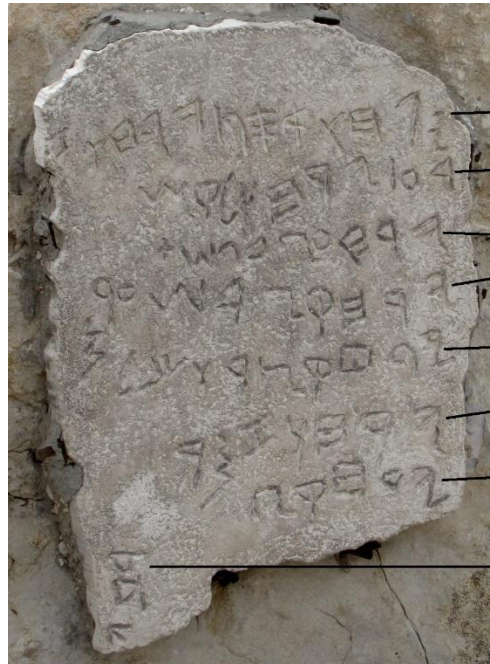


Amos 7:1-17



Gezer Calendar
(dated to 925 BC; found in 1908 in Gezer, Israel)

- Two months gathering (Aug-Sept-Oct, olives)
- Two months sowing (Oct-Nov-Dec, cereals)
- Two months late sowing (Dec-Jan-Feb, vegetables)
- One month cutting flax (Feb-Mar, flax/hay)
- One month reaping barley (Mar-April, barley)
- One month reaping and measuring grain (April-May, wheat)
- Two months pruning (May-June-July, grapes)
- One month summer fruit (July-Aug, fruit)
- Abij (the name of the scribe which is short for Abijah which means "Yah (or YAHWEH) is my father")
size: 4.3 x 2.8 inches

Amos 7:1 – This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, he was forming locusts when the latter growth was just beginning to sprout, and behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.

1. Amos chapter 7 begins with three visions:
 - a. One and two are cancelled
 - b. Three is a warning of an invasion resulting in national overthrow
2. “showed me” also means “reveal”, “inform” and “make visible”. These visions involve both seeing and hearing the Word of the Lord.
3. Yahweh was “forming”. He was preparing this disaster. (In the second vision he will be “calling” or speaking something into motion.)
4. “locusts” or grasshoppers have eggs that hatch in the spring moisture
5. Two main crops each year
 - a. First, planted in the fall (Oct-Nov-Dec), watered by the late fall rains, then harvested in the spring (Mar-Apr)
 - b. Second, planted in the winter (Dec-Jan-Feb), watered by spring rains, then harvested in early summer (Apr-May).
6. “King’s mowings” were the King’s share of the crop. This would be a form of taxation and was possibly the government’s claim on the whole of the first harvest in March-April.
 - a. Samuel warned Israel this would happen if they selected a kingdom with a king instead of being ruled by the LORD (1 Samuel 8:11-17)
 - b. The people’s share came from the second harvest (Apr-May)
7. The Lord was planning a plague on this second crop of the year. The government had already taken their share, but the people’s provision would have been devoured. The results would have been even more oppression. God would have been allowing the powerful to prosper, but

the weak, struggling middle class would have been wiped out and entirely dependent upon a corrupt ruling class that was already oppressing them unjustly.

Amos 7:2 – When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said,

“O Lord God, please forgive!

How can Jacob stand?

He is so small!”

1. Amos saw in the vision that there would be nothing left for the people and their animals, so Amos intercedes concerning the potential future.
2. “forgive” is the Hebrew *slh* which is only used of divine forgiveness (Num. 14:20; 1 Kings 8:30; Isaiah 55:7)
3. Amos is playing the role of the prophet as the mediator and interceding for the people.
 - a. Joel is calling on God’s mercy, not the people’s repentance. (Note: Jonah did not call on God’s mercy, but the people of Nineveh repented.)
 - b. God was not “blessing” the upper class, but was instead using the upper class along with natural (divine) events to judge the nation.

Amos 7:3 – The LORD relented concerning this:

“It shall not be,” said the LORD.

