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AMOS

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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Amos - Keil and Delitzsch

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AMOS

Introduction

The Prophet.

—*Amos* (אֲמוֹס, i.e., Bearer or Burden), according to the heading to his book, was “among the shepherds (*nōqdīm*) of Tekoah” when the Lord called him to be a prophet; that is to say, he was a native of Tekoah, a town situated on the borders of the desert of Judah, two hours to the south of Bethlehem, the ruins of which have been preserved under the ancient name (see at Josh. 15:59, LXX), and lived with the shepherds who fed their sheep in the steppe to the east of Tekoah; of course not as a rich owner of flocks, but simply as a shepherd. For even though *nōqēd* is applied to the Moabitish king in 2 Kings 3:4 as a rich owner of a choice breed of sheep and goats, the word properly signifies only a rearer of sheep, i.e., not merely the owner, but the shepherd of choice sheep, as Bochart (*Hieroz.* i. p. 483, ed. Ros.) has proved from the Arabic. But Amos himself affirms, in Amos 7:14, that he was a simple shepherd. He there replies to the priest at Bethel, who wanted to prevent him from prophesying in the kingdom of Israel: “I am not a prophet, nor yet a prophet’s pupil, but a herdman (*bōqēd*) am I, and *bōlēs shiqmīm*, a gatherer of sycamores” (see at Amos 7:14),— i.e., one who fed upon this fruit, which resembles figs, and is described by Pliny (*hist. n.* 13, 14), as *praedulcis*, but which, according to Strabo, xvii. 823 (ἄτιμος κατὰ τὴν γεῦσιν), was very lightly esteemed as food, and also, according to Dioscor., was ἄτιμος καὶ κακοστόμαχος, and which is only used in Egypt as the food of the common people (Norden, *Reise*, p. 118). Consequently we have to regard Amos as a shepherd living in indigent circumstances, not as a prosperous man possessing both a flock of sheep and a sycamore plantation, which many commentators, following the Chaldee and the Rabbins, have made him out to be. Without having dedicated himself to the calling of a

prophet, and without even being trained in the schools of the prophets, he was called by the Lord away from the flock to be a prophet, to prophesy concerning Israel (Amos 7:14, 15), under the Judaeen king Uzziah and the Israelitish king Jeroboam II, i.e., within the twenty-six years of the contemporaneous rule of these two kings, or between 810 and 783 B.C. Amos therefore commenced his prophetic labours about the same time as Hosea, probably a few years earlier, and prophesied in Bethel, the chief seat of the Israelitish image-worship (Amos 7:10). We cannot fix with any greater exactness either the time of his appearing or the duration of his ministry; for the notice in Amos 1:1, “two years before the earthquake,” furnishes no chronological datum, because the time of the earthquake is unknown. It is never mentioned in the historical books of the Old Testament, though it can hardly be any other than the terrible earthquake in the time of Uzziah, which the people had not forgotten even after the captivity, inasmuch as Zechariah was able to recal the flight that took place on that occasion (Zech. 14:5). As Amos has not given the date of the earthquake, his evident intention was not to fix the time when his ministry commenced, or when his book was composed, but simply to point to the internal connection between this event and his own prophetic mission. According to the teaching of Scripture, the earth quakes when the Lord comes to judgment upon the nations (see at Amos 8:8). The earthquake which shook Jerusalem two years after the appearance of Amos as the prophet, was a harbinger of the judgment threatened by Him against the two kingdoms of Israel and the surrounding nations,—a practical declaration on the part of God that He would verify the word of His servant; and the allusion to this divine sign on the part of the prophet was an admonition to Israel to lay to heart the word of the Lord which he had announced to them. So far as the explanation and importance of his prophecies were concerned, it was enough to mention the kings of Judah and Israel in whose reigns he prophesied.

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Under these kings the two kingdoms stood at the summit of their prosperity. Uzziah had completely subdued the Edomites, had subjugated the Philistines, and had even made the Ammonites tributary. He had also fortified Jerusalem strongly, and had raised a powerful army; so that his name reached as far as Egypt (2 Chron. 26). And Jeroboam had completely overcome the Syrians, and restored the original borders of the kingdom from the country of Hamath to the Dead Sea (2 Kings 14:25–28). After the power of the Syrians had been broken, Israel had no longer any foe to fear, for Assyria had not yet arisen as a conquering power. The supposition that Calneh or Ctesiphon is represented in Amos 6:2 as having already been taken (by the Assyrians), rests upon an incorrect interpretation, and is just as erroneous as the inference, also drawn from the same passage, that Hamath was conquered and Gath destroyed. Amos does not mention the Assyrians at all; although in Amos 1:5 he threatens the Syrians with transportation to Kir, and in Amos 5:27 predicts that the Israelites will be carried into captivity beyond Damascus. In the existing state of things, the idea of the approaching fall or destruction of the kingdom of Israel was, according to human judgment, a very improbable one indeed. The inhabitants of Samaria and Zion felt themselves perfectly secure in the consciousness of their might (Amos 6:1). The rulers of the kingdom trusted in the strength of their military resources (Amos 6:13), and were only concerned to increase their wealth by oppressing the poor, and to revel in earthly luxuries and pleasures (Amos 2:6–8; 5:11, 12; 6:4–6); so that the prophet denounces woes upon those who are in security upon Zion and without care upon the mountain of Samaria (Amos 6:1), and utters the threat that the Lord will cause the sun to set at noon, and bring darkness over the land in broad daylight (Amos 8:9).

It was at such a time as this that the plain shepherd of Tekoah was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes, to announce to the careless sinners the approach of the divine

judgment, and the destruction of the kingdom. And whilst it was in itself a strange event for a prophet to be sent out of Judah into the kingdom of the ten tribes,—so strange, in fact, that in all probability it had never occurred since the kingdom had been founded, or at any rate, that no second instance of the kind is recorded, from the time when the man of God was sent out of Judah to Bethel in the reign of Jeroboam I (1 Kings 13), down to the time of Amos himself,—it must have attracted universal attention, for a man to rise up who belonged to the rank of a shepherd, who had had no training at all for a prophet's vocation, but who nevertheless proved, by the demonstration of the Spirit, that he was a prophet indeed, and who foretold, in the strength of God, what destruction awaited the covenant people, before there was the slightest human probability of any such catastrophe.

The prophet's style of composition does indeed betray the former shepherd in the use of certain words, which evidently belonged to the dialect of the common people,—e.g., מְעִיק for

מִצִּיק (Amos 2:13), בּוֹשֵׁס for בּוֹסֵס (Amos

5:11), מְתַאֵב for מְתַעֵב (Amos 6:8), מְסִירָא

for מְשִׁירָא (Amos 6:10), יְצַחֵק for יְצַחֵק

(Amos 7:9, 16), נְשִׁקָּה for נְשִׁקָּה (Amos 8:8),

and in many figures and similes drawn from nature and rural life; but for the rest, it indicates a close acquaintance on the part of the prophet with the Mosaic law and the history of his nation, and also considerable rhetorical power, wealth and depth of thought, vivacity and vigour, more especially in the use of bold antitheses, and a truly poetical roll, which rises by no means unfrequently into actual rhythm; so that Lowth has already expressed the following opinion concerning him (*De poesi sacr.* ed. Mich. p. 433): "*Aequus judex, de re non de homine quaesiturus, censebit, credo, pastorem nostrum μηδὲν ὑστερηκέναι τῶν ὑπερλίαν προφητῶν, ut sensuum elatione et magnificentia*

spiritus prope summis parem, ita etiam dictionis splendore et compositionis elegantia vix quoquam inferiorem.” Beyond these facts, which we gather from the prophet’s won writings, nothing further is known of the circumstances connected with his life. After fulfilling his mission, he probably returned to Judah, his native land, where his prophecies were most likely first committed to writing. The apocryphal accounts of his death, in Pseud.-Epiphanius, c. 12, and Pseudo-Dorotheus. (see Carpzov, p. 319), have no historical value whatever.

2. The Book.

—Although Amos was sent by the Lord to Bethel, to prophesy to the people of Israel there, he does not restrict himself in his prophecy to the kingdom of the ten tribes, but, like his younger contemporary Hosea, notices the kingdom of Judah as well, and even the surrounding nations, that were hostile to the covenant nation. His book is not a mere collection of the addresses delivered in Bethel, but a carefully planned, complete work, in which Amos, after the occurrence of the earthquake in the time of Uzziah, gathered together all the essential contents of the prophecies he had previously uttered at Bethel. It consists of a lengthy introduction (Amos 1, 2) and two parts, viz., simple prophetic addresses (Amos 4–6), and visions with short explanations (Amos 7–19). In the introduction the prophet proclaims, in the following manner, the judgment about to fall upon Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel. The storm of the Lord, which bursts upon all these kingdoms, remains suspended over the kingdom of Israel, which is mentioned last. This is evident from the fact, that the sin of Israel is depicted more fully than that of the other nations; and the threatening of judgment is couched in such general terms, that it can only be regarded as a provisional announcement, or as the introduction to the body of the book by which it is followed. The *first* part contains an extended address, divided

into three sections by the recurrence of שְׁמַעוּ (hear ye) in Amos 3:1; 4:1, and 5:1. The address consists of a “great warning to repent,” in which the prophet holds up before the sinful Israelites, especially the rulers of the kingdom, the arts of injustice and wickedness that are current among them, and proclaims a judgment which embraces the destruction of the palaces and holy places, the overthrow of the kingdom, and the transportation of the people. In Amos 3 the sin and punishment are described in the most general form. In Amos 4 the prophet sweeps away from the self-secure sinners the false ground of confidence afforded by their own worship, recalls to their mind the judgments with which God has already visited them, and summons them to stand before God as their judge. In Amos 5 and 6, after a mournful elegy concerning the fall of the house of Israel (Amos 5:1–3), he points out to the penitent the way to life coupled with the repeated summons to seek the Lord, and that which is good (Amos 5:4, 6, 14); and then, in the form of a woe, for which a double reason is assigned (Amos 5:18; 6:1), he takes away all hope of deliverance from the impenitent and hardened. Throughout the whole of this address Amos prophesies chiefly to the ten tribes, whom he repeatedly addresses, predicting ruin and exile. At the same time, he not only addresses his words in the introduction (Amos 3:1, 2) to all Israel of the twelve tribes, whom Jehovah brought out of Egypt, but he also pronounces the last woe (Amos 6:1) upon the secure ones on Zion, and the careless ones on the mountain of Samaria; so that his prophecy also applies to the kingdom of Judah, and sets before it the same fate as that of the kingdom of the ten tribes, if it should fall into the same sin. The *second* part contains five visions, and at the close the proclamation of salvation. the first two visions (Amos 7:1–3 and 4–6) threaten judgments; the next two (Amos 7:7–9; 8:1–3) point out the impossibility of averting the judgment, and the ripeness of the people for it. Between these, viz., in Amos 7:10–17, the conversation

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between the prophet and the chief priest at Bethel is related. The substance of the fourth vision is carried out still further, in a simple prophetic address (Amos 8:4–14). Lastly, the fifth vision (Amos 9:1) shows the overthrow and ruin of the whole of Israel, and is also still further expanded in a plain address (Amos 9:2–10). To this there is appended the promise of the restoration of the fallen kingdom of God, of its extension through the adoption of the Gentiles, and of its eternal glorification (Amos 9:11–15). This conclusion corresponds to the introduction (Amos 1 and 2). Like all the nations that rise up in hostility to the kingdom of God, even Judah and Israel shall fall victims to the judgment, on account of their unrighteousness and idolatry, in order that the kingdom of God may be purified from its dross, be exalted to glory, and so be made perfect. This is the fundamental thought of the writings of Amos, who was called by the Lord to preach this truth to the nation of Israel. And just as the close of his book points back to the introduction (Amos 1 and 2), so also do the visions of the second part correspond to the addresses of the first, embodying the substance of the addresses in significant symbols. The parallel between the fifth vision and the elegy struck up in Amos 5:1 is very conspicuous; and it is also impossible to overlook the material agreement between the first and second visions and the enumeration in Amos 4:6–11, of the divine visitations that had already fallen upon Israel; whilst the third and fourth visions set clearly before the eye the irrevocable character of the judgments with which careless and wanton sinners are threatened in Amos 3–6.

There is evidently no foundation for the assumption that the second part contains “the true kernel of his work,” namely, “the addresses which Amos originally delivered at Bethel;” and that the first part, together with the introduction (Amos 1–6) and the Messianic conclusion (Amos 9:11–15), is purely a written description, composed by Amos after his return from Bethel to Judah, to give a further expansion to his original utterances (Ewald, Baur). This by no means follows, either from

the fact that the account of what the prophet experienced at Bethel is inserted in the series of visions, as it moves on step by step, and that the place in which it occurs (viz., Amos 7) is evidently its original position, or from the circumstance that Amos commences his work with a saying of Joel (compare Amos 1:2 with Joel 4:16), and evidently refers to Joel (Joel 3:18) even in the promise at the close (Amos 9:13). For the position of this account in Amos 7 proves nothing further than that Amos related those visions in Bethel; and the allusion to Joel simply presupposes an acquaintance with the predictions of this prophet. If there were no previous addresses, the visions in Amos 7 and 8 would have nothing to explain their occurrence, and would also be lacking in the requisite clearness. Moreover, the work of Amos in Bethel cannot possibly be limited to Amos 7–9. And lastly, the addresses in Amos 4–6 are throughout so individual, so full of life, and so impressive, that they clearly reflect the original oral delivery, even though it may be nothing more than the essential substance of what was orally delivered, that has been given here. Only Amos 1 and 2 appears to have been really conceived in the form of a written composition, and placed at the head of the book at the time when it was first compiled, although certain thoughts that had been orally expressed may lie at the foundation even there.

For the exegetical writings upon Amos, see my *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, pp. 284–5.

Amos 1

The Approaching Judgment—Ch. 1 and 2

Amos 1–2. Starting from the saying of Joel (Joel 3:16), “Jehovah will roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem,” Amos announces the wrath of the Lord, which will discharge itself upon Damascus (Amos 1:3–5), Philistia (Amos 1:6–8), Tyre (Amos 1:9, 10), Edom (Amos 1:11, 12), Ammon (Amos 1:13–15), Moab (Amos 2:1–3), Judah (Amos 2:4, 5), and Israel (Amos 2:6–16). The announcement of this judgment maintains a certain uniformity throughout; every one of these nations being threatened

with the destruction of the kingdom, or with ruin and exile, “for three or four transgressions;” and the threat, as Rückert has well expressed it, “rolling like a storm, in strophe after strophe, over all the surrounding kingdoms,” touching Judah as it passes along, and eventually resting over Israel. The six heathen nations mentioned, three of which are related to the covenant nation, represent all the Gentile nations, which rise up in hostility to the people or kingdom of God. For the sins on account of which they are to be punished, are not certain general breaches of morality, but crimes which they have committed against the people of God; and in the case of Judah, contempt of the commandments of the Lord, and idolatry. The whole section, not merely Amos 1:2–2:5, but also Amos 2:6–16, has an introductory character. Whilst, on the one hand, the extension of the prediction of judgment to the Gentile nations indicates the necessity and universality of the judgment, which is sent to promote the interests of the kingdom of God, and preaches the truth that every one will be judged according to his attitude towards the living God; on the other hand, the place assigned to the Gentile nations, viz., before the covenant nation, not only sharpened the conscience, but taught this lesson, that if even the nations which had only sinned indirectly against the living God were visited with severe punishment, those to whom God had so gloriously revealed Himself (Amos 2:9–11; 3:1) would be punished still more surely for their apostasy (Amos 3:2). It is with this design that Judah is also mentioned along with Israel, and in fact before it. “The intention was to impress this truth most strongly upon the people of the ten tribes, that not even the possession of such glorious prerogatives as the temple and the throne of David could avert the merited punishment. If this be the energy of the justice of God, what have we to look for?” (Hengstenberg).

Amos 1:1, 2. V. 1 contains the heading, which has already been discussed in the Introduction;

and אֲשֶׁר חָזָה (“which he saw”) refers to

דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס (*the words of Amos*). V. 2 forms the Introduction, which is attached to the heading by וַיֹּאמֶר, and announces a revelation of the wrath of God upon Israel, or a theocratic judgment. V. 2. “*Jehovah roars out of Zion, and He utters His voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the head of Carmel withers.*” The voice of Jehovah is the thunder, the earthly substratum in which the Lord manifests His coming to judgment (see at Joel 3:16). By the adoption of the first half of the verse word for word from Joel, Amos connects his prophecy with that of his predecessor, not so much with the intention of confirming the latter, as for the purpose of alarming the sinners who were at ease in their security, and overthrowing the delusive notion that the judgment of God would only fall upon the heathen world. This delusion he meets with the declaration, that at the threatening of the wrath of God the pastures of the shepherds, i.e., the pasture-ground of the land of Israel (cf. Joel 1:19), and the head of the forest-crowned Carmel, will fade and wither. *Carmel* is the oft-recurring promontory at the mouth of the Kishon on the Mediterranean (see the comm. on Josh. 19:26 and 1 Kings 18:19), and not the place called Carmel on the mountains of Judah (Josh. 15:55), to which the term ראש (head) is inapplicable (vid., Amos 9:3 and Mic. 7:14). Shepherds’ pastures and Carmel individualized the land of Israel in a manner that was very natural to Amos the shepherd. With this introduction, Amos announces the theme of his prophecies. And if, instead of proceeding at once to describe still further the judgment that threatens the kingdom of Israel, he first of all enumerates the surrounding nations, including Judah, as objects of the manifestation of the wrath of God, this enumeration cannot have any other object than the one described in our survey of the contents of the book. The enumeration opens with the kingdoms of Aram, Philistia, and Tyre (Phoenicia), which were not

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related to Israel by any ties of kinship whatever.

Amos 1:3-5. Aram-Damascus.—V. 3. *“Thus saith Jehovah, For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have threshed Gilead with iron rollers, V. 4. I send fire into the house of Hazael, and it will eat the palaces of Ben-hadad, V. 5. And break in pieces the bolt of Damascus, and root out the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and the sceptre-holder out of Beth-Eden: and the people of Aram will wander into captivity to Kir, saith Jehovah.”* In the formula, which is repeated in the case of every people, “for three transgressions, and for four,” the numbers merely serve to denote the multiplicity of the sins, the exact number of which has no bearing upon the matter. “The number four is added to the number three, to characterize the latter as simply set down at pleasure; in other words, it is as much as to say that the number is not exactly three or four, but probably a still larger number” (Hitzig). The expression, therefore, denotes not a small but a large number of crimes, or “ungodliness in its worst form” (Luther; see at Hos. 6:2). That these numbers are to be understood in this way, and not to be taken in a literal sense, is unquestionably evident from the fact, that not the more precise account of the sins which follows, as a rule, only one especially grievous crime is mentioned by

way of example. **לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ** (I will not reverse it) is inserted before the more minute description of the crimes, to show that the threat is irrevocable. **הֲשִׁיב** signifies to turn, i.e., to make a thing go back, to withdraw it, as in Num. 23:20, Isa. 43:13. The suffix attached to **אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ** refers neither to *qōlō* (his voice), nor “to the idea of **דָּבַר** which is implied in **כֹּה**

אָמַר (thus saith), or the substance of the threatening thunder-voice” (Baur); for *hēshībh dābhār* signifies to give an answer, and never to make a word ineffectual. The reference is to the

punishment threatened afterwards, where the masculine stands in the place of the neuter. Consequently the close of the verse contains the epexegetis of the first clause, and vv. 4 and 5

follow with the explanation of **לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ** (I will not turn it). The threshing of the Gileadites with iron threshing-machines is mentioned as the principal transgression of the Syrian kingdom, which is here named after the capital Damascus (see at 2 Sam. 8:6). This took place at the conquest of the Israelitish land to the east of the Jordan by Hazael during the reign of Jehu (2 Kings 10:32, 33, cf. Amos 13:7), when the conquerors acted so cruelly towards the Gileadites, that they even crushed the prisoners to pieces with iron threshing-machines, according to a barbarous war-custom that is met with elsewhere (see at 2 Sam. 12:31). *Chârûts* (= *chârîts*, 2 Sam. 12:31), lit., sharpened, is a poetical term applied to the threshing-roller, or threshing-cart (*mōrag chârûts*, Isa. 41:15). According to Jerome, it was “a kind of cart with toothed iron wheels underneath, which was driven about to crush the straw in the threshing-floors after the grain had been beaten out.” The threat is individualized historically thus: in the case of the capital, the burning of the palaces is predicted; and in that of two other places, the destruction of the people and their rulers; so that both of them apply to both, or rather to the whole kingdom. The palaces of Hazael and Benhadad are to be sought for in Damascus, the capital of the kingdom (Jer. 49:27). Hazael was the murderer of Benhadad I, to whom the prophet Elisha foretold that he would reign over Syria, and predicted the cruelties that he would practise towards Israel (2 Kings 8:7ff.). Benhadad is generally regarded as his son; but the plural “palaces” leads us rather to think of both the first and second Benhadad, and this is favoured by the circumstance that it was only during his father’s reign that Benhadad II oppressed Israel, whereas after his death, and when he himself ascended the throne, the conquered provinces were wrested from him by Joash king of Israel (2 Kings 13:22–25). The

breaking of the bar (the bolt of the gate) denotes the conquest of the capital; and the cutting off of the inhabitants of *Biq'ath-Aven* indicates the slaughter connected with the capture of the towns, and not their deportation; for *hikhrith* means to exterminate, so that *gâlâh* (captivity) in the last clause applies to the remainder of the population that had not been

slain in war. In the parallel clause **תֹּמֵךְ שִׁבֵּט**, the sceptre-holder, i.e., the ruler (either the king or his deputy), corresponds to *yōshēbh* (the inhabitant); and the thought expressed is, that both prince and people, both high and low, shall perish.

The two places, *Valley-Aven* and *Beth-Eden*, cannot be discovered with any certainty; but at any rate they were capitals, and possibly they may have been the seat of royal palaces as well as Damascus, which was the first capital of the

kingdom. **בְּקַעַת אֲוֹן**, valley of nothingness, or of idols, is supposed by Ewald and Hitzig to be a name given to Heliopolis or Baalbek, after the analogy of Beth-Aven = Bethel (see at Hos. 5:8). They base their opinion upon the Alex.

rendering ἐκ πεδίου Ὠν, taken in connection with the Alex. interpretation of the Egyptian *On* (Gen. 41:45) as Heliopolis. But as the LXX have

interpreted **אֲוֹן** by Heliopolis in the book of Genesis, whereas here they have merely

reproduced the Hebrew letters **אֲוֹן** by Ὠν, as they have in other places as well (e.g., Hos. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5, 8), where Heliopolis cannot for a moment be thought of, the πεδίου Ὠν of the LXX furnishes no evidence in favour of Heliopolis, still less does it warrant an alteration of the Hebrew pointing (into **אֲוֹן**).

Even the Chaldee and Syriac have taken **בְּקַעַת**

אֲוֹן as a proper name, and Ephraem Syrus speaks of it as "a place in the neighbourhood of Damascus, distinguished for idol-chapels." The supposition that it is a city is also favoured by

the analogy of the other threatenings, in which, for the most part, cities only are mentioned. Others understand by it the valley near Damascus, or the present Bekaa between Lebanon and Antilibanus, in which Heliopolis was always the most distinguished city, and Robinson has pronounced in favour of this (*Bibl. Res.* p. 677). *Bēth-'Eden*, i.e., house of delight, is not to be sought for in the present village of Eden, on the eastern slope of Lebanon, near to the cedar forest of Bshirrai, as the Arabic name of this village 'hdn has nothing

in common with the Hebrew **עֵדֵן** (see at 2 Kings 19:12); but it is the Παράδεισος of the Greeks, which Ptolemy (v. 15, 20) places ten degrees south and five degrees east of Laodicea, and which Robinson imagines that he has found in Old Jusieh, not far from Ribleh, a place belonging to the times before the Saracens, with very extensive ruins (see *Bibl. Researches*, pp. 542–6, and 556). The rest of the population of Aram would be carried away to *Kir*, i.e., to the country on the banks of the river *Kur*, from which, according to Amos 9:7, the Syrians originally emigrated. This prediction was fulfilled when the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser conquered Damascus in the time of Ahaz, and broke up the kingdom of Syria (2 Kings 16:9). The closing words, 'amar Yhōvâh (saith the Lord), serve to add strength to the threat, and therefore recur in vv. 8, 15, and Amos 2:3.

Amos 1:6–8. Philistia.—V. 6. "Thus saith Jehovah, For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they carried away captives in full number to deliver them up to Edom, V. 7. I send fire into the wall of Gaza, and it will eat their palaces; V. 8. And I exterminate the inhabitant from Ashdod, and the sceptre-holder from Askelon, and turn my hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines will perish, saith the Lord Jehovah." Instead of the Philistines generally, the prophet mentions *Gaza* in v. 6. This is still a considerable town, bearing the old name *Guzzeh* (see the comm. on Josh. 13:3), and was the one of the five capitals of the Philistines which had taken the most active part as a great commercial town in

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handing over the Israelitish prisoners to the Edomites. For it is evident that Gaza is simply regarded as a representative of Philistia, from the fact that in the announcement of the punishment, the other capitals of Philistia are also mentioned. *Gâlûth shlēmâh* is correctly explained by Jerome thus: "a captivity so perfect and complete, that not a single captive remained who was not delivered to the Idumaeans." The reference is to captive Israelites, who were carried off by the Philistines, and disposed of by them to the Edomites, the arch-enemies of Israel. Amos no doubt had in his mind the invasion of Judah by the Philistines and tribes of Arabia Petraea in the time of Joram, which is mentioned in 2 Chron. 21:16, and to which Joel had already alluded in Joel 4:3ff., where the Phoenicians and Philistines are threatened with divine retribution for having plundered the land, and sold the captive Judaeans to the Javanites (Ionians). But it by no means follows from this, that the "sons of Javan" mentioned in Joel 4:6 are not Greeks, but the inhabitants of the Arabian *Javan* noticed in Ezek. 27:19. The fact was simply this: the Philistines sold one portion of the many prisoners, taken at that time, to the Edomites, and the rest to the Phoenicians, who disposed of them again to the Greeks. Joel simply mentions the latter circumstance, because, in accordance with the object of his prophecy, his design was to show the wide dispersion of the Jews, and their future gathering out of all the lands of their banishment. Amos, on the other hand, simply condemns the delivering of the captives to Edom, the arch-foe of Israel, to indicate the greatness of the sin involved in this treatment of the covenant nation, or the hatred which the Philistines had displayed thereby. As a punishment for this, the cities of Philistia would be burned by their enemies, the inhabitants would be exterminated, and the remnant perish. Here again, as in vv. 4, 5, the threat is rhetorically individualized, so that in the case of one city the burning of the city itself is predicted, and in that of another the destruction of its inhabitants. (On Ashdod,

Askelon, and Ekron, see the comm. on Josh.

