



Daily Verse and Comment

Amos 9:1-6

(1) I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said:
" Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake,
And break them on the heads of them all.
I will slay the last of them with the sword.
He who flees from them shall not get away,
And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.
(2) " Though they dig into hell,
From there My hand shall take them;
Though they climb up to heaven,
From there I will bring them down;
(3) And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel,
From there I will search and take them;
Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea,
From there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;
(4) Though they go into captivity before their enemies,
From there I will command the sword,
And it shall slay them.
I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."
(5) The Lord GOD of hosts,
He who touches the earth and it melts,
And all who dwell there mourn;
All of it shall swell like the River,
And subside like the River of Egypt.
(6) He who builds His layers in the sky,
And has founded His strata in the earth;
Who calls for the waters of the sea,
And pours them out on the face of the earth—
The LORD *is* His name.

The vision in Amos 9 is different from the four visions in chapters 7 and 8. There is no conversation between [God](#) and the prophet. The time for talk is over; God simply acts. The situation has moved beyond Amos' ability to intercede—God's time to act has come, and He will not relent.

The background of this final vision is interesting. To make his rule more secure, Jeroboam I devised what the Bible calls "the [sin](#) of Jeroboam," the use of religion in the service of politics. Using the system in place in Judah, he counterfeited [the holy days](#), the priesthood, and the temple ritual. On his altar his priests offered sacrifices to the two golden calves, and the king stood by the altar to burn incense ([I Kings 12:26-33](#); [13:1](#)). It apparently became a custom for the king to stand at the right-hand side of the altar at his counterfeit feast in the eighth month.

Who is standing beside the altar in Amos 9? Not Jeroboam, but the Lord! Instead of officiating, God is destroying everything in sight!

Amos also draws on the story of Samson destroying the temple of Dagon by toppling the supporting pillars. If a man tries to pull a house down with his bare hands, he has to undermine it from the bottom, but God is not restricted like a man. He strikes the house down from the top! God, as the Supreme Omnipotent One and the Sovereign Lord, has every right to crush the house of Israel. Since the people had ignored all the numerous warnings He had sent for them to repent, He is now fulfilling His promise.

In the type, the temple of Dagon fell on everyone's head; no one survived ([Judges 16:30](#)). The same holds true in this destruction. No matter where the people of Israel flee in the day of calamity, they will not find any rest, ease, safety, or security ([Amos 9:2-6](#)). They had tried to get security by building multiple homes for themselves, but God will wipe away this assurance by smashing their houses to bits. Anything that they thought would provide them security in the day of punishment God will destroy.

God is omnipotent. When He decides to judge His people in this very painful way, there is no escaping it. He reminds His people of the covenant they made with Him, that He called them to His service, yet He is also the God of all the earth and Lord of every nation (verse 7). In other words, He has the

same responsibility to judge and punish them as He has to the other nations of [the world](#). The Philistines and Syrians, by the way, are two of the nations He judges in Amos 1. God is judging Israel in the same manner.

We find a manifestation of Israel's problem—false reliance that the covenant would save them—in modern-day "Christianity." Many professing Christians believe in [eternal security](#), commonly called "once saved, always saved," a devastatingly subtle deception of [Satan](#) the Devil. It is a belief that one can never fall out of favor with God, no matter what one's behavior or attitude.

As members of the [true church](#), we need to beware lest we bring this false idea into the church with us. When God called us, chose us, and granted us [repentance](#), we were baptized. But that does not exclude us from His scrutiny. He is no respecter of persons; He will judge us as justly as He does anyone else on earth.

That we chose to follow God's way of life is good, but having that fact on our spiritual resumé is not enough. *God is not interested in past actions but in present performance.* What is happening today? Are we living righteously each day? Or, have we fallen from our past performance and profession? What God did in the past to give us the opportunity for salvation does not absolutely bind Him to work everything out to our benefit, if we do not produce the corresponding good works, character growth, and obedience He expects (Ezekiel 18).

He wants us to see that we should not make the same mistake ancient Israel made—that is, take His salvation for granted. We can rely on Him and trust Him, but we also have a responsibility to submit to and obey Him. We must strive to produce the best character possible and be a light so He can say of each of us, "That's My son! He looks and acts like Me! He is definitely part of My Family."

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Prepare to Meet Your God! \(The Book of Amos\) \(Part Two\)](#)

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