

Part 6

I Will Restore My People

Inspire
CHRISTIAN
FORMATION

The point of this study

The goal of every Inspire study is to draw closer to Jesus Christ. In this series, we will explore the role of the prophets through the ministry of Amos. Though each prophet has a unique voice and message, Amos gives us a powerful glimpse into the prophetic tradition and its call to justice, faithfulness, and readiness to encounter God. As we listen to his challenge to "Prepare to meet your God," we will discover what the prophets still have to teach us today.

This study draws on the Four Ancient Lenses of Interpretation, which are introduced in the Inspire video series **How to Read the Bible (Part 2)**. These lenses help us engage Scripture more deeply, exploring its literary, theological, kingdom, and ethical dimensions.

The check-in & opening prayer

We know that what we bring to the study can impact what we take from the study. So, let's take a moment to check in with ourselves and to ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate our hearts. You can do this through personal journaling or by sharing with the group. If sharing in a group, try to keep your reflections brief so that everyone has an opportunity to be heard.



I wonder what was a highlight of your week.

I wonder where you may have needed prayer or support this week.

I wonder where you noticed God at work this week.

I wonder what you are bringing to this study.
*(questions, concerns, distractions, hopes, fears, learnings...)***.**

I wonder what you hope to receive from God through this study.

Holy God,
open our eyes to see the world as you see it, open our ears to hear your voice through the prophets, and open our hearts to be transformed by your truth. Give us courage to seek your justice, hope to trust your kingdom, and faithfulness to follow your call; through Jesus Christ, your living Word, our friend and helper. Amen.

Context *(read and reflect)*

*Reading Scripture through the **Literary Lens**. There is a little more context on page 4, following the Scripture. Read that first, then return here to mark and note the Scripture.*

Amos 8 continues the series of visions that began in Chapter 7. This time Amos sees a basket of summer fruit. In Hebrew there is a wordplay between *summer fruit* and *end*: the fruit is ripe, and so is Israel — the time has come. But Amos immediately reminds us why judgement has come. Merchants impatiently wait for the holy days to finish so they can return to business, using dishonest measures and exploiting those who are poor. Once again, Amos refuses to separate worship from everyday life. God has seen what is happening to the vulnerable and declares, "**Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.**"

I wonder what kind of fruit can grow when injustice is allowed to ripen.



Through Amos, God has been speaking. Again and again the prophet has warned, pleaded and called Israel to return. But now Amos describes a startling reversal. A time will come when people will desperately seek the word of the LORD and will not be able to find it. The famine will not be for food or water, but for hearing God's voice. The people who would not listen when God spoke will discover what it is like to long for a word that does not come. Perhaps one of the most frightening possibilities in Amos is not that God speaks in judgement, but that **God becomes silent**.

I wonder whether you have ever longed to hear a voice that was no longer there.



Scripture *(mark and note)*

Scripture invites us to slow down and listen. Read the passage aloud three times, perhaps with a different reader each time, allowing a moment of silence between readings. As you listen, underline or make notes about what catches your attention. ***First Reading — What catches your attention?*** *I wonder what words, images, or ideas stand out to you.* ***Second Reading — What challenges you?*** *I wonder what troubles you or raises questions.* ***Third Reading — What connections do you notice?*** *I wonder where this passage echoes other parts of Scripture, reminds you of Jesus, or speaks to your own life.*

Amos 8:1-7

This is what the Lord God showed me: a basket of summer fruit. He said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the Lord said to me,

"The end has come upon my people Israel;
I will spare them no longer.
The songs of the temple shall become
wailings on that day,"
says the Lord God;
"the dead bodies shall be many,
cast out in every place. Be silent!"

Circle the words connected with hunger, seeking, and finding. What changes as the passage moves from food to God's word?

Hear this, you who trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
saying, "When will the new moon be over
so that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath,
so that we may offer wheat for sale?
We will make the ephah smaller and the shekel heavier
and practice deceit with false balances,
buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and selling the sweepings of the wheat."

