

# Hope in God

God offers hope to those who return to Him in repentance.

AMOS 9:5-15



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Amorite.  
s for proph-  
or (Nazarites,  
idren of Israel?

rites wine to drink;  
prophets, saying,

### ISRAEL'S SINS

I am pressed under you, as a  
ed *that is* full of sheaves.  
ore the flight shall perish from  
and the strong shall not strength-  
force, "neither shall the mighty de-  
himself:  
Neither shall he stand that handleth  
e bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall  
ot deliver *himself*;" neither shall he that  
rideth the horse deliver himself.

<sup>16</sup>And *he that is* courageous among the  
mighty shall flee away naked in that day,  
saith the LORD.

### GOD HAS SPOKEN

**3** Hear this word that the LORD hath spo-  
ken against you, O children of Israel,  
against the whole family which I brought  
up from the land of Egypt, saying,

<sup>2</sup>You only have I known of all the fam-  
ilies of the earth: "therefore I will punish  
you for all your iniquities.

<sup>3</sup>Can two walk together, except they be  
agreed?

<sup>4</sup>Will a lion roar in the forest, when he  
hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of  
his den, if he have taken nothing?

on  
the  
father  
profane  
down upon  
ery altar, and  
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### FAITHFULNESS

the Amorite before  
ght *was* like the height of  
e *was* strong as the oaks;  
ed his fruit from above, and  
n beneath.

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## **What are some of the biggest hopes you have in this life? What are you doing to move toward that hope?**

The best hopes are not passive. A football team can hope to win, but those hopes must be accompanied by action. A future college graduate cannot start studying the night before graduation. Amos earlier had expressed the hope that God would save a remnant from Israel (Amos 5:15), but that hope was to be accompanied by the repentance of Israelites.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The book of Amos has two primary sections, the words of Amos (chaps. 1–6) and the visions of Amos (chaps. 7–9). The second section contains reports of five visions Amos received from the Lord. The first two visions (Amos 7:1-6) are of the arrival of locusts and the threatening judgment of fire. Visions three and four come from wordplay visions (7:7-9; 8:1-3). Amos saw a plumb line and measured it against the people of Israel to show they were not in line with the will of God. Then he saw a basket of summer fruit that was ripened and about to begin its decaying process. Like the basket of fruit, Israel was ripe and ready for the judgment God was about to bring against them. The final vision (9:1-4) was a vision of God Himself standing beside the altar. He was there to announce the destruction of Israel.

The Lord would shake the pillars of the temple, causing it to fall upon those worshipping in pretense (9:1a). He would kill the rest with the sword, a hint of the coming Assyrian invasion (9:1b) No matter how far or at what lengths people attempted to escape, they would be unable to escape God's

judgment (9:2). Even if they were to escape the temple and hide on a mountain such as Carmel or sink to the floor of the Mediterranean, God would track them down and hold them accountable for their actions. The Lord would bring harm on them rather than good because that was what their actions warranted (9:4).

The inevitability of judgment seen in the prophecy of Amos only heightens the need to share the gospel of Jesus, who bore in His body the sins of those who are willing to trust in Him (1 Peter 2:24). The One who did not know sin became sin for us so we could be made righteous before God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Even as Amos's book ended with a somber picture of judgment, it also would contain a message of hope for those who turn to God in Christ.

# AMOS 9:5-15

**5** The Lord, the GOD of Armies — he touches the earth; it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn; all of it rises like the Nile and subsides like the Nile of Egypt. **6** He builds his upper chambers in the heavens and lays the foundation of his vault on the earth. He summons the water of the sea and pours it out over the surface of the earth. The LORD is his name. **7** Israelites, are you not like the Cushites to me? This is the LORDS declaration. Didn't I bring Israel from the land of Egypt, the **Philistines from Capthor, and the Arameans from Kir** <sup>A</sup>? **8** Look, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will obliterate it from the face of the earth. However, I will not totally destroy the **house of Jacob** <sup>B</sup> — this is the LORD's declaration — **9** for I am about to give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations, as one shakes a sieve, but not a pebble will fall to the ground. **10** All the sinners among my people who say, "Disaster will never overtake or confront us," will die by the sword. **11** In that day I will restore the fallen shelter of David: I will **repair its gaps, restore its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old** <sup>C</sup>, **12** so that they may possess the remnant of **Edom** <sup>D</sup> and **all the nations that bear my name** <sup>E</sup> — this is the declaration of the LORD; he will do this. **13** Look, the days are coming — this is the LORD's declaration — when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the one who treads grapes, the sower of seed. The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it. **14** I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel. They will rebuild and occupy ruined cities, plant vineyards and drink their wine, make gardens and eat their produce. **15** I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them. **The LORD your God has spoken** <sup>F</sup>.

