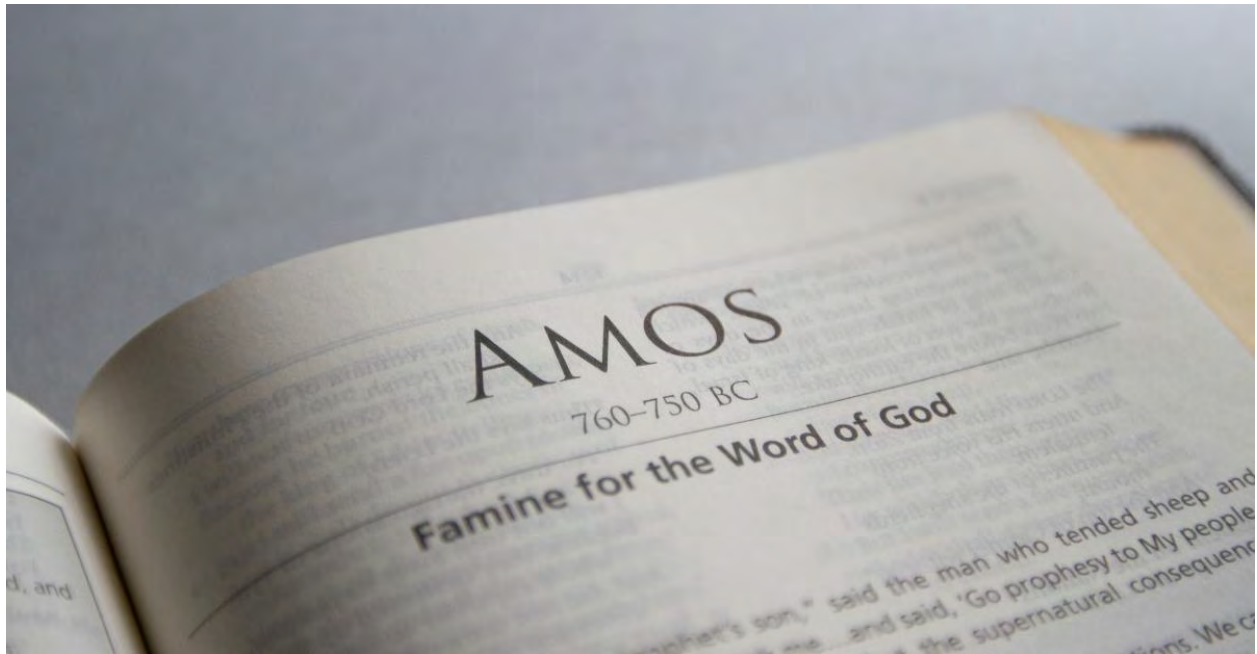


AMOS 1

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NATIONS



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Amos 1: Judgment Against the Nations
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Amos 1: Introduction

The sins of the nations had increased to the boiling point, and God was boiling mad.

The pagan nations around Israel had forfeited their right to the land of Canaan because of their sinful ways. But they did not learn their lesson. Instead, they continued to heap up sins against the Lord, especially sins against His chosen people.

God's patience had run out. He sent Amos to pronounce judgment on the nations, but this was only a prelude to the judgment He would exercise against His people, Israel.

We hope you will find this study of the book of Amos to provide abundant stimulation for your walk with and work for the Lord.

For His glory and praise!

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 God Calls

Pray Psalm 62.5-8.

My soul, wait silently for God alone,
For my expectation *is* from Him.
He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be moved.
In God *is* my salvation and my glory;
The rock of my strength,
And my refuge, *is* in God.
Trust in Him at all times, you people;
Pour out your heart before Him;
God *is* a refuge for us.
Selah

Sing Psalm 62.5-8.

(Germany: [*Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness*](#))

My soul in silence waits, O LORD, hoping in You and in Your Word.
You are my Rock, my Stronghold true, and my Salvation, LORD are You!

On You my hope and glory rest, Rock of my strength and Refuge best!
Trust always in our God, the LORD; take refuge only in His Word.

Read Amos 1.1, 2; meditate on Amos 7.14, 15.