13:3.) **הָשִׁיב יָד**, to return the hand, i.e., to turn or stretch it out again (see comm. on 2 Sam. 8:3). The use of this expression may be explained on the ground, that the destruction of the inhabitants of Ashdod and Askelon has already been thought of as a stretching out of the hand. The fifth of the Philistian capitals, Gath, is not mentioned, though not for the reason assigned by *Kimchi*, viz., that it belonged to the kings of Judah, or had been conquered by Uzziah, for Uzziah had not only conquered Gath and Jabneh, but had taken Ashdod as well, and thrown down the walls (2 Chron. 26:6), and yet Amos mentions Ashdod; nor because Gath had been taken by the Syrians (2 Kings 12:18), for this Syrian conquest was not a lasting one, and in the prophet's time (cf. Amos 6:2), and even later (cf. Mic. 1:10), it still maintained its independence, and was a very distinguished city; but for the simple reason that the individualizing description given by the prophet did not require the complete enumeration of all the capitals, and the idea of been named, but all that was still in existence, and had escaped destruction" (Amos 9:12 and Jer. 6:9), it nevertheless includes not merely the four states just named, but every part of Philistia that had hitherto escaped destruction, so that Gath must be included.

Amos 1:9, 10. Tyre or Phoenicia.—V. 9. *"Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have delivered up prisoners in full number to Edom, and have not remembered the brotherly covenant, V. 10. I send fire into the wall of Tyrus, and it will devour their palaces."* In the case of Phoenicia, the capital only (*Tzôr*, i.e., Tyrus; see at Josh. 19:29) is mentioned. The crime with which it is charged is similar to the one for which the Philistines were blamed, with this exception, that instead of **עַל־הַגְּלוֹתָם**

עַל־הַסְּגִירָם (v. 6) we have simply **עַל־הַסְּגִירָם**. If, therefore, Tyre is only charged with delivering up the captives to Edom, and not with having

carried them away, it must have bought the prisoners from an enemy of Israel, and then disposed of them to Edom. From what enemy they were purchased, it is impossible to determine with certainty. Probably from the Syrians, in the wars of Hazael and Benhadad with Israel; for there is nothing at variance with this in the fact that, when they purchased Israelitish captives in the time of Joram, they sold them to Javan. For a commercial nation, carrying on so extensive a trade as the Phoenicians did, would have purchased prisoners in more than one war, and would also have disposed of them as slaves to more nations than one. Tyre had contracted all the more guilt through this trade in Israelitish slaves, from the fact that it had thereby been unmindful of the brotherly covenant, i.e., of the friendly relation existing between Israel and itself—for example, the friendly alliance into which David and Solomon had entered with the king of Tyre (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:15ff.)—and also from the fact that no king of Israel or Judah had ever made war upon Phoenicia.

Amos 1:11, 12. Edom.—V. 11. *“Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because it pursues its brother with the sword, and stifles its compassion, and its anger tears in pieces for ever, and it keeps its wrath for ever, V. 12. I send fire into Teman, and it will devour the palaces of Bozrah.”* Edom and the two following nations were related to Israel by lineal descent. In the case of Edom, Amos does not condemn any particular sins, but simply its implacable, mortal hatred towards its brother nation Israel, which broke out into acts of cruelty at every

possible opportunity. וְשַׁחַת רַחֲמָיו, he annihilates, i.e., suppresses, stifles his sympathy or his compassionate love; this is still

dependent upon עַל רִדְפוֹ, the preposition עַל continuing in force as a conjunction before the infinitive (i.e., as equivalent to עַל אֲשֶׁר), and the infinitive passing into the finite verb (cf.

Amos 2:4). In the next clause אָפוּ is the subject: its wrath tears in pieces, i.e., rages destructively (compare Job 16:9, where *târaph* is applied to the wrath of God). In the last clause, on the other hand, Edom is again the subject; but it is now regarded as a kingdom, and construed as a feminine, and consequently

עֲבָרְתוֹ is the object, and placed at the head as an absolute noun. שְׁמָרָה, with the tone upon the *penult* (*milel*) on account of *netsach*, which follows with the tone upon the first syllable, stands for שְׁמָרָה (it preserves it), the *mappik* being omitted in the toneless syllable (compare Ewald, § 249, *b*). If עֲבָרְתוֹ were the subject,

the verb would have to be pointed שְׁמָרָה.

Again, the rendering proposed by Ewald, “his fury lies in wait for ever,” is precluded by the fact that שָׁמַר, when applied to wrath in Jer.

3:5, signifies to keep, or preserve, and also by the fact that lying in wait is generally inapplicable to an emotion. *Teman*, according to Jerome (*ad h. l.*), is *Idumaeorum regio quae vergit ad australem partem*, so that here, just as in Amos 2:2 and 5, the land is mentioned first, and then the capital. *Bozrah*, an important city, supposed to be the capital of Idumaea (see comm. on Gen. 36:33). It was to the south of the Dead Sea, and has been preserved in *el-Buseireh*, a village with ruins in *Jebâl* (see Robinson, *Pal. ii. p. 570*), and must not be confounded with *Bossra* in Hauran (Burckhardt, *Syr. p. 364*).

Amos 1:13–15. Ammon.—V. 13. *“Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have ripped up the pregnant women of Gilead, to widen their border, V. 14. I kindle fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it will devour its palaces, with the war-cry on the day of slaughter, in the storm on the day of the tempest. V. 15. And their king shall go into captivity, he*

and his princes all at once, saith Jehovah." The occasion on which the Ammonites were guilty of such cruelty towards the Israelites as is here condemned, is not recorded in the historical books of the Old Testament; possibly during the wars of Hazael with Israel, when they availed themselves of the opportunity to widen their territory by conquering back the land which had been wrested from them by Sihon king of the Amorites, and was then taken possession of by the Israelites, when he was overcome by them,—a thing which they had attempted once before in the time of Jephthah the judge (Judg. 11:12ff.). We may see from Jer. 49:1ff. that they had taken possession of the territory of the tribe of Gad, which lay nearest to them, though probably not till after the carrying away of the tribes beyond Jordan by the Assyrians (2 Kings 15:29). The ripping up of the women with child (see at 2 Kings 8:12) is singled out as the climax of the cruelties which the Ammonites inflicted upon the Israelites during the war. As a punishment for this, their capital was to be burned, and the king, with the princes, to wander into exile, and consequently their kingdom was to be destroyed. *Rabbâh*, i.e., the great one, is the abbreviated name of the capital; Rabbah of the children of Ammon, which has been preserved in the ruins of *Aurân* (see at Deut. 3:11). The threat is sharpened by the clause **בַּתְּרוּעָה וְגו'**, at the war-cry on the field of battle, i.e., an actual fact, when the enemy shall take the city by storm. **בְּסַעַר וְגו'** is a figurative expression applied to the storming of a city carried by assault, like **בְּסוּפָה** in Num. 21:14. The reading **מֶלֶכָם**, "their (the Ammonites') king," is confirmed by the LXX and the Chaldee, and required by **וְשָׂרָיו** (cf. Amos 2:3), whereas *Μαλχόμ*, *Melchom*, which is found in Aq., Symm., Jerome, and the Syriac, rests upon a false interpretation.

Amos 2

Amos 2:1–3. Moab.—V. 1. "Thus saith Jehovah: for three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because it has burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime, V. 2. I send fire into Moab, and it will devour the palaces of Kirioth, and Moab will perish in the tumult, in the war-cry, in the trumpet-blast. V. 3. And I cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and all its princes do I strangle with it, saith Jehovah." The burning of the bones of the king of Edom is not burning while he was still alive, but the burning of the corpse into lime, i.e., so completely that the bones turned into powder like lime (D. Kimchi), to cool his wrath still further upon the dead man (cf. 2 Kings 23:16). This is the only thing blamed, not his having put him to death. No record has been preserved of this event in the historical books of the Old Testament; but it was no doubt connected with the war referred to in 2 Kings 3, which Joram of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah waged against the Moabites in company with the king of Edom; so that the Jewish tradition found in Jerome, viz., that after this war the Moabites dug up the bones of the king of Edom from the grave, and heaped insults upon them by burning them to ashes, is apparently not without foundation. As Amos in the case of all the other nations has mentioned only crimes that were committed against the covenant nation, the one with which the Moabites are charged must have been in some way associated with either Israel or Judah, that is to say, it must have been committed upon a king of Edom, who was a vassal of Judah, and therefore not very long after this war, since the Edomites shook off their dependence upon Judah in less than ten years from that time (2 Kings 8:20). As a punishment for this, Moab was to be laid waste by the fire of war, and Keriyoth with its palaces to be burned down. **הַקְרִיּוֹת** is not an appellative noun (*τῶν πόλεων αὐτῆς*, LXX), but a proper name of one of the chief cities of Moab (cf. Jer. 48:24, 41), the ruins of which have been discovered by Burckhardt (*Syr.* p. 630) and

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Seetzen (ii. p. 342, cf. iv. p. 384) in the decayed town of *Kereyat* or *Kšrriât*. The application of the term **מַת** to Moab is to be explained on the supposition that the nation is personified. **שָׂאוֹן** signifies war tumult, and **בְּתִרוּעָה** is explained as in Amos 1:14 by **בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר**, blast of the trumpets, the signal for the assault or for the commencement of the battle. The judge with all the princes shall be cut off *miqqirbâh*, i.e., out of the land of Moab. The feminine suffix refers to Moab as a land or kingdom, and not to Keriyoth. From the fact that the *shōphēt* is mentioned instead of the king, it has been concluded by some that Moab had no king at that time, but had only a *shōphēt* as its ruler; and they have sought to account for this on the ground that Moab was at that time subject to the kingdom of the ten tribes (Hitzig and Ewald). But there is no notice in the history of anything of the kind, and it cannot possibly be inferred from the fact that Jeroboam restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom as far as the Dead Sea (2 Kings 14:25). *Shōphēt* is analogous to *tōmēkh shēbhet* in Amos 1:5, and is probably nothing more than a rhetorical expression applied to the **מְלִיךָ**, who is so called in the threat against Ammon, and simply used for the sake of variety. The threatening prophecies concerning all the nations and kingdoms mentioned from Amos 1:6 onwards were fulfilled by the Chaldeans, who conquered all these kingdoms, and carried the people themselves into captivity. For fuller remarks upon this point, see at Jer. 47:49 and Ezek. 25:28.

Amos 2:4, 5. Judah.—V. 4. *“Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they have despised the law of Jehovah, and have not kept His ordinances, and their lies led them astray, after which their fathers walked, V. 5. I send fire into Judah, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem.”* With the announcement that the storm of the wrath of God will also burst upon

Judah, Amos prepares the way for passing on to Israel, the principal object of his prophecies. In the case of Judah, he condemns its contempt of the law of its God, and also its idolatry. *Tōrâh* is the sum and substance of all the instructions and all the commandments which Jehovah had given to His people as the rule of life. *Chuqqim* are the separate precepts contained in the *thōrâh*, including not only the ceremonial commands, but the moral commandments also; for the two clauses are not only parallel, but synonymous. **כְּזַבֵּיהֶם**, their lies, are their idols, as we may see from the relative clause, since “walking after” (*hâ lakh ‘achărē*) is the standing expression for idolatry. Amos calls the idols *lies*, not only as *res quae fallunt* (Ges.), but as fabrications and nonentities (*‘ēlîlîm* and *hăbhâlîm*), having no reality in themselves, and therefore quite unable to perform what was expected of them. The “fathers” who walked after these lies were their forefathers generally, since the nation of Israel practised idolatry even in the desert (cf. Amos 5:26), and was more or less addicted to it ever afterwards, with the sole exception of the times of Joshua, Samuel, David, and part of the reign of Solomon, so that even the most godly kings of Judah were unable to eradicate the worship upon the high places. The punishment threatened in consequence, namely, that Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, was carried out by Nebuchadnezzar.

Amos 2:6–16. After this introduction, the prophet’s address turns to Israel of the ten tribes, and in precisely the same form as in the case of the nations already mentioned, announces the judgment as irrevocable. At the same time, he gives a fuller description of the sins of Israel, condemning first of all the prevailing crimes of injustice and oppression, of shameless immorality and daring contempt of God (vv. 6–8); and secondly, its scornful contempt of the benefits conferred by the Lord (vv. 9–12), and threatening inevitable trouble in consequence (vv. 13–16). V. 6. *“Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I shall not reverse it, because they sell*

the righteous for money, and the poor for a pair of shoes. V. 7. They who pant after dust of the earth upon the head of the poor, and bend the way of the meek: and a man and his father go to the same girl, to desecrate my holy name. V. 8. And they stretch themselves upon pawned clothes by every altar, and they drink the wine of the punished in the house of their God." The prophet condemns four kinds of crimes. The first is unjust treatment, or condemnation of the innocent in their administration of justice. Selling the righteous for silver, i.e., for money, refers to the judges, who were bribed to punish a man as guilty of the crime of which he was accused, when he was really *tsaddiq*, i.e., righteous in a judicial, not in a moral sense, or innocent of any punishable crime. *Bakkeseph*, for money, i.e., either to obtain money, or for the money which they had already received, viz., from the accuser, for condemning the innocent. בְּעֵבוֹר, on account of, is not

synonymous with בְּ pretii; for they did not sell the poor man merely to get a pair of sandals for him, as the worst possible slave was certainly worth much more than this (cf. Ex. 21:32); but the poor debtor who could not pay for a pair of shoes, i.e., for the merest trifle, the judge would give up to the creditor for a salve, on the strength of the law in Lev. 25:39 (cf. 2 Kings 4:1).

As a second crime, Amos reproves in v. 7a their thirst for the oppression of the quiet in the land.

דָּלִים, ταπεινοί, and עֲנָוִים, πραεῖς. The address is carried on in participles, in the form of lively appeal, instead of quiet description, as is frequently the case in Amos (cf. Amos 5:7; 6:3ff., 13, 8:14), and also in other books (cf. Isa. 40:22, 26; Ps. 19:11). In the present instance, the article before the participle points back to the suffix in מִכְרָם, and the finite verb is not

introduced till the second clause. שָׁאָף, to gasp, to pant, to long eagerly for earth-dust upon the head of the poor, i.e., to long to see the head of

the poor covered with earth or dust, or to bring them into such a state of misery, that they scatter dust upon their head (cf. Job 2:12; 2 Sam. 1:2). The explanation given by Hitzig is too far-fetched and unnatural, viz., that they grudge the man in distress even the handful of dust that he has strewn upon his head, and avariciously long for it themselves. To bend the way of the meek, i.e., to bring them into a trap, or cast them headlong into destruction by impediments and stumblingblocks laid in their path. The way is the way of life, their outward course. The idea that the way refers to the judgment or legal process is too contracted. The third crime is their profanation of the name of God by shameless immorality (v. 7b); and the fourth, desecration of the sanctuary by drinking carousals (v. 8). A man and his father, i.e., both son and father, go to the girl, i.e., to the prostitute. The meaning is, to one and the same girl; but *'achath* is omitted, to preclude all possible misunderstanding, as though going to different prostitutes was allowed. This sin was tantamount to incest, which, according to the law, was to be punished with death (cf. Lev. 18:7, 15, and 20:11). Temple girls (*qdeshōth*) are not to be thought of here. The profanation of the name of God by such conduct as this does not indicate prostitution in the temple itself, such as was required by the licentious worship of Baal and Asherah (Ewald, Maurer, etc.), but consisted in a daring contempt of the commandments of God, as the original passage (Lev. 22:32) from which Amos took the words clearly shows (cf. Jer. 34:16). By *Ima'an*, in order that (not "so that"), the profanation of the holy name of God is represented as intentional, to bring out the daring character of the sin, and to show that it did not arise from weakness or ignorance, but was practised with studious contempt of the holy God. *Bgādīm chābhulīm*, pawned clothes, i.e., upper garments, consisting of a large square piece of cloth, which was wrapt all around, and served the poor for a counterpane as well. If a poor man was obliged to pawn his upper garment, it was to be returned to him before night came on (Ex. 22:25), and a garment so pawned was not to be

slept upon (Deut. 24:12, 13). But godless usurers kept such pledges, and used them as cloths upon which they stretched their limbs at feasts (*yattū, hipphil*, to stretch out, sc. the body or its limbs); and this they did by every altar, at sacrificial meals, without standing in awe of God. It is very evident that Amos is speaking of sacrificial feasting, from the reference in the second clause of the verse to the drinking of wine in the house of God. עֲנוּשִׁים, punished in money, i.e., fined. Wine of the punished is wine purchased by the produce of the fines. Here again the emphasis rests upon the fact, that such drinking carousals were held in the house of God. *ʿElōhēhem*, not their gods (idols), but their God; for Amos had in his mind the sacred places at Bethel and Dan, in which the Israelites worshipped Jehovah as their God under the symbol of an ox (calf). The expression *col-mizbēāch* (every altar) is not at variance with this; for even if *col* pointed to a plurality of altars, these altars were still *bāmōth*, dedicated to Jehovah. If the prophet had also meant to condemn actual idolatry, i.e., the worship of heathen deities, he would have expressed this more clearly; to say nothing of the fact, that in the time of Jeroboam II there was no heathenish idolatry in the kingdom of the ten tribes, or, at any rate, it was not publicly maintained.

Amos 2:9, 10. And if this daring contempt of the commandments of God was highly reprehensible even in itself, it became perfectly inexcusable if we bear in mind that Israel was indebted to the Lord its God for its elevation into an independent nation, and also for its sacred calling. For this reason, the prophet reminds the people of the manifestations of grace which it had received from its God (vv. 9–11). V. 9. *“And yet I destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and who was strong as the oaks; and I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.* V. 10. *And yet I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the desert, to take possession of the land of the*

Amorite.” The repeated וְאֲנֹכִי is used with peculiar emphasis, and serves to bring out the contrast between the conduct of the Israelites towards the Lord, and the fidelity of the Lord towards Israel. Of the two manifestations of divine grace to which Israel owed its existence as an independent nation, Amos mentions first of all the destruction of the former inhabitants of Canaan (Ex. 23:27ff., 34:11); and secondly, what was earlier in point of time, namely, the deliverance out of Egypt and guidance through the Arabian desert; not because the former act of God was greater than the latter, but in order to place first what the Lord had done for the nation, that he may be able to append to this what He still continues to do (v. 11). The nations destroyed before Israel are called Amorites, from the most powerful of the Canaanitish tribes, as in Gen. 15:16, Josh. 24:15, etc. To show, however, that Israel was not able to destroy this people by its own strength, but that Jehovah the Almighty God alone could accomplish this, he proceeds to transfer to the whole nation what the Israelitish spies reported as to their size, more especially as to the size of particular giants (Num. 13:32, 33), and describes the Amorites as giants as lofty as trees and as strong as trees, and, continuing the same figure, depicts their utter destruction or extermination as the destruction of their fruit and of their roots. For this figure of speech, in which the posterity of a nation is regarded as its fruit, and the kernel of the nation out of which it springs as the root, see Ezek. 17:9, Hos. 9:16, Job 18:16. These two manifestations of divine mercy Moses impressed more than once upon the hearts of the people in his last addresses, to urge them in consequence to hold fast to the divine commandments and to the love of God (cf. Deut. 8:2ff., 9:1–6; 29:1–8).

Amos 2:11, 12. But Jehovah had not only put Israel into possession of Canaan; He had also continually manifested Himself to it as the founder and promoter of its spiritual prosperity. V. 11. *“And I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as dedicated ones (Naziraeans). Ah, is it not so, ye*

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sons of Israel? is the saying of Jehovah. V. 12. But ye made the dedicated drink wine, and ye commanded the prophets, saying, Ye shall not prophesy." The institution of prophecy and the law of the Nazarite were gifts of grace, in which Israel had an advantage over every other nation, and by which it was distinguished above the heathen as the nation of God and the medium of salvation. Amos simply reminds the people of these, and not of earthly blessings, which the heathen also enjoyed, since the former alone were real pledges of the covenant of grace made by Jehovah with Israel; and it was in the contempt and abuse of these gifts of grace that the ingratitude of the nation was displayed in the most glaring light. The Nazarites are placed by the side of the prophets, who proclaimed to the nation the counsel and will of the Lord, because, although as a rule the condition of a Nazarite was merely the consequence of his own free will and the fulfilment of a particular vow, it was nevertheless so far a gift of grace from the Lord, that the resolution to perform such a vow proceeded from the inward impulse of the Spirit of God, and the performance itself was rendered possible through the power of this Spirit alone. (For a general discussion of the law of the Nazarite, see the commentary on Num. 6:2-12, and my *biblical Antiquities*, § 67.) The raising up of Nazarites was not only intended to set before the eyes of the people the object of their divine calling, or their appointment to be a holy nation of God, but also to show them how the Lord bestowed the power to carry out this object. But instead of suffering themselves to be spurred on by these types to strive earnestly after sanctification of life, they tempted the Nazarites to break their vow by drinking wine, from which they were commanded to abstain, as being irreconcilable with the seriousness of their sanctification (see my *Bibl. Ant.* § 67); and the prophets they prohibited from prophesying, because the word of God was burdensome to them (cf. Amos 7:10ff.; Mic. 2:6).

Amos 2:13, 16. This base contempt of their covenant mercies the Lord would visit with a severe punishment. V. 13. "Behold, I will press

you down, as the cart presses that is filled with sheaves. V. 14. And the flight will be lost to the swift, and the strong one will not fortify his strength, and the hero will not deliver his soul. V. 15. And the carrier of the bow will not stand, and the swift-footed will not deliver, and the rider of the horse will not save his soul. V. 16. And the courageous one among the heroes will flee away naked in that day, is the saying of Jehovah." The Lord threatens as a punishment a severe oppression, which no one will be able to escape. The allusion is to the force of war, under which even the bravest and most able heroes will

succumb. הָעֵיק, from עֵיק, Aramaean for צוֹק, to press, construed with *tachath*, in the sense of κατὰ, downwards, to press down upon a person, i.e., to press him down (Winer, Ges., Ewald). This meaning is established by עָקָה in

Ps. 55:4, and by מוֹעָקָה in Ps. 66:11; so that there is no necessity to resort to the Arabic, as Hitzig does, or to alterations of the text, or to follow Baur, who gives the word the meaning, "to feel one's self pressed under another," for which there is no foundation in the language, and which does not even yield a suitable sense. The comparison instituted here to the pressure of a cart filled with sheaves, does not warrant the conclusion that Jehovah must answer to the cart; the simile is not to be carried out to this

extent. The object to תָּעֵיק is wanting, but may easily be supplied from the thought, namely, the ground over which the cart is driven. The

לָהּ attached to הַמְּלֵאָה belongs to the latitude allowed in ordinary speech, and gives to מְלֵאָה the reflective meaning, which is full in itself, has quite filled itself (cf. Ewald, § 315, a). In vv. 14-16 the effects of this pressure are

individualized. No one will escape from it. אָבַד

מְנוֹס, flight is lost to the swift, i.e., the swift will not find time enough to flee. The allusion to

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heroes and bearers of the bow shows that the pressure is caused by war. **קל ברגליו** belong together: "He who is light in his feet." The swift-footed will no more save his life than the rider upon a horse. **נפשו** in v. 15 belongs to both clauses. **אמץ לבו**, the strong in his heart, i.e., the hearty, courageous. **ערום**, naked, i.e., so as to leave behind him his garment, by which the enemy seizes him, like the young man in Mark 14:52. This threat, which implies that the kingdom will be destroyed, is carried out still further in the prophet's following addresses.

Amos 3

Prophecies Concerning Israel—Ch. 3–6

Amos 3–6. Although the expression "Hear this word," which is repeated at the commencement of Amos 3, 4 and 5, suggests the idea of three addresses, the contents of these chapters show that they do not contain three separate addresses delivered to the people by Amos at different times, but that they group together the leading thoughts of appeals delivered by word of mouth, so as to form one long admonition to repentance. Commencing with the proofs of his right to predict judgment to the nation on account of its sins (Amos 3:1–8), the prophet exposes the wickedness of Israel in general (Amos 3:9–4:3), and then shows the worthlessness of the nation's trust in idolatry (Amos 4:4–13), and lastly announces the destruction of the kingdom as the inevitable consequence of the prevailing injustice and ungodliness (Amos 5 and 6).

Announcement of the Judgment—Ch. 3

Amos 3. Because the Lord has chosen Israel to be His people, He must visit all its sins (v. 2), and has commissioned the prophet to announce this punishment (vv. 3–8). As Israel has heaped up oppression, violence, and wickedness, an enemy will come upon the land and plunder Samaria, and cause its inhabitants to perish,

and demolish the altars of Bethel, and destroy the capital (vv. 9–15).

Amos 3:1, 2. Verses 1 and 2 contain the introduction and the leading thought of the whole of the prophetic proclamation. v. 1. "Hear this word which Jehovah speaketh concerning you, O sons of Israel, concerning the whole family which I have brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying: V. 2. You only have I acknowledge of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit all your iniquities upon you." The word of the Lord is addressed to all the family of Israel, which God had brought up out of Egypt, that is to say, to all the twelve tribes of the covenant nation, although in what follows it is the ten tribes of Israel alone who are primarily threatened with the destruction of the kingdom, to indicate at the very outset that Judah might anticipate a similar fate if it did not turn to its God with sincerity. The threat is introduced by the thought that its divine election would not secure the sinful nation against punishment, but that, on the contrary, the relation of grace into which the Lord had entered with Israel demanded the punishment of all evil deeds. This cuts off the root of all false confidence in divine election. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. The greater the measure of grace, the greater also is the punishment if it is neglected or despised." This is the fundamental law of the kingdom of God.

