

The Lord Has Seen and Has Taken Notice

Amos 1:1 - 2:3

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Good morning everyone and welcome to Calvary Chapel. We are very grateful that you are here and excited to be here this morning with you as we begin the start of a new Book together on Sunday mornings having just finished the gospel of Mark.

Prior to our study in the Book of Mark, we began making our way through that section of the Bible known as the *Minor Prophets* and to date we have looked together at two of the twelve Books in that section of scripture - the Book of Hosea and the Book of Joel. Today we will begin a study of the third of these twelve Books - The Book of Amos.

I will remind you that there are three different periods that various prophets wrote during (both the 'major' and the 'minor' prophets). They are Pre-Exilic, Exilic, and Post Exilic. As the name indicates, pre-exilic refers to those books written in the years leading up to the two captivities of the Jews at the hands of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. *Exilic* refers to those that wrote during the captivity, and, obviously, *post-exilic* refer to those that wrote after the exile.

The Books of Hosea, Joel and now Amos (plus seven additional books) are all *pre-exilic* books written anywhere from a hundred plus years prior to when the captors were literally at the gate of the city ready to enter in and lead the people away. As mentioned, today we begin the Book of Amos.

The Book of Amos begins by introducing us to the namesake of the Book, giving us some background as to where he was from and then providing us a time frame in which He ministered. Verse 1 says,

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

Amos 1:1

These are the sort of verses we often read through quickly but fail to pay much attention. In our attempt to understand the full context of

this Book, however, we would do well to slow down here and take notice of a few things. The first thing we take notice of is the time period in which Amos prophesied. We read in the later portion of verse 1 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.

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

Amos 1:1

As we see in this opening verse, the Book of Amos was written *in the days of Uzziah the king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash the king of Israel.*

Now, you will recall that upon the death of King Solomon, the kingdom of the Jewish people (known as *Israel*) split into two kingdoms: A northern kingdom - which continued to be known as *Israel*, and a southern kingdom which came to be known by the name of the largest of the tribes of that kingdom - *Judah*.

Amos provides us with the name of the king of each of those kingdoms at the time of Amos' ministry. *Jeroboam the son of Joash* in the north and *Uzziah* in the south. And, he also makes reference to it being *two years before the earthquake*.

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

Amos 1:1

which archeologists approximate to be right around the year 760 BC.

We know when *Uzziah* reigned over the kingdom of Judah. He reigned from 790 to 739 BC. We also know when *Jeroboam* reigned

over Israel (commonly referred to as *Jeroboam II* because there was another *Jeroboam* that served as king approximately 125 years earlier). Jeroboam II ruled over the northern kingdom from 793-753 BC. So, putting all of those pieces of the puzzle together, we know that Amos prophesied sometime in the early 760's BC or late 750's.

You'll also notice that we learn in verse 1 that the visions which Amos saw were visions *concerning* the kingdom of *Israel*.

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

Amos 1:1

Despite the fact that he was from *Tekoa* (a small, village located in Judah - about 10 miles south of Jerusalem), he was given a message by God that he was to bring to the kingdom of *Israel*.

Israel, in 760 BC, was experiencing a period of great affluence and luxury, and sadly moral laxity - as we will see throughout our study of the Book. The 760's and 750's were a period of great affluence and wealth in the northern kingdom of Israel - which was actually unusual for the northern kingdom. Right around the year 800 BC - which was ten years or so before Jeroboam II came to power - Israel was pretty much hemmed in by its neighbor to the north (Syria). These two kingdoms (Israel and Syria) participated in frequent border skirmishes which led to pretty stale economic times in both nations. That state of things changed however right around the year 800 BC when Syria's neighbor to it's north- Assyria - attacked and defeated them thus bringing to an end Israel's frequent skirmishes with Syria. Fortunately for the Israelites at that time, the Assyrians didn't have much interest in advancing into the former Syrian territory and pretty much left that area alone opening up the door for Israel to acquire portions of that land - and more importantly, important trade routes that ran from Assyria in the north all the way down to Egypt in the South (Northern Africa).

