8:8, where the same images are used.

AMOS 9: 6 It is he who builds his rooms in the heavens, and has founded his vault on the earth; he who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the surface of the earth; the LORD is his name.

Verse 6

Buildeth his stories in the heaven - There is here an allusion to large houses, where there are cellars, or places dug in the ground as repositories for corn; middle apartments, or stories, for the families to live in; and the house-top for persons to take the air upon. There may be here a reference to the various systems which God has formed in illimitable space, transcending each other, as the planets do in our solar system: and thus we find Solomon speaking when addressing the Most High: "The heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, ושמיי השמים ושמיי השמים hashshamayim ushemey hashshamayim, 1Kgs 8:27. Six heavens are necessarily implied in these three words. According to the points, the first and third are in the dual number, and the second is the contracted form of the plural. But how many more spheres may be intended who can tell? There may be millions of millions of stellar systems in unlimited space; and then what are all these to the Vast Immensity of God!

Hath founded his troop in the earth - אגדיו aguddatho, from אגד agad, to bind or gather together, possibly meaning the seas and other collections of waters which he has gathered together and

bound by his perpetual decree, that they cannot pass; yet when he calleth for these very waters, as in the general deluge, he "poureth them out upon the face of the earth."

The Lord is his name - This points out his infinite essence. But what is that essence? and what is his nature? and what his immensity and eternity? What archangel can tell?

AMOS 9: 7 Are you not like the children of the Ethiopians to me, children of Israel?" says the LORD. "Haven't I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"

Verse 7

Children of the Ethiopians - Or Cushites. Cush was the son of Ham, Gen 10:6; and his descendants inhabited a part of Arabia Petraea and Arabia Felix. All this stock was universally despised. See Bochart.

The Philistines from Caphtor - The island of Crete, the people of which were the Cherethim. See, 1Sam 30:14; Eze 25:16; Zep 2:5.

The Syrians from Kir? - Perhaps a city of the Medes, Isa 22:6. Aram, from whom Syria had its name, was the son of Shem, Gen 10:22. Part of his descendants settled in this city, and part in Aram Naharaim, "Syria of the two rivers," viz., Mesopotamia, included between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

The meaning of the verse is this: Do not presume on my having brought you out of the land of Egypt and house of bondage, into a land flowing with milk and honey. I have brought other nations, and some of your neighbors, who are your enemies, from comparatively barren countries, into fruitful territories; such, for instance, as the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir.

AMOS 9: 8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the surface of the earth; except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," says the LORD.

Verse 8

The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom - The kingdom of Israel, peculiarly sinful; and therefore to be signally destroyed by the Assyrians.

I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob - The race shall not become extinct: I will reserve them as monuments of my justice, and finally of my mercy.

AMOS 9: 9 "For, behold, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet not the least kernel will fall on the earth.

Verse 9

I will sift the house of Israel among all nations - I will disperse them over the face of the earth; and yet I will so order it that the good shall not be lost; for though they shall be mixed among distant nations, yet there shall be a general restoration of them to their own land.

The least grain - צרור tseror, little stone, pebble, or gravel. Not one of them, howsoever little or contemptible, when the time comes, shall be left behind. All shall be collected in Christ, and brought into their own land.

AMOS 9: 10 All the sinners of my people will die by the sword, who say, 'Evil won't overtake nor meet us.'

Verse 10

All the sinners of my people - Those who are the boldest and most incredulous; especially they who despise my warnings, and say the evil day shall not overtake nor prevent us; they shall die by the sword. It is no evidence of a man's safety that he is presumptuously fearless. There is a blessing to him who trembles at God's word.