יָדַע does not mean to know, to become acquainted with, or to take knowledge of a person (Hitzig), but acknowledge. Acknowledgment on the part of God is not merely taking notice, but is energetic, embracing man in his inmost being, embracing and penetrating with divine love; so that **יָדַע** not only includes the idea of love and care, as in Hos. 13:5, but expresses generally the gracious fellowship of the Lord with Israel, as in Gen. 18:19, and is practically equivalent to electing, including both the motive and the result of election. And because Jehovah had acknowledged, i.e., had singled out and chosen Israel as the nation best fitted to be the vehicle

of His salvation, He must of necessity punish all its misdeeds, in order to purify it from the dross of sin, and make it a holy vessel of His saving grace.

Amos 3:3–8. But this truth met with contradiction in the nation itself. The proud self-secure sinners would not hear such prophesying as this (compare Amos 2:4; 7:10ff.). Amos therefore endeavours, before making any further announcement of the judgment of God, to establish his right and duty to prophesy, by a chain-like series of similes drawn from life. V. 3. *“Do two walk together without having agreed?”* V. 4. *Does the lion roar in the forest, and he has no prey? does the young lion utter his cry out of his den, without having taken anything?* V. 5. *Does the bird fall into the trap on the ground, when there is no snare for him? does the trap rise up from the earth without making a capture?* V. 6. *Or is the trumpet blown in the city, and the people are not alarmed? or does misfortune happen in the city, and Jehovah has not done it?* V. 7. *For the Lord Jehovah does nothing at all, without having revealed His secret to His servants the prophets.* V. 8. *The lion has roared; who does not fear? the Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who must not prophesy?”* The contents of these verses are not to be reduced to the general thought, that a prophet could no more speak without a divine impulse than any other effect could take place without a cause. There was certainly no need for a long series of examples, such as we have in vv. 3–6, to substantiate or illustrate the thought, which a reflecting hearer would hardly have disputed, that there was a connection between cause and effect. The examples are evidently selected with the view of showing that the utterances of the prophet originate with God. This is obvious enough in vv. 7, 8. The first clause, *“Do two men walk together, without having agreed as to their meeting?”* (*nō’ad*, to betake one’s self to a place, to meet together at an appointed place or an appointed time; compare Job 2:11, Josh. 11:5, Neh. 6:2; not merely to agree together), contains something more than the trivial truth, that two persons do not take a walk together without a previous arrangement. The two who

walk together are Jehovah and the prophet (Cyril); not Jehovah and the nation, to which the judgment is predicted (Cocceius, Marck, and others). Amos went as prophet to Samaria or Bethel, because the Lord had sent him thither to preach judgment to the sinful kingdom. But God would not threaten judgment if He had not a nation ripe for judgment before Him. The lion which roars when it has the prey before it is

Jehovah (cf. Amos 1:2; Hos. 11:10, etc.). יְהוָה

לֵאָוִן is not to be interpreted according to the second clause, as signifying “without having got possession of its prey” (Hitzig), for the lion is accustomed to roar when it has the prey before it and there is no possibility of its escape, and before it actually seizes it (cf. Isa. 5:29). On the contrary, the perfect *lâkhad* in the second clause is to be interpreted according to the first clause, not as relating to the roar of satisfaction with which the lion devours the prey in its den (Baur), but as a perfect used to describe a thing which was as certain as if it had already occurred. A lion has made a capture not merely when it has actually seized the prey and torn it in pieces, but when the prey has approached so near that it cannot possibly escape. *Kphîr* is the young lion which already goes in pursuit of prey, and is to be distinguished from the young of the lion, *gûr* (*catulus leonis*), which cannot yet go in search of prey (cf. Ezek. 19:2, 3). The two similes have the same meaning. The second strengthens the first by the assertion that God not only has before Him the nation that is ripe for judgment, but that He has it in His power.

The similes in v. 5 do not affirm the same as those in v. 4, but contain the new thought, that Israel has deserved the destruction which threatens it. *Pach*, a snare, and *mōqēsh*, a trap, are frequently used synonymously; but here they are distinguished, *pach* denoting a bird-net, and *mōqēsh* a springe, a snare which holds the bird fast. The earlier translators have taken *mōqēsh* in the sense of *yōqēsh*, and understand it as referring to the bird-catcher; and Baur proposes to alter the text accordingly. But there is no necessity for this; and it is evidently

unsuitable, since it is not requisite for a bird-catcher to be at hand, in order that the bird should be taken in a snare. The suffix *lâh* refers to *tsippôr*, and the thought is this: in order to catch a bird in the net, a springe (gin) must be laid for it. So far as the fact itself is concerned, *môqêsh* is "evidently that which is necessarily followed by falling into the net; and in this instance it is sinfulness" (Hitzig); so that the meaning of the figure would be this: "Can destruction possibly overtake you, unless your sin draws you into it?" (cf. Jer. 2:35). In the second clause *pach* is the subject, and **יַעֲלֶה** is used for the ascent or springing up of the net. Hitzig has given the meaning of the words correctly: "As the net does not spring up without catching the bird, that has sent it up by flying upon it, can ye imagine that when the destruction passes by, ye will not be seized by it, but will escape without injury?" (cf. Isa. 28:15). Jehovah, however, causes the evil to be foretold. As the trumpet, when blown in the city, frightens the people out of their self-security, so will the voice of the prophet, who proclaims the coming evil, excite a salutary alarm in the nation (cf. Ezek. 33:1-5). For the calamity which is bursting upon the city comes from Jehovah, is sent by Him as a punishment. This thought is explained in vv. 7, 8, and with this explanation the whole series of figurative sentences is made perfectly clear. The approaching evil, which comes from the Lord, is predicted by the prophet, because Jehovah does not carry out His purpose without having (**כִּי**)

כִּי, for when, except when he has, as in Gen. 32:27) first of all revealed it to the prophets, that they may warn the people to repent and to reform. *Sôd* receives a more precise definition from the first clause of the verse, or a limitation to the purposes which God is about to fulfil upon His people. And since (this is the connection of v. 8) the judgment with which the Lord is drawing near fills every one with fear, and Jehovah has spoken, i.e., has made known

His counsel to the prophets, they cannot but prophesy.

Amos 3:9, 10. Amos has thus vindicated his own calling, and the right of all the prophets, to announce to the people the judgments of God; and now (vv. 9-15) he is able to proclaim without reserve what the Lord has resolved to do upon sinful Israel. V. 9. "Make it heard over the palaces in Ashdod, and over the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumult in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the heart thereof. V. 10. And they know not to do the right, is the saying of Jehovah, who heap up violence and devastation in their palaces." The speaker is Jehovah (v. 10), and the prophets are addressed. Jehovah summons them to send out the cry over the palaces in

Ashdod and Egypt (**עַל** as in Hos. 8:1), and to call the inhabitants of these palaces to hear, (1) that they may see the acts of violence, and the abominations in the palaces of Samaria; and (2) that they may be able to bear witness against Israel (v. 13). This turn in the prophecy brings out to view the overflowing excess of the sins and abominations of Israel. The call of the prophets, however, is not to be uttered upon the palaces, so as to be heard far and wide (Baur and others), but over the palaces, to cause the inhabitants of them to draw near. It is they alone, and not the whole population of Ashdod and Egypt, who are to be called nigh; because only the inhabitants of the palace could pronounce a correct sentence as to the mode of life commonly adopted in the palaces of Samaria. Ashdod, one of the Philistian capitals, is mentioned by way of example, as a chief city of the uncircumcised, who were regarded by Israel as godless heathen; and Egypt is mentioned along with it, as the nation whose unrighteousness and ungodliness had once been experienced by Israel to satiety. If therefore such heathen as these are called to behold the unrighteous and dissolute conduct to be seen in the palaces, it must have been great indeed. The mountains of Samaria are not the mountains of the kingdom of Samaria, or

the mountains upon which the city of Samaria was situated—for Samaria was not built upon a plurality of mountains, but upon one only (Amos 4:1; 6:1)—but the mountains round about Samaria, from which you could look into the city, built upon one isolated hill. The city, built upon the hill of *Semer*, was situated in a mountain caldron or basin, about two yours in diameter, which was surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains (see at 1 Kings 16:24).

Mhūmâh, noise, tumult, denotes a state of confusion, in which everything is topsy-turvy, and all justice and order are overthrown by open violence (Maurer, Baur). *'Ashūqīm*, either the oppressed, or, taken as an abstract, the oppression of the poor (cf. Amos 2:6). In v. 10 the description is continued in the finite verb: they do not know how to do right; that is to say, injustice has become their nature; and they who heap up sins and violence in their palaces like treasures.

Amos 3:11, 12. Thus do they bring about the ruin of the kingdom. V. 11. *“Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, An enemy, and that round about the land; and he will hurl down thy glory from thee, and thy palaces are plundered.* V. 12. *Thus saith Jehovah, As the shepherd delivers out of the mouth of the lion two shin-bones or an ear-lappet, so will the sons of Israel deliver themselves; they who sit on the corner of the couch and on the damask of the bed.”* The threat

is introduced in the form of an aposiopesis. **צַר**, enemy, **וּסְבִיב הָאָרֶץ**, and indeed round about the land (1 explic. as in Amos 4:10, etc.; and

סְבִיב in the construct state construed as a preposition), i.e., will come, attack the land on all sides, and take possession of it. Others regard **צַר** as an abstract: oppression (from the Chaldee); but in this case we should have to supply *Jehovah* as the subject to **וְהוֹרִיד**; and although this is probable, it is by no means natural, as *Jehovah* is speaking. There is no

foundation, on the other hand, for the remark, that if *tsar* signified the enemy, we should

either find the plural **צָרִים**, or **הַצָּר** with the article (Baumgarten). The very indefiniteness of *tsar* suits the sententious brevity of the clause. This enemy will hurl down the splendour of Samaria, “which ornaments the top of the

mountain like a crown, Isa. 28:1–3” (Hitzig: **עֵז**, might, with the subordinate idea of glory), and plunder the palaces in which violence, i.e., property unrighteously acquired, is heaped up (v. 10). The words are addressed to the city of Samaria, to which the feminine suffixes refer. On the fall of Samaria, and the plundering thereof, the luxurious grandees, who rest upon costly pillows, will only be able to save their life to the very smallest extent, and that with great difficulty. In the simile used in v. 12 there is a slight want of proportion in the two halves, the object of the deliverance being thrown into the background in the second clause by the passive construction, and only indicated in the verb, to deliver themselves, i.e., to save their life. “A pair

of shin-bones and a piece (**בְּדֵלִי** ἀπαξ λεγ.), i.e., a lappet, of the earth,” are most insignificant remnants. The grandees of Samaria, of whom only a few were to escape with their life, are depicted by Amos as those who sit on costly

divans, without the least anxiety. **פְּאֵת מִטָּה**, the corner of the divan, the most convenient for repose. According to Amos 6:4, these divans were ornamented with ivory, and according to the verse before us, they were ornamented with

costly stuffs. **דְּמִשְׁקֵךְ** comes from **דְּמִשְׁקָה**,

Damascus, and signifies *damask*, an artistically woven material (see Ges. *Thes.* p. 346). This brings the visitation of God to an end. Even the altars and palaces are to be laid in ruins, and consequently Samaria will be destroyed.

Amos 3:13–15. This feature in the threat is brought out into peculiar prominence by a fresh introduction. V. 13. *“Hear ye, and testify it to the house of Jacob, is the utterance of the Lord,*

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Jehovah, the God of hosts: V. 14. *That in the day when I visit the transgressions of the house of Israel upon it, I shall visit it upon the altars of Bethel; and the horns of the altar will be cut off, and fall to the ground.* V. 15. *And I smite the winter-house over the summer-house, and the houses of ivory perish, and many houses vanish, is the saying of Jehovah.*” The words “Hear ye” cannot be addressed to the Israelites, for they could not bear witness against the house of Israel, but must either refer to the prophets, as in v. 9a (“publish ye”), or to the heathen, in which case they correspond to “assemble yourselves and behold” in v. 9b. The latter assumption is the only correct one, for the context does not assign a sufficient motive for an address to the prophets. On the other hand, as the heathen have been summoned to convince themselves by actual observation of the sins that prevail in Samaria, it is perfectly in keeping that they should now hear what is the punishment that God is about to inflict upon Israel in consequence, and that they should bear witness against Israel from what they have heard. **הָעֵיד ב**, to bear witness towards or against (not “in,” as Baur supposes). The house of Jacob is the whole of Israel, of the *twelve* tribes, as in v. 1; for Judah was also to learn a lesson from the destruction of Samaria. As the appeal to the heathen to bear witness against Israel indicates the greatness of the sins of the Israelites, so, on the other hand, does the accumulation of the names of God in v. 13b serve to strengthen the declaration made by the Lord, who possesses as God of hosts the power to execute His threats. **כִּי** introduces the substance of what is to be heard. The punishment of the sins of Israel is to extend even to the altars of Bethel, the seat of the idolatrous image-worship, the hearth and home of the religious and moral corruption of the ten tribes. The smiting off of the horns of the altar is the destruction of the altars themselves, the significance of which culminated in the horns (see at Ex. 27:2). The singular *hammizbēāch* (*the altar*) preceded by a plural is the singular

of species (cf. Ges. § 108, 1), and does not refer to any particular one—say, for example, to the principal altar. The destruction of the palaces and houses (v. 15) takes place in the capital. In the reference to the winter-house and summer-house, we have to think primarily of the royal palace (cf. Jer. 36:22); at the same time, wealthy noblemen may also have had them. **עַל**, lit., over, so that the ruins of one house fall upon the top of another; then “together with,” as in Gen. 32:12. **בְּתֵי שֵׁן**, ivory houses, houses the rooms of which are decorated by inlaid ivory. Ahab had a palace of this kind (1 Kings 22:39, compare Ps. 45:9). **בְּתֵי־רַבִּים**, not the large houses, but many houses; for the description is rounded off with these words. Along with the palaces, many houses will also fall to the ground. The fulfilment took place when Samaria was taken by Shalmanezar (2 Kings 17:5, 6).

Amos 4

The Impenitence of Israel—Ch. 4

Amos 4. The voluptuous and wanton women of Samaria will be overtaken by a shameful captivity (vv. 1–3). Let the Israelites only continue their idolatry with zeal (vv. 4, 5), the Lord has already visited them with many punishments without their having turned to Him (vv. 6–11); and therefore He must inflict still further chastisements, to see whether they will not at length learn to fear Him as their God (vv. 12, 13).

Amos 4:1. *“Hear this word, ye cows of Bashan, that are upon the mountain of Samaria, that oppress there the humble and crush the poor, that say to their lords, Bring hither, that we may drink. V. 2. The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by His holiness: behold, days come upon you, that they drag you away with hooks, and your last one with fish-hooks. V. 3. And ye will go out through breaches in the wall, every one before him, and be cast away to Harmon, is the saying of Jehovah.”* The commencement of this chapter is

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closely connected, so far as the contents are concerned, with the chapter immediately preceding. The prophet having there predicted, that when the kingdom was conquered by its enemies, the voluptuous grandees would perish, with the exception of a very few who would hardly succeed in saving their lives, turns now to the voluptuous women of Samaria, to predict in their case a shameful transportation into exile. The introduction, "Hear this word," does not point therefore to a new prophecy, but simply to a fresh stage in the prophecy, so that we cannot even agree with Ewald in taking vv. 1–3 as the conclusion of the previous prophecy (Amos 3). The cows of Bashan are well-fed, fat cows, βόες εὔτροφοι, *vaccae pingues* (Symm., Jer.), as Bashan had fat pastures, and for that reason the tribes that were richest in flocks and herds had asked for it as their inheritance (Num. 32). The fuller definitions which follow show very clearly that by the cows of Bashan, Amos meant the rich, voluptuous, and violent inhabitants of Samaria. It is doubtful, however, whether he meant the rich and wanton wives of the great, as most of the modern commentators follow Theodor., Theodoret, and others, in assuming; or "the rulers of Israel, and all the leading men of the ten tribes, who spent their time in pleasure and robbery" (Jerome); or "those rich, luxurious, and lascivious inhabitants of the palace of whom he had spoken in Amos 3:9, 10" (Maurer), as the Chald., Luther, Calvin, and others suppose, and whom he calls cows, not oxen, to denote their effeminacy and their unbridled licentiousness. In support of the latter opinion we might adduce not only Hos. 10:11, where Ephraim is compared to a young heifer, but also the circumstance that from v. 4 onwards the prophecy refers to the Israelites as a whole. But neither of these arguments proves very much. The simile in Hos. 10:11 applies to Ephraim as a kingdom of people, and the natural personification as a woman prepares the way for the comparison to an *'eglâh*; whereas voluptuous and tyrannical grandees would be more likely to be compared to the bulls of Bashan (Ps. 22:13). And so, again, the

transition in v. 4 to the Israelites as a whole furnishes no help in determining more precisely who are addressed in vv. 1–3. By the cows of Bashan, therefore, we understand the voluptuous women of Samaria, after the analogy of Isa. 3:16ff. and 32:9–13, more especially because it is only by forcing the last clause of v. 1 that it can be understood as

referring to men. שְׂמֵעָהּ for שְׂמֵעוּ, because the verb stands first (compare Isa. 32:11). The mountain of Samaria is mentioned in the place of the city built upon the mountain (see at Amos 3:9). The sin of these women consisted in the tyrannical oppression of the poor, whilst they asked their lords, i.e., their husbands, to procure them the means of debauchery. For עֲשֵׂה and רָצֵן, compare Deut. 28:33 and 1 Sam. 12:3, 4, where the two words are already connected. הַבִּיָּאָה stands in the singular, because every wife speaks in this way to her husband.

The announcement of the punishment for such conduct is introduced with a solemn oath, to make an impression, if possible, upon the hardened hearts. Jehovah swears by His holiness, i.e., as the Holy One, who cannot tolerate unrighteousness. כִּי (for) before הִנֵּה

introduces the oath. Hitzig takes וְנִשְׂא as a *niphal*, as in the similar formula in 2 Kings 20:17; but he takes it as a passive used impersonally with an accusative, after Gen. 35:26 and other passages (though not Ex. 13:7).

But as וְנִשְׂא unquestionably occurs as a *piel* in 1 Kings 9:11, it is more natural to take the same form as a *piel* in this instance also, and whilst interpreting it impersonally, to think of the enemy as understood. *Tsinnôth* = *tsinnîm*, Prov.

22:5, Job 5:5, צִנָּה = צִן, thorns, hence hooks; so also *sîrôth* = *sîrîm*, thorns, Isa. 34:13, Hos. 2:8. *Dûgâh*, fishery; hence *sîrôth dûgâh*, fish-hooks. *'Achârîth* does not mean posterity, or the young

brood that has grown up under the instruction and example of the parents (Hitzig), but simply “the end,” the opposite of *rē’shīth*, the beginning. It is “end,” however, in different senses. Here it signifies the remnant (Chaldee), i.e., those who remain and are not dragged away with *tsinnōth*; so that the thought expressed is “all, even to the very last” (compare Hengstenberg, *Christology*, i. p. 368).

אַחֲרֵיתָּךְ has a feminine suffix, whereas

masculine suffixes were used before (אַתְּכֶם,

עַלְיֵיכֶם); the universal gender, out of which the feminine was first formed. The figure is not taken from animals, into whose noses hooks and rings are inserted to tame them, or from large fishes that are let down into the water again by nose-hooks; for the technical terms applied to these hooks are חֶהָ, חוֹהָ, and חֶהָ (cf. Ezek. 29:4; Job 40:25, 26); but from the catching of fishes, that are drawn out of the fish-pond with hooks. Thus shall the voluptuous, wanton women be violently torn away or carried off from the midst of the superfluity and debauchery in which they lived as in their proper element. פְּרָצִים תִּצְאָנָהּ, to

go out of rents in the wall, יִצָּא being construed, as it frequently is, with the accusative of the place; we should say, “though rents in the wall,” i.e., through breaches made in the wall at the taking of the city, not out at the gates, because they had been destroyed or choked up with rubbish at the storming of the city. “Every one before her,” i.e., without looking round to the right or to the left (cf. Josh.

6:5, 20). The words הַהֲרִמוֹנָהּ הַשְּׁלֶכְתָּנָהּ are difficult, on account of the ἀπ. λεγ.

הַהֲרִמוֹנָהּ, and have not yet been satisfactorily explained. The form הַשְּׁלֶכְתָּנָהּ for הַשְּׁלֶכְתָּן is probably chosen simply for the purpose of

obtaining a resemblance in sound to תִּצְאָנָהּ,

and is sustained by אֲתָנָהּ for אֲתָן in Gen. 31:6

and Ezek. 13:11. הַשְּׁלִיךְ is applied to thrusting into exile, as in Deut. 29:27.

The ἀπ. λεγ. הַהֲרִמוֹנָהּ with ה loc. appears to indicate the place to which they were to be carried away or cast out. But the *hiphil*

הַשְּׁלֶכְתָּנָהּ does not suit this, and

consequently nearly all the earlier translators have rendered it as a passive, ἀπορρίψθησθε (LXX), *projiciemini* (Jerome); so also the Syr.

and Chald. וַיִּגְלוּן יְתָהוּן, “men will carry them away captive.” One Hebrew codex actually gives the *hophal*. And to this reading we must adhere; for the *hiphil* furnishes no sense at all, since the intransitive or reflective meaning, to plunge, or cast one’s self, cannot be sustained, and is not supported at all by the passages quoted by Hitzig, viz., 2 Kings 10:25 and Job 27:22; and still less does *haharmōnâh* denote the object cast away by the women when they go into captivity. The literal meaning of *harmōnâh* or *harmōn* still remains uncertain. According to

the etymology of הַרְם, to be high, it apparently denotes a high land: at the same time, it can neither be taken as an appellative, as Hesselberg and Maurer suppose, “the high land;” nor in the sense of *armōn*, a citadel or palace, as Kimchi and Gesenius maintain. The former interpretation is open to the objection, that we cannot possibly imagine why Amos should have formed a word of his own, and one which never occurs again in the Hebrew language, to express the simple idea of a mountain or high land; and the second to this objection, that “the citadel” would require something to designate it as a citadel or fortress in the land of the enemy. The unusual word certainly points to the name of a land or district, though we have no means of determining it more precisely.

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Amos 4:4, 5. After this threat directed against the voluptuous women of the capital, the prophecy turns again to all the people. In bitter irony, Amos tells them to go on with zeal in their idolatrous sacrifices, and to multiply their sin. But they will not keep back the divine judgment by so doing. V. 4. "Go to Bethel, and sin; to Gilgal, multiply sinning; and offer your slain-offerings in the morning, your tithes every three days. V. 5. And kindle praise-offerings of that which is leavened, and cry out freewill-offerings, proclaim it; for so ye love it, O sons of Israel, is the saying of the Lord, of Jehovah." "Amos here describes how zealously the people of Israel went on pilgrimage to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Beersheba, those places of sacred associations; with what superabundant diligence they offered sacrifice and paid tithes; who they would rather do too much than too little, so that they even burnt upon the altar a portion of the leavened loaves of the praise-offering, which were only intended for the sacrificial meals, although none but unleavened bread was allowed to be offered; and lastly, how in their pure zeal for multiplying the works of piety, they so completely mistook their nature, as to summon by a public proclamation to the presentation of freewill-offerings, the very peculiarity of which consisted in the fact that they had no other prompting than the will of the offerer" (v. Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, ii. 2, p. 373). The irony of the summons to maintain their worship comes out very distinctly in the words **וּפְשְׁעוּ**, and sin, or fall away from God. **הַגִּלְגָּל** is not a nominative absolute, "as for Gilgal," but an accusative, and **בְּאוֹ** is to be repeated from the first clause. The absence of the copula before **הַרְבּוּ** does not compel us to reject the Masoretic accentuation, and connect **הַגִּלְגָּל** with **פְּשְׁעוּ**, as Hitzig does, so as to obtain the unnatural thought, "sin ye towards Gilgal." On

Gilgal mentioned along with Bethel as a place of idolatrous worship (here and Amos 5:5, as in Hos. 4:15; 9:15, and 12:12), see at Hos. 4:15. Offer your slain-offerings *labbōqer*, for the morning, i.e., every morning, like *layyōm* in Jer. 37:21. This is required by the parallel *lishlōsheth yāmīm*, on the three of days, i.e., every three days. **זְבָחִים ... הַבְּיָאוּ** does not refer to the morning sacrifice prescribed in the law (Num. 28:3)—for that is always called *'ōlâh*, not *zebach*—but to slain sacrifices that were offered every morning, although the offering of *zbbâchīm* every morning presupposes the presentation of the daily morning burnt-offering. What is said concerning the tithe rests upon the Mosaic law of the second tithe, which was to be brought every three years (Deut. 14:28; 26:12; compare my *Bibl. Archäol.* § 71, Anm. 7). The two clauses, however, are not to be understood as implying that the Israelites had offered slain sacrifices every morning, and tithe every three days. Amos is speaking hyperbolically, to depict the great zeal displayed in their worship; and the thought is simply this: "If ye would offer slain sacrifices every morning, and tithe every three days, ye would only thereby increase your apostasy from the living God." The words, "kindle praise-offerings of that which is leavened," have been misinterpreted in various ways. **קִטְר**, an *inf. absol.* used instead of the *imperative* (see Ges. § 131, 4, b). According to Lev. 7:12–14, the praise-offering (*tōdâh*) was to consist not only of unleavened cakes and pancakes with oil poured upon them, but also of cakes of leavened bread. The latter, however, were not to be placed upon the altar, but one of them was to be assigned to the priest who sprinkled the blood, and the rest to be eaten at the sacrificial meal. Amos now charges the people with having offered that which was leavened instead of unleavened cakes and pancakes, and with having burned it upon the altar, contrary to the express prohibition of the law in Lev. 2:11. His words are not to be understood as signifying that, although outwardly the praise-offerings

consisted of that which was unleavened, according to the command of the law, yet inwardly they were so base that they resembled unleavened cakes, inasmuch as whilst the material of the leaven was absent, the true nature of the leaven—namely, malice and wickedness—was there in all the greater quantity (Hengstenberg, *Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 143 translation). The meaning is rather this, that they were not content with burning upon the altar unleavened cakes made from the materials provided for the sacrifice, but that they burned some of the leavened loaves as well, in order to offer as much as possible to God. What follows answers to this: call out *ndâbhōth*, i.e., call out that men are to present freewill-offerings. The emphasis is laid upon **קָרְאוּ**, which is therefore still further

strengthened by **הִשְׁמְעוּ**. Their calling out *ndâbhōth*, i.e., their ordering freewill-offerings to be presented, was an exaggerated act of zeal, inasmuch as the sacrifices which ought to have been brought out of purely spontaneous impulse (cf. Lev. 22:18ff.; Deut. 12:6), were turned into a matter of moral compulsion, or rather of legal command. The words, “for so ye love it,” show how this zeal in the worship lay at the heart of the nation. It is also evident from the whole account, that the worship in the kingdom of the ten tribes was conducted generally according to the precepts of the Mosaic law.

