

Amos 7:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.

Analysis

And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee (וְיָמָה אַמְכָּלָה לֹאֲכָל) —in this vision, Amos sees the locust swarm about to devour Israel's crops completely. The phrase "made an end of eating" (killah le'ekhol, קִלָּה לֹאֲכָל) indicates total consumption, leaving nothing. At this critical moment, Amos intercedes: "forgive, I beseech thee" (selach-na, סְלַח-נָא). The verb salach (סְלַח, "forgive/pardon") appears almost exclusively with God as subject—only God can truly forgive covenant violations.

By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small (מִי יָקֹם יַעֲקֹב כִּי קָטָן הוּא) —Amos's intercessory plea uses the name "Jacob" rather than "Israel," emphasizing the nation's vulnerability and dependence on divine grace. The verb qum (מֵקִים, "arise/stand") asks who will sustain or restore Jacob if this judgment falls. The description "he is small" (qaton hu, קָטָן הוּא) doesn't refer to population size but to helplessness and insignificance apart from God. This is the language of covenant relationship—Moses used similar intercession after the golden calf (Exodus 32:11-14), as did Abraham for Sodom (Genesis 18:23-32).

Amos's intercession demonstrates the prophet's mediatorial role. Though commissioned to announce judgment, he doesn't delight in destruction but pleads for mercy. This foreshadows Christ, the ultimate Prophet-Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 7:25), who ever lives to make intercession. The passage teaches that

God's warnings are meant to provoke repentance and intercession, not fatalistic resignation. Verse 3 reveals God's response: "The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD." Divine "repentance" (nacham, נִחְם) means God relents from announced judgment when conditions change—here, because of prophetic intercession. This doesn't contradict God's immutability (Numbers 23:19, 1 Samuel 15:29) but demonstrates His responsiveness within covenant relationship. Prayer matters; intercession moves God's hand.

Historical Context

This vision likely occurred early in Amos's prophetic ministry, before Israel's impenitence had exhausted divine patience. The locust imagery recalls Joel's locust plague (Joel 1:4-7, 2:25), which devastated Judah and prompted national repentance. Locusts were covenant curses for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:38, 42), capable of destroying entire harvests in hours. Ancient Near Eastern texts document locust plagues' catastrophic impact on agriculture and economy.

Amos's double intercession (verses 2 and 5) successfully delays judgment, showing God's patience and the power of prophetic prayer. However, verses 7-9 and chapter 8 reveal a shift: God declares "I will not again pass by them any more" (7:8, 8:2). Israel's persistent refusal to repent eventually exhausted divine forbearance. The intercession pattern—warning, prayer, delay, repeated warning, final judgment—appears throughout Scripture (Abraham for Sodom, Moses for Israel, prophets for Judah). God gives multiple opportunities for repentance before executing final judgment.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Amos's intercession for Israel despite their sin model Christ's intercessory ministry for believers?
2. What does it mean that prayer can move God to relent from announced judgment without contradicting His sovereignty?

Interlinear Text

וְאִם	וְכִי	הִ	כָּלָה	לְאָכֹל	אֶת
H1961	H518		And it came to pass that when they had made an end	of eating	H853
			H3615	H398	
שְׁבָב	רַצְחָנָה	עַשְׁבָּה	אָדָם	יְהֹוָה	מִן
the grass	of the land	then I said	O Lord	Forgive	arise
H6212	H776	H559	H136	H3068	H4310
				H5545	H6965
בְּעִזָּה	כִּי	כִּי	כִּי	כִּי	כִּי
I beseech thee by whom shall Jacob	H3588	for he is small	H1931		
H3290			H6996		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 37:4 (References God): It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

Ezekiel 11:13 (References God): And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

Jeremiah 42:2 (References God): And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)

Jeremiah 14:7 (References Lord): O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.

Exodus 10:15 (Parallel theme): For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

Ezekiel 9:8 (References God): And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?