

Amos Chapter 2

Amos 2:1 "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:"

“Moab”: Descendants of Lot and his elder daughter (Gen. 19:37).

“Burned the bones”: This event, where vengeance didn’t stop at death.

Burning a dead person’s bones ... into lime was not just despicable but was considered a desecration.

The Moabites were descended from Lot and his daughter. They and the Ammonites were not friends with Israel. They were very vicious in some of their battles. They were blood related to Israel, but they were enemies. It was the Moabites that hired Balam to curse the Israelites.

2 Kings 23:16 "And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchers that [were] there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchers, and burned [them] upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words."

God will not allow such sin to go unnoticed.

Amos 2:2 "But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kirioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, [and] with the sound of the trumpet:"

“Kirioth”: An important Moabite city, either as a capital or center of worship.

The following companion Scripture shows that God gives the same message to more than one prophet.

Jeremiah 48:41 "Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs."

The fire that came on Moab was in war. The trumpet was blowing and they were destroyed. Kirioth is a city.

Amos 2:3 "And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD."

“Judge”: Possibly denoting the king, who was often so designated (2 Kings 15:5; Dan. 9:12).

"Judge" was translated from shophet, which could also mean ruler. The king and his sons will all be slain.

Verses 4-5: Israel was probably as pleased at this pronouncement of judgment as she was with all the others. Judah's sin is similar to Israel's, for they have despised the law of the Lord. Israel should realize that if God would judge Judah, then certainly He would also judge Israel herself. Judah's sin is worse than those of the nation, because Judah has violated the law of God that was delivered to her by direct revelation.

Amos 2:4 "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked:"

“Judah”: With the judgments against the nations finished, the prophet proceeded to address Judah, moving ever closer to his ultimate target of Israel.

“Despised the law of the LORD”: The nations were judged because they had sinned against the law of God, which was written in the heart and conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). Judah and Israel were judged because they sinned against God's revealed, written law.

Judah's enemies were dealt with first, but God does not overlook the sins of Judah either. The main reason that their enemies had been punished by God was because of their cruelty toward God's people. We see that Judah was punished for her unfaithfulness to God. They worshipped false gods along with their worship of the One True God and He was jealous.

We studied in Hosea about the harlot wife of God. His chosen people were unto Him as a wife. God had given them His law, but they had not kept that law. They did not keep His commandments either, they had become liars. They sought the false gods of the heathen around them. God gave them ample time to repent but they did not.

Amos 2:5 "But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

“Fire upon Judah”: The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled this judgment (ca. 605-586 B.C.; 2 Kings Chapters 24-25).

We studied in some other prophetic books, how the Babylonians took Jerusalem and Judah and burned them. Jeremiah dealt with this more fully than Amos.

Jeremiah 17:27 "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

Verses 6-7: Greed, so all-consuming that for insignificant debts they would sell another into slavery (Matt. 18:23-35), was accompanied by uncontained sexual passion. Care for the poor is a

prominent Old Testament theme (e.g. Prov. 14:31; 17:5), and sexual purity is mandated repeatedly. Violations of both are an affront to God's holy name.

Israel's social injustice, materialism, self-centeredness and willful ignorance of God were rampant. Notice that Israel's list is the only one that names "four" crimes. The other nations' lists are deliberately shortened, as if to say that Israel's sins accumulated faster than their counterparts.

Amos 2:6 "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;"

God had declared that "the poor" be afforded the same privileges and care as the rest of society (5:11; 8:4-8; Prov. 22:2, 22-23; Isa. 10:2-3), yet the Israelites were selling their brothers and sisters into slavery.

This is speaking of the judges taking bribes and condemning the innocent. The sandals were very important in their land. For a man to take your shoes was cruel and unusual punishment.

Amos uses hyperbole to demonstrate how seriously the rich extorted the poor: to the point of desiring the "dust" on their heads to this sin of greed he adds injustice. "Turn aside the way of the meek", sexual sin, and the cruelty of not returning "clothes" to the poor so they could keep warm at night (Exodus 22:26-27).

Amos 2:7 "That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the [same] maid, to profane my holy name:"

"Go in unto the same maid": In the context of oppressing the helpless, the reference was probably to a slave girl (Exodus 21:7-11).

It is difficult to determine who the maid belonged to, but the following Scriptures cover the sin.

Leviticus 18:8 "The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it [is] thy father's nakedness."

Leviticus 18:15 "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she [is] thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness."

