



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

### The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Amos 9: 1-15

Amos

“Fortunes Restored”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We’re finishing up Amos tonight, so Amos 9 and let’s just begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this time together this evening and thank you for getting us here safely and pray that after the study you’d return us home safely and give us a time of learning and enjoyable fellowship in the meantime. So we look to you to bless us. Thank you for the study we have had in this great Book of Amos and pray that as we conclude it tonight that you would bless our time together.

May the spirit of God direct us in our thinking and enable us not only to understand the passage but how it applies to us, particularly the encouragement that it should give us. So we look to you to bless, guide us in all things and bless us not only in our time of study together but as the end of the hour we return again to the throne of grace. Pray these things in Christ’s name. Amen.

[Message] Amos 9. In Psalm 139 David asks the question, “Where can I flee from your presence?” And then he answers his own question with some hypothetical places to hide, up to heaven, down to heaven, down to Sheol, off into the sunset, all are futile. There’s no place to hide from God.

Amos says the same in Amos 9. Dig into Sheol, ascend to heaven, climb to the top of Mount Carmel, hide down in the sea, there’s no escape. God will find all who take cover and judge. This is the fifth and final vision of Amos. It is a prophecy of judgment given in vivid and even terrifying descriptions, at least to me it is.

Verse 3, “And though they conceal themselves from my sight on the floor of the seas, from there I will command the serpent and it will bite them.” Well, that is a

horrifying thought. But God’s long patience had run out on the sinful nation and now He would act to eradicate it. Verse 8, “I will destroy it from the face of the earth.” It is obliteration, almost but not completely. The chapter ends with the restoration and a prophecy of Israel’s future. “I will plant them on their land and they will not again be rooted out of their land.”

It’s what Paul declares in Roman 11:22, “Behold then the kindness and severity of God.” He judges the guilty in pure justice, but His grace compels Him to show kindness to multitudes. We see both, His severity and His kindness in this final vision of the chapter and it’s mainly kindness. The vision begins with the Lord standing beside the altar. Now the question that you have as you study this text and you look at the different commentaries is: what is that altar? Which altar? It could be the altar in Jerusalem because that is the altar.

And you’ll remember from some weeks back now that’s where this prophecy began, the Lord roaring from Zion. In which case that would mean that the prophecy which began in Jerusalem began on Zion, began in the temple ends in the same place. And there are some sense to that, I think. Most think, however, that this is the altar at Bethel.

And that finds support from chapter 3 in verse 14 where God said, “I will punish the altars of Bethel.” And here He’s carrying out that judgment. But also in support of that is 1 Kings 12 which records when all of this really started when Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel established Bethel as the center of false worship and he is described in 1 Kings 12:33 as going up to the altar. And now Amos sees the Lord at the altar standing there to destroy it and to bring down on the heads of all the worshippers the temple of their false religion.

But the prophecy goes beyond the northern kingdom to include the south as well. We see that in verse 8 when he speaks of the house of Jacob. There will be restoration for both of them, but first there will be sweeping judgment. That occupies the first part, largely most of the chapter, the first verses from 1 through 10.

God speaks and He says there as He stands by the altar, “Smite the capitals so that the thresholds will shake.” The capitals are the top of the pillars. And to shake them would bring down the roof and bring down the whole building. And so the structure will fall, that’s what God is commanding to happen, this whole temple, the whole religion really, which the temple would be symbolic of the whole religion, He’s

going to bring it down. He’s declaring war on this apostate religion that He’s been denouncing all through the Book of Amos.

And no one would escape, as Amos says, in verses 1 through 4, no one can flee far enough or high enough or deep enough to elude God’s wrath. Even those who seem to escape, at least they are taken off into captivity and they seem to have escaped deaths. They’re captives, but they’re alive, even they don’t escape because God says in verse 4, “I will command the sword that it slay them.”

And He’s well able to do this. His words mean something. They’re not empty and that’s made very clear in verses 5 and 6 where God is described in all of His power. He is the Lord God of hosts which mean He’s the Lord God of the armies, the armies of heaven certainly, but even the armies of the earth. He commands them and directs them to carry out His will and His discipline. That’s what He has done at the end of this prophecy.