The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

Amos 8:11-12

The time is surely coming, says the Lord God,
when I will send a famine on the land,
not a famine of bread or a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the Lord.
They shall wander from sea to sea
and from north to east;
they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord,
but they shall not find it.

Underline the things God says, "I will" do. What changes as the passage continues?

Amos 9:8-10
The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom,
and I will destroy it from the face of the earth
—except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,
says the Lord.

For I will command
and shake the house of Israel among all the nations,
as one shakes with a sieve
but no pebble shall fall to the ground.
All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword,
who say, "Evil shall not overtake or meet us."

Amos 9:11-15
On that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen
and repair its breaches
and raise up its ruins
and rebuild it as in the days of old,
in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations who are called by my name,
says the Lord who does this.

The time is surely coming, says the Lord,
when the one who plows shall catch up with the one who reaps
and the treader of grapes with the one who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.
I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.
I will plant them upon their land,
and they shall never again be plucked up
out of the land that I have given them,
says the Lord your God.

More Context *(read and reflect)*

*Reading Scripture through the **Literary Lens**.*

As Amos moves toward the end of his prophecy, judgement still has not disappeared. God will shake Israel "**as one shakes with a sieve.**" Everything that seemed secure will be disturbed and tested. Yet for the first time, something else becomes unmistakable: "**I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob.**" The image of the sieve holds judgement and preservation together. Israel will be shaken, but will not simply cease to exist. After so much language of destruction, Amos begins to open a small space through which hope can enter.

I wonder whether you have ever experienced a time when what seemed secure was shaken.



Then, in the final verses of Amos, the imagery changes. God will raise what has fallen, repair what has been broken, rebuild ruined cities and restore the people. Vineyards will be planted, gardens will produce fruit, and the mountains themselves will seem to overflow with abundance. The book that has spoken so often of violence, famine, destruction and death ends with people building homes, tending gardens and enjoying their fruit. Finally God says, "**I will plant them.**" Judgement has been real, but it does not have the final word. Amos ends with a vision of a God who rebuilds, restores and plants.

I wonder what this ending reveals about what God ultimately desires for God's people.



I will restore my people

*Reading Scripture through the **Theological Lens**.*

Amos does not end by pretending everything is all right. Israel will be shaken, and choices have consequences. God promises instead to **raise what has fallen, repair what has been broken, and rebuild what lies in ruins**. Grace does not erase the ruins; God begins rebuilding among them. The people plant vineyards and gardens again, and finally God says, "I will plant them." This is earthy grace: rebuilding, planting, tending, and waiting for fruit.

I wonder what it means to believe in restoration when some things cannot simply be undone.



Christians see this pattern most deeply in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Easter does not erase Good Friday. Jesus dies, is buried, and Holy Saturday leaves his friends in a world where everything they trusted has been shaken. Even the risen Jesus still bears his wounds. **Resurrection does not pretend death never happened; it is God bringing life on the other side of death.** Grace does not always spare us the consequences of what has happened, but death does not determine what God can do next.

I wonder what the wounds of the risen Jesus reveal about the kind of restoration God gives us.



The Bible ends with this hope embracing the whole creation. Revelation sees a new heaven and a new earth: God dwelling among us, tears wiped away, and the tree of life bringing healing to the nations. God declares, "**See, I am making all things new.**" Amos's rebuilt cities, vineyards, and gardens belong to this same earthy hope. God's answer to what has been broken is not abandonment, but restoration.

I wonder what you hope God will one day make new.



Sharing

*Reading Scripture through the **Kingdom of God Lens**.*

I wonder what Amos's vision of rebuilding and planting reveals about God's kingdom.

I wonder what it means to hope for a kingdom where what has been broken can be made new.

I wonder where we can already see signs of God bringing life out of places that have been shaken.

*Reading the Scripture through the **Ethical Lens**.*

I wonder what in our lives might need rebuilding rather than simply returning to the way it was.

I wonder where we might be called to help restore something that has been damaged.

I wonder what we need to plant now if we hope to see good fruit in the future.

You may close in prayer.