

Judgment on the Nations

Amos 1-2

Intro

This morning we will begin our verse-by-verse study of *the book of Amos*...

But before we dive into Amos 1, would you please turn to...

Psalm 2 (NKJV)

1 Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.

5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:

6 "Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

9 You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" "

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

BIG IDEA — the Lord rules all the nations — they are all accountable to Him...[expand]

*With this in mind, would you now please turn to **Amos 1**...*

Amos 1 (NKJV)

1 The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa,

Amos is the author of this book and it is worth noting here at the beginning that Amos was not a “professional prophet”...

- In fact, Amos was a **sheepbreeder from Tekoa**, a small town about 10 miles south of Jerusalem...

[expand — the word **sheepbreeder** used to indicate that Amos was a literal shepherd and not a metaphorical shepherd...]

Now, the fact that Amos is a **sheepbreeder** is interesting because tending to sheep was a common occupation of those who have been used by God...[ex. Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, etc...]

LESSON — If you want to be used by God, simply be faithful in the sphere of influence that God has given to you— even if that sphere of influence appears small in your own eyes...

Do not despise the days of small things — God is at work in the small things...

- ***Remember that you started as a very small thing — you started as two microscopic cells — and yet God has used you and will use you in ways that you cannot yet fathom...***

[ex. *Parable of the Talents* — if you are faithful in a few things you will be given more...]

Continuing on in vs 1 we read...

The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel

Israel is a reference to the *N Kingdom of Israel*...

It is important to understand that Amos' ministry took place during *the divided kingdom* — which lasted from about 930BC-722BC...

- During the time of the divided kingdom, the ***N Kingdom of 10 tribes*** was called ***Israel*** and the ***S Kingdom of 2 tribes*** was called ***Judah***...

And even though the sheepbreeder Amos was from the *S Kingdom of Judah*, his prophecies were primarily directed to the *N Kingdom of Israel*...

As we continue in vs 1, we read that Amos prophesied...

in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

From this information, Bible scholars believe that the book of Amos was written around **760BC**...

- Now, **Uzziah** was a relatively faithful king of Judah who stumbled by sinfully trying to offer incense at the Temple and as a result was struck with leprosy...

Jeroboam is *Jeroboam II* and like all kings of the N Kingdom of Israel he was unfaithful to God — but he was not as bad as most of the other kings of the N Kingdom...

- And it is important to understand that the N Kingdom of Israel enjoyed great material prosperity during his reign...[expand]

*We do not know much about the **earthquake** that is mentioned here in vs 1 but it was also written about some 200 years later in...*

Zechariah 14:5 (NKJV)

**Then you shall flee through My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.**

Yes, you shall flee

As you fled from the earthquake

In the days of Uzziah king of Judah...

Moving on in Amos 1, we come to vs...

2 And he said:

"The LORD roars from Zion,

And utters His voice from Jerusalem;

This is a strong picture of **the LORD** (Yahweh) making His voice heard from Jerusalem in the form of a **roar**...

- [expand — a roar is a frightening thing — these are going to be prophecies of judgment...]

[expand — **from Jerusalem** (place of the Temple) — in contrast to false centers of worship found in the N Kingdom of Israel...]

Continuing on in vs 2 we read...

**The pastures of the shepherds mourn,
And the top of Carmel withers."**

This is a reference to **Mt. Carmel** — where Elijah had his showdown with the prophets of Baal...

And Amos seems to be referring to a drought that is taking place in Israel and as a result Mt. Carmel is withering, causing the shepherds to mourn because they cannot find pasture for their sheep...

- Now, it is important to understand that the prophecies of Amos are primarily directed against the N Kingdom of Israel because the people of that nation have become complacent in their material prosperity and are failing to worship the Lord...

APPLICATION — This is a serious danger for us as believers when we are living comfortable lives...[expand]

Now, as we continue on in Amos 1 & 2, the prophet will first declare *God's judgment on the nations surrounding Israel...*

- [expand — view the map from above / swirling of judgment that moves inward until it reaches the N Kingdom of Israel...]

But before we get into these various judgments, we must remind ourselves of what we read earlier in **Psalm 2** — *that God is the judge of all the nations — and of every person in every nation...*

- [expand — the nations of the world do not get to opt out of the judgment of God / the global flood of the days of Noah...]

In **Genesis 18:25**, Abraham refers to God as “the Judge of all the earth”...

- [expand — Tribulation Period / Great White Throne Judgment...]

And this truth that God is the judge of all the nations makes perfect sense in light of...

Colossians 1:16 (NKJV)

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

So, the only way to escape the judgment that will come upon all the nations is to find refuge in the Son...

- The only way to live a life of value in this fallen world is to *live your life for the Lord...*

Any life that is lived in opposition to Him will be a lost and wasted life...

Let's move on in Amos 1 to vs...

3 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,

The phrase **"For three transgressions...and for four"** is a reference to the multiplied sins of the nations — this was not their first offense — they were repeat offenders...

Damascus is the capital city of Syria and it represents the nation as a whole...

I will not turn away its punishment,

Judgment is coming...

REMINDER – all sin must be punished / Christ receives the punishment you receive the punishment...[expand]

Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron.

