

## Amos Lesson 4 Articles

The third and fourth vision-reports vary somewhat from the first and second reports. As in the first pair, an introductory formula is followed by a report of the vision content. But while in the first pair of visions the prophet initiated the dialogue and did most of the speaking, in the second pair God initiated and concluded the dialogue, and Amos said only one or two words.<sup>22</sup> Although in the first pair the prophet was shown a horrifying sight of judgment, which in response to the prophet's intercession did not occur, in the second pair of visions God asked Amos to identify a common object, which God then explained represented terrible judgment. And in the second pair Amos was given no more opportunity for intercession. God announced the end of Israel's day of grace. While the horror of the locusts and the fire give way to compassion, an ordinary plumb line and a basket of fruit are used to stress the certainty of judgment. Perhaps, as Andersen and Freedman suggest, some period of time elapsed between the first two visions and the next, during which the calamities of 4:6–13 occurred. But the Lord's discipline and Amos's preaching met no repentance on the part of Israel.<sup>23</sup> At any rate, "judgment, terrible and drastic" was on its way, "certainly not because God wills it, though he does, but because the people deserve it and their persistently wicked behavior demands it."<sup>24</sup>

### 9. high places—dedicated to idols.

**of Isaac**—They boasted of their following the example of their forefather Isaac, in erecting high places at Beer-sheba (Am 5:5; compare Ge 26:23, 24; 46:1); but he and Abraham erected them before the temple was appointed at Jerusalem—and to God; whereas they did so, after the temple had been fixed as the only place for sacrifices—and to idols. In the *Hebrew* here "Isaac" is written with *s*, instead of the usual *ts*; both forms mean "laughter"; the change of spelling perhaps expresses that their "high places of Isaac" may be well so called, but not as they meant by the name; for they are only fit to be *laughed at* in scorn. Probably, however, the mention of "Isaac" and "Israel" simply expresses that these names, which their degenerate posterity boasted in as if ensuring their safety, will not save them and their idolatrous "sanctuaries" on which they depended from ruin (compare Am 8:14).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Andersen and Freedman, *Amos*, 624.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, *Amos*, 630.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Smith, B. K., & Page, F. S. (1995). *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Vol. 19B, pp. 131–132). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Am 7:9). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.