

Amos 8:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit.

Analysis

Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit—God shows Amos a fourth vision (following locusts in 7:1-3, fire in 7:4-6, and plumb line in 7:7-9). The Hebrew kelub qayits (קְלֻבָּקַיִת, "basket of summer fruit") depicts late-harvest fruit—figs, grapes, dates gathered at summer's end. The term qayits (קַיִת) means "summer" but specifically the hot, dry season culminating in final harvest before agricultural dormancy.

The vision functions as visual wordplay preparing for verse 2's devastating pun. God's prophetic pedagogy often uses ordinary objects to convey theological truth—Jeremiah sees an almond branch (shaqed) signaling God is watching (shoqed, Jeremiah 1:11-12); here, summer fruit (qayits) signals the end (qets, verse 2). The basket represents Israel as harvested fruit—gathered, ripe, at their end. Just as summer fruit is picked because it's fully mature and won't develop further, so Israel has reached maximum ripeness in sin and faces imminent judgment.

This vision occurs after Amos's confrontation with Amaziah (7:10-17), demonstrating that opposition to prophetic truth doesn't silence God's word but intensifies judgment. The progression through the four visions shows escalating severity: God relented after the first two (7:3, 6) but declares finality in the third (7:8, "I will not again pass by them") and fourth (8:2, "I will not again pass by them any more"). Summer fruit, usually a symbol of blessing and abundance, becomes judgment imagery—what appears as prosperity is actually death-ripeness.

Historical Context

Agricultural cycles structured ancient Israelite life. Summer harvest (June-September) gathered late-ripening crops—grapes, figs, dates, olives. This final harvest before autumn rains was crucial for winter survival. Farmers collected fruit in baskets (kelub) for immediate consumption, drying, or winemaking. Summer fruit was delicate and perishable, requiring quick processing before spoiling.

Amos, as a shepherd and cultivator of sycamore figs (7:14), knew agricultural rhythms intimately. His audience would immediately understand the imagery: summer fruit represents culmination, maturity, and finality. There's no fruit after summer harvest; the agricultural year ends, awaiting the next cycle. But Israel's next cycle would be exile, not replanting.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God uses ordinary objects and experiences to communicate spiritual truth, and how should this shape your attentiveness to God's voice?
2. How does the image of Israel as ripe summer fruit warn against presuming on God's patience when living in persistent sin?

Interlinear Text

הָרָא נִכְּנָה

H3541

shewed

H7200

אָדָנִי

Thus hath the Lord

H136

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם

GOD

H3069

כֹּל וּבְ

H2009

unto me and behold a basket

H3619

: יְזִירָה

of summer fruit

H7019

Additional Cross-References

Amos 7:1 (References God): Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.

Amos 7:7 (References Lord): Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

Amos 7:4 (References God): Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part.

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