Preparation

1. How did Amos become a prophet?
2. What did God tell him to do?

Meditation

Amos was not the first shepherd to be called into service for the Word of the Lord. God reminded David, “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel” (2 Samuel 7.8). It’s interesting to note the verb God used here: “took” rather than “called”. Amos used the same verb in 7.15 to refer to his calling. This verb gets at the irresistible nature of the call of God: When God calls, He will take you where He will, to serve Him as He leads. Jonah might have thought that, having *heard* the call of God, he could avoid it. But God “took” him to Nineveh in spite of himself. Neither David nor Amos had the proper credentials for their calling. But God took care of that, giving each just what they needed to fulfill His appointed work.

The word “saw” is **חָזַב** *chazab*, (v. 1) and means to see with the eyes. God must have shown Amos a vision of his calling, what he was to do and say, so that his mission was clear from the start. His mission and message were “concerning Israel” and he made it clear that his proclamation did not come from the humble folks of Tekoa but, as it were, from Zion and Jerusalem, that is, from the dwelling place of God (v. 2). What he had to say was as the roaring of a lion, not the bleating of

sheep. God had called, sent, and equipped Amos for his work, just as He does each of us whom He calls to His Kingdom and glory and sends to our world as His witnesses (1 Thess. 2.12; Acts 1.8).

The land of Israel was dried up and withered with sin, as suggested by the mourning pastures and the top of Carmel, which was normally lush and verdant. Carmel was also where Elijah called down the judgment of God against the pagan prophets of Israel, when Carmel “withered” under the fire of God (1 Kgs. 18.20ff.). Its mention here foreshadowed the rest of what Amos would proclaim.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (Gen. 5.24). Taken by God.

And the aforementioned Elijah? The same thing: “...suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them [Elijah and Elisha]; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kgs. 2.11). Taken by God.

When God desires something, it is done. Lickety-split.
“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6.10).

So, when God says, “I have called you by your name; you are Mine” (Is. 43.1) He means just that.

Called...taken...for life and in death. Taken by God.

Upper rooms, small horses, disciples, and prophets were taken in the same vein: “...as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, ‘Why are you loosing the colt?’ And they said, ‘The Lord has need of him.’ Then they brought him to Jesus” (Lk. 19.33-35). Taken for God.

“And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, ‘Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us” (Mk. 14.13-15). Taken for God.

“As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him” (Matt. 9.9). Taken by God.

“I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheep breeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the LORD took me...” (Amos 7.14, 15). Taken by God.

Don’t ever think God’s taking of you was a “mistook”.
He never makes a mistake. We too, are taken by God.

But, as “Taken Ones” like Enoch, Elijah, the colt, the upper room, Matthew, and Amos, we must also courageously roar from our vantage point, “Hear the word of the LORD”!

Reflection

1. God has taken every one of us. Where has He taken you? What is your calling?

2. What vision for serving Him has God given you? What are your goals? What outcomes do you seek in your calling?

3. How do you prepare each day to take up your calling?

Amos was a herdsman, and engaged in agriculture. But the same Divine Spirit influenced Isaiah and Daniel in the court, and Amos in the sheep-folds, giving to each the powers and eloquence needful for them. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Amos 1.1, 2

Pray Psalm 62.9-12.

Thank God for speaking to You in His Word. What have you heard from Him for today? Commit your day to the work God has appointed to you, and call on Him for mercy and grace to help in your times of need.

Sing Psalm 62.9-12.

(Germany: [Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness](#))

Trust not in men of low degree; lighter are they than breath shall be.

Do not rely on strength or gold; trust in the LORD, Who rules from old.

Once God has spoken, twice I have heard: Power belongs alone to the LORD!

And lovingkindness, LORD, is Yours; You recompense us for our works.

2 Judgment against Syria

Pray Psalm 68.1,2, 32, 33

Let God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered;
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.
As smoke is driven away,
So drive *them* away;
As wax melts before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God...
Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth;
Oh, sing praises to the Lord,
Selah
To Him who rides on the heaven of heavens, *which were* of old!
Indeed, He sends out His voice, a mighty voice.

Sing Psalm 68.1, 2, 32, 33.

(O Store Gud: How Great Thou Art)
Let God arise, let all Your foes be scattered!
Let those who hate You flee before Your face!
As smoke dissolves, as wax in flame is shattered,
let all the wicked perish in disgrace!
Refrain vv. 32, 33

Sing to the LORD, O kingdoms of the earth!
Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!
Behold He speaks; His Word is going forth;
Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!

Read Amos 1.1, 5; meditate on verses 3-5.