## Key Words

- A. God has brought other nations into their location, just as He did with Israel (Acts 17:26).
- B. A term for the people of Israel. Used here as an ethnic group, separate from the political entity of Israel (the Northern Kingdom). There will be a remnant of Israel who will be kept by God.
- C. God promised that He would one day fix what the Israelites had broken due to their sin. God's restoration of His covenant blessings was an unconditional promise.
- D. A people group that descended from Jacob's brother Esau (Genesis 36:1).
- E. The future people of God will include both Jews and Gentiles. James saw the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church as a fulfillment of this in Acts 15:13-21.
- F. God's Word is sure and trustworthy. "God is not a man, that he might lie, or a son of man, that he might change his mind. Does he speak and not act, or promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19).

# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## 1. THE INTRODUCTION (AMOS 9:5-6)

Believers should worship God, knowing He has no equal and controls all His creation.

**What characteristics of God cause the greatest amount of awe and wonder?**

## 2. THE SHAKING (AMOS 9:7-10)

All people face the judgment of God apart from repentance.

**How does comparing ourselves to others lead to a false sense of security?**

**Why do many people consider themselves exempt from God's judgment?**

## 3. THE RESTORATION (AMOS 9:11-15)

Believers can live with hope, knowing God's blessings wait in eternity.

**What does this passage reveal about God's redemptive plan? How does the promise of God's redeeming a remnant of believers from nations of sinners affect relationships with others who may still be part of that "sinful nation"?**

**How does the promise of God's future blessing motivate believers to endure God's discipline?**

## APPLY THE TEXT

Discuss the role your group plays in sharing the hope of salvation to all the nations.

**What actions should your group take to more effectively call all people to turn to God in repentance?**

### KEY DOCTRINE: Salvation (Regeneration)

Regeneration is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

### BIBLE SKILL: Review cross reference verses to gain insight.

Review the following verses that recognize Jesus as the Son of David: Matthew 12:23; 15:22; 21:9,15; Mark 12:35-37; Revelation 5:5. What do these verses reveal about God's fulfilling His purpose to restore Israel through the "booth of David" (v. 11)? In what ways did Jesus personify the idea of "shelter" during His time here on earth?

# TALK IT OUT

**Focus on Amos 5:15. Should we expect to receive mercy if we have not shown mercy?**

For someone to seek good, they must love good and delight in it, which means that person must then despise evil. Amos was calling on the people to reject behaviors that displease God just like the unrighteous person despises actions that please God. Hating evil and loving good would be seen in justice being offered to all people while also passionately calling out injustice.

**How could a person love evil and good at the same time? How does loving evil or good eliminate love for the other?**

Amos recognized that God was under no obligation to be gracious to a rebellious people. Using the word translated *perhaps* points to the need for humility when approaching God. The remnant found mercy through humble repentance that led to a growing relationship with God and experiencing life to the fullest as God intended.

**Discuss the need for humility in the Christian life. How does humility serve as a starting point for repentance?**

Memorize Amos 5:15 looking for ways to do the three actions called for in the verse.