It was these changes that ushered in the period of materialistic prosperity such as Israel has never before known. What is interesting to note is the common understanding of the reason for that period of great prosperity was that God was evidently blessing the nation and pouring out His favor upon them. In reality, (as we will see in our study of this Book) all of that wealth was not an evidence of God's great blessing for in fact God's judgment was about to come upon the nation for Israel because of their many sins that developed in the land as a result of their ease, their covetousness, and their lust for all manner of wickedness. On the surface, things couldn't have been better. Below the surface, however, there was great, spiritual decay which would bring about God's hand of judgment even upon His own people. We might say, "especially" upon His own people.

The overarching theme of the Book of Amos is the theme of judgment. The Book of Amos could be summarized as a warning to God's people by His prophet Amos to repent of their sin (greed, immorality, selfishness and oppression) and seek God and His will by returning to and obeying the law of Moses. If they would do this, perhaps the Lord would hear and relent. If they would not do this, then they would find themselves under the heavy hand of God's judgment which would bring about a day of darkness and great sorrow for the nation.

As we study this Book, we will notice a second theme which emerges as well (sort of a sub-theme) and that is the way in which it speaks powerfully against social injustice (that is a very timely message for our day) and the deceptiveness of religious formalism. We will attempt to consider these messages as we come upon them in our study of the text.

Allow me to make one final point of introduction before we begin to dig into each of these verses and that is in relation to this man **Amos** that we are introduced to in the first verse.

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

Amos 1:1

Mention of the prophet **Amos** is made nowhere else in the Bible outside of this particular Book. There are, however, many things we can learn about him from this Book. As is so often the case with Biblical names, the name is so often indicative of the calling God would place upon a person and their life. The name **Amos** actually means *burden* or *burden bearer*. Despite the fact that **Amos** was not born *a prophet or the son of a prophet*, as he will go on to tell us later in the Book,

Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs.

Amos 7:14

God would move upon the heart of his parents to give him a name which would define the eternal work that God had prepared for him to do. **Amos** would bear the *burden* of having to bring the message of God’s coming judgment to the northern kingdom of God’s chosen people. That’s the first thing we learn about the man who became the namesake of this book.

The second thing we learn is that Amos *was among the shepherds of Tekoa*,

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

Amos 1:1

which I mentioned earlier was a small village about ten miles south of Jerusalem. Again, Amos wasn’t *a prophet or the son of a prophet*. He didn’t go to the best school of the land that it might prepare him for this particular calling. He was a *shepherd* or a *herdsman* (as it is

sometimes translated) from a small little back country village of Judah. Even the word he chooses to use to describe himself is likely indicative of the type of person he was. Amos calls himself a **shepherd**, but he doesn't use the typical word (*ra 'ah*) used in the Old Testament to describe someone like David or even the Lord (as in **the Lord is my shepherd**). Instead, he uses the word (*noqed*) which more literally means *sheep raiser*. It's a word that seems to indicate his desire to communicate, *I am a nobody*. Again, to quote something he will write later in the Book,

14 Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. 15 But the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’

Amos 7:14-15

Amos, a man with no formal education from a back country ('hick') town of Judah makes his way to a foreign land to preach to the people of **Bethel** (as we will see later in the Book) - the most sophisticated of the towns of the northern kingdom - that he might confront the intellectual and the spiritual elite of the land of their sin and their leading of the people into sin. God took a *nobody* - a *nobody* that was available for God to use - and that is exactly what God did - He accomplished His purposes through him.

This is one of the first lessons of this Book and that is that God can (and, more often than not, does) use the insignificant in this world to accomplish His purposes. And so, while it is true that God sometimes uses the great of this world, it is more often the case that He uses the insignificant of this world in order that the glory might go to Himself and not to the men and women that are serving Him. As Paul the Apostle would later write,

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are

not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

I Corinthians 1:27-29

The Lord loves to use what the word calls the **foolish** things of this **world** to confound the wise.