Preparation

1. What had Syria (Damascus) done?

2. How would God judge them?

Meditation

The Syrians had horribly “threshed” the region of Gilead in Israel. Gilead was part of the land east of the Jordan which Israel had taken on their way to invading the Canaanite lands. It was the historic dwelling-place of the half-tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32.39), but doubtless people from other of the ten northern tribes had migrated and settled there by Amos’ day. According to Amos’ contemporary, Hosea, Gilead had become a region notorious for evildoers (Hos. 6.8-10). But this did not justify the excessive cruelty Damascus appears to have inflicted on the people there.

God’s judgment would take the form of the destruction of the royal household of Syria’s kings (vv. 4, 5). Further, enemies—probably Assyria—would break into the city of Damascus with murderous results (v. 5). The surviving people of Syria would go into captivity to Kir. It’s not clear where Kir

was. It may have been an Assyrian city or outpost. The word means simply “wall” or “enclosure”, suggesting captivity and deprivation of the worst kind.

The message to Israel was clear: See what God can do to those who are mightier than you. Repent and return to the Lord, lest worse judgment fall upon you.

Christians are commanded to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44-48). As much as we might like to put someone down, make life miserable for them, gossip about them to others, hold a grudge, or in other ways thresh them with words or deeds, we must desist. Jesus died for our enemies, just as He died for us, Who were His enemies until His love finally broke through and we were saved (Rom. 5:10; Gal. 4:6).

Only God can pass judgment on our enemies. Our duty is to love them.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“...because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron” (Amos 1.3 ESV).

“...because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth...” (Amos 1.3 NIV)

“They beat down My people in Gilead as grain is threshed with iron sledges” (Amos 1.3 NLT).

“...because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron” (Amos 1.3 NKJV).

Any way you write and read it, God is not pleased with those who treat His people—however deserving—cruelly and badly. It is His job to judge His people. It is not for others to do the deed.

For all those who are oppressed politically, personally, financially, familially and fatally—God sees, and He cares. And those who do the oppressing, from them He will “not turn away its punishment” (Amos 1.3).

“Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
and let them say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns.’
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
let the field rejoice, and all that is in it.
Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the LORD,
for He is coming to judge the earth” (1 Chron. 16:31-33).

“For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the LORD shall be many” (Is. 66:16).

“...the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Ps. 19:9).

God does not tolerate His people to be threshed with implements of iron, whether that implement of iron is someone else’s tongue, or power, or ill will. Someday those folks will be judged. After He gets through judging the Church. “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 4:17). Fair question.

“For three transgressions...and for four” (Amos 1.3) we must not be an implement of iron against anyone else. “The message to Israel was clear: See what God can do to those who are mightier [and perhaps meaner and crueller] than you. Repent and return to the Lord, lest worse judgment fall upon

you.”

Reflection

1. Have you ever “threshed” someone with your tongue or works? Are there outstanding amends to be made?
2. What’s the best way to make sure you don’t fall under the discipline of God (Heb. 12.3-11)?
3. How can believers encourage and help one another to avoid the judgment of God?

Damascus was the capital of Syria (also called Aram), a powerful kingdom that had been a frequent adversary of Israel throughout its history. Israelites listening to Amos would have been glad to hear of God’s punishment of Damascus. Earl Radmacher (1933-2014), NKJV Study Bible Note on Amos 1.3-5

Pray Psalm 68.3, 4, 19, 20, 32, 33.

Rejoice before the Lord and give thanks for our great salvation. Praise Him for His sovereign might and rule, and bless and thank Him for all His many benefits. Commit yourself to be an agent of His grace today.

Sing Psalm 68.3, 4, 19, 20, 32, 33.

(O Store Gud: How Great Thou Art)

LORD, let Your righteous ones exult in glory,
let us rejoice and praise Your holy Name!
Now let us sing the Savior’s old, old story—
Who life to deserts brings, we now proclaim!

Refrain v. 32, 33

Sing to the LORD, O kingdoms of the earth!
Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!
Behold He speaks; His Word is going forth;
Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!

Blessed be the LORD, our burden daily bearing,
O God, our God, our Savior and our King!
With us salvation and deliv’rance sharing,
He life from death His people daily brings.

Refrain

3 Judgment against Philistia

Pray Psalm 56.10-13.

In God (I will praise His word),
In the LORD (I will praise *His* word),
In God I have put my trust;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
Vows made to You *are binding* upon me, O God;
I will render praises to You,
For You have delivered my soul from death.
Have You not *kept* my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living?