The nation of the north would be swept away by the Assyrians. They’re God’s rod His people. And so we see His power here described in verses 5 and 6, He touches the land so that it melts and He builds His upper chamber in the heavens. He rules both the heaven and the earth so escape from Him, escape from His justice is futile, even for Israel.

Now that’s the final oracle of the coming judgment given in verses 7 through 10. There’s no escape for them. And the Lord begins by disabusing the nation of a false confidence that they had. They thought that because they were Israel, they were God’s people that they were invulnerable. But He tells them in verse 7 they’re no less accountable for their sin and for their error in their unbelief than the nations.

Verse 7, “‘Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to me, O sons of Israel?’ declares the Lord. ‘Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?’” In other words, God’s sovereign over the nations. Israel came up out of Egypt by the mighty arm, the strong arm of the Lord. That’s true of every nation. He’s moved them where they are.

He was no local deity’s what He’s saying here. That was the ancient mythology that really governed the thinking of the people of that day. They believed in gods and many gods. They didn’t have any trouble believing in Yahweh or Jehovah in Israel and Judah, but they believed in Moloch or whoever else, some other

god in their land. Each of them had their deities ruling and that was their province and so every nation had a local deity.

And of course many of these they believed in many gods in their land, but there'd be a chief deity in each one and what the Lord is saying here in effect is I'm the only God there is. There's no other god. I'm not some local deity. I rule over the entire world. He's the only God. This is what Paul said when he was in Athens and he was invited by the Athenians to speak. You'll remember he preached on the unknown God.

The philosophers of Athens heard the gospel and heard about the God he was preaching and thought it was some new idea and some new God. They wanted to hear about this so he'd seen this statue of the unknown God. It had statues of all kinds of deities. In case they missed one, they put that altar to the unknown God there in the marketplace and so he used that as the point of departure for the sermon that he gave and he speaks of who that unknown God is. He made the world and all things he said. He does not dwell in temples made with hands. He Himself gives to all people life and breath in all things.

So everything that is is from this God that you don't even know. And from one man he made every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation. Well now taking that to be true, that's not only true of those ancient nations, that's true of modern nations as well.

America exists because God willed it. It's part of His plan. Its time, its beginning and end have been appointed by Him. Now that's not fatalism. Fatalism is things happen unavoidably but there's no rhythm or reason to them, they just happen. This is predestination. And predestination is God's will that works according to His all-wise plan for a good purpose which ultimately is encompassed in His glory. So this is something different from fatalism.

Predestination is God's sovereignty and a reminder that we are in His hands and we should be humble. We don't determine things. He does. Now that was the message here to Israel. They weren't humble. And no more exempt from His justice than Ethiopia and He chooses Ethiopia because to their mind it was the nation farthest away that they had any dealings with. So go as far away as you can, you're no

different from them is what He’s saying. That may be way far away from the light, but you’re no different from them.

So He deals with them the way He deals with all the nations. And He deals with His people in justice. That’s perfect justice. He says in verses 8 and following, “Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,” declares the Lord. For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground. All the sinners of my people will die by the sword, those who say, ‘The calamity will not overtake or confront us.’”

In other words, the self-righteous, those who are self-confident and falsely believe that they’re secure, even though they’re in unbelief, their position will be swept away. But God would preserve a remnant. I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob He says. They are like grain in a sieve, that’s the image that He uses here of His judgment, and the purpose of a sieve is to trap what is undesirable so that it can be thrown away. So the things are shaken out in a sieve, the good falls through it, the bad remains and it’s tossed away.

The remnant would be shaken but it will be preserved. So this would not be the end. The remnant was a good sign. It is a sign that God is not finished with His people. It’s a sign that there’s a future for Israel and that’s guaranteed to them by the fact that God is entered into a covenant with them, an unconditional covenant and He cannot cast them off or throw them away.

Now this is an issue. All the issues that Amos deals with really are issues that the other prophets deal with as well, the greater prophets, the major prophets and the minor prophets, the issue of judgment on the nation and the nation’s future. Hosea deals with this and says in Hosea 11 or at least he records the Lord speaking in chapter 11 in verse 8 where God says, “How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel?”

