AMOS STUDY
Notes for Week Seven
Chapter 8

We have two units in this chapter.
The first is the fourth vision of Amos. There is a word-play here (see below). What is Amos to "do" with this? Note, he is not being commissioned to do anything. In fact, he is to "Be silent" (a prophet be silent?!). Note a particularly appalling consequence—dead bodies not being buried.

The second unit is not from Amos. It is inserted between the fourth and the fifth vision, just like the Amaziah narrative was inserted between the third and fourth vision. Why would these insertions be placed where they are? This unit consists of five separate oracles. There is no certainty that these individual oracles are from the same period. This is especially convincing in the fourth oracle (verses 11 and 12) --a memorable, succinct and penetrating reflection from the Deuteronomic school. What is it saying about its present? —about our present? And is its/our present any different from Amos' time? Is that the inevitable fate of prophecy--to not be heard? Reference Jesus in Matthew 4:3-4; 7:15-21 and Mark 13:22.
As an aside verse 14 sounds right out of Hosea. How did that happen?

Translation

Verse 2: קיץ means "summer/ripened fruit. קץ means "the end".
"pass them by" would mean here benignly "let matters pass" or order "a stay of execution." So in this verse Yahweh will no longer "pass them by"—the end has come.
Verse 3: NRSV does not catch the imagery—or at least abstracts it. A more likely reading: "The songstresses of the palace [not temple] will wail"
Verse 12: The Hebrew is more colorful: not just "wandering" but "tottering", like a drunkard.