Amos 4:6–11. But as Israel would not desist from its idolatrous worship, Jehovah would also continue to visit the people with judgments, as He had already done, though without effecting any conversion to their God. This last thought is explained in vv. 6–11 in a series of instances, in which the expression **וְלֹא שָׁבַתְּם עָדַי** (and ye have not returned to me), which is repeated five times, depicts in the most thorough manner the unwearied love of the Lord to His rebellious children.

Amos 4:6. “*And I have also given you cleanness of teeth in all your towns, and want of bread in*

all your places: and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.” The strongly

adversative **אֲנִי וְגַם** forms the antithesis to **כִּן**

אֶהְבֶּתֶם: Ye love to persist in your idolatry, and yet I have tried all means of turning you to me. Cleanness of teeth is explained by the parallel “want of bread.” The first chastisement, therefore, consisted in famine, with which God visited the nation, as He had threatened the transgressors that He would do in the law

(Deut. 28:48, 57). For **שׁוּב עַד**, compare Hos. 14:2.

Amos 4:7. “*And I have also withheld the rain from you, in yet three months to the harvest; and have caused it to rain upon one city, and I do not cause it to rain upon another. One field is rained upon, and the field upon which it does not rain withers. V. 8. And two, three towns stagger to one town to drink water, and are not satisfied: and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah.*” The second punishment mentioned is the withholding of rain, or drought, which was followed by the failure of the harvest and the scarcity of water (cf. Lev. 26:19, 20; Deut. 28:23). The rain “in yet (i.e., at the time when there were yet) three months to the harvest” is the so-called latter rain, which falls in the latter half of February and the first half of March, and is of the greatest importance to the vigorous development of the ears of corn and also of the grains. In southern Palestine the harvest commences in the latter half of April (Nisan), and falls for the most part in May and June; but in the northern part of the land it is from two to four weeks later (see my *Archäologie*, i. pp. 33, 34, ii. pp. 113, 114), so that in round numbers we may reckon three months from the latter rain to the harvest. But in order to show the people more clearly that the sending and withholding of rain belonged to Him, God caused it to rain here and there, upon one town and one field, and not upon others (the imperfects from *'amtîr* onwards express the repetition of a thing, what generally happens, and *timâtēr*, third pers. fem., is used

impersonally). This occasioned such distress, that the inhabitants of the places in which it had not rained were obliged to go to a great distance for the necessary supply of water to drink, and yet could not get enough to satisfy them. נוֹעַ, to stagger, to totter, expresses the insecure and trembling walk of a man almost fainting with thirst.

Amos 4:9. *"I have smitten you with blight and yellowness; many of your gardens, and of your vineyards, and of your fig-trees, and of your olive-trees, the locust devoured; and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah."* The third chastisement consisted in the perishing of the corn by blight, and by the ears turning yellow, and also in the destruction of the produce of the gardens and the fruits of the trees by locusts. The first is threatened in Deut. 28:22, against despisers of the commandments of God; the second points to the threatenings in Deut. 28:39, 40, 42. The *infin. constr. harbôth* is used as a substantive, and stands as a noun in the construct state before the following words; so that it is not to be taken adverbially in the sense of many times, or often, as though used instead of *harbêh* (cf. Ewald, § 280, c). On *gâzâm*, see at Joel 1:4. The juxtaposition of these two plagues is not to be understood as implying that they occurred simultaneously, or that the second was the consequence of the first; still less are the two to be placed in causal connection with the drought mentioned in vv. 7, 8. For although such combinations do take place in the course of nature, there is no allusion to this in the present instance, where Amos is simply enumerating a series of judgments, through which Jehovah had already endeavoured to bring the people to repentance, without any regard to the time when they occurred.

Amos 4:10. The same thing may be said of the fourth chastisement mentioned in v. 10, *"I have sent pestilence among you in the manner of Egypt, have slain your young men with the sword, together with the booty of your horses, and caused the stench of your camps to ascend,*

and that into your nose; and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah." In the combination of pestilence and sword (war), the allusion to Lev. 26:25 is unmistakeable (compare Deut. 28:60, where the rebellious are threatened with all the diseases of Egypt).

בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם, in the manner (not in the road) of Egypt (compare Isa. 10:24, 26; Ezek. 20:30), because pestilence is epidemic in Egypt. The idea that there is any allusion to the pestilence with which God visited Egypt (Ex. 9:3ff.), is overthrown by the circumstance that it is only a dreadful murrain that is mentioned there. The slaying of the youths or young men points to overthrow in war, which the Israelites endured most grievously in the wars with the Syrians (compare 2 Kings 8:12; 13:3, 7). עַם שְׂבִי

סוּסֵיכֶם does not mean together with, or by the side of, the carrying away of your horses, i.e., along with the fact that your horses were carried away; for שְׂבִי does not mean carrying away captive, but the captivity, or the whole body of captives. The words are still dependent upon הֲרַגְתִּי, and affirm that even the horses that had been taken perished,—a fact which is also referred to in 2 Kings 13:7. From the slain men and animals forming the camp the stench ascended, and that into their noses, "as it were, as an *'azkârâh* of their sins" (Hitzig), but without their turning to their God.

Amos 4:11. *"I have destroyed among you, like the destruction of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were like a brand plucked out of the fire; and ye have not returned to me, is the saying of Jehovah."* Proceeding from the smaller to the greater chastisements, Amos mentions last of all the destruction similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, i.e., the utter confusion of the state, by which Israel was brought to the verge of ruin, so that it had only been saved like

a firebrand out of the fire. הַפְּכֵתִי does not refer to an earthquake, which had laid waste

cities and hamlets, or a part of the land, say that mentioned in Amos 1:1, as Kimchi and others suppose; but it denotes the desolation of the whole land in consequence of devastating wars, more especially the Syrian (2 Kings 13:4, 7), and other calamities, which had undermined the stability of the kingdom, as in Isa. 1:9. The

words **כְּמַהֲפֹכֶת אֱלֹהִים וְגו'** are taken from Deut. 29:22, where the complete desolation of the land, after the driving away of the people into exile on account of their obstinate apostasy, is compared to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. By thus playing upon this terrible threat uttered by Moses, the prophet seeks to show to the people what has already happened to them, and what still awaits them if they do not eventually turn to their God. They have again been rescued from the threatening destruction like a firebrand out of the fire (Zech. 3:2) by the deliverer whom the Lord gave to them, so that they escaped from the power of the Syrians (2 Kings 13:5). But inasmuch as all these chastisements have produced no fruit of repentance, the Lord will now proceed to judgment with His people.

Amos 4:12. *“Therefore thus will I do to thee, O Israel; because I will do this to thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. V. 13. For, behold, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and maketh known to man what is his thought; who maketh dawn, darkness, and goeth over the high places of the earth, Jehovah God of hosts is His name.”* The punishment which God is now about to inflict is introduced with *lâkhên*

(therefore). **כֹּה אֲעֲשֶׂה** cannot point back to the punishment threatened in vv. 2, 3, and still less to the chastisements mentioned in vv. 6–11; for *lâkhên kôh* is always used by Amos to introduce what is about to ensue, and any retrospective allusion to vv. 6–11 is precluded by the future **אֲעֲשֶׂה**. What Jehovah is now about to do is not expressed here *more iratorum*, but may clearly be discerned from what follows. “When He has said, *‘This will I do to thee,’* He is silent as to what He will do, in

order that, whilst Israel is left in uncertainty as to the particular kind of punishment (which is all the more terrible because all kinds of things are imagined), it may repent of its sins, and so avert the things which God threatens here” (Jerome). Instead of an announcement of the punishment, there follows in the words,

“Because I will do this to thee (**זאת** pointing

back to **כֹּה**), prepare to meet thy God,” a summons to hold themselves in readiness *liqra’th ’ēlōhīm (in occursum Dei)*, i.e., to stand before God thy judge. The meaning of this summons has been correctly explained by Calvin thus: “When thou seest that thou hast resorted in vain to all kinds of subterfuges, since thou never wilt be able to escape from the hand of thy judge; see now at length that thou dost avert this last destruction which is hanging over thee.” But this can only be effected “by true renewal of heart, in which men are dissatisfied with themselves, and submit with changed heart to God, and come as suppliants, praying for forgiveness.” For if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged by the Lord (1 Cor. 11:31). This view is shown to be the correct one, by the repeated admonitions to seek the Lord and live (Amos 5:4, 6; cf. V. 14). To give all the greater emphasis to this command, Amos depicts God in v. 13 as the Almighty and Omniscient, who creates prosperity and adversity. The predicates applied to God are to be regarded as

explanations of **אֱלֹהֵיךָ**, prepare to meet thy God; for it is He who formeth mountains, etc., i.e., the Almighty, and also He who maketh known to man **מֶה-שֵׁחֹו**, what man thinketh,

not what God thinketh, since **שֵׁחֹו = שֵׁיחֹו** is not applicable to God, and is only used ironically of Baal in 1 Kings 18:27. The thought is this: God is the searcher of the heart (Jer. 17:10; Ps. 139:2), and reveals to men by prophets the state of their heart, since He judges not only the outward actions, but the inmost emotions of the

heart (cf. Heb. 4:12). עֲשֵׂה שַׁחַר עֵיפָה might mean, He turns morning dawn into darkness, since עֲשֵׂה may be construed with the accusative of that into which anything is made (compare Ex. 30:25, and the similar thought in Amos 5:8, that God darkens the day into night). But both of these arguments simply prove the possibility of this explanation, not that it is either necessary or correct. As a rule, where עֲשֵׂה occurs, the thing into which anything is made is introduced with לְ (cf. Gen. 12:2; Ex. 32:10). Here, therefore, לְ may be omitted, simply to avoid ambiguity. For these reasons we agree with Calvin and others, who take the words as asyndeton. God makes morning-dawn and darkness, which is more suitable to a description of the creative omnipotence of God; and the omission of the *Vav* may be explained very simply from the oratorical character of the prophecy. To this there is appended the last statement: He passes along over the high places of the earth, i.e., He rules the earth with unlimited omnipotence (see at Deut. 32:13), and manifests Himself thereby as the God of the universe, or God of hosts.

Amos 5

The Overthrow of the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes—Ch. 5 and 6

Amos 5 and 6. The elegy, which the prophet commences in v. 2, upon the fall of the daughter of Israel, forms the theme of the admonitory addresses in these two chapters. These addresses, which are divided into four parts by the admonitions, “Seek Jehovah, and live,” in vv. 4 and 6, “Seek good” in v. 14, and the two woes (*hōi*) in Amos 5: 18 and 6:1, have no other purpose than this, to impress upon the people of God the impossibility of averting the threatened destruction, and to take away from the self-secure sinners the false foundations of their trust, by setting the demands of God

before them once more. In every one of these sections, therefore, the proclamation of the judgment returns again, and that in a form of greater and greater intensity, till it reaches to the banishment of the whole nation, and the overthrow of Samaria and the kingdom (Amos 5:27; 6:8ff.).

Amos 5:1–3. The Elegy.—V. 1. “Hear ye this word, which I raise over you; a lamentation, O house of Israel. V. 2. The virgin Israel is fallen; she does not rise up again; cast down upon her soil; no one sets her up. V. 3. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, The city that goes out by a thousand will retain a hundred, and that which goes out by a hundred will retain ten, for the

house of Israel.” הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה is still further

defined in the relative clause אֲשֶׁר וּגְוֹ as

קִינָה, a mournful song, lit., a lamentation or dirge for one who is dead (cf. 2 Sam. 1:17; 2

Chron. 35:25). אֲשֶׁר is a relative pronoun, not a conjunction (for); and *qīnâh* is an explanatory apposition: which I raise or commence as (or “namely”) a lamentation. “House of Israel” is synonymous with “house of Joseph” (v. 6), hence Israel of the ten tribes. The lamentation follows in v. 2, showing itself to be a song by the

rhythm and by its poetical form. נָפַל, to fall,

denotes a violent death (2 Sam. 1:19, 25), and is here a figure used to denote the overthrow or destruction of the kingdom. The expression virgin Israel (an exegetical genitive, not “of Israel”) rests upon a poetical personification of the population of a city or of a kingdom, as a daughter, and wherever the further idea of being unconquered is added, as a virgin (see at Isa. 23:12). Here, too, the term “virgin” is used to indicate the contrast between the overthrow predicted and the original destination of Israel, as the people of God, to be unconquered by any heathen nation whatever. The second clause of

the verse strengthens the first. נָטַשׁ, to be

stretched out or cast down, describes the fall as

a violent overthrow. The third verse does not form part of the lamentation, but gives a brief, cursory vindication of it by the announcement that Israel will perish in war, even to a very small remnant. אֲצַיִר refers to their marching

out to war, and מֵאֵלֶּיךָ, אֵלֶּיךָ is subordinated to it, as a more precise definition of the manner in which they marched out (cf. Ewald, § 279, b).

Amos 5:4–12. The short, cursory explanation of the reason for the lamentation opened here, is followed in vv. 4ff. by the more elaborate proof, that Israel has deserved to be destroyed, because it has done the very opposite of what God demands of His people. God requires that they should seek Him, and forsake idolatry, in order to live (vv. 4–6); but Israel on the contrary, turns right into unrighteousness, without fearing the almighty God and His judgment (vv. 7–9). This unrighteousness God must punish (vv. 10–12). V. 4. *“For thus saith Jehovah to the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and live. V. 5. And seek not Bethel, and come not to Gilgal, and go not over to Beersheba: for Gilgal repays it with captivity, and Bethel comes to nought. V. 6. Seek Jehovah, and live; that He fall not upon the house of Joseph like fire, and it devour, and there be none to quench it for Bethel.”* The *kī* in v. 4 is co-ordinate to that in v. 3, “Seek me, and live,” for “Seek me, so shall ye live.” For this meaning of two imperatives, following directly the one upon the other, see

Gesenius, § 130,2, and Ewald, § 347, b. הִיָּוֶה, not merely to remain alive, not to perish, but to obtain possession of true life. God can only be sought, however, in His revelation, or in the manner in which He wishes to be sought and worshipped. This explains the antithesis, “Seek not Bethel,” etc. In addition to Bethel and Gilgal (see at Amos 4:4), Beersheba, which was in the southern part of Judah, is also mentioned here, being the place where Abraham had called upon the Lord (Gen. 21:33), and where the Lord had appeared to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:24 and 46:1; see also at Gen. 21:31). These sacred reminiscences from the olden time had caused

Beersheba to be made into a place of idolatrous worship, to which the Israelites went on pilgrimage beyond the border of their own

kingdom (עֵבֶר). But visiting these idolatrous places of worship did no good, for the places themselves would be given up to destruction. Gilgal would wander into *captivity* (an expression used here on account of the similarity in the ring of גִּלְגָּל and יְגִלָּה יְגִלָּה).

Bethel would become *’âven*, that is to say, not “an idol” here, but “nothingness,” though there is an allusion to the change of *Beth-el* (God’s house) into *Beth-’âven* (an idol-house; see at Hos. 4:15). The Judaeen Beersheba is passed over in the threat, because the primary intention of Amos is simply to predict the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes. After this warning the prophet repeats the exhortation to seek Jehovah, and adds this threatening, “that Jehovah come not like fire upon the house of Joseph” (*tsâlach*, generally construed with *’al* or *’el*, cf. Judg. 14:19; 15:14, 1 Sam. 10:6; here with an accusative, to fall upon a person), “and it (the fire) devour, without there being any to extinguish it for Bethel.” Bethel, as the chief place of worship in Israel, is mentioned here for the kingdom itself, which is called the “house of Joseph,” from Joseph the father of Ephraim, the most powerful tribe in that kingdom.

To add force to this warning, Amos (vv. 7–9) exhibits the moral corruption of the Israelites, in contrast with the omnipotence of Jehovah as it manifests itself in terrible judgments. V. 7. *“They that change right into wormwood, and bring righteousness down to the earth. V. 8. He that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into morning, and darkeneth day to night: that calleth to the waters of the sea, and poureth them over the surface of the earth; Jehovah is His name. V. 9. Who causeth desolation to flash upon the strong, and desolation cometh upon the fortress.”* The sentences in vv. 7 and 8 are written without any connecting link. The participle in v. 7 cannot be taken as an address, for it is carried on in the

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third person (*hinnīchū*), not in the second. And *hahōphkhīm* (who turn) cannot be in apposition to *Beth-el*, since the latter refers not to the inhabitants, but to the houses. As Amos is generally fond of a participial construction (cf. Amos 2:7; 4:13), so in a spirited address he likes to utter the thoughts one after another without any logical link of connection. As a matter of fact, *hahōphkhīm* is connected with *bēth-yōsēph* (the house of Joseph), "Seek the Lord, ye of the house of Joseph, who turn right into wrong;" but instead of this connection, he proceeds with a simple description, They are turning," etc. *La'ānāh*, wormwood, a bitter plant, is a figurative term denoting bitter wrong (cf. Amos 6:12), the actions of men being regarded, according to Deut. 29:17, as the fruits of their state of mind. Laying righteousness on the ground (*hinnīāch* from *nūāch*) answers to our "trampling under feet." Hitzig has correctly explained the train of thought in vv. 7 and 8: "They do this, whereas Jehovah is the Almighty, and can bring destruction suddenly upon them." To show this antithesis, the article which takes the place of the relative is omitted from the participles *'ōsēh* and *hōphēkh*. The description of the divine omnipotence commences with the creation of the brightly shining stars; then follow manifestations of this omnipotence, which are repeated in the government of the world. *Kīmāh*, lit., the crowd, is the group of seven stars, the constellation of the Pleiades. *Ksīl*, the gate, according to the ancient versions the giant, is the constellation of Orion. The two are mentioned together in Job 9:9 and 38:31 (see Delitzsch on the latter). And He also turns the darkest night into morning, and darkens the day into night again. These words refer to the regular interchange of day and night; for *tsalmāvēth*, the shadow of death, i.e., thick darkness, never denotes the regularly recurring gloominess of night, but the appalling gloom of night (Job 24:17), more especially of the night of death (Job 3:5; 10:21, 22; 38:17; Ps. 44:20), the unlighted depth of the heart of the earth (Job 28:3), the darkness of the prison (Ps. 107:10, 14), also of wickedness (Job 12:22; 34:22), of sufferings (Job 16:16; Jer. 13:16; Ps.

23:4), and of spiritual misery (Isa. 9:1). Consequently the words point to the judicial rule of the Almighty in the world. As the Almighty turns the darkness of death into light, and the deepest misery into prosperity and health, so He darkens the bright day of prosperity into the dark night of adversity, and calls to the waters of the sea to pour themselves over the earth like the flood, and to destroy the ungodly. The idea that by the waters of the sea, which pour themselves out at the call of God over the surface of the earth, we are to understand the moisture which rises from the sea and then falls upon the earth as rain, no more answers to the words themselves, than the idea expressed by Hitzig, that they refer to the water of the rivers and brooks, which flow out of the sea as well as into it (Eccles. 1:7). The words suggest the thought of terrible inundations of the earth by the swelling of the sea, and the allusion to the judgment of the flood can hardly be overlooked. This judicial act of the Almighty, no strong man and no fortress can defy. With the swiftness of lightning He causes desolation to smite the strong man. *Bālag*, lit., *micare*, used in the Arabic to denote the lighting up of the rays of the dawn, *hiphil* to cause to light up, is applied here to motion with the swiftness of lightning; it is also employed in a purely metaphorical sense for the lighting up of the countenance (Ps. 39:14; Job 9:27; 10:20). In v. 9b the address is continued in a

descriptive form; **יְבוֹאֵ** has not a causative meaning. The two clauses of this verse point to the fate which awaits the Israelites who trust in their strength and their fortifications (Amos 6:13). And yet they persist in unrighteousness. **Amos 5:10.** "They hate the monitor in the gate, and abhor him that speaketh uprightly. V. 11. Therefore, because ye tread upon the poor, and take the distribution of corn from him, ye have built houses of square stones, and will not dwell therein; planted pleasant vineyards, and will not drink their wine. V. 12. For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great your sins; oppressing the righteous, taking atonement money; and ye bow down the poor in the gate."

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However natural it may seem to take מוֹכִיחַ and דִּבֵּר תְּמִים in v. 10 as referring to prophets, who charge the ungodly with their acts of unrighteousness, as Jerome does, this explanation is precluded not only by *bassha'ar* (in the gate), since the gate was not the meeting-place of the people where the prophets were accustomed to stand, but the place where courts of judgment were held, and all the public affairs of the community discussed (see at Deut. 21:19); but also by the first half of v. 11, which presupposes judicial proceedings. *Mōkhīäch* is not merely the judge who puts down unjust accusers, but any one who lifts up his voice in a court of justice against acts of injustice (as in Isa. 29:21). דִּבֵּר תְּמִים, he who says what is blameless, i.e., what is right and true: this is to be taken generally, and not to be restricted to the accused who seeks to defend his innocence. תַּעֲבֹב is a stronger expression than שָׁנָא. The punishment for this unjust oppression of the poor will be the withdrawal of their possessions. The *ἀπ. λεγ. bōshēs* is a dialectically different form for בּוֹס, from בּוֹס, to trample down (Rashi, Kimchi), analogous to the interchange of שְׂרִיזֹן and סְרִיזֹן, a coat of mail, although as a rule שׁ passes into ס, and not ס into שׁ. For the derivation from בּוֹשׁ, according to which בּוֹשֵׁשׁ would stand for בּוֹשֵׁשׁ (Hitzig and Tuch on Gen. p. 85), is opposed both to the construction with עָל, and also to the circumstance that בּוֹשֵׁשׁ means to delay (Ex. 32:1; Judg. 5:28); and the derivation suggested by Hitzig from an Arabic verb, signifying to carry one's self haughtily towards others, is a mere loophole. Taking a gift of corn from the poor refers to unjust extortion on the part of the judge, who will only do justice to a poor

man when he is paid for it. The main clause, which was introduced with *lākhēn*, is continued with בָּתֵי גָזִית: “thus have ye built houses of square stones, and shall not dwell therein;” for “ye shall not dwell in the houses of square stones which ye have built.” The threat is taken from Deut. 28:30, 39, and sets before them the plundering of the land and the banishment of the people. Houses built of square stones are splendid buildings (see Isa. 9:9). The reason for this threat is given in v. 12, where reference is made to the multitude and magnitude of the sins, of which injustice in the administration of justice is again held up as the chief sin. The participles לְקַחִי and צָרְרִי are attached to the suffixes of חַטָּאתֵיכֶם and פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם: *your* sins, who oppress the righteous, attack him, and take atonement money, contrary to the express command of the law in Num. 35:31, to take no *kōpher* for the soul of a murderer. The judges allowed the rich murderer to purchase exemption from capital punishment by the payment of atonement money, whilst they bowed down the right of the poor. Observe the transition from the participle to the third person fem., by which the prophet turns away with disgust from these ungodly judges. Bowing down the poor is a concise expression for bowing down the right of the poor: compare Amos 2:7 and the warnings against this sin (Ex. 23:6; Deut. 16:19).

Amos 5:13–17. With the new turn that all talking is useless, Amos repeats the admonition to seek good and hate evil, if they would live and obtain favour with God (vv. 13–15); and then appends the threat that deep mourning will arise on every hand, since God is drawing near to judgment. V. 13. “Therefore, whoever has prudence at this time is silent, for it is an evil time.” As *lākhēn* (therefore) always introduces the threatening of divine punishment after the exposure of the sins (cf. vv. 11, 16, Amos 6:7; 4:12; 3:11), we might be disposed to connect v. 13 with the preceding verse; but the contents of the verse require that it should be taken in

connection with what follows, so that *lâkhēn* simply denote the close connection of the two turns of speech, i.e., indicates that the new command in vv. 14, 15 is a consequence of the previous warnings. *Hammaskīl*, the prudent man, he who acts wisely, is silent. **בְּעֵת הַהִיא**, at a time such as this is, because it is an evil time, not however “a dangerous time to speak, on account of the malignity of those in power,” but a time of moral corruption, in which all speaking and warning are of no avail. It is opposed to the context to refer **בְּעֵת הַהִיא** to the future, i.e., to the time when God will come to punish, in which case the silence would be equivalent to not murmuring against God (Rashi and others). At the same time, love to his people, and zeal for their deliverance, impel the prophet to repeat his call to them to return.