1. God responds to the prophets cry for the northern kingdom.
2. The Lord does respond and change direction because of human interaction.
3. A sovereign God who never changes direction is not a biblical concept.
 - a. God is sovereign, but in regard to overall power and authority.
 - b. God is immutable (unchanging, unable to change), but in regard to his character and his nature.
4. This judgment was avoided. God canceled this phase of the judgment.

Amos 7:4 – This is what the Lord God showed me: behold, the Lord God was calling for a judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land.

1. A second judgment is showed to Amos through another vision
2. Here Yahweh is “calling” or speaking a judgment of fire in to operation.
3. This is judgment by fire, likely the Lord passing through in his wrath as in chapter one
4. This fire consumes:
 - a. “devours the great deep”
 - i. “great deep” is Hebrew *tehom* and refers to the depths of the seas and includes the cosmic underworld.
 - ii. This would seem to be an eschatological event ending life on earth as we know it.
 - b. “eating up the land”
 - i. After the destruction of the great deep the fire would continue to eat up the land.

- ii. There is no hope for Israel in this event which would end not only Israel's existence, but the human race (think flood of Noah, but with fire). Consider:
 1. 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed."
 2. Deuteronomy 32:22, "For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains."

Amos 7:5 – Then I said,

"O Lord God, please cease!

How can Jacob stand?

He is so small!"

Amos 7:6 – The LORD relented concerning this:

"This also shall not be," said the Lord God."

1. Amos, the interceding prophet, begs the Lord to "cease" and the Lord announces "This also shall not be."
2. At least at this point in history this event is averted.
3. "O Lord God, please cease!" is literally, "Lord Yahweh, STOP!"

Amos 7:7 – This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand.

1. "plumb line" is Hebrew *anak* from the term *annaku*.
 - a. It was thought (actually, it was the best guess in translation) this word meant "tin" or "lead" which caused interpreters to consider it a "lead weight" like something that would be used like a plumb line in constructing or squaring up a wall.
 - b. Recent research has revealed the word *annaku* is clearly the word for "tin" and has nothing to do with "lead", "lead weight" or a plumb line.
 - c. The Hebrew word for plum and line is completely different and is used in 2 Kings 21:13 and Isaiah 28:17, but it is not used here.
 - i. 2 Kings 21:13 – "And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria, and the plumb line of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down."
 - ii. Isaiah 28:17 – "And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter."

2. Clearly Yahweh is holding something we would clearly translate as “TIN” in his hand and is standing beside a wall. So the instrument in the Lord’s hand and the wall whose proper construction involves the instrument is clearly part of the vision. In fact Amos is asked to identify the instrument the Lord is holding which the Lord will use not for a wall, but for his people.

Amos 7:8 – And the LORD said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

And I said, “A plumb line.”

Then the Lord said,

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

**Amos 7:9 – “the 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.”**

1. The Lord asks Amos what he sees, and Amos for the third time gives a one word answer by saying, “Tin.” (not “plumb line” which is based on the false understanding that the word means “lead” and “tin” which then is assumed to refer to a lead plumb line which is far away from the actual word which means “tin”.)
2. It is suggested that the meaning of this is a word play on what Hebrew word the word “tin” in Hebrew sounds like: “moaning”.
3. The Lord is not asked to change his mind and the Lord does not change his mind: “tin”, or “moaning” it will be for Israel.
4. The Lord is leaving Israel (just as he will leave Judah in Ezekiel 10:4) and the result will be “tin” by the walls, or, possibly, “moaning” by the walls.

Amos 7:10-11 – Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying,

“Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words.”