## Prayer Requests

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# DAILY EXPLORATION

## Day 1: Amos 9:5-6

### *Contemplate God's power.*

The phrase *the Lord, the God of Armies* points to the magnitude of God's authority and power. God has authority over all things and the ability to carry out all that He says He will do. The Lord merely *touches the earth* and *it melts*, meaning to tremble and shake as in an earthquake. Those who experience it will *mourn*. The land will rise and fall like the flooding of *the Nile* when the earth quakes at the Lord's touch (8:8). God will display such awesome power in judgment through this earthquake that it will come like a flood, and its devastation will be overwhelming. Amos preached his message to Israel two years before the earthquake (1:1; see Zechariah 14:5). God is not of this earth. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). However, God is not aloof because He resides in heaven. He *lays the foundation of his vault on the earth*. He touches heaven and earth with His sovereignty; therefore, He is a just judge who acts with all information at His disposal. God's actions are pure, just, righteous, and honorable. Amos reminded his readers that the God who made the waters can pour them out in judgment. He did it in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:17), and He could do it again to destroy Israel. This destruction would not be a flood of water but a flood of the Assyrian army.

**What characteristics of God cause you the greatest amount of awe and wonder?**

## Day 2: Amos 9:7

### *Consider how God has protected His people.*

Israel enjoyed a special place in kingdom history as the elect nation, chosen by God to be a blessing to all other nations (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). But the Israelites abused this privilege by refusing to live as the covenant people of God. In light of the Israelites' privilege, the words comparing them to the Cushites must have been especially shocking. These were the inhabitants of Nubia which was a great distance from Israel and represented the far boundary of their experience with the nations. An army of one million Cushites marched against King Asa in Judah in the previous century (2 Chronicles 14:9), but the Lord routed them with only 580,000 in Asa's army (2 Chronicles 14:8). Yet God said they were no different than Israel. God compared the Israelites to the *Philistines from Caphtor*, probably a reference to Crete or Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea. He also referenced the *Arameans from Kir*, who were the enemies of Israel. Only recently had Israel been set free from their dominion. The point was to show that God had moved them from one place to another. The God of all nations was also the God of Israel, and He could do what He desired to do with them.

**How does comparing yourself to others lead to a false sense of security?**

## Day 3: Amos 9:8-10

*Note the description of God shaking the house of Israel.*

Even more challenging were these words of Amos: *Look, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom.* What kingdom was he describing? Was it Cush and their invasion against Judah? Was it the Philistines and their constant attacks on Israel and Judah? Was it the Arameans, who dominated Israel in their recent history? Or did that also include Israel, a nation that also had abandoned the Lord in their worship practices and integrity? The sinful kingdom includes all those who have refused to turn to God in repentance. Israel was no less accountable to God than any other nation that surrounded it, whether near or far. Whether in Cush or Israel, judgment would come against sinners. However, Amos revealed with hope that God would not *totally destroy the house of Jacob*. The sinful kingdom and the house of Jacob were not identical. A remnant of the nation would survive by turning to God in repentance. Amos said God would give the command and would *shake the house of Israel among all the nations*. God's shaking was not punitive only but also for the purpose of separating the wheat and the chaff (Matthew 3:12). God knows those who belong to Him, and no mistakes are made on the day of His sifting. The only hope for Israel would be the hope of a remnant who heeded the call of God and turned to Him. Those who refused to do so would *die by the sword*. When the Assyrians captured Samaria, many died, and many others were taken away into captivity in Assyria. God gave Israel time to repent and turn back to Him, but they would not.

**How do you respond to people who view themselves as exempt from God's judgment?**

## Day 4: Amos 9:11-12

*Highlight God's promise to restore the house of David.*

Though Amos's message may seem pessimistic and full of gloom, it does not end on that note. God made a promise to David that his kingdom would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16). A time was coming when it would appear that his kingdom ended. The Northern Kingdom would fall in 722 BC and the Southern Kingdom would fall in 587 BC. At that point, David's kingdom would resemble a *fallen shelter*, or a dilapidated dwelling place. All looked bleak for David's kingdom, as all that remained was a remnant of those who turned to God. Far from a fixer-upper, God promised to *rebuild it as in the days of old*. With the arrival of Messiah, David's house would continue (Jeremiah 33:15,17; Micah 5:2). The rebuilding of David's house would elevate the importance of Israel's mission. Through the Messiah, God would create a remnant of Edom and every other nation where people turned from their sin and turned to God. The purpose of Israel would be fulfilled as God took the message of the Messiah to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6; Gen. 12:3).