So what does this mean for us here this morning? It means that He is able to use any and every one of us that are here today. Throughout the Bible and throughout history we see that God uses regular folks like us to accomplish things with great eternal significance. God does great things through insignificant people and groups of people (church's ministries, families, etc) in order that the honor and glory that is due to Him alone will be given to Him alone. You may wonder if God can use a person like yourself? The answer is, yes. Make yourself available to Him in humility and watch Him work through your life.

And so, with a message and a commissioning, this humble farmer from a small country village makes his way to the big city of Bethel in a foreign land and declares, verse 2,

And he said: "The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."

Amos 1:2

Amos knew the sound of a roaring lion from his many years of herding sheep in the wilderness. The Lord's **roar** from Zion was not designed to be a cause for great joy for those whom the Lord is roaring against. It was to be a cause for great concern. We might go to a zoo and hear a lion roar from inside its cage and be thoroughly awed and impressed with its strength and power. We would have a very different response if that lion was outside of it's cage and staring us down. That is the response that Amos is seeking to elicit.

Amos says, ***The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem.***

And he said: “The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.”

Amos 1:2

Zion is another name for **Jerusalem**. It was there that the Lord had set His name and hence from there He would roar in His indignation and utter His voice in judgment. When Amos says that the Lord speaks **from Zion/Jerusalem**), he is reminding the northern kingdom that that is where the center of true worship was to be. As I mentioned earlier, upon the death of King Solomon (c 950 BC) the nation of the Jewish people divided into two kingdoms - a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. We learn in I Kings chapter 12 that the new king of the northern kingdom (the first **Jeroboam**) was fearful that the hearts of the people of his new kingdom would be won over to the **southern** kingdom each time they went down to Jerusalem to worship the Lord at the temple.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.”

I Kings 12:26-27

His response, therefore, was to offer alternative places of worship that would be located throughout the northern kingdom (**Bethel, Dan**, and, in time, **Gilgal**).

28 So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

I Kings 12:28-29

It was a shrewd political move, but it was a complete violation of God's law and thus would inevitably lead to evil results. Amos says, ***the Lord roars from Zion and utters from Jerusalem*** - the true place He had chosen to dwell.

And he said: "The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."

Amos 1:2

Beginning than in verse 3 and continuing all the way until chapter 7, Amos proceeds to pronounce the messages of judgment that will become the theme of this Book. You will notice in verse 3 that judgment is first pronounced against the city of ***Damascus***.

Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron.

Amos 1:3

Then down in verse 6, the region of ***Gaza***.

Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom.

Amos 1:6

That will be followed by ***Tyre*** in verse 9,

Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.

Amos 1:9

Edom in verse 11,

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever.

Amos 1:11

the **Ammonites** in verse 13,

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.

Amos 1:13

and then **Moab** in the first verse of the next chapter.

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom.

Amos 2:1

These are the various nations surrounding the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Here is a map that shows the location of each of these neighboring kingdoms.



Amos was to deliver, from the Lord, a message regarding God's coming judgment first against the surrounding nations and then, as we will see in chapter 2, against the kingdom's of Judah and Israel.

He begins with **Damascus**. Beginning in verse 3, we read,

3 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron. 4 So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad. 5 I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir,” says the Lord.

Amos 1:3-5

Now before we begin considering the specifics of what the judgment will be against Damascus and the reason for that judgment, let's first take notice of this phrase, **For three transgressions ... and for four** for this will be repeated again in verse 6, vs 9, vs 11, vs 13, chapter 2:1, 2:4 and 2:6.

3 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron.

Amos 1:3

This "formula" will introduce God's announcement of judgment against each nations that Amos was instructed to address. It's a phrase or idiom that is not designed to mean that each of these nation's were given three chances and then were disciplined on the fourth occasion. Rather, it is an idiom that has the idea of *sin upon sin upon sin*. It is an expression that is communicating, *Because they continue to sin.....* The phrase is meant to communicate that because each of these nations had continued to sin, God would now bring about His judgment upon that nation.