The needy were to be cared for, and not abused. We see in the following Scriptures, they did sin against the poor.

Job 24:4 "They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together."

Job 24:10 "They cause [him] to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf [from] the hungry;"

These people have rebelled against God and His law.

Amos 2:8 "And they lay [themselves] down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned [in] the house of their god."

“Clothes laid to pledge”: Outer garments used to secure a loan to be returned before sunset (Exodus 22:25-27; Deut. 24:12-13). Instead, they used them to engage in idolatrous acts.

We see they had no compassion at all for the poor. They took the things away from the poor that were necessary for them to live and used them. They did not need these things but they took them from the poor anyway. The poor had pledged them and the rich took the clothes away. Notice, the word god is not capitalized. This is speaking of their worship of false gods. They were a greedy self-indulgent society. They hated the authority of God.

Verses 9-12: God’s faithful provision to Israel included military victory, deliverance, and spiritual leadership. As part of their consecration to the Lord, the “Nazirites” were to drink no wine (Num. 6:1-21). Yet Israel had spurned God’s messengers by tempting them to sin.

Amos 2:9 "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height [was] like the height of the cedars, and he [was] strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath."

“Amorite”: The pre-Conquest inhabitants of Canaan, whom God defeated for the Jews (in Joshua 10:12-15). Their giant stature was said to make the spies look like grasshoppers (Num. 13:32-33).

These had been God's people and He had been with them in battle against the Amorites. The Amorites were like giants yet God helped Israel defeat the Amorites. God had been faithful to them in every way, but they had not been faithful to God. They disobeyed God and ran after false gods.

Amos 2:10 "Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite."

Where they were bond slaves in great affliction and distress, unable to help themselves. But the Lord brought deliverance for them, and took them out of this house of bondage with a high hand and a mighty arm.

"And led you forty years through the wilderness": Going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; providing them with all things necessary, with food and raiment, and protecting them from all their enemies.

To possess the whole land of Canaan, so called from a principal nation of it.

God had miraculously delivered them from the rule of Egypt and fed and protected them for 40 years in the wilderness. They had need for nothing. He even took the land from the evil Amorites, and gave it to them. They are a very ungrateful people.

Amos 2:11 "And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. [Is it] not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD."

Such were Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and many others; and of your young men for Nazirites. Who, by devoting themselves to God's service in a peculiar manner, and by observing peculiar rites, was an honor to Him. But ye gave the Nazarites wine, and ye tempted the Nazarites to violate their vow and condemn God's law, persuading them to drink wine.

And commanded the prophets, saying, prophesy not. You bid the prophets hold their peace, and not speak against your actions, nor denounce any punishments against you for them. An example of this we have in Amos himself (see chapter 7).

(See Numbers 6:1-21).

They were God's chosen people. They were to be the religious standard for all the heathen nations. God communicated with them regularly. God had endowed some of their people to speak to them the wishes of God. On occasion, God had spoken directly to them Himself.

"Nazirites" are those who have taken a special vow to God. They had paid no attention to the messages these prophets had brought them. The prophets were chosen of God for this special purpose, and were actually speaking words that God placed in their mouths. The Nazarite was chosen to live an example for the others to follow. The question here is saying, have you forgotten all of this?

Amos 2:12 "But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not."

Ye so despised these My favors, as to tempt the Nazarite to break his vow; and forbade the prophets prophesying (Isa 30:10). So Amaziah forbade Amos (Amos 7:12-14). Contrary to their vow and calling, and in contempt of it, and to make them like themselves; they either persuaded them, or forced them to it.

“And commanded the prophets, saying, prophesy not”: Hard and heavy things, judgments and denunciations of vengeance, only smooth things; by this authoritative language it appears that this is said of the rulers and governors of the people, as king, princes, and priests.

One of the requirements of the Nazarite vow was, they were to drink no strong drink. They tried to tempt the Nazirites to be like them. The holy life the Nazarite lived was a constant reminder of their sins. They had ears to hear, but they paid no attention to the messages the true prophets brought them from God.

Verses 13-16: Because of Israel's flagrant violations of God's righteous law and His gracious provisions, inescapable judgment must inevitably fall, though it will fall only after God has permitted Himself to endure Israel's many and grievous sins far beyond what might ordinarily be considered the breaking point.

Amos 2:13 "Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed [that is] full of sheaves."

With the weight of their sins, with which they had made him to serve, and had wearied him; his patience was quite wore out, he could bear them no longer.