**How does the promise of God's redeeming a remnant of believers from nations of sinners affect your relationships with others who may still be part of that "sinful nation"?**

## Day 5: Amos 9:13-15

**Think about the great abundance God promises His people.**

God would restore the fortunes of Israel through the promise of the Messiah. Amos described this as a time of great abundance. The harvest would be so great that the reapers would still be reaping when it was time to plant the seeds for the next cycle! The time of Messiah would signal a fruitfulness as yet unseen among the people of Israel. This time of abundance was magnified in verse 14. Cities previously abandoned would spring to life. Vineyards that had been abandoned and left for dead would flourish again. All that was taken away by Israel's sin would be restored by Messiah. What a hopeful and encouraging thought! God would replant His people in their own land with a fruitfulness that could never be taken away. At long last they would fulfill their calling to be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6). They would never again be thwarted or supplanted from their place in God's story of redemptive history, as Messiah would usher in a period of spiritual peace and prosperity that could never be equaled. Sinners would repent and turn to God, and He would forgive their sin and give them peace. Amos's prophecy ends on a glorious note that he only hoped for but has been realized in our day with the coming of Jesus.

**How does the promise of God's future blessing motivate you to endure God's discipline?**

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### APPLY THE TEXT

List names of people who are living apart from God. Begin to pray for them every day, asking God to give you the opportunity to share with them about the forgiveness found in Jesus.



# Hope in God

## ENGAGE

**PREPARE:** Write the following quotes on a board or large sheet of paper, omitting the source of the quote: “Hope springs eternal.” (Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*), “Where then is my hope?” (Job 17:15), “Nothing can be done without hope” (Helen Keller), and “This hope will not disappoint us” (Rom. 5:5).

**DISCUSS:** Read aloud each quote, directing the group to listen and determine which come from the Bible and which do not, using a thumbs up or a thumbs down signal as you read each. Then share the source for each quote.

**ASK:** *What are some of the biggest hopes you have in this life? What are you doing to move toward that hope?* (p. 37)

**TRANSITION:** *In our previous sessions, Amos shared the hope that God would save a remnant from Israel, but he was clear that any hope for that had to be accompanied by the repentance of the Israelites.*

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## EXPLORE

**CONTEXTUALIZE:** Utilizing **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outlines of Amos; Jonah; Hosea; Micah*) and *Understand the Context* (p. 37), briefly overview the five visions in Amos 7-9. Emphasize that God’s judgment is unfolding in each of the

visions with certainty, but Amos proclaimed a glimmer of hope for a remnant of Israel if they repent.

**TRANSITION:** *Amos presented a hymn about God who reigns supremely over His creation. God is portrayed as having authority over both heaven and earth, and therefore cannot be escaped.*

**READ: Call for a volunteer to read aloud Amos 9:5-6**, guiding the group to listen for how God is portrayed.

- **(9:5)** God has authority over all things and the ability to carry out all that He says He will do. He has the host of heaven at His disposal, and no one can withstand Him or flee from His wrath. No place in all of creation is beyond His reach.
- **(9:6)** *LORD* is *Yahweh* in Hebrew, God’s personal and covenant name to Israel. This was their personal God, whom they had ignored and rejected, who would do these things—the God who saved the Israelites and chose them to be His treasured possession (Ex. 19:4-6).

**SUMMARIZE:** Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Emphasize that God is not of this earth. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. Lead the group to consider how the Isaiah passage compares to how Amos portrayed God.

**DISCUSS:** *What characteristics of God cause the greatest amount of awe and wonder?* (p. 39). As the group answers, record their responses on the board and invite them to explain their thoughts.