Now, that implies, and even reveals, that God had been repeatedly dealing with these nations with patience and long-suffering desiring

that these nations would come to the place of repentance. When that repentance failed to come, the cup of their wickedness had finally been filled and thus judgment had to be meted out. God is patient and long-suffering, but as Paul tells us, that **kindness and forbearance is meant to lead us to repentance.**

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Romans 2:4

When it fails to accomplish that purpose, the only thing that remains is His judgment.

We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

Romans 2:2

That is the meaning of this somewhat poetic phrase we have repeated on multiple occasions in these opening chapters.

Addressing Damascus, the Lord, through Amos, says, **For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke the punishment.**

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron.

Amos 1:3

He then lists the reason (**because**)

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron.

Amos 1:3

Again, this isn't the only reason, but we might say it was the straw that broke the camel's back so to speak.

We do not have a precise historical incident that we can point to that this refers to (either in the Bible or in history), but we can get an idea of what is involved from the metaphor that is used. The reason **Damascus** was to be judged was because it had come against **Gilead** (a city of the people of Israel; today more commonly known as *the Golan Heights*) and did so with such a deep destruction that it was as if a deep plow (**threshing sledges of iron**) had been run through the land. Whatever the details of their attack were, we can ascertain that they went beyond what was necessary - even in warfare - , and as a result **Damascus** was going to be judged for those wartime atrocities.

Amos continues,

4 So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael, (9th century BC king of Damascus) and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad (another 9th century King BC of Damascus). **5 I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir," says the Lord.**

Amos 1:4-5

That event (**the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir**) is recorded for us in II Kings 16 where we learn that **the king of Assyria** went up against the people of Syria (**Damascus** being the most prominent city of Syria), **took** the city and **carried away its people captive**.

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.

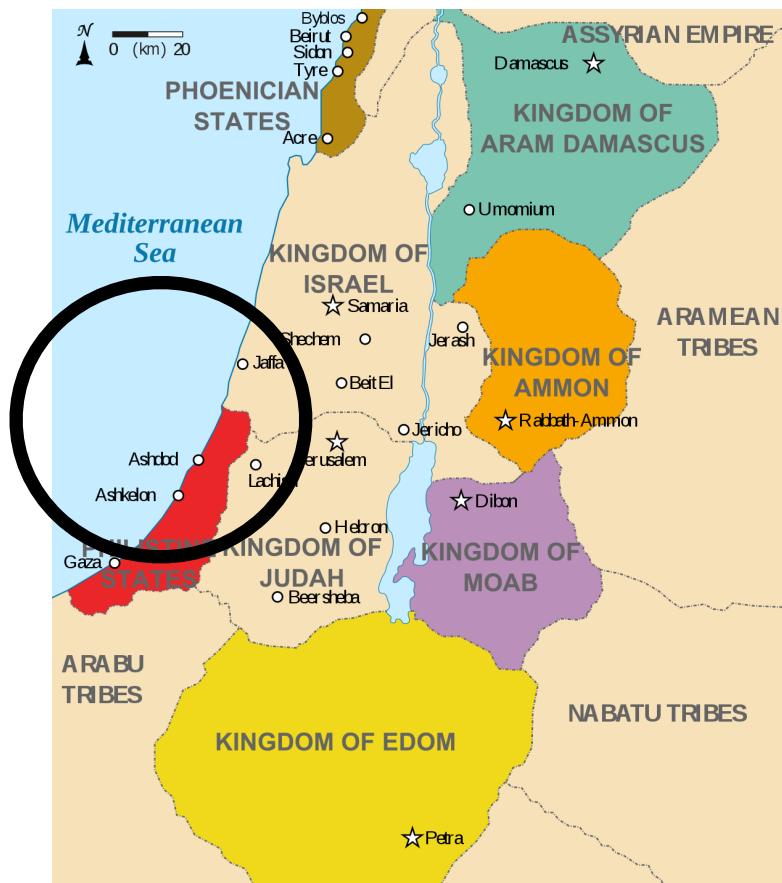
2 Kings 16:9

Amos's first pronouncement of judgment against the city of Damascus.

