

New Revised Standard Version

¹This is what the Lord GOD showed me: he was forming locusts at the time the latter growth began to sprout (it was the latter growth after the king's mowings). ²When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, "O Lord GOD, forgive, I beg you! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" ³The LORD relented concerning this; "It shall not be," said the LORD.

⁴This is what the Lord GOD showed me: the Lord GOD was calling for a shower of fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land. ⁵Then I said, "O Lord GOD, cease, I beg you! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" ⁶The LORD relented concerning this; "This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.

⁷ This is what he showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass them by;

⁹The high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

¹⁰Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.'"

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

Easy-to-Read Version

¹This is what the Lord GOD showed me: He was making locusts. This was at the time the second crop began to grow, after the king's people had cut the first crop. ²Before the locusts could eat all the grass in the country, I said, "Lord GOD, I beg you, forgive us! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!" ³Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The LORD said, "It will not happen."

⁴This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw the Lord GOD calling for judgment by fire. The fire destroyed the ocean and was beginning to eat up the land. ⁵But I said, "Lord GOD, stop, I beg you! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!" ⁶Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The Lord GOD said, "It will not happen either."

⁷This is what the Lord showed me: He stood by a wall with a plumb line in his hand. (The wall had been marked with a plumb line.) ⁸The LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A plumb line."

Then the Lord said to me, "See, I will put a plumb line among my people Israel. I will not let their 'crooked ways' pass inspection anymore.

⁹Isaac's high places will be destroyed. Israel's holy places will be made into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboam's family with swords."

¹⁰Amaziah, a priest at Bethel, sent this message to Jeroboam, the king of Israel: "Amos is making plans against you. He is trying to make the people of Israel fight against you. He has been speaking so much that this country cannot hold all his words. ¹¹Amos has said, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and the people of Israel will be taken as prisoners out of their country.'"

¹²Amaziah also said to Amos, "You seer, go down to Judah and eat there. Do your prophesying there. ¹³But don't prophesy anymore here at Bethel. This is Jeroboam's holy place. This is Israel's temple."

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am not a professional prophet, and I am not from a prophet's family. I raise cattle and take care of sycamore trees. ¹⁵I was a shepherd and the LORD took me from following the sheep. The LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

Some background (adapted from Wikipedia): Jeroboam II was the 14th king of Israel whose 41 year reign was the most prosperous to date. This prosperity was built on trade, and Israel grew to be the most densely populated area in the region. This kingdom was characterized oppression and exploitation of the poor by the powerful elite who lived in unprecedented luxury. While God was worshiped at Dan and Beth-el and at other shrines at Gilgal and Beer-sheba, it was through images and idols. This roused the indignation of the prophets against the priests of these cults, such as Amaziah who was the priest of the golden calf at Beth-el. Jeroboam’s reign was during the time of Hosea, Joel, Jonah and Amos, all of whom condemned the materialism and selfishness of the Israelite elite of their day. The book of Kings condemns Jeroboam for doing "evil in the eyes of the Lord", oppressing the poor and supporting the cult centers of Dan and Beth-el in opposition to the temple in Jerusalem.

1. Who are the main characters? Amos? Judah? Israel? Jeroboam? Amaziah?
2. What are the three visions that Amos has? What are some differences about the first two compared to the third?
3. In the first vision, God relents. In the second vision, God relents? What happens in the third vision? How is this mirrored in the current “climate of justice” in America?
4. How do these three visions and Amos’ interaction with God support and anthropomorphic view of God? How might this anthropomorphic nature of God circle back and become a self-justification of our justice system?
5. In verses 10 and 11, what does Amaziah say in his message to Jeroboam? What might be his motive(s) for doing so? What does he say Amos has said? How is Amaziah correct in attributing these words to Amos? How is he incorrect? How can one know if the words of a prophet are coming from God or from the prophet?
6. In verses 12 and 13, what does Amaziah tell Amos to do? How does Amaziah characterize Beth-el? How is the characterization significant?
7. In verses 14 and 15, how does Amos describe himself? Is this an effective rebuttal of Amaziah? Why or why not?
8. How do these people reflect Amos? How have you / do you / could you reflect Amos?



As a young girl, Malala Yousafzai defied the Taliban in Pakistan and demanded that girls be allowed to receive an education. She was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman in 2012, but survived.



The Gulabi Gang are a group of female Indian vigilantes, who all wear a pink sari. The group fight against child marriages, the dowry system, abusive husbands and female illiteracy.



Jong-rak, a pastor in South Korea, attached a box to the side of his house to allow parents to leave their mentally handicapped or unwanted babies instead of abandoning them on the side of the road.