Amos 5:14. “Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah the God of hosts may be with you, as ye say. V. 15. Hate evil, and love good, and set up justice in the gate; perhaps Jehovah the God of hosts will show favour to the remnant of Joseph.” The command to seek and love good is practically the same as that to seek the Lord in vv. 4, 6; and therefore the promise is the same, “that ye may live.” But it is only in fellowship with God that man has life. This truth the Israelites laid hold of in a perfectly outward sense, fancying that they stood in fellowship with God by virtue of their outward connection with the covenant nation as sons of Israel or Abraham (cf. John 8:39), and that the threatened judgment could not reach them, but that God would deliver them in every time of oppression by the heathen (cf. Mic. 3:11; Jer. 7:10). Amos meets this delusion with the remark, “that Jehovah may be so with you as ye say.” **כִּי** neither means “in case ye do so” (Rashi, Baur), nor “in like manner as, i.e., if ye strive after good” (Hitzig). Neither of these meanings can be established, and here they are untenable, for the simple reason that **כִּי** unmistakably

corresponds with the following **כַּאֲשֶׁר**. It means nothing more than “so as ye say.” The thought is the following: “Seek good, and not evil: then will Jehovah the God of the heavenly hosts be with you as a helper in distress, so as ye say.” This implied that in their present condition, so long as they sought good, they ought not to comfort themselves with the certainty of Jehovah’s help. Seeking good is explained in v. 15 as loving good, and this is still further defined as setting up justice in the gate, i.e., maintaining a righteous administration of justice at the place of judgment; and to this the hope, so humiliating to carnal security, is attached: perhaps God will then show favour to the remnant of the people. The emphasis in these words is laid as much upon *perhaps* as upon the remnant of Joseph. The expression “*perhaps* He will show favour” indicates that the measure of Israel’s sins was full, and no deliverance could be hoped for if God were to proceed to act according to His righteousness. The “remnant of Joseph” does not refer to “the existing condition of the ten tribes” (Ros., Hitzig). For although Hazael and Benhadad had conquered the whole of the land of Gilead in the times of Jehu and Jehoahaz, and had annihilated the Israelitish army with the exception of a very small remnant (2 Kings 10:32, 33; 13:3, 7), Joash and Jeroboam II had recovered from the Syrians all the conquered territory, and restored the kingdom to its original bounds (2 Kings 13:23ff., 14:26–28). Consequently Amos could not possibly describe the state of the kingdom of the ten tribes in the time of Jeroboam II as “the remnant of Joseph.” As the Syrians had not attempted any deportation, the nation of the ten tribes during the reign of Jeroboam was still, or was once more, all Israel. If, therefore, Amos merely holds out the possibility of the favouring of the remnant of Joseph, he thereby gives distinctly to understand, that in the approaching judgment Israel will perish with the exception of a remnant, which may possibly be preserved after the great chastisement (cf. v. 3), just as Joel (Joel 3:5) and Isaiah (Isa. 6:13; 10:21–23)

promise only the salvation of a remnant to the kingdom of Judah.

Amos 5:16, 17. This judgment is announced in vv. 16, 17. V. 16. *“Therefore thus saith Jehovah the God of hosts, the Lord: In all roads lamentation! and in all streets will men say, Alas! alas! and they call the husbandman to mourning, and lamentation to those skilled in lamenting. V. 17. And in all vineyards lamentation, because I go through the midst of thee, saith Jehovah.”*

Lâkhên (therefore) is not connected with the admonitions in vv. 14, 15, nor can it point back to the reproaches in vv. 7, 10–12, since they are too far off: it rather links on to the substance of v. 13, which involves the thought that all admonition to return is fruitless, and the ungodly still persist in their unrighteousness,—a thought which also forms the background of vv. 14, 15. The meaning of vv. 16, 17 is, that mourning and lamentation for the dead will fill both city and land. On every hand will there be dead to weep for, because Jehovah will go judging through the land. The roads and streets are not merely those of the capital, although these are primarily to be thought of, but those of all the towns in the kingdom. *Mispēd* is the death-wail. This is evident from the parallel *’âmar hō hō*, saying, Alas, alas! i.e., striking up the death-wail (cf. Jer. 22:18). And this death-wail will not be heard in all the streets of the towns only, but the husbandman will also be called from the field to mourn, i.e., to seep for one who has died in his house. The verb **קָרְאוּ**,

they call, belongs to **מְסַפְדֵי אֵל** י, they call lamentation to those skilled in mourning: for they call out the word *mispēd* to the professional mourners; in other words, they send for them to strike up their wailing for the dead. **יְדֵי נָהִי** (those skilled in mourning) are the public wailing women, who were hired when a death occurred to sing mourning songs (compare Jer. 9:16, Matt. 9:23, and my *Bibl. Archäologie*, ii. p. 105). Even in all the vineyards, the places where rejoicing is generally looked for (v. 11; Isa. 16:10), the

death-wail will be heard. V. 17b mentions the event which occasions the lamentation

everywhere. **אֲנִי**, for (not “if”) I go through the midst of thee. These words are easily explained from Ex. 12:12, from which Amos has taken them. Jehovah there says to Moses, “I pass through the land of Egypt, and smite all the first-born.” And just as the Lord once passed through Egypt, so will He now pass judicially through Israel, and slay the ungodly. For Israel is no longer the nation of the covenant, which He passes over and spares (Amos 7:8; 8:2), but has become an Egypt, which He will pass through as a judge to punish it. This threat is carried out still further in the next two sections, commencing with *hōi*.

Amos 5:18–27. The first turn.—V. 18. *“Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah! What good is the day of Jehovah to you? It is darkness, and not light. V. 19. As if a man fleeth before the lion, and the bear meets him; and he comes into the house, and rests his hand upon the wall, and the snake bites him. V. 20. Alas! is not the day of Jehovah darkness, and not light; and gloom, and no brightness in it?”* As the Israelites rested their hope of deliverance from every kind of hostile oppression upon their outward connection with the covenant nation (v. 14); many wished the day to come, on which Jehovah would judge all the heathen, and redeem Israel out of all distress, and exalt it to might and dominion above all nations, and bless it with honour and glory, applying the prophecy of Joel in Joel 3 without the least reserve to Israel as the nation of Jehovah, and without considering that, according to Joel 2:32, those only would be saved on the day of Jehovah who called upon the name of the Lord, and were called by the Lord, i.e., were acknowledged by the Lord as His own. These infatuated hopes, which confirmed the nation in the security of its life of sin, are met by Amos with an exclamation of woe upon those who long for the day of Jehovah to come, and with the declaration explanatory of the woe, that that day is darkness and not light, and will bring them nothing but harm and destruction,

and not prosperity and salvation. He explains this in v. 19 by a figure taken from life. To those who wish the day of Jehovah to come, the same thing will happen as to a man who, when fleeing from a lion, meets a bear, etc. The meaning is perfectly clear: whoever would escape one danger, falls into a second; and whoever escapes this, falls into a third, and perishes therein. The serpent's bite in the hand is fatal. "In that day every place is full of danger and death; neither in-doors nor out-of-doors is any one safe: for out-of-doors lions and bears prowl about, and in-doors snakes lie hidden, even in the holes of the walls" (C. a. Lap.). After this figurative indication of the sufferings and calamities which the day of the Lord will bring, Amos once more repeats in v. 20, in a still more emphatic manner (הֲלֹא, *nonne* = assuredly), that it will be no day of salvation, sc. to those who seek evil and not good, and trample justice and righteousness under foot (vv. 14, 15).

Amos 5:21-24. This threatening judgment will not be averted by the Israelites, even by their feasts and sacrifices (vv. 21, 22). The Lord has no pleasure in the feasts which they celebrate. Their outward, heartless worship, does not make them into the people of God, who can count upon His grace. V. 21. *"I hate, I despise your feasts, and do not like to smell your holy days. V. 22. For if ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I have no pleasure therein; and the thank-offering of your fatted calves I do not regard. V. 23. Put away from me the noise of thy songs; and I do not like to hear the playing of thy harps. V. 24. And let judgment roll like water, and righteousness like an inexhaustible stream."*

By the rejection of the *opus operatum* of the feasts and sacrifices, the roots are cut away from the false reliance of the Israelites upon their connection with the people of God. The combination of the words שְׂנֵאתִי מֵאֲסֹתַי expresses in the strongest terms the dislike of God to the feasts of those who were at enmity with Him. *Chaggīm* are the great annual feasts; *'ātsārōth*, the meetings for worship at those feasts, inasmuch as a holy meeting took place at

the *'ātsereth* of the feast of Passover and feast of Tabernacles (see at Lev. 23:36). *Rīāch*, to smell, is an expression of satisfaction, with an allusion

to the רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ, which ascended to God from the burning sacrifice (see Lev. 26:31). *Kī*, in v. 22, is explanatory: "for," not "yea." The observance of the feast culminated in the sacrificers. God did not like the feasts, because He had no pleasure in the sacrifices. In v. 23a the two kinds of sacrifice, *'ōlāh* and *minchāh*, are divided between the protasis and apodosis, which gives rise to a certain incongruity. The sentences, if written fully, would read thus: When ye offer me burnt-offerings and meat-offerings, I have no pleasure in your burnt-offerings and meat-offerings. To these two kinds the *shelem*, the health-offering or peace-offering, is added as a third class in v. 22b.

מְרִיאִים, fattened things, generally mentioned along with *bāqār* as one particular species, for fattened calves (see Isa. 1:11). In הִסְרָה (v. 23)

Israel is addressed as a whole. הַמִּזְמוֹר שְׁרִידָה, the noise of thy songs, answers to the strong

expression הִסְרָה. The singing of their psalms is nothing more to God than a wearisome noise, which is to be brought to an end. Singing and playing upon harps formed part of the temple worship (vid., 1 Chron. 16:40; 23:5, and 25). Isaiah (Isa. 1:11ff.) also refuses the heartless sacrifice and worship of the people, who have fallen away from God in their hearts. It is very clear from the sentence which Amos pronounces here, that the worship at Bethel was an imitation of the temple service at Jerusalem. If, therefore, with Amos 6:1 in view, where the careless upon Mount Zion and in Samaria are addressed, we are warranted in assuming that here also the prophet has the worship in Judah in his mind as well; the words apply primarily and chiefly to the worship of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and therefore even in that case they prove that, with regard to ritual, it was based upon the model of the

temple service at Jerusalem. Because the Lord has no pleasure in this hypocritical worship, the judgment shall pour like a flood over the land. The meaning of v. 24 is not, "Let justice and righteousness take the place of your sacrifices." *Mishpât* is not the justice to be practised by men; for "although Jehovah might promise that He would create righteousness in the nation, so that it would fill the land as it were like a flood (Isa. 11:9), He only demands righteousness generally, and not actually in floods" (Hitzig). Still less can *mishpât ūtsdâqâh* be understood as relating to the righteousness of the gospel which Christ has revealed. This thought is a very far-fetched one here, and is only founded

upon the rendering given to יִגַּל , *et revelabitur*

(Targ., Jerome, = יִגַּל), whereas יָגַל comes

from לָגַל , to roll, to roll along. The verse is to be explained according to Isa. 10:22, and threatens the flooding of the land with judgment and the punitive righteousness of God (Theod. Mops., Theodoret, Cyr., Kimchi, and others).

Amos 5:25–27. Their heartless worship would not arrest the flood of divine judgments, since Israel had from time immemorial been addicted to idolatry. V. 25. "Have ye offered me sacrifices and gifts in the desert forty years, O house of Israel? V. 26. But have ye borne the booth of your king and the pedestal of your images, the star of your gods, which ye made for yourselves? V. 27. Then I will carry you beyond Damascus, saith Jehovah; God of hosts is His name." The connection between these verses and what precedes is explained by Hengstenberg thus: "All this (the acts of worship enumerated in vv. 21–23) can no more be called a true worship, than the open idolatry in the wilderness. Therefore (v. 17) as in that instance the outwardly idolatrous people did not tread the holy land, so now will the inwardly idolatrous people be driven out of the holy land" (*Dissertations on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 157 transl.). But if this were the train of thought, the prophet would not have omitted all reference

to the punishment of the idolatrous people in the wilderness. And as there is no such allusion here, it is more natural to take vv. 25 and 26, as Calvin does, and regard the reference to the idolatry of the people, which was practised even in the wilderness, as assigning a further reason for their exposure to punishment. The question, "Have ye offered me sacrifices?" is equivalent to a denial, and the words apply to the nation as a whole, or the great mass of the people, individual exceptions being passed by. The *forty* years are used as a round number, to denote the time during which the people were sentenced to die in the wilderness after the rebellion at Kadesh, just as in Num. 14:33, 34, and Josh. 5:6, where this time, which actually amounted to only thirty-eight years, is given, as it is here, as forty years. And "the prophet could speak all the more naturally of forty years, since the germ of apostasy already existed in the great mass of the people, even when they still continued outwardly to maintain their fidelity to the God of Israel" (Hengstenberg). During that time even the circumcision of the children born in the thirty-eight years was suspended (see at Josh. 5:5–7), and the sacrificial worship prescribed by the law fell more and more into disuse, so that the generation that was sentenced to die out offered no more sacrifices. *Zbhâchîm* (slain-offerings) and *minchâh* (meat-offerings), i.e., bleeding and bloodless sacrifices, are mentioned here as the two principal kinds, to denote sacrifices of all kinds. We cannot infer from this that the daily sacrificial worship was entirely suspended: in Num. 17:11, indeed, the altar-fire is actually mentioned, and the daily sacrifice assumed to be still in existence; at the same time, the event there referred to belonged to the time immediately succeeding the passing of the sentence upon the people. Amos mentions the omission of the sacrifices, however, not as an evidence that the blessings which the Lord had conferred upon the people were not to be attributed to the sacrifices they had offered to Him, As Ephraem Syrus supposes, nor to support the assertion that God does not need or wish for their worship, for which Hitzig appeals to Jer. 7:22; but as a proof

that from time immemorial Israel has acted faithlessly towards its God, in adducing which he comprehends all the different generations of the people in the unity of the house of Israel, because the existing generation resembled the contemporaries of Moses in character and conduct.

Amos 5:26. Ver. 26 is attached in an adversative sense: "To me (Jehovah) ye have offered no sacrifices, but ye have borne," etc. The opposition between the Jehovah-worship which they suspended, and the idol-worship which they carried on, is so clearly expressed in

the verbs **הִנְשַׁתֶּם** and **נִשְׂאתֶם**, which correspond to one another, that the idea is precluded at once as altogether untenable, that "v. 26 refers to either the present or future in the form of an inference drawn from the preceding verse: therefore do ye (or shall ye) carry the hut of your king," etc. Moreover, the idea of the idols being carried into captivity,

which would be the meaning of **נִשְׂאָ** in that case, is utterly foreign to the prophetic range of thought. It is not those who go into captivity who carry their gods away with them; but the gods of a vanquished nation are carried away by the conquerors (Isa. 46:1). To give a correct interpretation to this difficult verse, which has been explained in various ways from the very earliest times, it is necessary, above all things, to bear in mind the parallelism of the clauses. Whereas in the first half of the verse the two

objects are connected together by the copula **ו** (**וְאֵת**), the omission of both **אֵת** and the copula

ו before **כּוֹבֵב** indicates most obviously that

כּוֹבֵב אֱלֹהֵיכֶם does not introduce a third object in addition to the two preceding ones, but rather that the intention is to define those objects more precisely; from which it follows

still further, that **סִבּוֹת מְלִכְכֶם** and **כִּיּוֹן**

צְלִמֵיכֶם do not denote two different kinds of idolatry, but simply two different forms of the very same idolatry. The two **ἀπ. λεγ. sikkūth** and **kiyyūn** are undoubtedly appellatives, notwithstanding the fact that the ancient versions have taken **kiyyūn** as the proper name of a deity. This is required by the parallelism of

the members; for **צְלִמֵיכֶם** stands in the same relation to **כִּיּוֹן** as **מְלִכְכֶם** to **סִבּוֹת**. The plural

צְלִמֵיכֶם, however, cannot be in apposition to the singular **כִּיּוֹן** (**kiyyūn**, your images), but must be a genitive governed by it: "the **kiyyūn** of your images." And in the same way **מְלִכְכֶם** is

the genitive after **סִבּוֹת**: "the **sikkūth** of your king." **Sikkūth** has been taken in an appellative sense by all the ancient translators. The LXX and Symm. render it **τὴν σκιήν**; the Peshito, Jerome, and the Ar. **tentorium**. The Chaldee has retained **sikkūth**. The rendering adopted by Aquila, **σσκιασμός**, is etymologically the more

exact; for **sikkūth**, from **סִכָּה**, to shade, signifies a shade or shelter, hence a covering, a booth, and is not to be explained either from **sākhath**, to be silent, from which Hitzig deduces the meaning "block," or from the Syriac and Chaldee word **סכתא**, a nail or stake, as

Rosenmüller and Ewald suppose. **כִּיּוֹן**, from

כּוֹן, is related to **כָּן**, **basis** (Ex. 30:18), and

מְכוּנָה, and signifies a pedestal or framework.

The correctness of the Masoretic pointing of the word is attested by the **kiyyūn** of the Chaldee,

and also by **צְלִמֵיכֶם**, inasmuch as the reading

כִּיּוֹן, which is given in the LXX and Syr.,

requires the singular **צְלִמֵיכֶם**, which is also

given in the Syriac. **צְלָמִים** are images of gods, as in Num. 33:52, 2 Kings 11:18. The words **אֱלֹהֵי בֹכָב** which follow are indeed also governed by **נְשֹׂאתָם**; but, as the omission of **וְאֵת** clearly shows, the connection is only a loose one, so that it is rather to be regarded as in apposition to the preceding objects in the sense of “namely, the star of your god;” and there is no necessity to alter the pointing, as Hitzig proposes, and read **בֹּכָב**, “a star was your god,” although this rendering expresses the sense quite correctly. **אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בֹּכָב** is equivalent to the star, which is your god, which ye worship as your god (for this use of the construct state, see Ges. § 116, 5). By the star we have to picture to ourselves not a star formed by human hand as a representation of the god, nor an image of a god with the figure of a star upon its head, like those found upon the Ninevite sculptures (see Layard). For if this had been what Amos meant, he would have repeated the particle **וְאֵת** before **בֹּכָב**. The thought is therefore the following: the king whose booth, and the images whose stand they carried, were a star which they had made their god, i.e., a star-deity (**אֱשֶׁר** refers to **אֱלֹהֵיכֶם**, not to **בֹּכָב**). This star-god, which they worshipped as their king, they had embodied in *tslāmīm*. The booth and the stand were the things used for protecting and carrying the images of the star-god. *Sikkūth* was no doubt a portable shrine, in which the image of the deity was kept. Such shrines (*ναοὶ ναϊσκοί*) were used by the Egyptians, according to Herodotus (ii. 63) and Diodorus Sic. (i. 97): they were “small chapels, generally gilded and ornamented with flowers and in other ways, intended to hold a small idol when processions were made, and to be carried

or driven about with it” (Drumann, *On the Rosetta Inscription*, p. 211). The stand on which the chapel was placed during these processions was called *παστοφόριον* (Drumann, p. 212); the bearers were called *ιεραφόροι* or *παστοφόροι* (D. p. 226). This Egyptian custom explains the prophet’s words: “the hut of your king, and the stand of your images,” as Hengstenberg has shown in his *Dissertations on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 161), and points to Egypt as the source of the idolatry condemned by Amos. This is also favoured by the fact, that the golden calf which the Israelites worshipped at Sinai was an imitation of the idolatry of Egypt; also by the testimony of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 20:7ff.), to the effect that the Israelites did not desist even in the wilderness from the abominations of their eyes, namely the idols of Egypt; and lastly, by the circumstance that the idea of there being any allusion in the words to the worship of Moloch or Saturn is altogether irreconcilable with the Hebrew text, and cannot be historically sustained, whereas star-worship, or at any rate the worship of the sun, was widely spread in Egypt from the very earliest times. According to the more recent investigations into the mythology of the ancient Egyptians which have been made by Lepsius (*Transactions of the Academy of Science at Berlin*, 1851, p. 157ff.), “the worship of the sun was the oldest kernel and most general principle of the religious belief of Egypt;” and this “was regarded even down to the very latest times as the outward culminating point of the whole system of religion” (Lepsius, p. 193). The first group of deities of Upper and Lower Egypt consists of none but sun-gods (p. 188). *Ra*, i.e., Helios, is the prototype of the kings, the highest potency and prototype of nearly all the gods, the king of the gods, and he is identified with Osiris (p. 194). But from the time of Menes, Osiris has been worshipped in This and Abydos; whilst in Memphis the bull Apis was regarded as the living copy of Osiris (p. 191). According to Herodotus (ii. 42), Osiris and Isis were the only gods worshipped by the ancient Egyptians; and, according to Diodorus Sic. (i. 11), the Egyptians were said to have had originally only

two gods, Helios and Selene, and to have worshipped the former in Osiris, the latter in Isis. The *Pan* of *Mendes* appears to have also been a peculiar form of Osiris (cf. Diod. Sic. i. 25, and Leps. p. 175). Herodotus (ii. 145) speaks of this as of primeval antiquity, and reckons it among the eight so-called first gods; and Diodorus Sic. (i. 18) describes it as διαφερόντως ὑπὸ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων τιμώμενον. It was no doubt to these Egyptian sun-gods that the star-god which the Israelites carried about with them in the wilderness belonged. This is all that can at present be determined concerning it. There is not sufficient evidence to support Hengstenberg's opinion, that the Egyptian Pan as the sun-god was the king worshipped by them. It is also impossible to establish the identity of the king mentioned by Amos with

the שְׁעִירִים in Lev. 17:7, since these שְׁעִירִים, even if they are connected with the goat-worship of Mendes, are not exhausted by this goat-deity.

The prophet therefore affirms that, during the forty years' journey through the wilderness, Israel did not offer sacrifices to its true King Jehovah, but carried about with it a star made into a god as the king of heaven. If, then, as has already been observed, we understand this assertion as referring to the great mass of the people, like the similar passage in Isa. 43:23, it agrees with the intimations in the Pentateuch as to the attitude of Israel. For, beside the several grosser outbreaks of rebellion against the Lord, which are the only ones recorded at all circumstantially there, and which show clearly enough that it was not devoted to its God with all its heart, we also find traces of open idolatry. Among these are the command in Lev. 17, that every one who slaughtered a sacrificial animal was to bring it to the tabernacle, when taken in connection with the reason assigned, namely, that they were not to offer their sacrifices any more to the *S'irim*, after which they went a whoring (v. 7), and the warning in Deut. 4:19, against worshipping the sun, moon, and stars, even all the host of heaven, from which we may infer that Moses

had a reason for this, founded upon existing circumstances. After this further proof of the apostasy of Israel from its God, the judgment already indicated in v. 24 is still further defined in v. 27 as the banishment of the people far beyond the borders of the land given to it by the Lord, where *higlâh* evidently points back to *yiggâl* in v. 24. מֵהַלְאָה לֵּ, lit., "from afar with regard to," i.e., so that when looked at from Damascus, the place showed itself afar off, i.e., according to one mode of viewing it, "far beyond Damascus."

Amos 6

Amos 6. The prophet utters the second woe over the careless heads of the nation, who were content with the existing state of things, who believed in no divine judgment, and who revelled in their riches (vv. 1–6). To these he announces destruction and the general overthrow of the kingdom (vv. 7–11), because they act perversely, and trust in their own power (vv. 12–14). V. 1. "Woe to the secure upon Zion, and to the careless upon the mountain of Samaria, to the chief men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes! V. 2. Go over to Calneh, and see; and proceed thence to Hamath, the great one: and go down to Gath of the Philistines: are they indeed better than these kingdoms? or is their territory greater than your territory? V. 3. Ye who keep the day of calamity far off, and bring the seat of violence near." This woe applies to the great men in Zion and Samaria, that is to say, to the chiefs of the whole of the covenant nation, because they were all sunk in the same godless security; though special allusion is made to the corrupt leaders of the kingdom of the ten tribes, whose debauchery is still further depicted in what follows. These great men are designated in the words נְקֻבֵי רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם, as the heads of the chosen people, who are known by name. As רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם is taken from Num. 24:20, so

נְקֻבֵי is taken from Num. 1:17, where the heads

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of the tribes who were chosen as princes of the congregation to preside over the numbering of the people are described as men **אֲשֶׁר נִקְּבוּ**

בְּשֵׁמוֹת, who were defined with names, i.e., distinguished by names, that is to say, well-known men; and it is used here in the same sense. Observe, however, with reference to **רְאֵשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם**, that in Num. 24:20 we have

not **הַגּוֹיִם**, but simply **רְאֵשִׁית גּוֹיִם**. Amalek is so called there, as being the first heathen nation which rose up in hostility to Israel. On the other hand, **ר' הַגּוֹיִם** is the firstling of the nations, i.e., the first or most exalted of all nations. Israel is so called, because Jehovah had chosen it out of all the nations of the earth to be the people of His possession (Ex. 19:5; cf. 2 Sam. 7:23). In order to define with still greater precision the position of these princes in the congregation, Amos adds, "to whom the house of Israel cometh," namely, to have its affairs regulated by them as its rulers. These epithets were intended to remind the princes of the people of both kingdoms, "that they were the descendants of those tribe-princes who had once been honoured to conduct the affairs of the chosen family, along with Moses and Aaron, and whose light shone forth from that better age as brilliant examples of what a truly theocratical character was" (Hengstenberg, *Dissertations*, i. p. 148). To give still greater prominence to the exalted calling of these princes, Amos shows in v. 2 that Israel can justly be called the firstling of the nations, since it is not inferior either in prosperity or greatness to any of the powerful and prosperous heathen states. Amos names three great and flourishing capitals, because he is speaking to the great men of the capitals of the two kingdoms of Israel, and the condition of the whole kingdom is reflected in the circumstances of the capital. *Calneh* (= *Calno*, Isa. 10:9) is the later *Ctesiphon* in the land of Shinar, or Babylonia, situated upon the Tigris

opposite to Seleucia (see at Gen. 10:10); hence the expression **עָבְרוּ**, because men were obliged to cross over the river (Euphrates) in order to get there. *Hamath*: the capital of the Syrian kingdom of that name, situated upon the Orontes (see at Gen. 10:18 and Num. 34:8). There was not another Hamath, as Hitzig supposes. The circumstance that Amos mentions Calneh first, whereas it was much farther to the east, so that Hamath was nearer to Palestine than Calneh was, may be explained very simply, from the fact that the enumeration commences with the most distant place and passes from the north-east to the south-west, which was in the immediate neighbourhood of Israel. *Gath*: one of the five capitals of Philistia, and in David's time the capital of all Philistia (see at Josh. 13:3, 2 Sam. 8:1). The view still defended by Baur—namely, that Amos mentions here three cities that had either lost their former grandeur, or had fallen altogether, for the purpose of showing the self-secure princes of Israel that the same fate awaited Zion and Samaria—is groundless and erroneous; for although *Calneh* is spoken of in Isa. 10:9 as a city that had been conquered by the Assyrians, it cannot be proved that this was the case as early as the time of Amos, but is a simple inference drawn from a false interpretation of the verse before us. Nor did Jeroboam II conquer the city of Hamath on the Orontes, and incorporate its territory with his own kingdom (see at 2 Kings 14:25). And although the Philistian city *Gath* was conquered by Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:60, we cannot infer from 2 Chron. 26:6, or from the fact of Gath not being mentioned in Amos 1:6–8, that this occurred before the time of Amos (see at Amos 1:8). On the other hand, the fact that it is placed by the side of Hamath in the passage before us, is rather a proof that the conquest did not take place till afterwards.