Sing Psalm 56.10-13.

(Morecambe: [*Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart*](#))

I will not fear what foes might do to me. I give You thanks, my vows will I renew.
You have redeemed me, set my spirit free, and ever in Your light I'll walk with You.

Read Amos 1.1-8; meditate on verses 6-8.

Preparation

1. Why was God angry with the Philistines?
2. What was He going to do?

Meditation

From the earliest days of the nation, the five cities of the Philistines—Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Gath—never reconciled to Israel's presence in Canaan. Warfare was almost continuous. David, to escape Saul, fled to the Philistines, pretending to be fighting for them against Israel, but more concerned to keep himself safe and to protect certain cities in Israel. Perhaps it was during this time that David learned to play the “instrument of Gath” which was scored to accompany Psalm 8 (Asaph and the sons of Korah also picked up on this instrument for Psalms 81 and 84).

The Philistines ultimately expelled David, and their harassment of Israel continued during the division of the nation into Israel and Judah. Apparently, at the time Amos prophesied, the Philistines had taken a large population of Israel (“the whole”) into captivity and sold them into slavery to Edom (v. 6). They “jumped the gun” on the Lord in this matter, for at this time, as we have seen, God was wooing His people back to Him by enlarging their territory and restoring some of their cities. His time for sending His people into captivity would come later and by a nation of His choosing.

God promised to turn His hand against the Philistines, to burn the city of Gaza, cut off the inhabitants of Ashdod and the king of Ashkelon, and to destroy the remnant of the Philistines (vv. 7, 8). Surely the people of Israel, hearing this, would have rejoiced. Nevertheless, they would not

repent or give thanks to God, and the march of God's judgment and wrath would continue toward its destination—Israel herself.

God is sovereign over the nations and peoples of the world. He has a time and place for them all, and the hearts of their rulers are in His hand, to do with as He pleases (Prov. 21.1). We need not fear what anyone can do to us, as long as we trust in the Lord, rejoice in His Presence, give thanks for all His blessings, and walk in all His ways.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Country after country, generation after generation, the warning of the LORD continues. Right on down to us.

We read of the people of Israel with consternation: Why didn't they ever get the picture? Why did they always behave so obstinately? Why did they always break God's commands? Why, oh why, did they always think that they knew better than the Creator Sustainer of the heavens and the earth?

Indeed, why? Why do we do the same? Why does the Church never seem to get the picture? Why don't the Shepherds teach the commandments of God? Why, oh why, do we continue to think that we know better than God? Or as Job said to his "all-knowing friends", "No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!" (Job 12.2).

God offers His people either destruction for disobedience, or a joy-filled eternal life—here and now and there and then—for believing in Jesus and obeying His commands (Jn. 3.16; 14.15).

"And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees" (Is. 25.6). A peaceful picnic of sorts, basketed, delivered by, and shared with the LORD.

"And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations" (Is. 25.7).
He will open our eyes to Jesus and our hearts to the Holy Spirit.

"He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken" (Is. 25.8). The plans He has for His people are good and not evil, to give us a future and a hope.

"And it will be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation'" (Is. 25.9).

This is what God wants us to say and do. This is His preferred choice for us.

It seems a simple choice when the options are weighed:

Do I want to enjoy God's peaceful, eye and heart opening, and saving picnic plans?

Or do I want the fiery, devouring judgment that the Philistines got?

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Ps. 23.1-3).

Decidedly "...we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24.15).

Reflection

1. How do you know when the Holy Spirit is convicting you of sin (Jn. 16.8)?
2. What should you do then?
3. Why does this matter so much (Heb. 2.1-3)?

The Prophet records here a special crime, — that the Gazites took away Jews and Israelites, and removed them as captives into Idumea, and confined them there. I have already said that it was not the Prophet's design to enumerate all their sins, but that he was content to mention one crime, that the Israelites might understand that they were involved in a heavier guilt, because they had grievously offended both God and men. If then so severe a vengeance was to be taken on Gaza, they ought to have known, that a heavier vengeance awaited them, because they were guilty of more and greater sins. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Amos 1.6-8

Pray Psalm 56.1-9.

Seek the Lord's protection today against all fears, foes, and follies. Commit yourself to trust in Him for all your needs and for the strength and grace to do the work He has appointed for you.

Sing Psalm 56.1-9.

