

SPECIAL STUDY TEN  
 FIGURES OF SPEECH IN AMOS  
 American Standard Version  
 by Shirley Woolsey

CHAPTER 1

- v. 2 — Jehovah will roar and utter voice . . . anthropomorphism . . . pastures shall mourn, the top of Carmel shall wither . . . personification
- v. 3 — for three transgressions, yea for four (also in vv. 6, 9, 11, 13, and 2:1, 4, and 6) . . . meiosis  
 they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron . . . personification of Gilead and verbal metaphor
- v. 4 — send fire into Hazael that shall devour the palaces (also in vv. 7, 10, 12, 14, and 2:2 and 5) . . . metaphor
- v. 5 — break the bar of Damascus . . . verbal metaphor
- v. 11 — cast off pity,  
 anger did tear . . . verbal metaphors or personifications of abstract qualities: pity and anger

CHAPTER 2

- v. 7 — they pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor . . . hyperbole
- v. 9 — height was like the height of cedars . . . simile  
 they were strong as the oaks . . . simile  
 I destroyed their fruit from above and roots from beneath . . . metaphor
- v. 13 — I will press you, as a cart is pressed down that is full of sheaves . . . simile
- v. 14 — flight shall perish from the swift . . . personification of flight
- v. 16 — flee away naked . . . maybe literal, or an ellipsis if it means naked of courage

In chapters 1 and 2 there is a climax of judgments, in the Oriental custom of "beating around the bush" . . . finally coming to Israel.

1:3—Damascus; 1:6—Gaza; 1:9—Tyre; 1:11—Edom; 1:13—2:1 Moab; 2:4—Judah; 2:6—Israel.

## FIGURES OF SPEECH

### CHAPTER 3

- v. 1 — children of Israel (throughout book) . . . metonymy  
(people called by name of nation's founder)
- v. 3-8 — effect:                      cause:  
           Shall 2 walk together—except they have made an  
           appointment  
           Will a lion roar in the forest—except he hath prey  
           Will a young lion cry out of his den—if he has taken  
           nothing  
           Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth—where no  
           trap is set  
           Shall people not be afraid—when the trumpet is blown  
           in a city  
           so:    Shall evil befall a city—the Lord hath not done it  
               . . . litotes . . . climactic parallelism in rhetorical  
               questions (interrogation)
- v. 10 — store up violence and robbery in their palaces . . .  
           verbal metaphor and hyperbole of their desire for  
           evil.
- v. 12 — as this: shepherd rescues two legs or ear out of lion's  
           mouth  
           so this: Hebrews rescued from silk beds, etc. . . .  
           similitude

### CHAPTER 4

- v. 1 — cows of Bashan . . . metaphor
- v. 4-5 — come to Bethel and transgress . . . irony and sarcasm
- v. 6 — cleanness of teeth . . . metaphor for lack of food
- v. 8 — two or three cities wandered into a city to drink . . .  
           personification of cities.
- v. 9-11 — A climax:  
           v. 9 — I have smitten with mildew  
           v. 10 — I have sent pestilence  
                   I have slain men  
                   I have carried away your horses  
                   I have made the stench of your camp  
                   come to your nostrils
- v. 11 — I have overthrown cities among you; YET  
           YOU HAVE NOT RETURNED!

## AMOS

- v. 11 — You were as a brand plucked out of the burning . . . simile
- v. 13 — God treads on the high places of the earth . . . anthropomorphism

### CHAPTER 5

- v. 2 — virgin of Israel is fallen,  
no more rise,  
cast upon her land  
none to raise her . . . personification of nation
- v. 3 — 1,000 and 100 left  
100 and just 10 left . . . synecdoche (definite no. for indefinite)
- v. 6 — God will break out like fire, devour, none will quench . . . simile
- v. 7 — You turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth . . . verbal metaphor and perhaps a hyperbole
- v. 8 — God calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth . . . anthropomorphism
- v. 18 — The day of the Lord is darkness and not light (also v. 20) . . . metaphor
- v. 19 — As a man flees from lion and bear meets him  
As a man runs to house, leans on wall and a snake bites him:  
So (you seek day of Lord and will find it darkness.)  
. . . similitude which climaxes with an interrogation
- v. 24 — let justice roll down as waters  
and righteousness as a mighty stream . . . personification of justice and righteousness and a simile.