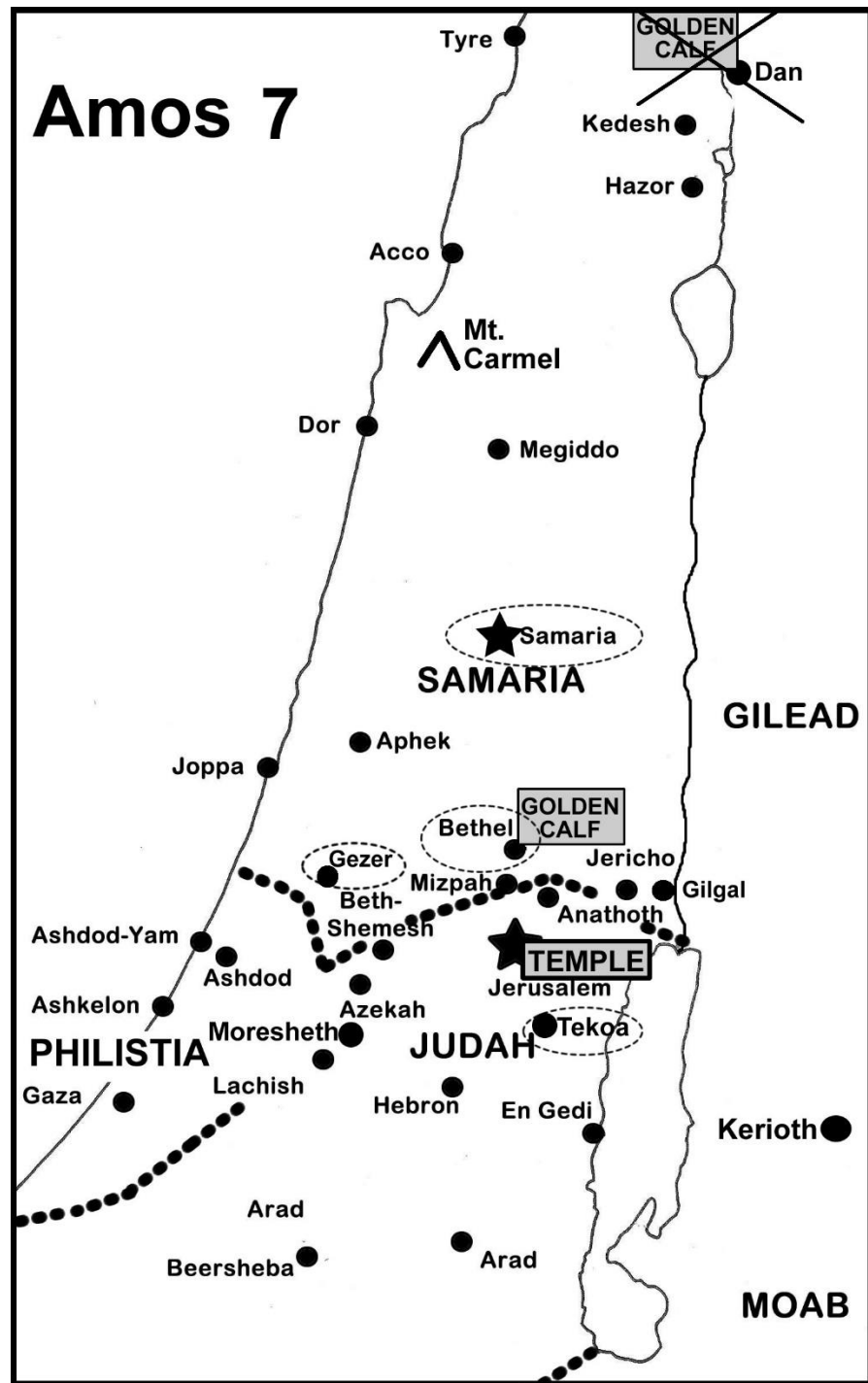
For thus Amos has said,

“Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.”

1. Amaziah likely sent a letter reporting Amos’ activity to Jeroboam II.
2. The report opens with the concept that Amos is advancing a conspiracy against Jeroboam, not that Amos is warning the land of the corruption in the religion Amaziah is promoting.
3. Amaziah is actually the enemy of the people and Jeroboam. Amos is not the enemy. Amos is identifying the problem that is going to result in conspiracy and national overthrow, including the ending of Jeroboam’s dynasty.
4. Amos’ words or prophetic preaching are summarized by Amaziah:
 - a. The death of Jeroboam by the “sword”, which was a creation of Amaziah to arouse the king’s attention. The “sword” could refer to death in battle or death by assassination.
 - b. The exile of the nation. This is exactly right and repeated immediately by Amos in 7:17

Amos 7:12-13 – And Amaziah said to Amos,

“O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”