(Morecambe: [*Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart*](#))

Savior, be gracious, gracious unto me! Weary, I seek the shelter of Your wings.
'Til trouble passes, 'til my sighings flee; I seek the LORD Who for me does all things.

When I'm afraid I'll put my trust in You, You, LORD, Whose everlasting Word I praise.
I will not fear what foes to me might do, but will in faith to You my crying raise.

Wickedly how my foes distort my words. Constant attacks and snares await my way.
Pour out Your wrath, consume them, mighty LORD! Bring evil to its end, O LORD, I pray!

LORD, see my wand'rings, see my anxious tears! Help me to trust and praise Your holy Word.
Gladly I know that when I call You hear; I will not fear but trust in You, O LORD.

4 Judgment against Tyre

Pray Psalm 2.1, 2.

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed...

Sing Psalm 2.1, 2.

(Agincourt: [*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High*](#))

Why do the nations vainly rage,
conspiring together from age to age?
Earth's kings and all of their couns'lers stand
against the LORD and His Right Hand.

Read and meditate on Amos 1.1-10; meditate on verses 9, 10.

Preparation

1. Why was God angry with Tyre?
2. What would He do to them?

Meditation

The Gentile city of Tyre was guilty of the same sin as Gaza: selling the people of Israel into captivity to Edom (v. 9). The people of Tyre had a long-standing covenant with the people of Israel, dating back to the days of Solomon (1 Kgs. 5.1-10). Despite Israel's rebellion against Judah, relations with Tyre seem to have remained intact. But when Tyre piled on with Gaza to take a large number of people captive and sell them to Edom, that was the end of their covenant and of God's patience with Tyre.

The punishment was yet in the future, when Nebuchadnezzar would burn the city-state of Tyre to the ground and leave its rubble beside the Mediterranean Sea. The people of Tyre, stubborn and determined, rebuilt their city on an island just offshore, thinking this an impregnable redoubt. But Alexander would come, around 333 BC, and, using the rubble from old Tyre, build a causeway to new Tyre, lay siege, and subdue it entirely.

Tyre's palaces and all its people were "devoured", just as the Lord said.

God's judgment can be long in coming sometimes. But that doesn't mean His Word has failed. Judgment can occur suddenly—as in the fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians (Dan. 5.30, 31); or it can take the form of a process of steady decline unto ultimate destruction (Rom. 1.18-32).

Either way, it's not somewhere we want to be.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Arise, O LORD, in Your anger;
lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies;
rise up for me to the judgment You have commanded!” (Ps. 7.6).

The enemies against God’s people were vicious indeed. The description of them is frightening:
“...he pursued his brother with the sword, and cast off all pity; his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever” (Amos 1.11).

Prayer is the only way to fend off that kind of hatred. We can only give that to God and wait for Him to judge and deliver. As David prayed:

“O LORD my God, in You I put my trust; save me from all those who persecute me;
and deliver me, lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver...
Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just;
for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.
My defense is of God, who saves the upright in heart.
God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7.1, 2, 9-11).

Paul also experienced this same terrifying anger from his enemies, yet he said:

“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!” (2 Tim. 4.17, 18).

God sees. God knows. And God is angry with the wicked every day.

And we never want to fall on the wrong side of that equation.

Have we ever pursued a Christian brother with a sword?

“There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword...” (Prov. 12.18).

Have we ever cast off all pity toward anyone, or any group?

Has our anger toward any person or persons torn at them perpetually?

Or torn into our own hearts continually?

Have we kept wrath going about anything?

What if there is something in our life, or in our church, that God is angry about every day?

Are there three transgressions, maybe even four, from which we need to turn?

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pet. 2.1-3).

God’s judgment fell against Tyre.

God’s judgment will fall against our enemies.

God’s judgment will happen...

“God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (Lk. 18.13).

Reflection

1. What's the best way to keep from coming under the discipline of the Lord?
2. How would you counsel a friend who came to you burdened with some sin?
3. How can believers encourage one another to stay on the Lord's path?

*He uses nearly the same words respecting Tyrus which he did respecting Gaza, and charges it with the same sin, which was that of removing the Jews from their country, as refugees and exiles, into Idumea, and of selling them as captives to the Idumeans. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Amos 1.9-12**

Pray Psalm 2.10-12.

Pray for a great worldwide awakening to Jesus in all the nations of the world, and that God would spare His wrath and multiply His mercy and grace.

Sing Psalm 2.10-12.