It’s a rhetorical question and the answer is I cannot do that. God cannot give up His people ultimately. They are His eternal people. He is bound to them in covenant. He bound Himself to them and He promises to restore them. The prophecy of doing that is in the last verses of this book and that’s the theme and the subject on

which it concludes. The phrases in that day and days are coming signify that what He is describing here refers to the distant future.

Verse 11, “In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares the Lord who does this.” Well, that raises a question. To understand what He’s talking about, here we need to know what is the booth of David.

Well, it’s the house of David. It’s the rule of David. The phrase is probably taken from 2 Samuel 7:16 where God promised to build David’s house. You’ll remember David wants to build the Lord’s house. He wants to build the temple and the Lord says, “No, you’re not going to do that. That’s for someone after you. That’s for your son Solomon. No, you’re not going to build a house for me, I’m going to build a house for you.” And that’s his dynasty that he’s spoken of there.

The Davidic house, the house of David and the kings that would come from him. The house, though, or tent or tabernacle had collapsed. The nation Israel and Judah would be defeated and deported. The last king of Israel would be taken off to Babylon and to this day a king of David has not ruled the nation.

But the prophecy is that will change. Israel’s fortunes will be restored. It seems impossible. Admittedly I think a lot of people dismiss it. Maybe not so much since 1948, but it seems like an unlikely thing and maybe an impossible thing that an ancient regime would be restored and ancient people reconstituted and reestablished among the nations, but that’s the promise here.

And it will be fulfilled. It’s not being fulfilled now. I’m not saying that what’s taking place in Israel today doesn’t have some bearing on what’s going to take place, but I don’t think that that is the fulfillment and that’s what this is describing here. This will be fulfilled when Christ, the son of David, David’s greater son, will return and will establish his kingdom.

Now that’s the prophecy of Amos. There’s a future for Israel. And it is glorious. God will raise it up and rebuild it as in the days of old He says, which is to its former glory, looking back to the time of David. But really, it will be far greater than that. The glory that’s to come will eclipse any past glory that Israel has enjoyed. The boundaries of the future kingdom will expand to include Edom and all the nations really. This will be worldwide kingdom.

You can read about that in the next prophecy which we'll look at next week, Obadiah where the promises they'll possess Edom and this kingdom will be throughout the world. Well, that's the millennial kingdom, it's the kingdom of heaven. This is blessing. It is not like the conquest and gentile rule in which one nation subdues another. I think there will be that, although the Lord is going to come back with a sword and He's going to establish His kingdom in that way.

But what's described here is not subduing and destroying so much as the grace that's extended to include the gentiles as well. It's the fulfilment of Genesis 12:3 that Abraham would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. And that will happen when Christ returns and establishes His kingdom which will encompass all the nations of the earth. The remnant Edom that's referred to here is really a representative nation. It represents all the nations in Numbers 20 and this is probably what is in the background of referring to Edom here.

Numbers 20 is that incident when the nation come out of Israel or out of Egypt, wandered in the wilderness and it was seeking to go from the Sinai up to Canaan and they wanted to pass through Edom and promise they'd stay on the road, they wouldn't get off, they wouldn't eat anything that was not theirs and if they did, they'd pay for it. But the Edomites would not let them pass and opposed them and was an enemy of Israel.

So Edom here represents the nations of the earth and their opposition to the people of God to Israel, but what is indicated here, that's going to change. Their enmity will be turned into amenity. It'll be turned into faith and they will become believing people. I think we find what's described here described in Isaiah 2:2 where in the last days which is very much like in that day here in verse 11, all the nations Isaiah said will stream to the mountain of the house of the Lord.

Going to come up to Jerusalem. There will be worldwide revival in the future. A revival of Israel and I mean the north and the south together, the nation as whole, but also all the nations will experience that. God has promised that and that will happen. And that will begin a glorious age on the earth.

It's described in verses 13 through 15, “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, ‘when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine and the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined

cities and live in them; they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them,’ says the Lord your God.”