Jehovah, in the awful judgment which He inflicts, is symbolized by the heavily-laden wagon. The expression "beneath you" suggests that the evil is not confined to the present. Israel, the nation weighted with the doom of past iniquities, bequeaths a yet more crushing load to future generations. If the text is sound, this appears the only satisfactory rendering of a difficult passage.

The heaviness this has placed on God's heart is almost more than He could bear. They have greatly disappointed God.

Verses 14-16: Neither personal strength nor military armament was sufficient to prevent the Lord's hand of judgment by the Assyrians (ca. 722 B.C.; 2 Kings Chapter 17).

The seven statements in these verses describe how completely devastated the Israelite army would be.

Amos 2:14 "Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself:"

Israel relied, against God, on his own strength. "Have we not," they said, "taken to us horns by our own strength?" (Amos 6:13). Amos tells them then, that every means of strength, resistance, flight, swiftness of foot, of horse, place of refuge, should fail them. Three times he repeats, as a sort of dirge, "he shall not deliver himself."

"Therefore the flight shall perish", (probably place of flight; Job 11:20; Psalm 142:5; Jer. 25:35). They had despised God, as their place of refuge, so the place of refuge, should perish from the swift, as though it were not. He should flee at full speed, but there would be no place to flee unto. God alone "renews strength;" therefore "the strong" man should not "strengthen his force" or might. Should not be able to gather or "collect his strength" as we say. Fear should disable him.

There will be no escape for the punishment God must bring to them for their sinful ways. There is no place to run and hide from God who is angry. Their strength was in the Lord and now that He has left, their strength left with Him.

Amos 2:15 "Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and [he that is] swift of foot shall not deliver [himself]: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself."

That is, at some distance, and can make use of his instruments of war afar off. Yet will not think it safe to stand his ground, but will betake himself to his heels as fast as he can to save himself.

“And he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself”; this is repeated, lest any should place confidence in their agility, and to show how complete and inevitable the affliction will be.

“Neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself”: By fleeing on horseback, no more than he that is on foot. No ways that can be devised or thought on would preserve from this general calamity (see Psalm 33:17).

There will be no fight in them. The following Scriptures show the futility of trying to run or fight, without God's help.

Psalms 33:16-17 "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength." "A horse [is] a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver [any] by his great strength."

We can take a lesson from this. To depend on one's self or the things we possess, is an action in futility. We must depend upon the God who created us.

Amos 2:16 "And [he that is] courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD."

A description of the most famous warriors amongst Israel, such as were known for valor among the mighty and valiant ones, like David's men, such as had the heart of a lion.

“Shall flee away naked in that day”: All throw away his armor and put off his clothes, as being both a hindrance to him in his flight; that he may make better speed.

“Saith the Lord”: Which is added to show the certainty of all this; it might be depended upon that so it would be, since the Lord God of truth had spoken it; and it was fulfilled about eighty years after this prophecy.

Even if a person were to get away in such a heated battle, it is certain they could carry nothing with them. He would have to leave all behind to hurry away. Again, I say to depend on things of this earth to help, brings destruction.

Colossians 3:1-2 "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

To depend on things of the earth brings heartache and failure, as these Israelites found out. Their only help was God.

Amos Chapter 2 Questions

1. What terrible thing had Moab done against Edom?
2. Who were these Moabites descended from?
3. They were blood related to Israel, but they were _____.
4. What had the Moabites hired Baalam to do?
5. What did God send on Moab?
6. What does the word "judge" in verse 3, probably mean?
7. Why had God determined to punish Judah?
8. Why had God punished their enemies?
9. They sought the _____ of the heathen around them.
10. Who took Jerusalem and Judah?
11. The Israelites had done what terrible sin?
12. What is verse 6 speaking of?
13. Give the two laws in Leviticus that forbid a man and his son sleeping with the same Maid?
14. What did God say that sin did to the name of God?
15. They had no _____ for the poor.
16. Why is god not capitalized in verse 8?
17. They were a _____ society.
18. The Amorite was so tall, they were compared to _____.
19. How many years did He lead them through the wilderness?
20. God had raised up _____, and of their young men for _____.
21. What was the prophet to speak?
22. What was a "Nazarite"?
23. They had given the Nazirites _____ to drink.
24. They had ears to hear, but they did not _____ the message of the prophet.

25. What heaviness is spoken of in verse 13?
26. Where can they escape to?
27. The courageous shall flee away _____.
28. To depend on things of the earth, brings _____ and _____.