(Agincourt: [*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High*](#))

Be wise, O kings, O judges, hear,
and tremble with joy, serve the LORD with fear.
Embrace the Son, keep His wrath at bay,
or you shall perish in the way.

His wrath is kindled like a flame
at all who refuse to bow to His Name.
Beware His anger and judgment grim:
How blessed are all who trust in Him!

5 Judgment against Edom

Opening Prayer: Psalm 91.1-3

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, “*He is my refuge and my fortress;*
My God, in Him I will trust.”
Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.

Sing Psalm 91.1-3

(Lauda Anima: [*Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*](#))

All who dwell within God’s shelter in His shadow will reside.
He our Tow’r, our Fortress ever, in Him we our trust confide.
From the trapper’s snares He saves us; safe from sickness we abide.

Read Amos 1.1-12; meditate on verses 11, 12.

Preparation

1. Why did God judge Edom?
2. What form would that judgment take?

Meditation

Edom’s ingratitude and depravity were the worst, since their crimes were committed against “his brother” (v. 11).

The Edomites had been opposed to Israel’s settling in the land of Canaan from the beginning (cf. Num. 20.14-21). We have noted how eagerly they purchased a multitude of Israelites to make them slaves and, we may assume, sell them in the lucrative slave trade of the day (vv. 6, 9). Yet as heinous as this sin was, it paled into insignificance—the LORD does not mention it here—with the other transgressions for which God was coming in judgment against them.

The Edomites were pitiless against the people of Israel and “pursued” them “with the sword”, filled with rage and anger (v. 11). That is, in their rage, they butchered as many of the Israelites as they could, whenever opportunity arose. They “tore perpetually”, never giving the Israelite who bordered their land any rest from savagery.

Such unrelenting anger and violence became more than God would endure. He would burn their main cities to the ground—at the hand of the Babylonians (cf. Jer. 46.7ff)—and put an end to their monarchy. In other words, they would cease to be a people: “His descendants are plundered, his brethren and his neighbors, and he is no more” (Jer. 49.10).

Moses explained that God “remembered” His covenant with His people (Ex. 2.24, 25). Israel did not, but God will not deny His Word. For the nations surrounding Israel, their time was up. Ironically, when judgment fell on Edom and the others, it would fall on Israel as well, and ultimately

on Judah. Because God also remembered that if His people spurn His promises and Law, they will know the backhand of His wrath (cf. Deut. 28.15ff). And He continues to remember His Word and promises today.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God remembers His promises and keeps them—the good, the bad, and the ugly.

And we must remember that God is God. He is not like us, and sadly, we are not like Him.

“‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD.

‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Is. 55.8, 9).

As gratifying as it is to know that God deals with His, and our, enemies, we also need to know, and fully understand, that the only reason we are not His enemies is because of Jesus’ saving work on our behalf.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5.8).

How can we ever fully comprehend a love like that? Our thoughts truly are not His thoughts. His love and forgiveness are beyond measure, something that we can only know “dimly”. “We can see and understand only a little about God now, as if we were peering at His reflection in a poor mirror” (1 Cor. 13.12 TLB).

Paul hoped for us that we might “be able to comprehend...the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge...” (Eph. 3.18, 19).

That amazing love makes all the difference in the way God deals with our sin. He pities those who fear Him.

“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities...

As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.

For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust” (Ps. 103.8-10, 13).

Sadly for the Edomites who did not fear Him nor repent, their fate was ugly, bad, and deadly.

Sadly for those today who do not fear Him nor repent (Rom. 3.18), their fate is equally as sad.

Happily, for those who do fear Him, repent, and turn from their sinful ways (2 Chron. 7.14) the outcome is good.

“He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded...” (Ps. 105.8).

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13.20, 21).

Reflection

1. What does it mean to say that God “remembers” His covenant?
2. How does He “remember” His covenant toward you? What should your response be?
3. Knowing that God will deal with our enemies, how should this affect our witness for Christ?

*[T]he Prophet says now, that the Idumeans had sinned more than their neighbors, and that their obstinacy was unbealable and that hence they could no longer be borne, for they had too long abused God's forbearance, who had withheld his vengeance until this time. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Amos 1.11, 12**

Closing Prayer: Psalm 91.4-16

Thank the Lord for the forgiveness of sins and for His mercy and grace to meet us in all our times of need.