The second region that Amos address is the Philistine city of **Gaza** located on the Mediterranean Coast to the south and west of the kingdom of Judah. We read,

6 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom. 7 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour her strongholds. 8 I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him 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.

Amos 1:6-8



Remarkably, Israel continues to have difficulties emanating from this same parcel of land which today we know as the Gaza Strip.

Again, using the phrase **for three transgressions and for four**

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom.

Amos 1:6

Amos makes the case that the cup of their rebellion had reached full measure and thus God's judgment had to be meted out. This time, the straw that broke the camel's back was, ***because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom.***

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom.

Amos 1:6

Because Gaza came against God's people and sold them into slavery to the kingdom of ***Edom***, God pronounces He would bring judgment against ***Gaza*** and the other cities of the Philistines (***Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron***).

7 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour her strongholds. 8 I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him 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.

Amos 1:7-8

You'll notice, the crime was not that soldiers were enslaved after being taken in battle, which was the standard practice, but that the Philistines used their temporary supremacy to enslave ***the whole people***

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom.

Amos 1:6

- soldiers and civilians, men and women, adults and children, young and old. The Lord took notice of their wartime atrocities and cruelty and would, like He did with Damascus, judge them as well. And, you will notice, they didn't even 'need' (as if there is ever a 'need' to enslave another individual) to take these additional people captive for they sold them off to others.

Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom.

Amos 1:6

It was simply a means for them to profit through the oppression of others for their own personal gain. The Lord saw it, He took notice of it and He judged them for it. The nations of the world - including the United States - would be wise to take notice as well.

Continuing on to verse 9, we read of **Tyre**. Amos writes,

9 Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. 10 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her strongholds."

Amos 1:9-10

Tyre is a city of Lebanon located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea just north of Israel. It was part of the kingdom of the Phoenicians.



Amos pronounces a judgment upon them **because** like the Philistines did down in Gaza, so too the people of **Tyre delivered up a whole people** (not just the soldiers) into captivity to the Edomites.

9 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. 10 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her strongholds.”

Amos 1:9-10

additionally, they **did not remember the covenant of brotherhood** (aka a treaty)

9 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of

brotherhood. 10 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her strongholds.”

Amos 1:9-10

that had previously been established between the kingdom of Israel (under *Solomon's* leadership) and the Kingdom of Tyre (during the leadership of their king *Hiram*). As with the nations before them, **Tyre** would too be held responsible and subsequently judged for their sin and against God and His people.

Amos continues. He writes,

11 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever. 12 So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah.”

Amos 1:11-12

Edom is down on the south east border of the kingdom of Judah.



The people of Edom were the descendants of the man *Esau* - who you perhaps recall was the twin brother of *Jacob* (aka *Israel*) who we read about in the Book of Genesis. Sadly, Jacob and Esau did not have a very good relationship during their lifetimes, and that animosity was manifest during the lifetimes of each of their posterity. You will notice that Amos points out how ***Edom pursued his brother with the sword and how he cast off pity.***

11 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever. 12 So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah.”

Amos 1:11-12

That ***brother*** whom Amos refers to is the people of Israel (both the northern and southern kingdoms). We have repeated records in the scripture of the way in which the Edomites either warred against the Jewish people (II Kings 8:20-22) or simply refused to show them kindness. (Numbers 20:14-21). Of course, we also have the two examples here in the Book of Amos where Edom bought captives from Gaza and Tyre as a further example of the acrimonious relationship. Like the nations mentioned before them, ***Edom*** too will be judged. ***So I will send a fire upon Teman*** (the name of an Edomite clan), and ***it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah*** (the capital city of Edom)."

So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah.”

Amos 1:12

Verse 13.

13 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border. 14 So I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,

and it shall devour her strongholds, with shouting on the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; 15 and their king shall go into exile, he and his princes together," says the Lord.