Amos 6:2b. Ver. 2b states what the princes of Israel are to see in the cities mentioned,—namely, that they are not better off (**טוֹבִים**) denoting outward success or earthly

prosperity) than these two kingdoms, i.e., the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and that their territories are not larger than theirs. It is very evident that this does not apply to cities that have been destroyed. The double question הֲ ...

וְאֵי requires a negative answer. V. 3. assigns the reason for the woe pronounced upon the sinful security of the princes of Israel, by depicting the godless conduct of these princes; and this is appended in the manner peculiar to Amos, viz., in participles. These princes fancy that the evil day, i.e., the day of misfortune or of judgment and punishment, is far away (מְנַדִּים),

piel of נָדָה = נָדַד, to be far off, signifies in this instance not to put far away, but to regard as far off); and they go so far as to prepare a seat or throne close by for wickedness and violence, which must be followed by judgment. הַנִּישׁ

שֶׁבֶת, to move the sitting (*shebheheth* from *yâshabh*) of violence near, or better still, taking *shebheheth* in the sense of enthroning, as Ewald does, to move the throne of violence nearer, i.e., to cause violence to erect its throne nearer and nearer among them.

Amos 6:4-6. This forgetfulness of God shows itself more especially in the reckless licentiousness and debauchery of these men. V. 4. "They who lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves out of the fattening stall. V. 5. Who prattle to the tune of the harp; like David, they invent string instruments. V. 6. Who drink wine out of sacrificial bowls, and anoint themselves with the best oils, and do not afflict themselves for the hurt of Joseph." They lie stretched, as it were poured out (סָרְחִים),

upon beds inlaid with ivory, to feast and fill their belly with the flesh of the best lambs and fattened calves, to the playing of harps and singing, in which they take such pleasure, that they invent new kinds of playing and singing.

The ἀπ. λεγ. *pârat*, to strew around (cf. *peret* in Lev. 19:10), in Arabic to throw many useless words about, to gossip, describes the singing at the banquets as frivolous nonsense. כְּלֵי שִׁיר, articles or instruments of singing, are not musical instruments generally, but, as we may see from 2 Chron. 34:12, compared with 2 Chron. 29:26, 27, and 1 Chron. 23:5, the stringed instruments that were either invented by David (e.g., the *nebel*), or arranged by him for the sacred song of the temple, together with the peculiar mode of playing them; in other words, "the playing upon stringed instruments introduced by David." Consequently the meaning of v. 5 is the following: As David invented stringed instruments in honour of his God in heaven, so do these princes invent playing and singing for their god, the belly. The meaning to invent or devise, which Baur will

not allow to תִּשְׁב, is established beyond all doubt by Ex. 31:4. They drink thereby out of sacrificial bowls of wine, i.e., drink wine out of sacrificial bowls. שֶׁתָּה with בָּ, as in Gen. 44:5.

Mizrâq, in the plural *mizrâqîm* and *mizrâqôth*, from *zâraq*, to sprinkle, was the name given both to the vessels used for the sprinkling of the blood, and also to the bowls made use of for pouring the libation of wine upon the table of shew-bread (2 Chron. 4:8). This word is applied by Amos to the bowls out of which the gluttons drank their wine; with special reference to the offering of silver sacrificial bowls made by the tribe-princes at the consecration of the altar (Num. 7), to show that whereas the tribe-princes of Israel in the time of Moses manifested their zeal for the service of Jehovah by presenting sacrificial bowls of silver, the princes of his own time showed just as much zeal in their care for their god, the belly. *Mizrâqîm* does not mean "rummers, or pitchers used for mixing wine." Lastly, Amos refers to their anointing themselves with the firstling of the oils, i.e., the best oils, as a sign of unbridled rejoicing, inasmuch as the custom of anointing was suspended in time of mourning (2 Sam.

14:2), for the purpose of appending the antithesis **וְלֹא נַחֲלוּ**, they do not afflict or grieve themselves for the ruin of Israel. *Shēbher*, breach, injury, destruction. *Joseph* signifies the people and kingdom of the ten tribes.

Amos 6:7–11. Announcement of Punishment.—V. 7. “Therefore will they now go into captivity at the head of the captives, and the shouting of the revellers will depart.” Because these revellers do not trouble themselves about the ruin of Israel, they will now be obliged to wander into captivity at the head of the people (cf. 1 Kings 21:9), when the approaching

shebher occurs. **בְּרֵאשׁ גְּלִים** is chosen with direct reference to **רֵאשִׁית שְׂמָנִים**, as Jerome has observed: “Ye who are *first* in riches will be the *first* to bear the yoke of captivity.” *Srūchīm* also points back to v. 4, “those who are stretched upon their couches”—that is, the revellers; and it forms a play upon words with *mirzach*. **מְרִיחַ** signifies a loud cry, here a joyous cry, in Jer. 16:5 a cry of lamentation.

Amos 6:8–11. This threat is carried out still further in vv. 8–11. V. 8. “The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by Himself, is the saying of Jehovah, the God of hosts: I abhor the pride of Jacob, and his palaces I hate; and give up the city, and the fulness thereof. V. 9. And it will come to pass, if then men are left in a house, they shall die. V. 10. And when his cousin lifts him up, and he that burieth him, to carry out the bones out of the house, and saith to the one in the hindmost corner of the house, Is there still any one with thee? and he says, Not one; then will he say, Hush; for the name of Jehovah is not to be invoked. V. 11. For, behold, Jehovah commandeth, and men smite the great house to ruins, and the small house into shivers.” In order to show the secure debauchees the terrible severity of the judgments of God, the Lord announces to His people with a solemn oath the rejection of the nation which is so confident in its own power (cf. v. 13). The oath runs here as

in Amos 4:2, with this exception, that instead of **בְּקִדְשׁוֹ** we have **בְּנִפְשׁוֹ** in the same sense; for the *nephesh* of Jehovah, His inmost being or self, is His holiness. **מִתְאַב**, with the guttural

softened, for **מִתְעַב**. The participle describes the abhorrence as a continued lasting feeling, and not a merely passing emotion. **גִּאּוֹן יַעֲקֹב**, the loftiness or pride of Jacob, i.e., everything of which Jacob is proud, the true and imaginary greatness and pride of Israel, which included the palaces of the voluptuous great men, for which reason they are placed in parallelism

with **גִּאּוֹן יֵעָ**. This glory of Israel Jehovah abhors, and He will destroy it by giving up the city (Samaria), and all that fills it (houses and men), to the enemies to be destroyed. **הִסְגִּיר**, to give up to the enemy, as in Deut. 32:30 and Ob. 14; not to surround, to which **וּמְלֹאָהּ** is unsuitable. The words not only threaten surrounding, or siege, but also conquest, and (v. 11) the destruction of the city. And then, even if there are ten in one house, they will all perish.

אַנְשִׁים: people, men. Ten in one house is a large number, which the prophet assumes as the number, to give the stronger emphasis to the thought that not one will escape from death. This thought is still further explained in v. 10. A relative comes into the house to bury his deceased blood-relation. The suffix to **נִשְׂאוֹ**

refers to the idea involved in **מֵתוֹ**, a dead man. *Dōd*, literally the father’s brother, here any near relation whose duty it was to see to the burial of the dead. **מְסַרְףִי** for **מְשַׂרְףִי**, the burner, i.e., the burier of the dead. The Israelites were indeed accustomed to *bury* their dead, and not to *burn* the corpses. The description of the burier as *msârēph* (a burner) therefore supposes the occurrence of such a multitude of

deaths that it is impossible to bury the dead, whose corpses are obliged to be burned, for the purpose of preventing the air from being polluted by the decomposition of the corpses. Of course the burning did not take place at the house, as Hitzig erroneously infers from

לְהוֹצִיא עֲצָמִים; for עֲצָמִים denotes the corpse here, as in Ex. 13:19, Josh. 24:32, and 2 Kings 13:21, and not the different bones of the dead which remained without decomposition or burning. The burier now asks the last living person in the house, who has gone to the very back of the house in order to save his life, whether there is any one still with him, any one still living in the house beside himself, and

receives the answer, אָפֶס (Adv.), “Nothing more;” whereupon he says to him, *has*, “Be still,” answering to our Hush! because he is afraid that, if he goes on speaking, he may invoke the name of God, or pray for the mercy of God; and he explains his words by adding, “The name of Jehovah must not be mentioned.” It is not Amos who adds this explanation, but the relation. Nor does it contain “the words of one who despairs of any better future, and whose mind is oppressed by the weight of the existing evils, as if he said, Prayers would be of no use, for we too must die” (Liev., Ros.). לֹא

לְהִזְכִּיר, “it is not to (may not) be mentioned,” would be unsuitable as an utterance of despair. It rather indicates the fear lest, by the invocation of the name of God, the eye of God should be drawn towards this last remaining one, and he also should fall a victim to the judgment of death. This judgment the Lord accomplishes not merely by a pestilence which breaks out during the siege, and rages all around (there is no ground for any such limitation of the words), but also by sword and plague during the siege and conquest of the town. For the reason assigned for the threat in v. 11 points to the latter. כִּי links the words to the main thought in v. 11, or even v. 10b: “When

the Lord delivers up the city and all that fills it, they will all perish; for, behold, He commands, orders the enemy (the nation in v. 14), and it will smite in pieces the houses, great and

small.” The singular הַבַּיִת is used with indefinite generality: every house, great and small (cf. Amos 3:15).

Amos 6:12–14. This judgment also, they, with their perversion of all right, will be unable to avert by their foolish trust in their own power. V. 12. “Do horses indeed run upon the rock, or do men plough (there) with oxen, that ye turn justice into poison, and the fruit of the righteousness into wormwood? V. 13. They who rejoice over what is worthless, who say: with our strength we make ourselves horns! V. 14. For, behold, I raise over you, O house of Israel, is the saying of Jehovah, the God of hosts, a nation; and they will oppress you from the territory of Hamath to the brook of the desert.” To explain the threat in v. 11, Amos now calls attention in v. 12, under two different similes, to the perversity with which the haughty magnates of Israel, who turn right into bitter wrong, imagine that they can offer a successful resistance, or bid defiance with their own strength to the enemy, whom the Lord will raise up as the executor of His judgment. The perversion of right into its opposite can no more bring salvation than horses can run upon rocks, or any one plough upon such a soil with oxen. In the second question בְּסֵלַע (on the rock) is to be repeated from the first, as the majority of commentators suppose. But the two questions are not to be taken in connection with the previous verse in the sense of “Ye will no more be able to avert this destruction than horses can run upon rocks,” etc. (Chr. B. Mich.). They belong to what follows, and are meant to expose the moral perversity of the unrighteous conduct of the wicked. For הַפְּכֵתֶם וְגוֹ', see Amos 5:7; and for רֵאשׁ, Hos. 10:4. The impartial administration of justice is called the “fruit of righteousness,” on account of the

figurative use of the terms darnel and wormwood. These great men, however, rejoice thereby in **לֹא דָבָר**, “a nothing,” or a thing which has no existence. What the prophet refers to may be seen from the parallel clause, viz., their imaginary strength (*chōzeq*). They rested this hope upon the might with which Jeroboam had smitten the Syrians, and restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom. From this might they would take to themselves (*lâqach*, to take, not now for the first time to create, or ask of God) the horns, to thrust down all their foes. *Horns* are signs and symbols of power (cf. Deut. 33:17; 1 Kings 22:11); here they stand for the military resources, with which they fancied that they could conquer every foe. These delusions of God-forgetting pride the prophet casts down, by saying that Jehovah the God of hosts will raise up a nation against them, which will crush them down in the whole length and breadth of the kingdom. This nation was Assyria. *Kî hinnēh* (for behold) is repeated from v. 11; and the threat in v. 14 is thereby described as the resumption and confirmation of the threat expressed in v. 11, although the *kî* is connected with the perversity condemned in vv. 12, 13, of trusting in their own power. *Lâchats*, to oppress, to crush down.

On the expression **לְבוֹא חֲמַת**, as a standing epithet for the northern boundary of the kingdom of Israel, see Num. 34:8. As the southern boundary we have **נַחַל הָעֲרֵבָה**

instead of **יַם הָעֲרֵבָה** (2 Kings 14:25). This is not the willow-brook mentioned in Isa. 15:7, the present Wady *Sufsaf*, or northern arm of the Wady *el-Kerek* (see Delitzsch on Isaiah, *l.c.*), nor the *Rhinokorura*, the present *el-Arish*, which formed the southern boundary of Canaan, because this is constantly called “the brook of Egypt” (see at Num. 34:5, Josh. 15:4), but the present *el-Ahsy* (*Ahsa*), the southern border river which separated Moab from Edom (see at 2 Kings 14:25).

Amos 7

Sights or Visions

Amos 7–9. The last part of the writings of Amos contains five visions, which confirm the contents of the prophetic addresses in the preceding part. The first four visions, however (Amos 7 and 8), are distinguished from the fifth and last (Amos 9) by the fact, that whereas the former all commence with the same formula, “Thus hath the Lord showed me,” the latter commences with the words, “I saw the Lord,” etc. They also differ in their contents, inasmuch as the former symbolize the judgments which have already fallen in part upon Israel, and in part have still to fall; whilst the latter, on the contrary, proclaims the overthrow of the old theocracy, and after this the restoration of the fallen kingdom of God, and its ultimate glory. And again, of these four, the first and second (Amos 7:1–6) are distinguished from the third and fourth (Amos 7:7–9, and 8:1–3) by the fact, that whereas the former contain a promise in reply to the prophet’s intercession, that Jacob shall be spared, in the latter any further sparing is expressly refused; so that they are thus formed into two pairs, which differ from one another both in their contents and purpose. This difference is of importance, in relation both to the meaning and also to the historical bearing of the visions. It points to the conclusion, that the first two visions indicate universal judgments, whilst the third and fourth simply threaten the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel in the immediate future, the commencement of which is represented in the fifth and last vision, and which is then still further depicted in its results in connection with the realization of the divine plan of salvation.

Visions of the Locusts, the Fire, and the Plumb-Line. The Prophet’s Experience at Bethel—Ch. 7

Amos 7:1–6. The first two visions.—Vv. 1–3. The Locusts.—V. 1. “Thus the Lord Jehovah

showed me; and, behold, He formed locusts in the beginning of the springing up of the second crop; and, behold, it was a second crop after the king's mowing. V. 2. And it came to pass, when they had finished eating the vegetable of the land, I said, Lord Jehovah, forgive, I pray: how can Jacob stand? for he is small. V. 3. Jehovah repented of this: It shall not take place, saith Jehovah." The formula, "Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me," is common to this and the three following visions (vv. 4, 7, and Amos 8:1), with this trifling difference, that in the third (v. 7) the subject (the Lord Jehovah) is omitted, and 'Adōnāi (the Lord) is inserted instead, after *vhinnēh* (and behold). הִרְאֵנִי denotes seeing with the eyes of the mind—a visionary seeing. These visions are not merely pictures of a judgment which was ever threatening, and drawing nearer and nearer (Baur); still less are they merely poetical fictions, or forms of drapery selected arbitrarily, for the purpose of clothing the prophet's thoughts; but they are inward intuitions, produced by the Spirit of God, which set forth the punitive judgments of God. *Kōh* (*ita*, thus) points to what follows, and *vhinnēh* (and behold) introduces the thing seen. Amos sees the Lord form locusts. Baur proposes to alter יוצר (forming) into יצור (forms), but without any reason, and without observing that in all three visions of this chapter *hinnēh* is followed by a participle (קרא in v. 4, and נצב in v. 7), and that the 'Adōnāi which stands before נצב in v. 7 shows very clearly that this noun is simply omitted in v. 1, because 'Adōnāi *Yhōvāh* has immediately preceded it. גבי (a poetical form for גבה, analogous to שדי for שדה, and contracted into גוב in Nah. 3:17) signifies locusts, the only question being, whether this meaning is derived from גוב =

Arab. *jâb*, to cut, or from גבה = Arab. *jb'a*, to creep forth (out of the earth). The fixing of the time has an important bearing upon the meaning of the vision: viz., "at the beginning of the springing up of the second crop (of grass);" especially when taken in connection with the explanation, "after the mowings of the king." These definitions cannot be merely intended as outward chronological data. For, in the first place, nothing is known of the existence of any right or prerogative on the part of the kings of Israel, to have the early crop in the meadow land throughout the country mown for the support of their horses and mules (1 Kings 18:5), so that their subjects could only get the second crop for their own cattle. Moreover, if the second crop, "after the king's mowings," were to be interpreted literally in this manner, it would decidedly weaken the significance of the vision. For if the locusts did not appear till after the king had got in the hay for the supply of his own mews, and so only devoured the second crop of grass as it grew, this plague would fall upon the people alone, and not at all upon the king. But such an exemption of the king from the judgment is evidently at variance with the meaning of this and the following visions. Consequently the definition of the time must be interpreted spiritually, in accordance with the idea of the vision. The king, who has had the early grass mown, is Jehovah; and the mowing of the grass denotes the judgments which Jehovah has already executed upon Israel. The growing of the second crop is a figurative representation of the prosperity which flourished again after those judgments; in actual fact, therefore, it denotes the time when the dawn had risen again for Israel (Amos 4:13). Then the locusts came and devoured all the vegetables of the earth. עשב הארץ is not the second crop; for עשב does not mean grass, but vegetables, the plants of the field (see at Gen. 1:11). Vv. 2 and 3 require that this meaning should be retained. When the locusts had already eaten the vegetables of the earth,

the prophet interceded, and the Lord interposed with deliverance. This intercession would have been too late after the consumption of the second crop. On the other hand, when the vegetables had been consumed, there was still reason to fear that the consumption of the second crop of grass would follow; and this is averted at the prophet's intercession. וְהָיָה for

וְהָיָה, as in 1 Sam. 17:48, Jer. 37:11, etc.

סְלַח־נָא, pray forgive, sc. the guilt of the

people (cf. Num. 14:19). מִי יָקוּם, how (מִי qualis) can Jacob (the nation of Israel) stand (not arise), since it is small? קָטָן, small, i.e., so poor in sources and means of help, that it cannot endure this stroke; not "so crushed already, that a very light calamity would destroy it" (Rosenmüller). for גַּחַם עַל, see Ex.

32:14. זֹאת (this) refers to the destruction of the people indicated in מִי יָקוּם; and זֹאת is also to be supplied as the subject to לֹא תִהְיֶה.

Amos 7:4-6. The Devouring Fire.—V. 4. "Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me: and, behold, the Lord Jehovah called to punish with fire; and it devoured the great flood, and devoured the portion. V. 5. And I said, Lord Jehovah, leave off, I pray: how can Jacob stand? for it is small. V. 6. Jehovah repented of this; this also shall not take place, said the Lord Jehovah." That the all-devouring fire represents a much severer judgment than that depicted under the figure of the locusts, is generally acknowledged, and needs no proof. But the more precise meaning of this judgment is open to dispute, and depends upon the explanation of the fourth verse. The object to לָרִיב בָּאֵשׁ is קָרָא, and

רִיב is to be taken as an infinitive, as in Isa. 3:13: He called to strive (i.e., to judge or punish)

with fire. There is no necessity to supply μυστρος σοος here. The expression is a concise one, for "He called to the fire to punish with fire" (for the expression and the fact, compare Isa. 66:16). This fire devoured the great flood. *Thōm rabbâh* is used in Gen. 7:11 and Isa. 51:10, etc., to denote the unfathomable ocean; and in Gen. 1:2 *thōm* is the term applied to the immense flood which surrounded and covered the globe at the beginning of the creation.

וְתֹאכַל, as distinguished from וְאָכַל, signifies an action in progress, or still incomplete (Hitzig). The meaning therefore is, "it also devoured (began to devour) *eth-hachēleq*;" i.e., not the field, for a field does not form at all a fitting antithesis to the ocean; and still less "the land," for *chēleq* never bears this meaning; but the inheritance or portion, namely, that of Jehovah (Deut. 32:9), i.e., Israel. Consequently *thōm rabbâh* cannot, of course, signify the ocean as such. For the idea of the fire falling upon the ocean, and consuming it, and then beginning to consume the land of Israel, by which the ocean was bounded (Hitzig), would be too monstrous; nor is it justified by the simple remark, that "it was as if the last great conflagration (2 Pet. 3:10) had begun" (Schmieder). As the fire is to earthly fire, but the fire of the wrath of God, and therefore a figurative representation of the judgment of destruction; and as *hachēleq* (the portion) is not the land of Israel, but according to Deuteronomy (*l.c.*) Israel, or the people of Jehovah; so *thōm rabbâh* is not the ocean, but the heathen world, the great sea of nations, in their rebellion against the kingdom of God. The world of nature in a state of agitation is a frequent symbol in the Scriptures for the agitated heathen world (e.g., Ps. 46:3; 93:3, 4). On the latter passage, Delitzsch has the following apt remark: "The stormy sea is a figurative representation of the whole heathen world, in its estrangement from God, and enmity against Him, or the human race outside the true church of God; and the rivers are figurative representations of the kingdoms of the world, e.g., the Nile of the Egyptian (Jer.

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46:7, 8), the Euphrates of the Assyrian (Isa. 8:7, 8), or more precisely still, the arrow-swift Tigris of the Assyrian, and the winding Euphrates of the Babylonian (Isa. 27:1).” This symbolism lies at the foundation of the vision seen by the prophet. The world of nations, in its rebellion against Jehovah, the Lord and King of the world, appears as a great flood, like the chaos at the beginning of the creation, or the flood which poured out its waves upon the globe in the time of Noah. Upon this flood of nations does fire from the Lord fall down and consume them; and after consuming them, it begins to devour the inheritance of Jehovah, the nation of Israel also. The prophet then prays to the Lord to spare it, because Jacob would inevitably perish in this conflagration; and the Lord gives the promise that “this shall not take place,” so that Israel is plucked like a firebrand out of the fire (Amos 4:11).

If we inquire now into the historical bearing of these two visions, so much is *à priori* clear,—namely, that both of them not only indicate judgments already past, but also refer to the future, since no fire had hitherto burned upon the surface of the globe, which had consumed the world of nations and threatened to annihilate Israel. If therefore there is an element of truth in the explanation given by Grotius to the first vision, “After the fields had been shorn by Benhadad (2 Kings 13:3), and after the damage which was then sustained, the condition of Israel began to flourish once more during the reign of Jeroboam the son of Joash, as we see from 2 Kings 14:15,” according to which the locusts would refer to the invasion on the part of the Assyrians in the time of Pul; this application is much too limited, neither exhausting the contents of the first vision, nor suiting in the smallest degree the figure of the fire. The “mowing of the king” (v. 1) denotes rather all the judgments which the Lord had hitherto poured out upon Israel, embracing everything that the prophet mentions in Amos 4:6–10. The locusts are a figurative representation of the judgments that still await the covenant nation, and will destroy it even to a small remnant, which will be saved through

the prayers of the righteous. The vision of the fire has a similar scope, embracing all the past and all the future; but this also indicates the judgments that fall upon the heathen world, and will only receive its ultimate fulfilment in the destruction of everything that is ungodly upon the face of the earth, when the Lord comes in fire to strive with all flesh (Isa. 66:15, 16), and to burn up the earth and all that is therein, on the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Pet. 3:7, 10–13). The removal of the two judgments, however, by Jehovah in consequence of the intercession of the prophet, shows that these judgments are not intended to effect the utter annihilation of the nation of God, but simply its refinement and the rooting out of the sinners from the midst of it, and that, in consequence of the sparing mercy of God, a holy remnant of the nation of God will be left. The next two visions refer simply to the judgment which awaits the kingdom of the ten tribes in the immediate future.

Amos 7:7–9. The Third Vision.—V. 7. *“Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made with a plumb-line, and a plumb-line in His hand. V. 8. And Jehovah said to me, What seest thou, Amos? And I said, A plumb-line. And the Lord said, Behold, I put a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel: I shall pass by it no more. V. 9. And the sacrificial heights of Isaac are laid waste, and the holy things of Israel destroyed; and I rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”* The word **כַּוֵּן**,

which only occurs here, denotes, according to the dialects and the Rabbins, tin or lead, here a plumb-line. *Chōmath ‘ānākh* is a wall built with a plumb-line, i.e., a perpendicular wall, a wall built with mechanical correctness and solidity. Upon this wall Amos sees the Lord standing. The wall built with a plumb-line is a figurative representation of the kingdom of God in Israel, as a firm and well-constructed building. He holds in His hand a plumb-line. The question addressed to the prophet, “What does he see?” is asked for the simple purpose of following up his answer with an explanation of the symbol, as in Jer. 1:11, 13, since the plumb-line was

used for different purposes,—namely, not only for building, but partly also for pulling buildings down (compare 2 Kings 21:13; Isa. 34:11). Jehovah will lay it *bqerebh* ‘*ammī*, to the midst of His people, and not merely to an outward portion of it, in order to destroy this building. He will no longer spare as He has done hitherto.

עָבַר לְ, to pass by any one without taking any notice of him, without looking upon his guilt or punishing him; hence, to spare,—the opposite

of עָבַר בְּקִרְבּוֹ in Amos 5:17. The destruction will fall upon the idolatrous sanctuaries of the land, the *bâmōth* (see at 1 Kings 3:2), i.e., the altars of the high places, and the temples at Bethel, at Dan (see at 1 Kings 12:29), and at

Gilgal (see Amos 4:4). Isaac (יִשְׁחָק), a softened

form for יִצְחָק, used here and at v. 16, as in Jer. 33:26) is mentioned here instead of *Jacob*, and the name is used as a synonym for *Israel* of the ten tribes. Even the house of Jeroboam, the reigning royal family, is to perish with the

sword קָם עַל as in Isa. 31:2). Jeroboam is mentioned as the existing representative of the monarchy, and the words are not to be restricted to the overthrow of his dynasty, but announce the destruction of the Israelitish monarchy, which actually was annihilated when this dynasty was overthrown (see p. 29). The destruction of the sacred places and the overthrow of the monarchy involve the dissolution of the kingdom. Thus does Amos himself interpret his own words in vv. 11 and 17.