This description is really unlike anything that mankind has known. You can’t look back at history and say, “Well, this happened in this time or that time.” It’s an age of abundant productivity and worldwide material and spiritual prosperity. The curse will be lifted from the ground, it’s going to be a restoration of Eden, something like that. Super fruitful. In Israel plowing began after the rains in October and November. Reaping ended in April and May, so there’s a gap of, what, something like six months.

But at that time, the one plowing will overtake the one reaping. There will be so much grain and fruit that the people will not be able to gather it soon enough before they begin plowing again. And it’s the same with wine. The mountains will drip with it. Grapes were pressed in August to September and they were planted from November to December, so there’s a gap between those of about eight months.

But it’s not enough. Those who tread the grapes will still be treading them. They’ll be so many of them that by the time they’re planting again they’re still treading grapes. It’s a time of abundance, of fruitfulness in the age to come. A picture of unprecedented prosperity when the land of milk and honey will really live up to that description.

The garden of Eden will be restored and not only I think we’re to understand of material blessing, but it’s reflective of the spiritual blessing as well, that this is reflective of men’s heart as well as the fruitiness of the earth. It’s going to be a glorious time. This is the restoration of Israel’s fortunes and it’s described in verse 14 as a return from captivity. “Also I will restore the captivity of my people Israel, and they will rebuild ruined cities and live in them.”

So that’s been explained as a return from Babylon and that did happen when Judah returned from Babylon. They rebuilt the walls of the city and began living in the land again. But remember, this is addressed to the north as well as the south. This is primarily a prophecy to the northern kingdom which long before Israel or the south, Judah, went off into captivity, Israel, the northern kingdom had been taken off into Assyria and had been swallowed up there. They didn’t come back.

So this refers to more than Judah and it describes an age of unprecedented prosperity like nothing the nation experienced. It hasn't experienced anything like that. This is lasting prosperity. Judah was under hostile gentile rule from the time it returned from Persia until AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and they were scattered again.

The peace the Jews experienced during that time was always tenuous, it was always a shaky peace. And what is described here isn't bad at all, what's described in this prophecy is stability, it's rebuilding cities, it's planting vineyards and gardens and it's permanent. Israel is restored to its land, that's the description in verse 15. "I will also plant them on their land, and they not again be uprooted from their land which I have given them."

God will plant them and they will not again be uprooted from the land. That has never been fulfilled. After the nation returned and remember, only a small part of the nation returned, the nation of Judah. Most of them remained in Persia. But after they returned, they were again uprooted. Now this passage specifically versus – so what I'm saying is this is yet to be fulfilled. But this passage and specifically verses 11 and 12 was quoted by James at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

So I want you to turn there and we're going to spend maybe the next ten minutes looking at that and the end of this prophecy. But they are at the Jerusalem Council, the issue was debated on the method of gentile salvation. They weren't really debating can gentiles be saved but how are gentiles saved, by becoming Jews or are they saved through faith alone. Did they need to be circumcised in order to be saved? That was the real issue that they were debating.

And so what had happened to bring this about is some Jews had come up from Jerusalem and they come to Antioch or Paul was ministering and Barnabus and they were preaching this and it caused great confusion. You need to become Jews in order to be saved and so Paul and Barnabus went to Jerusalem where they described the conversion of gentiles, a sect of the Pharisees were there that believed in the necessity of circumcision.

Remember, circumcision was extremely important under the old covenant. You were not in the old covenant and under the blessings of God if you were not circumcised even if your parents were Israelites and that's emphasized in Genesis 17. So it was very important to them and they're learning gradually what is important and

what isn't, what has ended in terms of God's commands and what remained. And so this debate was understandable and it was heated. There was much debate.

Paul and Barnabus spoke and then Peter spoke and he reminded the council of his experience in Cornelius' house which was a very enlightening moment for them recorded in Acts 11, how he gave the gospel to these gentiles and God gave the Holy Spirit to them. It was given to the gentiles at the moment of faith just the way that he was given to circumcised Jews.

So Peter says in verse 9, “And he made no distinction,” this is verse 9 of Acts 15, “and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” We believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the same way as they also are.

All the people kept silent and they were listening to Barnabus and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the gentiles. So the debate was over, it was clear that salvation is apart from ceremonies and works. It's all by grace through faith in Christ, that's the gospel. Faith in the gospel results in salvation.