Amos 1:13-15

The Kingdom of Ammon was located on the eastern border of Israel right about in the center (from top to bottom) of the nation(s).



Ammon's treatment of the Jewish people - God's chosen people - was especially heinous as we read *they ripped open pregnant women that they might enlarge their border.*

13 Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border. 14 So I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour her strongholds, with shouting on the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; 15 and their king shall go into exile, he and his princes together," says the Lord.

Amos 1:13-15

Gilead was the area of land that had been apportioned to the tribe of Gad by Moses just prior to the children of Israel entering into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. You may recall that was the area of land outside of the land promised to them by God that Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh determined was good enough for them to settle in even though it wasn't the area of land that God had planned for them to settle in. This is now the second time (see also verse 3) we see in this chapter that **Gilead** was attacked by one of the surrounding nations and this time the attack was most especially barbaric.

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.

Amos 1:13

And for what purpose? *That they might enlarge their border.*

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.

Amos 1:13

Speaking on behalf of the Lord, Amos says, and *so I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, (capital city of Ammon) and it shall devour her strongholds, with shouting on the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind;*

14 So I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour her strongholds, with shouting on the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; 15 and their king shall go into exile, he and his princes together,” says the Lord.

Amos 1:14-15

The Lord saw, He took notice and He judged them accordingly. Again, the nations of the world would do wise to take notice as well.

Chapter 2 verse 1, we read,

1 Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom. 2 So I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the strongholds of Kerioth, and Moab shall die amid uproar, amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet; 3 I will cut off the ruler from its midst, and will kill all its princes with him,” says the Lord.

Amos 2:1-3

We have now the sixth and final kingdom of the nations surrounding the two kingdoms of the Jewish people. This time it is the Kingdom of **Moab** (who along with Ammon are from the area that is the present day Kingdom of Jordan) located on the southeastern border of Judah).



Interestingly, the final straw for **Moab** was a cruelty not so much against the people of Israel but for their cruelty they showed toward the king of Edom after having defeated the king in battle.

Thus says the Lord: “For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom.

Amos 2:1

God indicted the Ammonites for their treatment of the not-yet born while still in the womb of their mothers. Here now He indicts the Moabites for their lack respect for the dead and their desecration of the corpse of **the king of Edom**. Is this the worst thing the nation had ever done? Probably not, but it was the final straw that broke the acmes back and filled up the measure of the cup of God's wrath against them. And thus they were judged.

2 So I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the strongholds of Kerioth, and Moab shall die amid uproar, amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet; 3 I will cut off the ruler from its midst, and will kill all its princes with him,” says the Lord.

Amos 2:1-3

There is a common denominator that we see in each of these pronouncements by Amos against Syria, and Gaza, and Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab and that is that each involves a sin against the humanity of a neighboring people. None of them are specific violations of any particular provision of the Old Testament law of God. Rather, they were (and continue to be) violations of the basic code of human behavior that is written into the hearts of all people and thus is expected of all people. And you'll notice, God holds even unbelieving, pagan nations responsible for unmerciful behavior that violates this basic code.

All flesh will stand before God to be judged. As Paul the Apostle wrote,

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.

Romans 2:12

And so, whether a person or peoples' sin is against the basic law of God written upon the heart of every man, or it is against the written law of God preserved for us through His Word, all flesh will stand before Him to whom we must give an account.

And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Hebrews 4:13

That's a pretty sobering thought. And it should be. It can be a pretty scary thought as well, but it need not have to be. For Christ Jesus came into the world to take upon Himself the judgment that each one of us deserves to have meted out upon ourselves.

I'll close this morning with these words from the Apostle John. He wrote,

1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

I John 2:1-2a

If you have never dealt with the problem of your sin - that is the consequences of that sin - by coming to Jesus Christ in faith and placing your trust in His work in your stead, then I want to encourage you to do that. The Lord loves you and He has made a way for you to come into His presence despite the reality of your sin. I encourage you to receive the gift of His salvation today.

Let's pray.