Amos 7:10–17. Opposition to the Prophet at Bethel.—The daring announcement of the overthrow of the royal family excites the wrath of the high priest at Bethel, so that he relates the affair to the king, to induce him to proceed against the troublesome prophet (vv. 10 and 11), and then calls upon Amos himself to leave Bethel (vv. 12 and 13). That this attempt to drive Amos out of Bethel was occasioned by his prophecy in vv. 7–10, is evident from what

Amaziah says to the king concerning the words of Amos. “*The priest of Bethel*” (*Kōhēn Bēth-ēl*) is the high priest at the sanctuary of the golden calf at Bethel. He accused the prophet to the king of having made a conspiracy (*qâshar*; cf. 1 Kings 15:27, etc.) against the king, and that “in the midst of the house of Israel,” i.e., in the centre of the kingdom of Israel—namely at Bethel, the religious centre of the kingdom—through all his sayings, which the land could not bear. To establish this charge, he states (in v. 11) that Amos has foretold the death of Jeroboam by the sword, and the carrying away of the people out of the land. Amos had really said this. The fact that in v. 9 Jeroboam is named, and not the house of Jeroboam, makes no difference; for the head of the house if naturally included in the house itself. And the carrying away of the people out of the land was not only implied in the announcement of the devastation of the sanctuaries of the kingdom (v. 9), which presupposes the conquest of the land by foes; but Amos had actually predicted it in so many words (Amos 5:27). And Amaziah naturally gave the substance of all the prophet’s addresses, instead of simply confining himself to the last. There is no reason, therefore, to think of intentional slander.

Amos 7:12, 13. The king appears to have commenced no proceedings against the prophet in consequence of this denunciation, probably because he did not regard the affair as one of so much danger. Amaziah therefore endeavours to persuade the prophet to leave the country. “*Seer, go, and flee into the land of*

Judah.” בְּרַח-לְךָ, i.e., withdraw thyself by flight from the punishment which threatens thee.

“*There eat thy bread, and there mayst thou prophesy:*” i.e., in Judah thou mayst earn thy bread by prophesying without any interruption. It is evident from the answer given by Amos in v. 14, that this is the meaning of the words: “*But in Bethel thou shalt no longer prophesy, for it is a king’s sanctuary* (i.e., a sanctuary founded by the king; 1 Kings 12:28), *and bēth mamlâkhâh,*” house of the kingdom, i.e., a royal capital (cf. 1 Sam. 27:5),—namely, as being the principal seat

of the worship which the king has established for his kingdom. There no one could be allowed to prophesy against the king.

Amos 7:14, 15. Amos first of all repudiates the insinuation that he practises prophesying as a calling or profession, by which he gets his living. “*I am no prophet,*” sc. by profession, “*and no prophet’s son,*” i.e., not a pupil or member of the prophets’ schools, one who has been trained to prophesy (on these schools, see the comm. on 1 Sam. 19:24); *but* (according to my proper calling) a *bōqēr*, lit., a herdsman of oxen (from *bâqâr*); then in a broader sense, a

herdsman who tends the sheep (רֹעֶה), a shepherd; and a *bōlēs shiqmīm*, i.e., one who plucks sycamores or mulberry-figs, and lives upon them. The ἀπ. λεγ. *bōlēs* is a denom. from the Arabic name for the mulberry-fig, and signifies to gather mulberry-figs and live upon them; like συκάζειν and ἀποσυκάζειν, i.e., according to Hesych. τὰ σῦκα τρώγειν, to eat figs. The rendering of the LXX κνίζων, Vulg. *vellicans*, points to the fact that it was a common custom to nip or scratch the mulberry-figs, in order to make them ripen (see Theophr. *Hist. plant.* iv. 2; Plin. *Hist. nat.* 13, 14; and Bochart, *Hieroz.* i. 384, or p. 406 ed. Ros.); but this cannot be shown to be the true meaning of *bōlēs*. And even if the idea of nipping were implied in the word *bōlēs*, it would by no means follow that the possession of a mulberry plantation was what was intended, as many commentators have inferred; for “the words contain an allusion to the ‘eating of bread’ referred to in v. 12, and the fruit is mentioned here as the ordinary food of the shepherds, who lived at the pasture grounds, and to whom bread may have been a rarity” (Hitzig). From this calling, which afforded him a livelihood, the Lord had called him away to prophesy to His people Israel; so that whoever forbade him to do so, set himself in opposition to the Lord God.

Amos 7:16, 17. In return for this rebellion against Jehovah, Amos foretels to the priest the punishment which will fall upon him when the judgment shall come upon Israel, meeting his

words, “*Thou sayst, Thou shalt not prophesy,*” with the keen retort, “*Thus saith Jehovah.*”

הִטִּי, to drip, applied to prophesying here and at Mic. 2:6, 11, and Ezek. 21:2, 7, is taken from Deut. 32:2, “My teaching shall drip as the rain,” etc. *Isaac (yischâq)* for Israel, as in v. 9. The punishment is thus described in v. 17: “Thy wife will be a harlot in the city,” i.e., at the taking of the city she will become a harlot through violation. His children would also be slain by the foe, and his landed possession assigned to others, namely, to the fresh settlers in the land. He himself, viz., the priest, would die in an unclean land, that is to say, in the land of the Gentiles,—in other words, would be carried away captive, and that with the whole nation, the carrying away of which is repeated by Amos in the words which the priest had reported to the king (v. 11), as a sign that what he has prophesied will assuredly stand.

Amos 8

The Ripeness of Israel for Judgment—Ch. 8

Amos 8. Under the symbol of a basket filled with ripe fruit, the Lord shows the prophet that Israel is ripe for judgment (vv. 1–3); whereupon Amos, explaining the meaning of this vision, announces to the unrighteous magnates of the nation the changing of their joyful feasts into days of mourning, as the punishment from God for their unrighteousness (vv. 4–10), and sets before them a time when those who now despise the word of God will sigh in vain in their extremity for a word of the Lord (vv. 11–14).

Amos 8:1–3. Vision of a Basket of Ripe Fruit.—V. 1. “*Thus did the Lord Jehovah show me: and behold a basket with ripe fruit.* V. 2. *And He said, What seest thou, Amos? And I said, A basket of ripe fruit. Then Jehovah said to me, The end is come to my people Israel; I will not pass by them any more.* V. 3. *And the songs of the palace will yell in that day, is the saying of the Lord Jehovah: corpses in multitude; in every place hath He cast them forth: Hush!*” כָּלוּב from כָּלַב, to lay hold

of, to grasp, lit., a receiver, here a basket (of basket-work), in Jer. 5:27 a bird-cage. קִיץ: summer-fruit (see at 2 Sam. 16:1); in Isa. 16:9; 28:4, the gathering of fruit, hence ripe fruit. The basket of ripe fruit (*qayits*) is thus explained by the Lord: the end (*qēts*) is come to my people (cf. Ezek. 7:6). Consequently the basket of ripe fruit is a figurative representation of the nation that is now ripe for judgment, although *qēts*, the end, does not denote its ripeness for judgment, but its destruction, and the word *qēts* is simply chosen to form a paronomasia with *qayits*. לֹא

אוֹסִיף וּגְוֹ as in Amos 7:8. All the joy shall be turned into mourning. the thought is not that the temple-singing to the praise of God (Amos 5:23) would be turned into yelling, but that the songs of joy (Amos 6:5; 2 Sam. 19:36) would be turned into yells, i.e., into sounds of lamentation (cf. v. 10 and 1 Macc. 9:41), namely, because of the multitude of the dead which lay upon the ground on every side.

הַשְּׁלִיךְ is not impersonal, in the sense of “which men are no longer able to bury on account of their great number, and therefore cast away in quiet places on every side;” but Jehovah is to be regarded as the subject, viz., which God has laid prostrate, or cast to the ground on every side. For the adverbial use of

הִס cannot be established. The word is an interjection here, as in Amos 6:10; and the exclamation, Hush! is not a sign of gloomy despair, but an admonition to bow beneath the overwhelming severity of the judgment of God, as in Zeph. 1:7 (cf. Hab. 2:20 and Zech. 2:17).

Amos 8:4–10. To this vision the prophet attaches the last admonition to the rich and powerful men of the nation, to observe the threatening of the Lord before it is too late, impressing upon them the terrible severity of the judgment. V. 4. “Hear this, ye that gape for the poor, and to destroy the meek of the earth, V. 5. Saying, When is the new moon over, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may

open wheat, to make the ephah small, and the shekel great, and to falsify the scale of deceit? V. 6. To buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and the refuse of the corn will we

sell.” The persons addressed are the הַשְּׂאִפִּים

אֲבִיוֹן, i.e., not those who snort at the poor man, to frighten him away from any further pursuit of his rights (Baur), but, according to Amos 2:6, 7, those who greedily pant for the poor man, who try to swallow him (Hitzig). This is affirmed in the second clause of the verse, in

which שְׂאִפִּים is to be repeated in thought

before לְהַשְׁבִּית: they gape to destroy the

quiet in the land (עֲנִי-אֶרֶץ = עֲנִיִּים, in Amos 2:7), “namely by grasping all property for themselves, Job 22:8, Isa. 5:8” (Hitzig). Vv. 5 and 6 show how they expect to accomplish their purpose. Like covetous usurers, they cannot even wait for the end of the feast-days to pursue their trade still further. *Chōdesh*, the new moon, was a holiday on which all trade was suspended, just as it was on the Sabbath

(see at Num. 28:11 and 2 Kings 4:23). הַשְּׁבִיר

שָׁבַר, to sell corn, as in Gen. 41:57. פָּתַח בָּר, to open up corn, i.e., to open the granaries (cf. Gen. 41:56). In doing so, they wanted to cheat the poor by small measure (ephah), and by making the shekel great, i.e., by increasing the price, which was to be weighed out to them; also by false scales (*ivvēth*, to pervert, or falsify the scale of deceit, i.e., the scale used for cheating), and by bad corn (*mappal*, waste or refuse); that in this way they might make the poor man so poor, that he would either be obliged to sell himself to them from want and distress (Lev. 25:39), or be handed over to the creditor by the court of justice, because he was no longer able to pay for a pair of shoes, i.e., the very smallest debt (cf. Amos 2:6).

Amos 8:7, 8. Such wickedness as this would be severely punished by the Lord. V. 7. “Jehovah

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hath sworn by the pride of Jacob, Verily I will not forget all their deeds for ever. V. 8. Shall the earth not tremble for this, and every inhabitants upon it mourn? and all of it rises like the Nile, and heaves and sinks like the Nile of Egypt.” The pride of Jacob is Jehovah, as in Hos. 5:5 and 7:10. Jehovah swears by the pride of Jacob, as He does by His holiness in Amos 4:2, or by His soul in Amos 6:8, i.e., as He who is the pride and glory of Israel: i.e., as truly as He is so, will He and must He punish such acts as these. By overlooking such sins, or leaving them unpunished, He would deny His glory in Israel.

שָׁכַח, to forget a sin, i.e., to leave it unpunished. In v. 8 the negative question is an expression denoting strong assurance. “For this” is generally supposed to refer to the sins; but this is a mistake, as the previous verse alludes not to the sins themselves, but to the punishment of them; and the solemn oath of Jehovah does not contain so subordinate and casual a thought, that we can pass over v. 7, and take **עַל זֹאת** as referring back to vv. 4–6. It rather refers to the substance of the oath, i.e., to the punishment of the sins which the Lord announces with a solemn oath. This will be so terrible that the earth will quake, and be resolved, as it were, into its primeval condition of chaos. *Râgaz*, to tremble, or, when applied to the earth, to quake, does not mean to shudder, or to be shocked, as Rosenmüller explains it after Jer. 2:12. Still less can the idea of the earth rearing and rising up in a stormy manner to cast them off, which Hitzig supports, be proved to be a biblical idea from Isa. 24:20. The thought is rather that, under the weight of the judgment, the earth will quake, and all its inhabitants will be thrown into mourning, as we may clearly see from the parallel passage in Amos 9:5. In v. 8b this figure is carried out still further, and the whole earth is represented as being turned into a sea, heaving and falling in a tempestuous manner, just as in the case of the flood. **בְּלֵיה**, the totality of the earth, the entire globe, will rise, and swell and fall like waters

lashed into a storm. This rising and falling of the earth is compared to the rising and sinking of the Nile. According to the Parallel passage in Amos 9:5, **כָּאֵר** is a defective form for **כִּיאֵר**, just as **בּוֹל** is for **יְבוֹל** in Job 40:20, and it is still further defined by the expression **כִּיאֹר** **מִצְרַיִם**, which follows. All the ancient versions have taken it as **יאֹר**, and many of the Hebrew codd. (in Kennicott and De Rossi) have this reading. *Nigrash*, to be excited, a term applied to the stormy sea (Isa. 57:20). **נִשְׁקָה** is a softened form for **נִשְׁקָעָה**, as is shown by **שְׁקָעָה** in Amos 9:5.

Amos 8:9. “*And it will come to pass on that day, is the saying of the Lord Jehovah, I cause the sun to set at noon, and make it dark to the earth in clear day. V. 10. And turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation: and bring mourning clothes upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and make it like mourning for an only one, and the end thereof like a bitter day.*” The effect of the divine judgment upon the Israelites is depicted here. Just as the wicked overturn the moral order of the universe, so will the Lord, with His judgment, break through the order of nature, cause the sun to go down at noon, and envelope the earth in darkness in clear day. The words of the ninth verse are not founded upon the idea of an eclipse of the sun, though Michaelis and Hitzig not only assume that they are, but actually attempt to determine the time of its occurrence. An eclipse of the sun is not the setting of the sun (**בּוֹא**). But to any man the sun sets at noon, when he is suddenly snatched away by death, in the very midst of his life. And this also applies to a nation when it is suddenly destroyed in the midst of its earthly prosperity. But it has a still wider application. When the

Lord shall come to judgment, at a time when the world, in its self-security, looketh not for Him (cf. Matt. 24:37ff.), this earth's sun will set at noon, and the earth be covered with darkness in bright daylight. And every judgment that falls upon an ungodly people or kingdom, as the ages roll away, is a harbinger of the approach of the final judgment. V. 10. When the judgment shall burst upon Israel, then will all the joyous feasts give way to mourning and lamentation (compare v. 3 and Amos 5:16; Hos. 2:13). On the shaving of a bald place as a sign of mourning, see Isa. 3:24. This mourning will be very deep, like the mourning for the death of an only son (cf. Jer. 6:26 and Zech. 12:10). The

suffix in *שָׁמְתִיהָ* (I make it) does not refer to

אָבֵל (mourning), but to all that has been previously mentioned as done upon that day, to their weeping and lamenting (Hitzig).

אֶת־רִיתָהּ, the end thereof, namely, of this mourning and lamentation, will be a bitter day (*ד* is *caph verit.*; see at Joel 1:15). This implies that the judgment will not be a passing one, but will continue.

Amos 8:11-14. And at that time the light and comfort of the word of God will also fail them. V. 11. *"Behold, days come, is the saying of the Lord Jehovah, that I send a hungering into the land, not a hungering for bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the words of Jehovah. V. 12. And they will reel from sea to sea; and from the north, and even to the east, they sweep round to seek the word of Jehovah, and will not find it."* The bitterness of the time of punishment is increased by the fact that the Lord will then withdrawn His word from them, i.e., the light of His revelation. They who will not now hear His word, as proclaimed by the prophets, will then cherish the greatest longing for it. Such hunger and thirst will be awakened by the distress and affliction that will come upon them. The intensity of this desire is depicted in v. 12. They reel (*נָוֶה*) as in Amos 4:8) from the sea to the

sea; that is to say, not "from the Dead Sea in the east to the Mediterranean in the west," for Joel 2:20 and Zech. 14:8 are not cases in point, as the two seas are defined there by distinct epithets; but as in Ps. 72:8 and Zech. 9:10, according to which the meaning is, from the sea to where the sea occurs again, at the other end of the world, "the sea being taken as the boundary of the earth" (Hupfeld). The other clause, "from the north even to the east," contains an abridged expression for "from north to south and from west to east," i.e., to every quarter of the globe.

Amos 8:13. *"In that day will the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst. V. 14. They who swear by the guilt of Samaria, and say, By the life of thy God, O Dan! and by the life of the way to Beersheba; and will fall, and not rise again."*

Those who now stand in all the fullest and freshest vigour of life, will succumb to this hunger and thirst. The virgins and young men are individualized, as comprising that portion of the nation which possessed the vigorous

fulness of youth. *עָלָהּ*, to be enveloped in night, to sink into a swoon, *hithp.* to hide one's self, to faint away.

הַנְּשָׁבְעִים refers to the young men and virgins; and inasmuch as they represent the most vigorous portion of the nation, to the nation as a whole. If the strongest succumb to the thirst, how much more the weak! *'Ashmath Shōmrōn*, the guilt of Samaria, is the golden calf at Bethel, the principal idol of the kingdom of Israel, which is named after the capital Samaria (compare Deut. 9:21, "the sin of Israel"), not the Asherah which was still standing in Samaria in the reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:6); for apart from the question whether it was there in the time of Jeroboam, this is at variance with the second clause, in which the manner of their swearing is given,—namely, by the life of the god at Dan, that is to say, the golden calf that was there; so that the guilt of Samaria can only have been the golden calf at Bethel, the national sanctuary of the ten tribes (cf. Amos 4:4; 5:5). The way to Beersheba is mentioned, instead of the worship, for the sake of which the

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pilgrimage to Beersheba was made. This worship, again, was not a purely heathen worship, but an idolatrous worship of Jehovah (see Amos 5:5). The fulfilment of these threats commenced with the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, and the carrying away of the ten tribes into exile in Assyria, and continues to this day in the case of that portion of the Israelitish nation which is still looking for the Messiah, the prophet promised by Moses, and looking in vain, because they will not hearken to the preaching of the gospel concerning the Messiah, who appeared as Jesus.

Amos 9

Destruction of the Sinful Kingdom, and Establishment of the New Kingdom of God

Amos 9. The prophet sees the Lord standing by the altar, and giving command to overthrow the temple, that the whole nation may be buried beneath the ruins (v. 1). Should any one escape, the Lord will pursue him everywhere, and overtake and destroy him (vv. 2-4); for He is the Almighty God, and the Judge of the world (vv. 5 and 6); and Israel has become like the heathen, so that it deserves no sparing. Nevertheless it shall not be utterly destroyed, but simply sifted, and the sinful mass be slain (vv. 7-10). Then will the fallen tabernacle of David be raised up again, and the kingdom of God be glorified by the reception of all nations (v. 12), and richly blessed with the fulness of the gifts of divine grace (vv. 13, 14), and never destroyed again (v. 15). As the chapter gives the final development of the judgment threatened in the preceding one, so is it also closely attached in form to Amos 7 and 8, commencing with a vision just as they do. But whilst the preceding visions simply indicate the judgment which is to fall upon the sinful nation, and are introduced with the words, "The Lord showed me" (Amos 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1), this closing vision shows the Lord engaged in the execution of the judgment, and commences accordingly with the words, "I saw the Lord standing," etc.

Amos 9:1. *"I saw the Lord standing by the altar; and He said, Smite the top, that the thresholds*

may tremble, and smash them upon the head of all of them; and I will slay their remnant with the sword: a fugitive of them shall not flee; and an escaped one of them shall not escape." The correct and full interpretation not only of this verse, but of the whole chapter, depends upon the answer to be given to the question, what altar we are to understand by *hammizbēāch*. Ewald, Hitzig, Hofmann, and Baur follow Cyril in thinking of the temple at Bethel, because, as Hitzig says, this vision attaches itself in an explanatory manner to the close of Amos 8:14, and because, according to Hofmann, "if the word of the prophet in general was directed against the kingdom, the royal house and the sanctuary of the ten tribes, the article before *hammizbēāch* points to the altar of the sanctuary in the kingdom of Israel, to the altar at Bethel, against which he has already prophesied in a perfectly similar manner in Amos 3:14." But there is no ground whatever for the assertion that our vision contains simply an explanation of Amos 8:14. The connection with Amos 8 is altogether not so close, that the object of the prophecy in the one chapter must of necessity cover that of the other. And it is quite incorrect to say that the word of the prophet throughout is directed simply against the kingdom of the ten tribes, or that, although Amos does indeed reprove the sins of Judah as well as those of Israel, he proclaims destruction to the kingdom of Jeroboam alone. As early as Amos 2:5 he announces desolation to Judah by fire, and the burning of the palaces of Jerusalem; and in Amos 6:1, again, he gives utterance to a woe upon the self-secure in Zion, as well as upon the careless ones in Samaria. And lastly, it is evident from vv. 8-10 of the present chapter, that the sinful kingdom which is to be destroyed from the face of the earth is not merely the kingdom of the ten tribes, but the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, which are embraced in one. For although it is stated immediately afterwards that the Lord will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, but will shake the house of Israel among all nations, the house of Jacob cannot mean the kingdom of Judah, and the house of Israel the kingdom of

the ten tribes, because such a contrast between Judah and Israel makes the thought too lame, and the antithesis between the destruction of the sinful kingdom and the utter destruction of the nation is quite obliterated. Amos does not generally draw such a distinction between the house of Jacob and the house of Israel, as that the first represents Judah, and the second the ten tribes; but he uses the two epithets as synonymous, as we may see from a comparison of Amos 6:8 with Amos 6:14, where the rejection of the pride of Israel and the hating of its palaces (v. 8) are practically interpreted by the raising up of a nation which oppresses the house of Israel in all its borders (v. 14). And so also in the chapter before us, the "house of Israel" (v. 9) is identical with "Israel" and the "children of Israel" (7), whom God brought up out of Egypt. But God brought up out of Egypt not the ten tribes, but the twelve. And consequently it is decidedly incorrect to restrict the contents of vv. 1–10 to the kingdom of the ten tribes. And if this be the case, we cannot possibly understand by *hammizbēäch* in v. 1 the altar of Bethel, especially seeing that not only does Amos foretel the visitation or destruction of the altars of Bethel in Amos 3:14, and therefore recognises not one altar only in Bethel, but a plurality of altars, but that he also speaks in Amos 7:9 of the desolation of the high places and sanctuaries in Israel, and in Amos 8:14 places the sanctuary at Dan on a par with that at Bethel; so that there was not any *one* altar in the kingdom of the ten tribes, which could be called *hammizbēäch*, the altar *par excellence*, inasmuch as it possessed from the very beginning two sanctuaries of equal dignity (viz., at Bethel and Dan). *Hammizbēäch*, therefore, both here and at Ezek. 9:2, is the altar of burnt-offering in the temple, at Jerusalem, the sanctuary of the whole of the covenant nation, to which even the ten tribes still belonged, in spite of their having fallen away from the house of David. So long as the Lord still continued to send prophets to the ten tribes, so long did they pass as still forming part of the people of God, and so long also was the temple at Jerusalem the divinely appointed

sanctuary and the throne of Jehovah, from which both blessings and punishment issued from the. The Lord roars from Zion, and from Zion He utters His voice (Amos 1:2), not only upon the nations who have shown hostility to Judah or Israel, but also upon Judah and Israel, on account of their departure from His law (Amos 2:4 and 6ff.).

The vision in this verse is founded upon the idea that the whole nation is assembled before the Lord at the threshold of the temple, so that it is buried under the ruins of the falling building, in consequence of the blow upon the top, which shatters the temple to its very foundations. The Lord appears at the altar, because here at the sacrificial place of the nation the sins of Israel are heaped up, that He may execute judgment upon the nation there.

עַל, standing at (not upon) the altar, as in 1 Kings 13:1. He gives commandment to smite the top. The person who is to do this is not mentioned; but it was no doubt an angel,

probably the *הַמְּלֹאךְ הַמְּשַׁחֵת*, who brought the pestilence as a punishment at the numbering of the people in the time of David (2 Sam. 24:15, 16), who smote the army of the Assyrian king Sennacherib before Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35), and who also slew the first-born of Egypt (Ex. 12:13, 23); whereas in Ezek. 9:2, 7, He is represented as accomplishing the judgment of destruction by means of six angels. *Hakkaphtōr*, the knob or top; in Ex. 25:31, 33, ff., an ornament upon the shaft and branches of the golden candlestick. Here it is an ornament at the top of the columns, and not "the lintel of the door," or "the pinnacle of the temple with its ornaments." For the latter explanation of *kaphtōr*, which cannot be philologically sustained, by no means follows from the fact that the antithesis to the *kaphtōr* is formed by the *sippīm*, or thresholds of the door. The knob and threshold simply express the contrast between the loftiest summit and the lowest base, without at all warranting the conclusion that the *saph* denotes the base of the pillar which culminated in a knob, or *kaphtōr*, the top

of the door which rested upon a threshold. The description is not architectural, but rhetorical, the separate portions of the whole being individualized, for the purpose of expressing the thought that the building was to be shattered to pieces *in summo usque ad imum, a capite ad calcem*. Would we bring out more clearly the idea which lies at the foundation of the rhetorical mode of expression, we have only to think of the capital of the pillars Jachin and Boaz, and that with special reference to their significance, as symbolizing the stability of the temple. The smiting of these pillars, so that they fall to the ground, individualizes the destruction of the temple, without there being any necessity in consequence to think of these pillars as supporting the roof of the temple hall. The rhetorical character of the expression comes out clearly again in what follows, "and smash them to pieces, i.e., lay them in ruins upon the head of all," where the plural suffix attached to **בַּצְעֵם** (with the toneless suffix for

בַּצְעֵם; see Ewald, § 253, a) cannot possibly be taken as referring to the singular *hakkaphtōr*, nor even to *hassippīm* alone, but must refer to the two nouns *hakkaphtōr* and *hassippīm*. the reference to *hassippīm* could no doubt be grammatically sustained; but so far as the sense is concerned, it is inadmissible, inasmuch as when a building falls to the ground in consequence of its having been laid in ruins by a blow from above, the thresholds of the entrance could not possibly fall upon the heads of the men who were standing in front of it. The command has throughout a symbolical meaning, ad has no literal reference to the destruction of the temple. The temple symbolizes the kingdom of God, which the Lord had founded in Israel; and as being the centre of that kingdom, it stands here for the kingdom itself. In the temple, as the dwelling-place of the name of Jehovah, i.e., of the gracious presence of God, the idolatrous nation beheld an indestructible pledge of the lasting continuance of the kingdom. But this support to their false trust is taken away from it by the

announcement that the Lord will lay the temple in ruins. The destruction of the temple represents the destruction of the kingdom of God embodied in the temple, with which indeed the earthly temple would of necessity fall to the ground. No one will escape this judgment. This is affirmed in the words which follow: And their last, their remnant (*'achārīth*, as in Amos 4:2), I will slay with the sword; as to the meaning of which Cocceius has correctly observed, that the magnitude of the slaughter is increased *exclusionē fugientium et eorum, qui videbantur effugisse*. The apparent discrepancy in the statement, that they will *all* be crushed to pieces by the ruins, and yet there will be fugitives and persons who have escaped, is removed at once if we bear in mind that the intention of the prophet is to cut off every loophole for carnal security, and that the meaning of the words is simply this: "And even if any should succeed in fleeing and escaping, God will pursue them with the sword, and slay them" (see Hengstenberg, *Christology*, on this passage).

