

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
8-30-17

Amos 1

Judgment on Israel's Neighbors - Verses 1-2

¹The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel. ² He said: “The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.”

1:1 Amos was a shepherd and fig grower from the southern kingdom (Judah), but he prophesied to the northern kingdom (Israel). Israel was politically at the height of its power with a prosperous economy, but the nation was spiritually corrupt. Idols were worshiped throughout the land, and especially at Bethel, which was supposed to be the nation's religious center. Like Hosea, Amos was sent by God to denounce this social and religious corruption. About 30 or 40 years after Amos prophesied, Assyria destroyed the capital city, Samaria, and conquered Israel (722 B.C.). Uzziah reigned in Judah from 792 to 740; Jeroboam II reigned in Israel from 793 to 753.

1:1 Tekoa, Amos's hometown, was located in the rugged sheep country of Judah, about 10 miles south of Jerusalem. Long before Amos was born, a woman of Tekoa had helped reconcile David and his rebellious son, Absalom (2 Samuel 14:1-23).

1:1 Amos raised sheep—not a particularly “spiritual” job—yet he became a channel of God's message to others. Your job may not cause you to feel spiritual or successful, but it is a vital work if you are in the place God wants you to be. God can work through you to do extraordinary things, no matter how ordinary your occupation.

1:2 In the Bible, God is often pictured as a shepherd and his people as sheep. As a shepherd, God leads and protects his flock. But here God is depicted as a ferocious lion ready to devour those who are evil or unfaithful (see also Hosea 11:10).

1:2 Carmel means “fertile field.” It was a very fertile area. A drought capable of drying up this area would have to be quite severe.

Damascus Will Be Judged for Its Crimes - Verses 3-5

³ This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not relent. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth, ⁴ I will send fire on the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad. ⁵ I will

break down the gate of Damascus; I will destroy the king who is in the Valley of Aven and the one who holds the scepter in Beth Eden. The people of Aram will go into exile to Kir," says the LORD.

1:3 Damascus was the capital of Aram. In the past, Aram had been one of Israel's most formidable enemies. After the defeat of Aram by Assyria in 732 B.C. (2 Kings 16:9), Damascus was no longer a real threat.

1:3 Amos pronounced God's judgment on nation after nation around Israel's borders—even Judah. Perhaps the people of Israel cheered when they heard the rebukes leveled against those nations. But then Amos proclaimed God's judgment on the people of Israel. They could not excuse their own sin just because the sins of their neighbors seemed worse. God is no respecter of persons. He judges all people fairly and impartially.

1:3 The phrase "For three sins . . . even for four" is the prophet's strong and repeated reminder that these nations had sinned over and over again. This phrase echoes through this passage as God evaluates nation after nation. Each nation had repeatedly and persistently refused to follow God's commands. A sinful practice can become a way of life. Ignoring or denying the problem will not help us. We must begin the process of correction by confessing our sins to God and asking him to forgive us. Otherwise, we have no hope but to continue our pattern of sin.

1:5 The Arameans had once been slaves in Kir, but here they were free (9:7). Decreeing that the Arameans should go back to Kir was like saying the Israelites should go back to Egypt as slaves (Exodus 1).

Gaza Will Be Judged for Its Crimes - Verses 6-8

⁶This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not relent. Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom, ⁷I will send fire on the walls of Gaza that will consume her fortresses. ⁸I will destroy the king of Ashdod and the one who holds the scepter in Ashkelon. I will turn my hand against Ekron, till the last of the Philistines are dead," says the Sovereign LORD.

1:7-8 Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron were four of the five major cities of Philistia, an enemy that often threatened Israel. The fifth city, Gath, had probably already been destroyed. Therefore, Amos was saying that the entire nation of Philistia would be destroyed for its sins.

Tyre Will Be Judged for Its Crimes - Verses 9-10

⁹This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not relent. Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood, ¹⁰I will send fire on the walls of Tyre that will consume her fortresses."

1:9 Tyre was one of two major cities in Phoenicia. Several treaties had been made with this city, which supplied the cedar used to build David's palace and God's temple in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5).

Edom Will Be Judged for Its Crimes - Verses 11-12

¹¹ This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not relent.

Because he pursued his brother with a sword and slaughtered the women of the land, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked, ¹² I will send fire on Teman that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah."

1:11-12 Both Edom and Israel had descended from Isaac: Edom from Isaac's son Esau, and Israel from Esau's twin brother, Jacob (Genesis 25:19-28; 27). But these two nations, like the two brothers, were always fighting. Edom had rejoiced at Israel's misfortunes. As a result, God promised to destroy Edom completely, from Teman in the south to Bozrah in the north.

Ammon Will Be Judged for Its Crimes - Verses 13-15

¹³ This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not relent. Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders, ¹⁴ I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah that will consume her fortresses amid war cries on the day of battle, amid violent winds on a stormy day. ¹⁵ Her king will go into exile, he and his officials together," says the LORD.

1:13-15 The Ammonites had descended from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his younger daughter (Genesis 19:30-38). The Ammonites were hostile to Israel; and although Israel began to worship their idols, the Ammonites still attacked (Judges 10:6-8). After Saul had been anointed Israel's king, his first victory in battle was against the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11). Rabbah was Ammon's capital city. Amos's prophecy of Ammon's destruction was fulfilled through the Assyrian invasion.