

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-6-17

Amos 2

This Is What The LORD Says - Verses 1-5

This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Moab, even for four, I will not relent. Because he burned to ashes the bones of Edom's king, ² I will send fire on Moab that will consume the fortresses of Kerioth. Moab will go down in great tumult amid war cries and the blast of the trumpet. ³ I will destroy her ruler and kill all her officials with him," says the LORD. ⁴ This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not relent. Because they have rejected the law of the LORD and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed, ⁵ I will send fire on Judah that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem."

2:1-3 The Moabites had descended from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his older daughter (*Genesis 19:30-37*). Balak, king of Moab, had tried to hire the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites so they could be defeated (*Numbers 22-24*). Balaam spoke instead the Lord's word of blessing, but some of the Moabites had succeeded in getting Israel to worship Baal (*Numbers 25:1-3*). The Moabites were known for their atrocities (*2 Kings 3:26-27*). An archaeological artifact, the Moabite Stone, reveals that Moab was always quick to profit from the downfall of others.

2:4-6 After Solomon died, the kingdom divided, and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin became the southern kingdom (Judah) under Solomon's son, Rehoboam. The other 10 tribes became the northern kingdom (Israel) and followed Jeroboam, who had rebelled against Rehoboam. God had punished other nations harshly for their evil actions and atrocities. But God also promised to judge both Israel and Judah because they ignored the revealed law of God. The other nations were ignorant, but Judah and Israel, God's people, knew what God wanted. Still they ignored him and joined pagan nations in worshipping idols. If we know God's Word and refuse to obey it, like Israel, we will carry an even greater burden of guilt.

2:4-5 Amos must have won over his audience as he proclaimed God's judgment against the evil nations surrounding Israel. But then he even spoke against his own nation, Judah, before focusing on God's indictment of Israel.

Judgment on Israel - Verses 6-16

⁶ This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. ⁷ They trample on the heads of the poor on the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. ⁸ They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines. ⁹ "Yet I destroyed the Amorites before them, though they were tall as the cedars and strong as the oaks. I destroyed their fruit above and their roots below. ¹⁰ I brought you up out of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness to give you the land of the Amorites. ¹¹ "I also raised up prophets from among your children and Nazirites from among your youths. Is this not true, people of Israel?" declares the LORD. ¹² "But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy. ¹³ "Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain. ¹⁴ The swift will not escape, the strong will not muster their strength, and the warrior will not save his life. ¹⁵ The archer will not stand his ground, the fleet-footed soldier will not get away, and the horseman will not save his life. ¹⁶ Even the bravest warriors will flee naked on that day," declares the LORD.

2:6-16 God condemned Israel for five specific sins: (1) selling the poor as slaves (see Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Amos 8:6), (2) exploiting the poor (see Exodus 23:6; Deuteronomy 16:19), (3) engaging in perverse sexual sins (see Leviticus 20:11-12), (4) taking illegal collateral for loans (see Exodus 22:26-27; Deuteronomy 24:6, 12-13), and (5) worshiping false gods (see Exodus 20:3-5).

2:6-7 Amos was speaking to the upper class. There was no middle class in the country—only the very rich and the very poor. The rich observed religious rituals. They gave extra tithes, went to places of worship, and offered sacrifices. But they were greedy and unjust, and they took advantage of the helpless. Be sure that you do not neglect the needs of the poor while you faithfully attend church and fulfill your religious obligations. God expects us to live out our faith—this means responding to those in need.

2:9-11 The prophets were constantly challenging people to remember what God had done! When we read a list like this one, we are amazed at Israel's forgetfulness. But what would the prophets say about us? God's past faithfulness should have reminded the Israelites to obey him; likewise, what he has done for us should remind us to live for him.

2:11 The Nazirites took a vow of service to God. The vow included abstaining from wine and never cutting their hair. But instead of being respected for their disciplined and temperate lives, they were being urged to break their vows. If the Nazirites were corrupted, there would remain little influence for good among the Israelites.

2:16 "That day" refers to the time when Assyria would attack Israel, destroy Samaria, and take the people captive (722 B.C.). This military defeat came only a few decades after this pronouncement.

2:16 Television and movies are filled with images of people who seem to have no fear. Many today have modeled their lives after these images—they want to be tough. But God is not impressed with bravado. He says that even the toughest people will run in fear when God's judgment comes. Do you know people who think they can make it through life without God? Don't be swayed by their self-assured rhetoric. Recognize that God fears no one, and one day all people will fear him.