



## [Amos 8:11-12](#)

(11) Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: (12) And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

*King James Version*

[God](#) says that He will soon send a peculiar famine—not a typical famine of food or water, but a far more destructive one. It strikes at the heart of His people, causing the very fabric of society to unravel.

Notice first that it does not say that it will be a famine of the *word* of the Lord, but a famine of *hearing*. God's words will still be available, but it will be rare that those words will be heard. The [truth](#) will still be obtainable; His inspired messages will still be accessible. However, as a curse on the land, God will cause truth not to be heard.

This "hearing" is far more than just being aware of words or concepts. It is a hearing that includes focused, careful attention that, taken to its logical conclusion, ends in obedience. The kind of hearing that will be in such short supply is one that causes right action—in fact, the Hebrew word is often translated as "obey." This famine causes God's words not to be heard, and the result is that [sin](#) and disobedience flourish—which are a reproach to any nation ([Proverbs 14:34](#)). It is a tremendous curse, because without having God's words as guidance—without the light of truth—then a nation will be like a blind man, stumbling around and not comprehending why he keeps falling (*cf.* [Deuteronomy 28:29](#); [Isaiah 29:9-10](#)).

This is an unusual curse. It is not like a physical famine, which everyone recognizes as a tragedy. Most of those who are struck by this famine will probably not recognize that it *is* a true calamity. A famine of hearing the truth will seem like a relief to many, because no voice is calling them into account or prompting them to think about eternity.

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However, even though this famine may give the impression that a burden has been lifted, the reality is that without divine instruction, the nation can only stagger toward eventual destruction. Truth is a blessing, but God has every right to withhold it, just as He withholds rain when His people turn from Him. People may be vaguely aware that things are breaking down, that life seems to have a lot more tragedies, and that nothing seems to work as it once did, but they will not make the connection between their hardships and their spiritual deafness.

— David C. Grabbe

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