### CHAPTER 6

- v. 3 — you that (try to) put away the evil day . . . ellipsis and cause the seat of violence to come near . . . metonymy (cause stated and effect understood)
- v. 8 — abhor excellency of Jacob . . . metonymy (nation called by name of founder)
- v. 12 — shall horses run upon rocks?  
shall one plow the sea with oxen? . . . interrogation  
6:12b compare with 5:7

## FIGURES OF SPEECH

### CHAPTER 7

- v. 1-3 — locusts . . . vision
- v. 4-6 — fire . . . vision  
           eating up the land . . . personification  
           Jacob so small, how shall he stand? (vv.2, 5)  
           metonymy and interrogation
- v. 7-9 — plumbline . . . vision metaphorical
- v. 10 — the land is not able to bear Amos' words . . . personification
- v. 16 — You say, Drop not your word against Israel . . .  
           figurative for Do not preach, as in R.S.V.
- v. 17 — an unclean land . . . metonymy (the lack of purity  
           before God is represented as an actual dirty mess.)

### CHAPTER 8

- v. 1-3 — summer fruit . . . vision metaphorical
- v. 4 — you that swallow up the needy . . . verbal metaphor
- v. 6 — you buy the poor for silver and the needy for shoes  
           . . . maybe literal, or a verbal metaphor
- v. 8 — land trembles for this . . . personification of land  
           it rises up like the River, is troubled and sinks  
           again . . . simile
- v. 9 — the sun goes down at noon  
           darkens earth in the clear day . . . maybe literal  
           or metaphor
- v. 11 — send a famine of God's word,  
           seek it from sea to sea  
           seek it from north to east  
           run to and fro and will not find it . . . climax  
           and personification of the Word.
- v. 13 — fair virgins and young men faint for thirst (for the  
           word) . . . ellipsis
- v. 14 — they will fall and never rise up again . . . verbal  
           metaphor

### CHAPTER 9

- v. 1 — Lord standing beside the altar . . . vision  
           smite the capitals, shake the thresholds and break them  
           on their heads . . . verbal metaphors
- v. 2 — dig into Sheol . . . verbal metaphor (want to die  
           climb up to heaven)

AMOS

hide in Mt. Carmel

hide in bottom of sea

go into captivity before enemies, but GOD  
WILL BE THERE!

These are climactic parallelisms and verbal metaphors.

- v. 4 — the Lord's eyes are set upon them for evil . . . anthropomorphism
- v. 5 — the Lord touches the land and it melts . . . anthro. and verbal met. compare 5b with 8:8.
- v. 6 — God builds his chambers in Heaven  
founded his vault upon the earth  
calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out . . . see 5:8  
This is anthropomorphism and metaphor.
- v. 7 — are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me?  
both simile and interrogation
- v. 8 — the eyes of the Lord are on this sinful kingdom . . . anthropomorphism
- v. 9 — I will sift Israel among the nations as a grain if sifted in a sieve, not a kernel will fall on the earth . . . similitude
- v. 11-15 — These are Messianic, see Acts 15:16-18.
- v. 11 — raise David's tabernacle, close breaches, raise up ruins, build it as in the days of old . . . metonymy—covenant people meant
- v. 12 — they may possess Edom's remnant . . . synecdoche
- v. 13 — the plowman shall overtake the reaper  
the treader of grapes him that sows seed . . . metaphor  
mountains shall drop sweet wine  
hills shall melt . . . personification and metaphor
- v. 14 — the returned captives:  
shall build the waste cities  
inhabit them  
plant vineyards  
drink wine from them  
make gardens and eat the fruit . . . climax of metaphors
- v. 15 — God will plant them upon their land and they shall no more be plucked up . . . metaphor.