Amos 9:2-4. The thought is still further expanded in vv. 2-6. V. 2. "If they break through into hell, my hand will take them thence; and if they climb up to heaven, thence will I fetch them down. V. 3. And if they hide themselves upon the top of Carmel, I will trace them, and fetch them thence; and if they conceal themselves from before mine eyes in the bottom of the sea, thence do I command the serpent, and it biteth them. V. 4. And if they go into captivity before their enemies, I will command the sword thence, and it slayeth them; and I direct my eye upon them for evil, and not for good." The imperfects, with **וְ**, are to be taken as futures. They do not assume what is impossible as merely hypothetical, in the sense of "if they should hide themselves;" but set forth what was no doubt in actual fact an impossible case, as though it were possible, in order to cut off every escape. For the cases mentioned in vv. 3a and 4a might really occur. Hiding upon Carmel and going into captivity belong to the sphere of possibility and of actual occurrence. In order to individualize the

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thought, that escape from the punishing arm of the Almighty is impossible, the prophet opposes the most extreme spaces of the world to one another, starting from heaven and hell, as the loftiest height and deepest depth of the universe, in doing which he has in all probability Ps. 139:7, 8 floating before his mind. He commences with the height, which a man cannot possibly climb, and the depth, to which he cannot descend, to show that escape is

impossible. **חָתַר**, to break through, with **ב**, to make a hole into anything (Ezek. 8:8; 12:5, 7). According to the Hebrew view, Sheol was deep in the interior of the earth. The head of Carmel is mentioned (see at Josh. 19:26). The reference is not to the many caves in this promontory, which afford shelter to fugitives; for they are not found upon the head of Carmel, but for the most part on the western side (see v. Raumer, *Pal.* p. 44). The emphasis lies rather upon the head, as a height overgrown with trees, which, even if not very high (about 1800 feet; see at 1 Kings 18:19), yet, in comparison with the sea over which it rises, might appear to be of a very considerable height; in addition to which, the situation of Carmel, on the extreme western border of the kingdom of Israel, might also be taken into consideration. "Whoever hides himself there, must assuredly know of no other place of security in the whole of the land besides. And if there is no longer any security there, there is nothing left but the sea." But even the deep sea-bottom will not shelter from the vengeance of God. God commands the serpent, or summons the serpent to bite him. *Nâchâsh*, here the water-serpent, called elsewhere *livyâthân* or *tannîn* (Isa. 27:1), a sea-monster, which was popularly supposed to be extremely dangerous, but which cannot be more exactly defined. Even by going into captivity, they will not be protected from the sword. **בְּשִׁבִי**, not into captivity, but *in statu captivitatis*: even if they should be among those who were wandering into captivity, where men are generally sure of their lives (see Lam. 1:5). For God has fixed His eye upon them, i.e., has

taken them under His special superintendence (cf. Jer. 39:12); not, however, to shelter, to protect, and to bless, but **לְרָעָה**, for evil, i.e., to punish them. "The people of the Lord remain, under all circumstances, the object of special attention. They are more richly blessed than the world, but they are also more severely punished" (Hengstenberg).

Amos 9:5, 6. To strengthen this threat, Amos proceeds, in vv. 5, 6, to describe Jehovah as the Lord of heaven and earth, who sends judgments upon the earth with omnipotent power. V. 5. "And the Lord Jehovah of hosts, who toucheth the earth, and it melteth, and all the inhabitants of thereupon mourn; and the whole of it riseth like the Nile, and sinketh like the Nile of Egypt. V. 6. Who buildeth His stories in heaven, and His vault, over the earth hath He founded it; who calleth to the waters of the sea, and poureth them out over the earth: Jehovah is His name." This description of God, who rules with omnipotence, is appended, as in Amos 4:13 and 5:8, without any link of connection whatever. We must not render it, "The Lord Jehovah of hosts is He who toucheth the earth;" but we must supply the connecting thought, "And He who thus directeth His eye upon you is the Lord Jehovah of hosts, who toucheth the earth, and it melteth." The melting or dissolving of the earth is, according to Ps. 46:7, an effect produced by the Lord, who makes His voice heard in judgments, or "the destructive effect of the judgments of God, whose instruments the conquerors are" (Hengstenberg), when nations reel and kingdoms totter. The Lord therefore touches the earth, so that it melts, when He dissolves the stability of the earth by great judgments (cf. Ps. 75:4). "Israel could not fail to test the truth of these words by painful experience, when the wild hordes of Assyria poured themselves over the western parts of Asia" (Hengstenberg). The following words, depicting the dissolution of the earth, are repeated, with very inconsiderable alterations, from c. 8:8; we have merely the omission of

וְנִגְרָשָׁה, and the *kal* **שְׁקָעָה** substituted for

the *niphal* נִשְׁקָה. In v. 6 there is evidently an allusion to the flood. God, who is enthroned in heaven, in the cloud-towers built above the circle of the earth, possesses the power to pour the waves of the sea over the earth by His simple word. *Ma'ālōth* is synonymous with עֲלִיּוֹת in Ps. 104:3: upper rooms, lit., places to which one has to ascend. *'Aguddâh*, an arch or vault: that which is called *râqîā'*, the firmament, in other places. The heaven, in which God builds His stories, is the heaven of clouds; and the vault, according to Gen. 1:7, is the firmament of heaven, which divided the water above the firmament from the water beneath it. Consequently the upper rooms of God are the waters above the firmament, in or out of which God builds His stories (Ps. 104:3), i.e., the cloud-tower above the horizon of the earth, which is raised above it like a vault. Out of this cloud-castle the rain pours down (Ps. 104:13); and out of its open windows the waters of the flood poured down, and overflowed the earth (Gen. 7:11). When God calls to the waters of the sea, they pour themselves over the surface of the earth. The waves of the sea are a figurative representation of the agitated multitude of nations, or of the powers of the world, which pour their waves over the kingdom of God (see at Amos 7:4).

Amos 9:7. The Lord will pour out these floods upon sinful Israel, because it stands nearer to Him than the heathen do. V. 7. *"Are ye not like the sons of the Cushites to me, ye sons of Israel? is the saying of Jehovah. Have I not brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines out of Caphtor, and Aram out of Kir?"* With these words the prophet tears away from the sinful nation the last support of its carnal security, namely, reliance upon its election as the nation of God, which the Lord has practically confirmed by leading Israel up out of Egypt. Their election as the people of Jehovah was unquestionably a pledge that the Lord would not cast off His people, or suffer them to be destroyed by the heathen. But what the apostle says of circumcision in Rom. 2:25 applied to

this election also, namely, that it was of benefit to none but those who kept the law. It afforded a certainty of divine protection simply to those who proved themselves to be the children of Israel by their walk and conduct, and who faithfully adhered to the Lord. To the rebellious it was of no avail. Idolaters had become like the heathen. The Cushites are mentioned, not so much as being descendants of the accursed Ham, as on account of the blackness of their skin, which was regarded as a symbol of spiritual blackness (cf. Jer. 13:23). The expression "*sons (children) of the Cushites*" is used with reference to the title "*sons (children) of Israel*," the honourable name of the covenant nation. For degenerate Israel, the leading up out of Egypt had no higher signification than the leading up of the Philistines and Syrians out of their former dwelling-places into the lands which they at present inhabited. These two peoples are mentioned by way of example: the Philistines, because they were despised by the Israelites, as being uncircumcised; the Syrians, with an allusion to the threat in Amos 1:5, that they should wander into exile to Kir. On the fact that the Philistines sprang from Caphtor, see the comm. on Gen. 10:14.

Amos 9:8-10. Election, therefore, will not save sinful Israel from destruction. After Amos has thus cut off all hope of deliverance from the ungodly, he repeats, in his own words in vv. 8ff., the threat already exhibited symbolically in v. 1. V. 8. *"Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are against the sinful kingdom, and I destroy it from off the face of the earth; except that I shall not utterly destroy the house of Jacob: is the saying of Jehovah. V. 9. For, behold, I command, and shake the house of Israel among all nations, as (corn) is shaken in a sieve, and not even a little grain falls to the ground. V. 10. All the sinners of my people will die by the sword, who say, The evil will not overtake or come to us."* The sinful kingdom is Israel; not merely the kingdom of the ten tribes however, but all Israel, the kingdom of the ten tribes along with Judah, the house of Jacob or Israel, which is identical with the sons of Israel, who had become like the Cushites, although Amos had chiefly the people and kingdom of

the ten tribes in his mind. *Bammamlâkhâh*, not upon the kingdom, but against the kingdom. The directing of the eye upon an object is expressed by עַל (v. 4) or אֶל (cf. Ps. 34:16);

whereas כִּי is used in relation to the object upon which anger rests (Ps. 34:17). Because the Lord had turned His eye towards the sinful kingdom, He must exterminate it,—a fate with which Moses had already threatened the nation in

Deut. 6:15. Nevertheless (אֶפְסֵי כִי, “only that,” introducing the limitation, as in Num. 13:28, Deut. 15:4) the house of Jacob, the covenant nation, shall not be utterly destroyed. The “house of Jacob” is opposed to the “sinful nation;” not, however, so that the antithesis simply lies in the kingdom and people (*regnum delebo, non populum*), or that the “house of Jacob” signifies the kingdom of Judah as distinguished from the kingdom of the ten tribes, for the “house of Jacob” is perfectly equivalent to the “house of Israel” (v. 9). The house of Jacob is not to be utterly destroyed, but simply to be shaken, as it were, in a sieve.

The antithesis lies in the predicate הַחֲטָאָה, the *sinful* kingdom. So far as Israel, as a kingdom and people, is sinful, it is to be destroyed from off the face of the earth. But there is always a divine kernel in the nation, by virtue of its divine election, a holy seed out of which the Lord will form a new and holy people and kingdom of God. Consequently the

destruction will not be a total one, a הַשְׁמִיד

אֲשֶׁמִיד. The reason for this is introduced by כִּי (for) in v. 9. The Lord will shake Israel among the nations, as corn is shaken in a sieve; so that the chaff flies away, and the dust and dirt fall to the ground, and only the good grains are left in the sieve. Such a sieve are the nations of the world, through which Israel is purified from its chaff, i.e., from its ungodly members. *Tsrôr*, generally a bundle; here, according to its etymology, that which is compact or firm, i.e.,

solid grain as distinguished from loose chaff. In 2 Sam. 17:13 it is used in a similar sense to denote a hard piece of clay or a stone in a building. Not a single grain will fall to the ground, that is to say, not a good man will be lost (cf. 1 Sam. 26:20). The self-secure sinners, however, who rely upon their outward connection with the nation of God (compare v. 7 and Amos 3:2), or upon their zeal in the outward forms of worship (Amos 5:21ff.), and fancy that the judgment cannot touch them

(הַקְּדִים בְּעַד, to come to meet a person round about him, i.e., to come upon him from every side), will all perish by the sword. This threat is repeated at the close, without any formal link of connection with v. 9, not only to prevent any abuse of the foregoing modification of the judgment, but also to remove this apparent discrepancy, that whereas in vv. 1–4 it is stated that not one will escape the judgment, according to v. 8b, the nation of Israel is not to be utterly destroyed. In order to anticipate the frivolity of the ungodly, who always flatter themselves with the hope of escaping when there is a threatening of any general calamity, the prophet first of all cuts off all possibilities whatever in vv. 1–4, without mentioning the exceptions; and it is not till afterwards that the promise is introduced that the house of Israel shall not be utterly annihilated, whereby the general threat is limited to sinners, and the prospect of deliverance and preservation through the mercy of God is opened to the righteous. The historical realization or fulfilment of this threat took place, so far as Israel of the ten tribes was concerned, when their kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians, and in the case of Judah, at the overthrow of the kingdom and temple by the Chaldeans; and the shaking of Israel in the sieve is still being fulfilled upon the Jews who are dispersed among all nations.

Amos 9:11–15. The Kingdom of God Set Up.—Since God, as the unchangeable One, cannot utterly destroy His chosen people, and abolish or reverse His purpose of salvation, after destroying the sinful kingdom, He will set up

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the new and genuine kingdom of God. V. 11. *“On that day will I set up the fallen hut of David, and wall up their rents; and what is destroyed thereof I will set up, and build it as in the days of eternity.* V. 12. *That they may taken possession of the remnant of Edom, and all the nations upon which my name shall be called, is the saying of Jehovah, who doeth such things.”* “In that day,” i.e., when the judgment has fallen upon the sinful kingdom, and all the sinners of the people of Jehovah are destroyed. *Sukkâh*, a hut, indicates, by way of contrast to *bayith*, the house or palace which David built for himself upon Zion (2 Sam. 5:11), a degenerate condition of the royal house of David. This is placed beyond all doubt by the predicate *nōpheleth*, fallen down. As the stately palace supplies a figurative representation of the greatness and might of the kingdom, so does the fallen hut, which is full of rents and near to destruction, symbolize the utter ruin of the kingdom. If the family of David no longer dwells in a palace, but in a miserable fallen hut, its regal sway must have come to an end. The figure of the stem of Jesse that is hewn down, in Isa. 11:1, is related to this; except that the former denotes the decline of the Davidic dynasty, whereas the fallen hut represents the fall of the kingdom. There is no need to prove, however, that this does not apply to the decay of the Davidic house by the side of the great power of Jeroboam (Hitzig, Hofmann), least of all under Uzziah, in whose reign the kingdom of Judah reached the summit of its earthly power and glory. The kingdom of David first became a hut when the kingdom of Judah was overcome by the Chaldeans,—an event which is included in the prediction contained in vv. 1ff., and hinted at even in Amos 2:5. But this hut the Lord will raise up again from its fallen condition. This raising up is still further defined in the three following clauses: “I wall up their rents” (*pirtsēhen*). The plural suffix can only be explained from the fact that *sukkâh* actually refers to the kingdom of God, which was divided into two kingdoms (“these kingdoms,” Amos 6:2), and that the house of Israel, which was not to be utterly destroyed (v. 8), consisted

of the remnant of the people of the two kingdoms, or the ἐκλογία of the twelve tribes; so that in the expression גִּדְרָתִי פִרְצִיהֶן there is an allusion to the fact that the now divided nation would one day be united again under the one king David, as Hosea (Hos. 2:2; 3:5) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 37:22) distinctly prophesy. The correctness of this explanation of the plural suffix is confirmed by הִרְסָתִיו in the second clause, the suffix of which refers to David, under whom the destroyed kingdom would rise into new power. And whilst these two clauses depict the restoration of the kingdom from its fallen condition, in the third clause its further preservation is foretold.

בְּנָה does not mean to “build” here, but to finish building, to carry on, enlarge, and

beautify the building. The words כִּימֵי עוֹלָם

(an abbreviated comparison for “as it was in the days of the olden time”) point back to the promise in 2 Sam. 7:11, 12, 16, that God would build a house for David, would raise up his seed after him, and firmly establish his throne for ever, that his house and his kingdom should endure for ever before Him, upon which the whole of the promise before us is founded. The days of the rule of David and of his son Solomon are called “days of eternity,” i.e., of the remotest past (compare Mic. 7:14), to show that a long period would intervene between that time and the predicted restoration. The rule of David had already received a considerable blow through the falling away of the ten tribes. And it would fall still deeper in the future; but, according to the promise in 2 Sam. 7, it would not utterly perish, but would be raised up again from its fallen condition. It is not expressly stated that this will take place through a shoot from its own stem; but that is implied in the fact itself. The kingdom of David could only be raised up again through an offshoot from David’s family. And that this can be no other than the Messiah, was unanimously acknowledged by the earlier Jews, who even formed a name for the Messiah

out of this passage, viz., **בַּר נַפְלִים**, *filius cadentium*, He who had sprung from a fallen hut (see the proofs in Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. i. p. 386 transl.). The kingdom of David is set up in order that they (the sons of Israel, who have been proved to be corn by the sifting, v. 9) may take possession of the remnant of Edom and all the nations, etc. The Edomites had been brought into subjection by David, who had taken possession of their land. At a late period, when the hut of David was beginning to fall, they had recovered their freedom again. This does not suffice, however, to explain the allusion to Edom here; for David had also brought the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Aramaeans into subjection to his sceptre,—all of them nations who had afterwards recovered their freedom, and to whom Amos foretels the coming judgment in Amos 1. The reason why Edom alone is mentioned by name must be sought for, therefore, in the peculiar attitude which Edom assumed towards the people of God, namely, in the fact “that whilst they were related to the Judaeans, they were of all nations the most hostile to them” (Rosenmüller). On this very ground Obadiah predicted that judgment would come upon the Edomites, and that the remnant of Esau would be captured by the house of Jacob. Amos speaks here of the “remnant of Edom,” not because Amaziah recovered only a portion of Edom to the kingdom (2 Kings 14:7), as Hitzig supposes, but with an allusion to the threat in Amos 1:12, that Edom would be destroyed with the exception of a remnant. The “remnant of Edom” consists of those who are saved in the judgments that fall upon Edom.

This also applies to **כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם**. Even of these nations, only those are taken by Israel, i.e., incorporated into the restored kingdom of David, the Messianic kingdom, upon whom the name of Jehovah is called; that is to say, not those who were first brought under the dominion of the nation in the time of David (Hitzig, Baur, and Hofmann), but those to whom He shall have revealed His divine nature, and

manifested Himself as a God and Saviour (compare Isa. 63:19, Jer. 14:9, and the remarks on Deut. 28:10), so that this expression is practically the same as **אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה קָרָא** (whom Jehovah shall call) in Joel 3:5. The perfect **נִקְרָא** acquires the sense of the *futurum exactum* from the leading sentence, as in Deut. 28:10 (see Ewald, § 346, c). **יִרְשׁוּ**, to take possession of, is chosen with reference to the prophecy of Balaam (Num. 24:18), that Edom should be the possession of Israel (see the comm. on this passage). Consequently the taking possession referred to here will be of a very different character from the subjugation of Edom and other nations to David. It will make the nations into citizens of the kingdom of God, to whom the Lord manifests Himself as their God, pouring upon them all the blessings of His covenant of grace (see Isa. 56:6–8). To strengthen this promise, **נְאֻם יְיָ וְגו'** (“saith Jehovah, that doeth this”) is appended. He who says this is the Lord, who will also accomplish it (see Jer. 33:2).

The explanation given above is also in harmony with the use made by James of our prophecy in Acts 15:16, 17, where he derives from vv. 11 and 12 a prophetic testimony to the fact that Gentiles who became believers were to be received into the kingdom of God without circumcision. It is true that at first sight James appears to quote the words of the prophet simply as a prophetic declaration in support of the fact related by Peter, namely, that by giving His Holy Spirit to believers from among the Gentiles as well as to believers from among the Jews, without making any distinction between Jews and Gentiles, God had taken out of the Gentiles a people *ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ*, “upon His name” (compare Acts 15:14 with Acts 15:8, 9). But as both James and Peter recognise in this fact a practical declaration on the part of God that circumcision was not a necessary prerequisite to the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of Christ, while James follows

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up the allusion to this fact with the prophecy of Amos, introducing it with the words, “and to this agree the words of the prophets,” there can be no doubt that James also quotes the words of the prophet with the intention of adducing evidence out of the Old Testament in support of the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God without circumcision. But this proof is not furnished by the statement of the prophet, “through its silence as to the condition required by those who were pharisaically disposed” (Hengstenberg); and still less by the fact that it declares in the most striking way “what significance there was in the typical kingdom of David, as a prophecy of the relation in which the human race, outside the limits of Israel, would stand to the kingdom of Christ” (Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, ii. 2, pp. 84, 85). For the passage would contain nothing extraordinary concerning the typical significance possessed by the kingdom of David in relation to the kingdom of Christ, if, as Hofmann says (p. 84), the prophet, instead of enumerating all the nations which once belonged to the kingdom of David, simply mentions Edom by name, and describes all the others as the nations which have been subject like Edom to the name of Jehovah. The demonstrative force of the prophet’s statement is to be found, no doubt, as Hofmann admits, in the words כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא שְׁמִי

עֲלֵיהֶם. But if these words affirmed nothing more than what Hofmann finds in them—namely, that all the nations subdued by David were subjected to the name of Jehovah; or, as he says at p. 83, “made up, in connection with Israel, the kingdom of Jehovah and His anointed, without being circumcised, or being obliged to obey the law of Israel”—their demonstrative force would simply lie in what they do not affirm,—namely, in the fact that they say nothing whatever about circumcision being a condition of the reception of the Gentiles. The circumstance that the heathen nations which David brought into subjection to his kingdom were made tributary to himself

and subject to the name of Jehovah, might indeed be typical of the fact that the kingdom of the second David would also spread over the Gentiles; but, according to this explanation, it would affirm nothing at all as to the internal relation of the Gentiles to Israel in the new kingdom of God. The Apostle James, however, quotes the words of Amos as decisive on the point in dispute, which the apostles were considering, because in the words, “all the nations upon whom my name is called,” he finds a prediction of what Peter has just related,—namely, that the Lord has taken out of the heathen a people “upon His name,” that is to say, because he understands by the calling of the name of the Lord upon the Gentiles the communication of the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles.

Amos 9:13–15. To the setting up of the kingdom and its outward extension the prophet appends its inward glorification, foretelling the richest blessing of the land (v. 13) and of the nation (v. 14), and lastly, the eternal duration of the kingdom (v. 15). V. 13. *“Behold, days come, is the saying of Jehovah, that the ploughman reaches to the reaper, and the treader of grapes to the sower of seed; and the mountains drip new wine, and all the hills melt away.* V. 14. *And I reverse the captivity of my people Israel, and they build the waste cities, and dwell, and plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; and make gardens, and eat the fruit thereof.* V. 15. *And I plant them in their land, and they shall no more be torn up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.”* In the new kingdom of God the people of the Lord will enjoy the blessing, which Moses promised to Israel when faithful to the covenant. This blessing will be poured upon the land in which the kingdom is set up. V. 13a is formed after the promise in Lev. 26:5, “Your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time;” but Amos transfers the action to the persons employed, and says, “The ploughman will reach to the reaper.” Even while the one is engaged in ploughing the land for the sowing, the other will already be able to cut ripe corn; so quickly

will the corn grow and ripen. And the treading of the grapes will last to the sowing-time, so abundant will the vintage be. The second half of the verse is taken from Joel 4:18; and according to this passage, the melting of the hills is to be understood as dissolving into streams of milk, new wine, and honey, in which the prophet had the description of the promised land as a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8, etc.) floating before his mind. In the land so blessed will Israel enjoy unbroken peace, and delight itself in the fruits of its inheritance. On שׁוֹב

אֶת־שְׁבוֹת, see the exposition of Hos. 6:11.

That this phrase is not used here to denote the return of the people from captivity, but the turning of misfortune and misery into prosperity and salvation, is evident from the context; for Israel cannot be brought back out of captivity *after* it has already taken possession of the Gentiles (v. 12). The thought of v. 14, as attached to v. 13, is the following: As the land of Israel, i.e., the territory of the re-erected kingdom of David, will no more be smitten with the curse of drought and failing crops with which the rebellious are threatened, but will receive the blessing of the greatest fertility, so will the people, i.e., the citizens of this kingdom, be no more visited with calamity and judgment, but enjoy the rich beneficent fruits of their labour in blessed and unbroken peace. This thought is individualized with a retrospective glance at the punishment with which the sinners are threatened in Amos 5:11, —namely, as building waste cities, and dwelling therein, and as drinking the wine of the vineyards that have been planted; not building houses for others any more, as was threatened in Amos 5:11, after Deut. 28:30, 39; and lastly, as laying out gardens, and eating the fruit thereof, without its being consumed by strangers (Deut. 28:33). This blessing will endure for ever (v. 15). Their being planted in their land denotes, not the settling of the people in their land once more, but their firm and lasting establishment and fortification therein. The Lord will make Israel, i.e., His rescued

people, into a plantation that will never be torn up again, but strikes firm roots, sends forth blossom, and produces fruit. The words point back to 2 Sam. 7:10, and declare that the firm planting of Israel which was begun by David will be completed with the raising up of the fallen hut of David, inasmuch as no further driving away of the nation into captivity will occur, but the people of the Lord will dwell for ever in the land which their God has given them. Compare Jer. 24:6. This promise is sealed by אָמַר יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי.

We have not to seek for the realization of this promise in the return of Israel from its captivity to Palestine under Zerubbabel and Ezra; for this was no planting of Israel to dwell for ever in the land, nor was it a setting up of the fallen hut of David. Nor have we to transfer the fulfilment to the future, and think of a time when the Jews, who have been converted to their God and Saviour Jesus Christ, will one day be led back to Palestine. For, as we have already observed at Joel 3:18, Canaan and Israel are types of the kingdom of God and of the church of the Lord. The raising up of the fallen hut of David commenced with the coming of Christ and the founding of the Christian church by the apostles; and the possession of Edom and all the other nations upon whom the Lord reveals His name, took its rise in the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven set up by Christ. The founding and building of this kingdom continue through all the ages of the Christian church, and will be completed when the fulness of the Gentiles shall one day enter into the kingdom of God, and the still unbelieving Israel shall have been converted to Christ. The land which will flow with streams of divine blessing is not Palestine, but the domain of the Christian church, or the earth, so far as it has received the blessings of Christianity. The people which cultivates this land is the Christian church, so far as it stands in living faith, and produces fruits of the Holy Ghost. The blessing foretold by the prophet is indeed visible at present in only a very small measure, because Christendom is not yet so pervaded by

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the Spirit of the Lord, as that it forms a holy people of God. In many respects it still resembles Israel, which the Lord will have to sift by means of judgments. This sifting will be first brought to an end through the judgment upon all nations, which will attend the second coming of Christ. Then will the earth become a

Canaan, where the Lord will dwell in His glorified kingdom in the midst of His sanctified people.