This is a picture of the cruelty of Syria toward the people of Israel...
[expand]

**4 But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,
Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.**

**5 I will also break the gate bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven,
And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden.**

There will be severe judgment on Syria for their mistreatment of the people of Israel...

**The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,"
Says the LORD.**

We read of the fulfillment of this prophecy in...

2 Kings 16:9 (NKJV)

So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

Let's move on to vs...

6 Thus says the LORD:

**"For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they took captive the whole captivity
To deliver them up to Edom.**

Gaza was a city of the Philistines on the coast, west of Judah and Israel...

- **Gaza** teamed up with Edom and other Philistine cities to take God's people captive, presumably to sell as slaves...

**7 But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza,
Which shall devour its palaces.**

**8 I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,
And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;
I will turn My hand against Ekron,
And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,"
Says the Lord GOD.**

God would bring judgment upon these different Philistine cities for the part they played in taking God's people captive...

- Now, it seems unlikely that every single Philistine in each of these cities participated in this enslavement...

Nevertheless, they all were to suffer the judgment that was going to come upon the nation...

REMINDER — No one sins unto themselves...

*In other words, our sin always affects at least 3 parties — it affects **God**, it affects **ourselves**, and it affects **those around us**...*

So, if we truly desire **to love God** and **to love others** then the best thing that we can do is walk in obedience to the Lord...

*We must understand that **a close walk with God — a life of committed discipleship to the Lord** is the best offering that we can make in this life...*

I love the way that Paul expresses this truth in...

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Continuing on in Amos 1 to vs...

9 Thus says the LORD:

**"For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,
And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.**

**10 But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre,
Which shall devour its palaces."**

Tyre was a city of Lebanon, north of Israel...

It too had teamed up with **Edom** to take Israelites captive and God would bring destruction on the city by destroying its **walls** and **palaces**...

- ***Again, this is a reminder that sin must be punished — God cannot simply “let it go”...***

For a reminder of this frightening truth, would you please turn to the Song of Moses as recorded in...

Deuteronomy 32:39-43 (NKJV)

**39 'Now see that I, even I, am He,
And there is no God besides Me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.**

**40 For I raise My hand to heaven,
And say, "As I live forever,
41 If I whet My glittering sword,
And My hand takes hold on judgment,
I will render vengeance to My enemies,
And repay those who hate Me.**

**42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood,
And My sword shall devour flesh,
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the heads of the leaders of the enemy."**

**43 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people;
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,**

**And render vengeance to His adversaries;
He will provide atonement for His land and His people.”**

Now, on the other hand, as we have seen in our study through 2 Peter, God prefers mercy over judgment...

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

So, if you are not yet a believer — please turn to the Lord while there is still time — today is the day of salvation — now is the appointed time...

- And if you are a believer — then continue to pray for the lost — pray that they would turn to the Lord in repentance that they may be saved from the judgment to come...

Please turn back to Amos 1 as we move into vs...

11 Thus says the LORD:

**"For three transgressions of Edom, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because he pursued his brother with the sword,
And cast off all pity;
His anger tore perpetually,
And he kept his wrath forever.**

**12 But I will send a fire upon Teman,
Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.”**

The nation of **Edom** was descended from Esau, the older twin of Jacob — the Jacob who gave rise to the nation of Israel...

- Tragically, though they were relatives, the Edomites hated the Israelites and attacked Israel in **anger** and **wrath**...

Sadly, the unrighteous hatred of **Edom** only led to its own destruction...

- ***And this is how it always goes — ungodly anger and wrath eventually leads to the destruction of the unrighteous person or nation...***

*James warns **believers** not to give in to wrath and anger in...*

James 1:19-20 (NKJV)

19 ...my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Moving on in Amos 1 to vs...

13 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four,

I will not turn away its punishment,

Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead,

That they might enlarge their territory.

Horribly, the Ammonites committed this atrocity against the women of Gilead so that they might have more land...

- [expand — connection to ***the sin of abortion*** / destruction of babies because those babies are in the way of something that is viewed as more important...]

**14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
Amid shouting in the day of battle,
And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.**

**15 Their king shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together,"
Says the LORD.**

The Lord would not overlook this sin — the Ammonites and their rulers would have their land conquered and their rulers would go into captivity...

Let's move on now to...

Amos 2 (NKJV)

1 Thus says the LORD:

**"For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.**

**2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting and trumpet sound.**

3 And I will cut off the judge from its midst,

**And slay all its princes with him,"
Says the LORD.**

Here we see that **Moab** will be punished for its mistreatment of **Edom...**

This is another reminder that all people and all nations belong to the Lord...

And the Lord will not only bring punishment upon the nations that *abused His chosen people* but also upon the nations that *abused one another...*

Moving on to vs...

4 Thus says the LORD:

**"For three transgressions of Judah, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,**

It is interesting to note that the Lord uses the same formula of judgment on the ***S Kingdom of Judah*** that He used on *the gentile nations...*

I take this as a reminder that — as believers — we cannot simply behave as unbelievers behave and expect different results...