AMOS 9: 11 In that day I will raise up the tent of David who is fallen, and close up its breaches, and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old;

Verse 11

Will I raise up the tabernacle of David - It is well known that the kingdom of Israel, the most profane and idolatrous, fell first, and that the kingdom of Judah continued long after, and enjoyed considerable prosperity under Hezekiah and Josiah. The remnant of the Israelites that were left by the Assyrians became united to the kingdom of Judah; and of the others, many afterwards joined them: but this comparatively short prosperity and respite, previously to the Babylonish captivity, could not be that, as Calmet justly observes, which is mentioned here. This could not be called closing up the breaches, raising up the ruins, and building it as in the days of old; nor has any state of this kind taken place since; and, consequently, the prophecy remains to be fulfilled. It must therefore refer to their restoration under the Gospel, when they shall receive the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, and be by him restored to their own land. See these words quoted by James, Act 15:17. Then indeed it is likely that they shall possess the remnant of Edom, and have the whole length and breadth of Immanuel's land, Amo 9:12. Nor can it be supposed that the victories gained by the Asmoneans could be that intended by the prophet and which he describes in such lofty terms. These victories procured only a short respite, and a very imperfect re-establishment of the tabernacle of David; and could not warrant the terms of the prediction in these verses.

AMOS 9: 12 that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations who are called by my name," says the LORD who does this.

Verse 12

That they may possess the remnant of Edom - Bp. Newcome translates this clause as follows: "That the residue of men may seek Jehovah, and all the heathen who are called by my name." Here, instead of אֶדוֹם Edom, he reads אָדָם Adam, men or mankind, which is the reading of the Arabic, and some MSS. of the Syriac, and of Act 15:17.

The Pachomian MS. of the Septuagint adds here, ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσι με, that they may seek me. And the Arabic has the Lord; and in stead of יִרְשׁוּ yireshu, "they shall possess," the learned bishop seems to have read יִדְרְשׁוּ yidreshu, "they may seek;" and thus the text resembles the quotation by St. James, Act 15:17, "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord." It is strange that not one of the MSS. collated by Kennicott and De Rossi, nor any of my own, favors or countenances any of these alterations. I am of opinion, therefore, that we must dismiss all these conjectural emendations, and take the Hebrew text as we find it. That it speaks of the conversion of the Jews in Gospel times, we have the authority of the New Testament as above to prove; and if we cannot make the words, as they stand there, entirely to agree with the words here, the subject is not affected by it. The Jews shall be converted and restored, and this text in both covenants is a proof of it.

AMOS 9: 13 "Behold, the days come," says the LORD, "that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the one treading grapes him who sows seed; and sweet wine will drip from the mountains, and flow from the hills.

Verse 13

The ploughman shall overtake the reaper - All the seasons shall succeed in due and natural order: but the crops shall be so copious in the fields and in the vineyards, that a long time shall be employed in gathering and disposing of them; so that the seasons of ploughing, sowing, gathering the grapes, treading the wine-press, etc., shall press on the heels of each other; so vast will be the abundance, and so long the time necessary to gather and cure the grain and fruits. We are informed by travelers in the Holy Land, Barbary, etc., that the vintage at Aleppo lasts from the fifteenth of September to the middle of November; and that the sowing season begins at the close of October, and lasts through all November. Here, then, the ploughman, sower, grape-gatherer, and operator at the wine-press, not only succeed each other, but have parts of these operations going on at the same time. But great fertility in the land, abundance in the crops, and regularity of the seasons, seem to be the things which the prophet especially predicts. These are all poetical and prophetic images, by which happy times are pointed out.

AMOS 9: 14 I will bring my people Israel back from captivity, and they will rebuild the ruined cities, and inhabit them; and they will plant vineyards, and drink wine from them. They shall also make gardens, and eat their fruit.

Verse 14

They shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine - When threatened with great evils, Amo 5:11, it is said, "They shall plant pleasant vineyards but shall not drink the wine of them." Previously to their restoration, they shall labor for others; after their restoration, they shall labor for themselves.

AMOS 9: 15 I will plant them on their land, and they will no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them," says the LORD your God.

Verse 15

I will plant them upon their land - They shall receive a permanent establishment there.

And they shall no more be pulled up - Most certainly this prophecy has never yet been fulfilled. They were pulled out by the Assyrian captivity, and by that of Babylon. Many were planted in again, and again pulled out by the Roman conquest and captivity, and were never since planted in, but are now scattered among all the nations of the earth. I conclude, as the word of God cannot fail, and this has not yet been fulfilled, it therefore follows that it will and must be fulfilled to the fullness of its spirit and intention. And this is established by the conclusion: "Saith the Lord thy God." He is Jehovah, and cannot fail; he is Thy God, and will do it. He can do it, because he is Jehovah; and he will do it, because he is Thy God. Amen.