Sing Psalm 91.4-16

(Lauda Anima: [*Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*](#))

He will shade us with His pinions, 'neath His wings we safety find.
From night's terror, from day's arrow, from the fears that stalk our mind.
When destruction falls at noon time, safe in Him shall we abide.

Thousands at our sides may falter—it will not to us come near!
We instead shall see the end of all who at God's mercy sneer.
Evil shall no more befall us for we hold the Lord most dear.

He shall give His angels charge to bear us up, lest we should fall;
they will guard and carry all who on the Savior's mercy call.
Cobra, mighty lion, serpent: We shall tread upon them all!

Save us, Lord! We love You only; set us up secure on high!
You we know, on You we call in trouble: Hear us when we cry!
Show us Your salvation, let long life forever satisfy!

6 Judgment against Ammon

Pray Psalm 52.3-5.

You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking righteousness.

Selah

You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.

God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the living.

Selah

Sing Psalm 52.3-5

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Men more than good in evil delight, and lies prefer to what is right.
They utter words both harsh and strong with their devouring, deceitful tongue.

God will forever break them down, uproot, and cast them to the ground!
He from their safety tears them away, no more to know the light of day.

Read Amos 1.1-15; meditate on verses 13-15.

Preparation

1. Why was God judging Ammon?
2. How would He judge them?

Meditation

The sin of Ammon is almost unspeakable: “they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, that they might enlarge their territory.” God hates murder, and he hates the murder of children in the womb. Ammon would pay the price. Their capital burned, the palaces of their rulers “devoured”, their king and princes dragged off to captivity amid the tempestuous fury of the living God.

This country has been ripping children from the wombs of their mothers, with the consent and cooperation of those mothers and the blessing of law, for two generations now. Millions of children have been murdered in the womb, not just in one region of the country but all over the nation. So familiar have we become with the practice of abortion that politicians, activists, scholars, physicians, and everyday folk see nothing wrong with it whatsoever. Indeed, they seem to regard it as some great good.

Remember Ammon. God does. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of people who, in brazen ingratitude, refuse to acknowledge His many gifts or to seek His favor. His judgment is upon us—all manner of uncleanness and lustfulness, sexual immorality and abuse, debased minds, unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil thinking, violence, disobedience to parents,

undiscerning and unloving, unforgiving, and unmerciful (Rom. 1.26-32). We are Ammon. And if we do not repent, the end of this downward spiral of ungodliness is death—death of the wicked, death of their culture, death of their freedoms, death of their nation. Just ask Ammon.

Let repentance and renewal begin with each of us daily, and let us not fail to pray for mercy for our nation.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162 |

Abhorrent. Sin. In all its shapes and sizes.

Ammon was guilty. America is guilty. We are guilty.

And lest we focus too heavily on abortion, adultery for example, rips the heart right out of the offended spouse. Brutal speech and bullying rip self-esteem right out of the recipient. Physical and emotional abuse tears the spirit out of the attacked. Life itself is torn out of those who are mistreated. Even a whisper of gossip can be witheringly destructive.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 16.25).

There is a better way. As Solomon wrote, “In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil” (Prov. 16.6).

But there is the catch. We need first to realize that we are guilty of evil. Then we need to bear in mind what happened to Ammon, and believe it so wholeheartedly, that we understand the truth of the fact that “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7.11). Then we need to stop pointing the finger at Ammon and query Jesus, as the disciples did, “Lord, is it I?” (Matt. 26.22).

“For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground. He brings it down to the dust” (Is. 26.5).

God’s anger should bring us to repentance. And when we acknowledge our sin and turn from it, blessings abound, we are pleasing the Lord, and back on track with doing our ordained work (Eph. 2.10).

“The way of the just is uprightness;
O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.
Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You;
the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You.
With my soul I have desired You in the night,
Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;
for when Your judgments are in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Is. 26.7-9).

The sin of Ammon runs rampant throughout the world.
But it best never run through us—in any way, shape, or form—
as the outcome is ripping and dire for all involved.

7 God Judges

Opening Prayer: Psalm 116.4-6

Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
“O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”
Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God *is* merciful.
The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.

Sing Psalm 116.4-6

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise To God Who Reigns Above*](#))

I called to God, “O Lord, I pray, my soul redeem with favor!”
The Lord is gracious in His way, and righteous is our Savior.
His mercy to the simple flies; He lifted me up to the skies –
I rest in Him forever!

Read Amos 1.1-15; meditate on verse 2.