**TRANSITION:** *Amos announced the coming judgment on Israel, comparing them to overthrown kings and kingdoms. The prophet warned of a shaking that would take place of which the people of Israel would not be excused.*

**READ:** Read Amos 9:7-10 aloud as the group listens for excuses given for exemptions from God's judgment.

- **(9:7)** Besides Israel's military superiority, economic prosperity, and fervent religious activity, there was one more reason the people doubted Amos's words of judgment upon Israel: Israel was God's chosen, covenant people, His treasured possession out of all the nations (Ex. 19:5). Because of this, it appears they believed they were exempt from the judgments God levied against the other nations. They behaved as if since their ancestors had made a covenant with the Lord, then the Lord was obligated to bless them no matter what.
- **(9:9)** God would give a command to *shake* Israel like grain in a *sieve*. A sieve allows the grain to escape while catching that which is undesirable, such as husks, pieces of stalks, pebbles, and dirt, so it can be discarded. The phrase *not a pebble will fall to the ground* means no person who rejected the Lord would escape His judgment. The purpose of God's judgment was to remove those who rejected the Lord and to save those who had been faithful to Him.

**COMPARE:** Direct the group to review comments about verse 7 (p.41) for background on the comparison kingdoms pointed to by Amos. Ask: *To whom might people compare themselves to today to excuse themselves from guilt?*

**DISCUSS:** *How does comparing ourselves to others lead to a false sense of security?* (p. 39)

**PROPOSE:** Invite volunteers to propose reasons a person might give for being exempt from God's judgment. Lead the group to compare this list to ways the people in Amos's day felt exempt.

**TRANSITION:** *The message delivered by Amos appears to be pessimistic and full of gloom, but thankfully it doesn't end on that note. Even though the Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom would fall, a new day was coming. A remnant would remain, and the lineage of David would continue to provide the Messiah realized in the coming of Jesus Christ.*

**READ:** Instruct the group to read Amos 9:11-15, guiding them to look for words of hope that follow God's shaking.

- **(9:12)** People from every nation who once stood in opposition to God would one day become part of a renewed Israel under the authority of the coming Son of David who will rule over it. The nations that once rebelled against God would bear the name of the Lord. This denotes the Lord's ownership of them and intimate relationship with them.
- **(9:14)** Amos described how God would restore His people Israel and even bestow upon them greater blessing than what they had ever

experienced as a nation. God declared that this restoration and blessing of Israel was based on His covenant faithfulness.

**FOCUS:** Write the prefix *Re* on the board or a large sheet of paper. Ask how *Re* impacts the meaning of words. This prefix typically means “again” or “back.” Lead the group to locate the words in verses 11-15 that begin with “re” and provide hope. Point out that hope is evident when a new opportunity is provided.

**DISCUSS:** *What does this passage reveal about God’s redemptive plan? How does the promise of God redeeming a remnant of believers from nations of sinners affect relationships with others who may still be a part of that “sinful nation”?* (p. 39)

**HIGHLIGHT:** Call attention to the statement: *God would replant His people in their own land with a fruitfulness that could never be taken away. They would never again be thwarted or supplanted from their place in God’s story of redemptive history, as Messiah would usher in a period of spiritual peace and prosperity that could never be equaled* (p.43). Solicit responses to the highlighted statement.

**ASK:** *How does the promise of God’s future blessing motivate believers to endure God’s discipline?* (p.39)

**TRANSITION:** *Amos’s prophecy ends in a promise of hope for the future. We can be thankful that our hope now rests in our relationship with Jesus Christ.*

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## CHALLENGE

**REVIEW:** Read the summary statement: *God offers hope to those who return to Him in repentance.* Discuss examples that support this statement from each of the three session points: The Introduction, The Shaking, The Restoration.

**HIGHLIGHT:** Distribute **Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark*) to anyone in the group who hasn’t received a copy. Direct attention to the memory verse for the session, Amos 5:15. Read it together as a summary of the expectations of God proclaimed by Amos.

**REFLECT:** Lead the group to share their response to the question set under Apply the Text (p. 39): *Discuss the role your group plays in sharing the hope of salvation to all the nations. What actions should your group take to more effectively call all people to turn to God in repentance?* Affirm ideas that point to praying for others. Direct the group to jot down any names that come to mind in the margin of their book.

**PRAY:** Guide a time of silent prayer for the specific people identified as in need of a Savior. Pray that the group will support each other in sharing the hope and forgiveness found in Christ with others.

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## AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the study by praying specifically for opportunities to offer hope to others through your own faith in Christ. Tell the group about someone for whom you are praying and how you plan to share the gospel with him or her.