

Amos 8:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

Analysis

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day—God announces cosmic disruption accompanying judgment. The phrase **in that day** (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, bayyom hahu) signals eschatological judgment, the "Day of the LORD" Amos described in 5:18-20 as "darkness, and not light." **The sun to go down at noon** (בְּשַׁעַר הַשְׁמֶשׁ בְּצַדְקָתִים, veheveti hashemesh batsahorayim)—the brightest hour becomes darkest, reversing natural order.

I will darken the earth in the clear day (וְהַשְׁחַקְתִּי לְאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם אֹור), vehachashakhti la'arets beyom or)—the phrase "clear day" (yom or, literally "day of light") emphasizes the shock: when light should be strongest, darkness falls. This imagery evokes both literal phenomena (solar eclipse, volcanic ash, storm darkness) and metaphorical meaning—spiritual/political darkness overwhelming Israel's "bright" prosperity. The day they expected deliverance becomes the day of doom.

This prophecy connects to multiple biblical themes:

1. Exodus plague of darkness (Exodus 10:21-23), now reversed against Israel
2. Joel's prophecy: "the sun shall be turned into darkness... before the great and terrible day of the LORD" (Joel 2:31)

3. Jesus's crucifixion when "there was darkness over all the land" from noon to 3 PM (Matthew 27:45)—God's judgment on sin literally darkened the earth when Christ bore our guilt
4. Revelation's final judgments including darkening of sun, moon, and stars (Revelation 6:12, 8:12).

Darkness symbolizes divine judgment, removing light that sustains life and reveals truth. When God withdraws His presence, darkness consumes.

Historical Context

Solar eclipses were terrifying ancient phenomena, interpreted as divine omens. A total solar eclipse visible in Israel occurred on June 15, 763 BC—during Amos's ministry period. Ancient Assyrian records mention this eclipse (the "Bur-Sagale eclipse"), and it may have reinforced Amos's prophecy in hearers' minds. However, Amos likely uses eclipse imagery metaphorically for the comprehensive darkness accompanying judgment.

The historical fulfillment came through Assyrian conquest (722 BC)—the "sun going down at noon" metaphorically depicted Israel's sudden transition from prosperity (midday brightness) to destruction (darkness). Jeroboam II's reign was Israel's last period of power and wealth, making the subsequent collapse seem like noon suddenly becoming midnight. The prophecy's deeper fulfillment awaits the eschatological Day of the LORD when Christ returns in judgment (Matthew 24:29-30; 2 Peter 3:10).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the image of darkness at noon challenge assumptions that prosperity indicates divine favor?

2. What does the darkness at Jesus's crucifixion teach about God's judgment on sin and the cost of redemption?
3. How should believers prepare for the "Day of the LORD" knowing it brings both darkness for unbelievers and vindication for the faithful?

Interlinear Text

וְיֹאמֶר	בַּיּוֹם	בַּיּוֹם	בַּיּוֹם	יְהוָה	אָדָן	נָאָם	יְהוָה
H1961	And it shall come to pass in that day	H1931	saith	H5002	the Lord	H136	GOD
	H3117						H3069
וְיֹמֶשׁ	בַּשְׁמַךְ	בַּצְהָרָב	בַּצְהָרָב	לֹא	רֹא	וּמְפִשְׁכָת	לְאָרֶץ
to go down	that I will cause the sun	at noon	and I will darken	the earth	the earth		
H935	H8121	H6672	H2821	H776			
בַּיּוֹם	אָזֶן						
And it shall come to pass in that day	in the clear						
H3117	H216						

Additional Cross-References

Mark 15:33 (Darkness): And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Matthew 27:45 (Darkness): Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

Jeremiah 15:9 (References Lord): She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.

Luke 23:44 (Darkness): And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

Matthew 24:29 (Darkness): Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Amos 5:8 (Darkness): Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:

Micah 3:6 (Darkness): Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.

Isaiah 13:10 (Darkness): For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

Job 5:14 (Darkness): They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

Amos 4:13 (Darkness): For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name.