Preparation

1. What is God’s voice like when He comes to judge?
2. How does the earth (pastures, mountain tops) respond?

Meditation

There is a danger, when we’re reading the Old Testament, to allow a subtle, perhaps even unrecognized note of “that was then, this is now” to creep into our thinking. Yes, we see that God, roaring like a lion, brought the severest judgments against sinful nations. He did this in time, real time, in a continuum of time that leads from them to us over several thousands of years.

But that little voice in our soul intimates that He no longer does this. God does not judge nations *in time*, but only at the *end of time*. But as we saw yesterday, citing Paul’s letter to the Romans, the wrath of God *is being revealed* now, in time. We see the consequences of that judgment as a downward spiral away from things godly and God-like into all things selfish, sensual, scandalous, and suicidal. Our country—indeed, the world in our day—is experiencing the wrath of God *in time, now*. Can anything be done to interrupt this cesspool spiral into social, cultural, and national death?

Yes, but only God can do it. And He will do it working through His people—believers in Jesus, the Church of our Lord Jesus. Like Amos in his day, we are the keepers of God’s Word in ours. If God is going to roar out warnings of wrath to come against our sinful world, it will be through us, as we have opportunities to do so in our Personal Mission Fields. And when anyone might ask, “What can we do?”, we must be ready to answer, like Peter, “Repent and believe the Good News of Christ and His Kingdom” (Acts 2.36-39).

Make no mistake: God judges in time. In the time in which we live. And He calls on us who know this to cry out with the apostle, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” If we will, it may please

God to lead many to mourn for their sins, to be withered of their pride, and to repent and believe the Gospel.

God Who judges in time also works to save in time, just as He has promised.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

How glorious that God has planned to use us for His kingdom and glory to alert the world to His judgment and His salvation messages. There are those who will say, "I'm not called to evangelism" or "I can't speak out against sin" or "No one will listen to me, anyway."

And to that God says, "Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them" (Prov. 28.4).

That's it. That's all. Simple enough.

You don't want to talk about sin? Just keep God's Law.

You don't feel called to evangelism? Just keep God's Law.

You don't think anyone will listen to you? No problem, just keep God's Law.

The devil is always going to be doing his three transgressions and four; we do not have to participate with him, nor do we have to agree with his ravages against humanity. Just keep God's Law.

John warns us about the devil and his workers: "These will make war with the Lamb."

But he also encourages us with this eternal and everlasting Good News: "The Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." But there is more good news on top of that: "those who are with Him are called and chosen." The only requirement? They are "faithful" (Rev. 17.14).

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much..." (Lk. 16.10).

"And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Cor. 3.23-4.2).

"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2.10).

The promises that accompany faithfulness are so much better than the punishments that will fall in real time and later, for disobedience, destruction, and debauchery. God desires that we choose wisely and keep His Law.

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD!
Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!
They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways" (Ps. 119.1-3).

By keeping God's Law, we are used as a testimony of God's saving love and His real-time judgment.

Reflection

1. What does it mean for you to be faithful as a steward of the Lord?
2. All the Law is fulfilled in two great commandments. Do you know what they are (Matt. 22.34-40)?
3. Whom will you encourage today in keeping God's Law?

*[T]he Prophet intimates that all punishments which God inflicts on the ungodly and the despisers of his word, are only the executions of what the Prophets proclaimed, in order that men, should there be any hope of their repentance, might anticipate the destruction which they hear to be nigh. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Amos 1.2**

Closing Prayer: Psalm 116.7-19

Thank God the Father that Jesus has borne His wrath against our sins, and that in Him we have forgiveness and life. Pray that He will give you courage to share with someone today how the Lord has dealt “full well” with you.

Sing Psalm 116.7-19

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*](#))

Full well the Lord has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,
and dwell with them forever.

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.
What shall I render to the Lord for all His blessings to me?
Salvation’s cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
and pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart—make me, Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand’ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your presence I would stay
Your praise to offer ever.

Amos 1: Judgment against the Nations

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. What does Amos teach about why it is important to “keep short accounts” with God where sin is concerned?
2. How did Amos, a shepherd, come to be a prophet?
3. What was God particularly angry at Israel? Do we ever do that?
4. Does God still judge nations and peoples today (Rom. 1.18-32)? What forms can that judgment take?
5. What’s the most important lesson you have learned from this introduction to the book of Amos?

For Prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.