- ***If you and I want lives that are different from the lives of unbelievers — then we must choose to live differently from unbelievers...***

With that said, you and I cannot seek unbelievers to be our guides — we must choose to be led by those who will lead us in the way of the Lord...

*Unfortunately, **Judah** chose to forsake the way of the LORD and as a result they were under judgment — notice what Amos writes in vs 4...*

**Because they have despised the law of the LORD,
And have not kept His commandments.**

This is where it all begins — simply choosing ***not to obey the law of the Lord — choosing to disobey His commandments...***

And please hear me — the path of disobedience will never lead to flourishing...

Instead, it will always lead to some form of ***death — the death of your witness — the death of relationships — the death of opportunity — the death of hope...***

But it doesn't have to be this way — we can choose to be people who love the law of the LORD and who walk in obedience to His commandments...

To see what this sort of life looks like, please turn to...

Psalm 1 (NKJV)

1 Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

- *Here we are reminded that **obedience is key to discipleship** — the key to being an apprentice of Jesus — we must be willing to do what He says if we claim to follow Him...*

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

Please turn back to Amos 2 as we move on in vs 4...

**Because they have despised the law of the LORD,
And have not kept His commandments.
Their lies lead them astray,
Lies which their fathers followed.**

This is what happens 100 out of 100 times...

***You see, if a person turns their back on the law of the LORD —
if a person turns away from the commandments of God — then
all they are left with is lies...***

- So the question we must ask ourselves is this — “do I want to follow lies that will lead me astray or do I want to walk in the truth and follow that truth wherever it leads?”...***

Wonderfully, the Lord Jesus tells us where the truth will lead us — it will lead us into a life of freedom...

John 8:31-32 (NKJV)

31 ...“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Walking in obedience to the Lord is a life of ***truth*** and ***freedom*** — turning away from the Lord in disobedience is a life of ***lies*** and ***bondage***...

**5 But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.”**

Tragically, because Judah lived like the other nations, they too would endure a similar judgment...

Now, as we move into vs 6 we get to the heart of Amos' message — the warning that judgment will be coming upon the N Kingdom of Israel...

6 Thus says the LORD:

**"For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they sell the righteous for silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.**

God was going to judge Israel for the oppression of the poor by the rich...

- This oppression likely included such things as usury, extortion and slavery...

**7 They pant after the dust of the earth
which is on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.**

The poor and the humble were being mistreated by the powerful...

**A man and his father go in to the same girl,
To defile My holy name.**

Sexual perversion was taking place in Israel and this may be a reference to the ritual prostitution that was part of the idolatry that Israel was participating in...

This wickedness was an affront to God and God considered it to be a direct insult against His **holy name**...

- This is a reminder that all sin is ultimately committed against God — God is the primary victim of our sin — and that our sin insults His name — it drags His name through the mud...[expand]

**8 They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their
god.**

- [expand and explain the picture that is being presented...]

**9 "Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them,
Whose height was like the height of the cedars,
And he was as strong as the oaks;
Yet I destroyed his fruit above
And his roots beneath.**

**10 Also it was I who brought you up
from the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years through the wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.**

It was God who had led the Israelites out of Egypt, sustained them in the wilderness and defeated the Amorites so the Israelites could inhabit the land...

- But because the Israelites had forgotten all of this, they thought it was ok for them to do whatever they wanted because they viewed it as ***their land***...

This reminds me of what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth in...

1 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

- [importance of remembering that everything that we have is a gift from God...]

Moving on in Amos 2 we come to vs...

**11 I raised up some of your sons as prophets,
And some of your young men as Nazirites.
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"
Says the LORD.**

The Lord Himself had given the Israelites both prophets and Nazirites...

- And prophets were to serve God by prophesying & Nazirites were to be dedicated to God by abstaining from wine and other things that would distract them from their mission...

**12 "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,
And commanded the prophets saying,
'Do not prophesy!'**

The Israelites were actively working against God, seeking to disrupt the ministries of both the Nazirites and the prophets...

And this never ends well — this is a fight that no one can win — no one can go against God and be victorious...

**13 "Behold, I am weighed down by you,
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.**

This is tragic imagery — the people of Israel were a burden to the Lord...

QUESTION — Are we a blessing or a burden to others? — obedience to the Lord will make us a blessing and disobedience will make us a burden...[expand]

Now to our final 3 verses...

**14 Therefore flight shall perish from the swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;**

**15 He shall not stand who handles the bow,
The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.**

**16 The most courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in that day,"
Says the LORD.**

Ultimately, when God brings His judgment, there will be no escape for the people of Israel...[expand]

Conclusion

Well, these are rough words close on but they are the truth...

It is true that a life of unrepentant disobedience will end in tragedy...

And that was what the N Kingdom of Israel was headed for...

- In just a few decades, they would be taken captive by the Assyrians and the N Kingdom of Israel would be no more...

With that said, you and I cannot do anything about what happened to them...

But we can do something about what will happen to us...

We can choose to live lives of obedience — recognizing that God is the One to whom we must give an account...

- ***We can live everyday knowing that the life of obedience that He calls us to is the best possible life — both for now and for the life to come...***

Let's pray...