1. Bethel was clearly the place of the original Golden Calf shrine, but the king of Israel (at this time Jeroboam II) most likely had a royal palace/sanctuary also in Bethel besides in the nation's capital city of Samaria.
2. Northern Israel may have considered themselves more progressive and culturally advanced due to their contemporary religion (paganized) and their access to the latest styles and fashions of the nations due to their location on the trade routes when compared to Judah being tucked away in the hill country of Judah without access to the trade routes, the Mediterranean coast and surrounded by wilderness to the east and the south. Israel was progressive; Judah was the flyover country.
3. It appears that Amaziah was acting on his own and rebuking Amos without an official response from the king. Amaziah never appeals to the words or letter of the king who most likely is not going to respond to a priest's complaint about a prophet.

Amos 7:14-15 – Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah,

**“I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son,
but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs.
But the LORD took me from following the flock,
and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’**

1. Amos does not reject that he is a prophet, but he does clarify that he is not a professional prophet. In fact, Amos is indeed a prophet of Yahweh and claims to have been commissioned and sent by Yahweh's will (but, not Amos' will!).
2. Amos was:
 - a. NOT a professional prophet as is fiercely defended in Amos 7:14.
 - b. Amos was a “shepherd” (as in *noqedim* or *noqed*), but not a shepherd (as in *roeh*) which merely kept the sheep. In 2 Kings 3:4 *noqed* is a sheep-breeder which was how King Mesa of Moab produced large amounts of tribute to pay Ahab of Israel. Large amounts of sheep and goat wool was produced.
 - c. Amos also identifies himself as a herdsman (*boqer*) in 7:14 which means a cattle herder.
 - d. Amos also identifies himself as a “dresser of sycamore trees” in 7:14. But, sycamore trees were only grown in the western foothills (towards the Mediterranean Sea) and in the Jordan Valley. Amos would have had to be a migrant worker or own land/business to make this occupation work while still breeding sheep, watching over cattle and living in Tekoa. The sycamore trees would have their figs pierced or scraped to hasten maturity and repel insects.
 - e. Amos was not an uneducated shepherd, but was likely a wealthy landowner who lived in the city of Tekoa where he would have had a place in the gate as a leader and elder.
 - f. Amos likely traveled to purchase sheep and tend to his sycamore trees.

- g. Amos was the first prophet to record and preserve his message in written form.

Amos 7:16 – Now therefore hear the word of the LORD.

**“You say, ‘Do not prophesy against Israel,
and do not preach against the house of Isaac.’**

Amos 7:17 – Therefore thus says the LORD:

**“Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city,
and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword,
and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line;
you yourself shall die in an unclean land,
and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land.”**

1. Classic use of “You say...” (Amaziah), therefore “Yahweh says” announcements.
2. Since the false priest addressed Yahweh’s prophet directly, Yahweh will personally address the false priest Amaziah through his prophet addressing five areas of importance to Amaziah:
 - a. Amaziah’s wife...will be a prostitute in the city. Is this city Bethel where she is left behind since she is alone without the husband who was taken to a northern land? Is this in a pagan city in the north where she was taken alone without her husband? Either way Amaziah’s wife will have no one to provide for her (such as a family) so she will have to resort to prostitution to provide for herself.
 - b. Amaziah’s children...will be killed in the Assyrian invasion
 - c. Amaziah’s property...will be lost in the invasion and redistributed when the new government is set up
 - d. Amaziah himself...will not be left behind in Bethel after the deportation, will not die in the invasion like his children, but will himself be deported to the land in the far north away from his wife, his children, his property and his national home.
 - e. Amaziah’s culture/people...will be exiled away from the land of Israel.
3. A treaty of the Assyrian Asshu-nirari V says something similar:
“May Mati’ilu become like a prostitute and his soldiers women.
May they receive gifts like a prostitute in the square of the city.”
4. Religion, institutional priests and professional clergy always oppose the prophets and people called by the Lord.
5. Amaziah’s threat against Amos will not stop God from interacting with Israel nor stop the deportation.
6. But, Amaziah’s threat against the Lord’s prophet may have put a target on Amaziah’s back!