But then James speaks and he quotes our passage, he quotes Amos 9:11-12, verse 13, “After they had stopped speaking, James answered saying, “Brethren, listen to me, Simon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the gentiles of people for His name. With this, the words of the prophets agree just as it is written. After these things I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen. And I will rebuild its ruins and I will restore it so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord and all the gentiles who are called by my name,’ says the Lord who makes these things known from long ago. Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the gentiles.”

Now in the Hebrew text and in the Greek translation of it, the Septuagint, the text is, “In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David.” James quotes it differently. “After these things,” he says, “I will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David.” That change from in that day in the Hebrew text, in that future day to after these things seems to be a deliberate change by James recognizing that this present age in which we're living, the age in which the apostles live and which we live is a

time of divine discipline on the nation. The nation of Israel rejected Christ so the Lord turned from them to the gentiles. Paul explains that in Romans 11, the natural branches of the olive tree had been broken off, the unnatural or the wild branches had been grafted in representing the gentiles.

That is presently happening. This is the time, the age of largely gentile salvation. There's a remnant that's being saved among the Jews, but generally this is the time of placing wild branches in the olive tree. But that will only be, as Paul says in Romans 11:25, until the fullness of the gentiles come in. God has a number of gentiles He's going to bring in from generation to generation over the centuries. He's doing that now. And then when He has done that, there will be a change and Paul wrote in verse 26 of Romans 11, “And all Israel will be saved.” “Thus all Israel will be saved.”

That's Israel's future. God is not finished with the Jews. We have evidence of that, I think next door to us. Where are we? I never get my bearings right. Wherever that – next to us here or in down the street a block. They're still intact, they're still there. The Jewish people are still a people. And they're still a people because God is going to save them, all Israel someday in the future.

James indicated that by saying, “After these things,” that is after this period of discipline, after this age of calling out the gentiles, God will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen. So he was saying, “We recognize God's work in the present age. We recognize God is saving gentiles just as Paul and Barnabus said, just as Peter has said and we've had ample demonstration of that from Cornelius and others and the miracles that the apostles are doing among them.

This is a time of gentile salvation. “But after these things,” James says, “and in that day,” that is in that future day, “then the tabernacle of David would be rebuilt,” which again you'll remember is the house of David from 2 Samuel 7 when the king of the line of David will come and establish his kingdom and rule the earth.

That promise is fulfilled in Christ, David's greatest descendent and Lord. It will be rebuilt, a tabernacle, Christ will reign when he returns to this earth and establishes His kingdom. Now some have interpreted the tabernacle of David as the church, but as Dr. Johnson pointed out, God isn't rebuilding the church, He's building the church. And there's a big distinction between that. It's not rebuilding the tabernacle that's fallen down.

He's building something different. He's building something new. He's building the church and he will rebuild Israel and also where has the church ever been called the tent of David? This is about David. This is about his messianic line, this is about his people, this is about the Jews, about Israel, they will be saved.

That's how the Book of Amos ends, a book that is filled with judgment from chapter to chapter that begins with the roar of a lion, a threatening roar but ends with restoration and peace. So again, we see in this final vision and final chapter of the Book of Amos both the severity and the kindness of the Lord. And mainly kindness thankfully.

Someday the God who has opened our eyes the gospel will open the eyes of Israel and they will be saved. And then, as Paul indicates in Romans 11:12, then unprecedented blessing will come to this earth. Well, that's their hope and that's our hope as well. Let me close this in a word of prayer and then we'll continue in our prayer time.

[Prayer] Father, thank you for this time of study in the Book of Amos. It is a book that is filled from chapter to chapter, nine chapters of judgment. And those chapters are convicting for us as well because they go to the heart of our problem so often. Love for the world and how it can pull us away from our devotion to you. And so we learn a great deal from the sins of the northern kingdom of Israel.

We also learn a great deal about your grace and we certainly come to that at the end with the future of the world, that it's going to be a glorious future. It is a glorious future. It will be filled with a glorious kingdom and we thank you for that and thank you for making that our future as well. Thank you for all that we have in Christ, for this book, for all 66 books of the bible. Thank you for the gift of life and your revelation to us and it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.