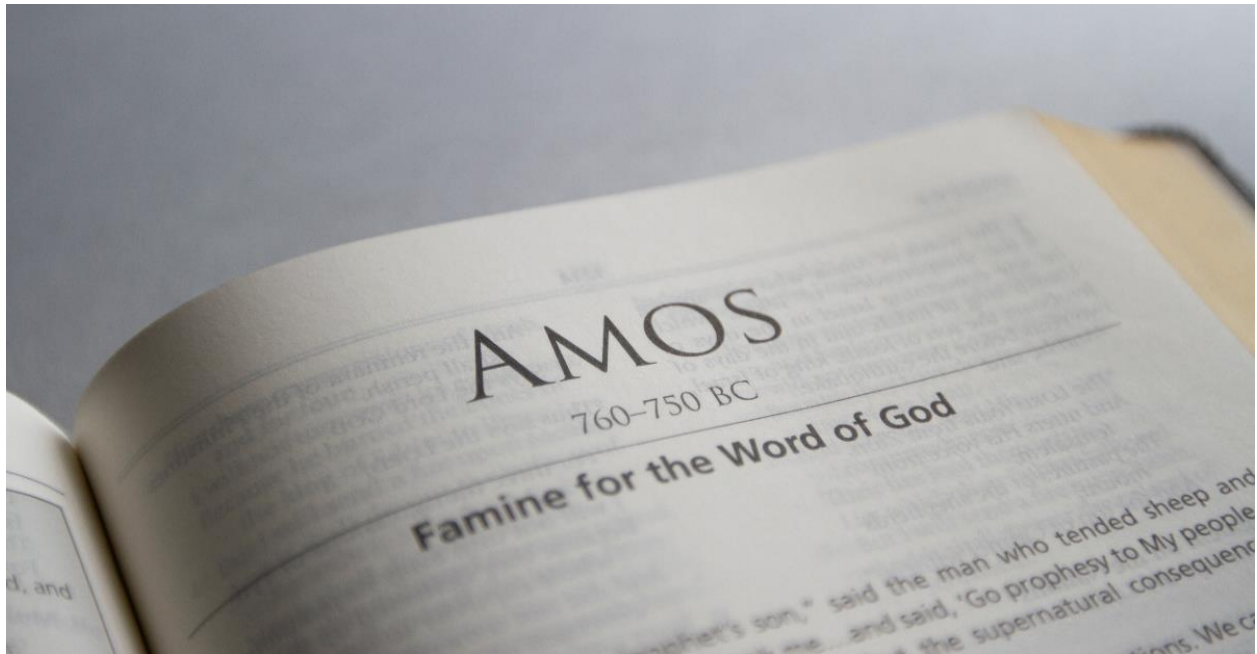


# AMOS 2

## JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL



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*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Amos 2: Judgment Against Israel  
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## Amos 2: Introduction

God declared that He was weighed down, weighed down, with Israel's sins. He refused to bear with them any longer, for it was time for judgment to begin from within the household of God.

The people of Judah and Israel had become fools. Like the nations around them, they did not believe in God, protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. Indeed, by their conduct they showed their confidence He did not exist, and that there was nothing to be gained from His Word and Law and no need to fear anything He might do. And now God was weighed down with such sin.

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!

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## 1 Judgment against Moab

*Pray Psalm 58.3-5.*

The wicked are estranged from the womb;  
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.  
Their poison is like the poison of a serpent;  
*They are* like the deaf cobra *that* stops its ear,  
Which will not heed the voice of charmers,  
Charming ever so skillfully.

*Sing Psalm 58.3-5.*

(Arlington: [\*This Is the Day the Lord Has Made\*](#))

The wicked from the womb rebel; from birth they utter lies.  
Their tongues of serpent's venom tell; all truth their ears despise.

*Read and meditate on Amos 2.1-3.*

*Preparation*

1. What was the sin of Moab?
2. What would God do against them?

*Meditation*

What a barbarous, inhumane, dishonorable thing to do, to dig up the bones of a neighboring king and burn them to dust. The Edomites and Moabites descended from common ancestors. More respect and regard should have existed between them. God found this act despicable and deserving of the severest judgment.

Since this is the way the Moabites treated dead kings, God would bring the living king of Moab down in wrath, sending fire throughout his realm, devouring his palaces, killing his descendants, and cutting off all judges in Moab. This would leave the country—or what remained of it—in anarchy and tumult, with the shouts and trumpets of warfare ravaging every village and town. We can scarcely imagine a more terrible calamity.

The judgment against Moab is unique in this litany of condemnations because no mention is made of treachery against Israel. God hates sin in His own people as well as against them. But He hates sin wherever it happens, even when it involves enemies of His people devouring and destroying one another. It's not too much of a stretch to imagine that the slave-seeking Edomites may have taken some Moabites into captivity, with the intention of selling them into slavery. We don't know, but something provoked the Moabites to the extreme action of exhuming an Edomite king and burning his bones to lime.

The Moabites considered themselves justified in doing so. But God did not. Do we ever consider ourselves justified by some biting remark, well-timed snub, bit of backbiting, or angry scowl? What does God think, Who calls us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves?

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Sounds have many different interpretations and one's perspective makes all the difference.

Consider Moses and Joshua: As they were coming down the mountain from receiving God's Law, they both heard the same noise (the sound of Aaron and the people in sinful revelry with their onerous golden calf) but their personal perspective changed everything. Moses, the man of God heard one thing, Joshua the warrior,

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another. “And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, ‘There is a noise of war in the camp.’ But [Moses] said: ‘It is not the noise of the shout of victory, nor the noise of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing I hear’” (Ex. 32.17, 18). Same sound. Different perspectives. As an aside, both wrong.

But the point being, the destruction of Moab contained dying “with tumult, with shouting and trumpet sound” (Amos 2.2).

Those very same sounds are heard in the victory over Jericho. “So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat” (Josh. 6.20).

When David brought the ark back to Jerusalem after a period of its absence, we again get these same sounds: “So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet” (2 Sam. 6.15).

We have a choice about the sounds we hear from God.  
Are they going to be sounds of our judgment and destruction?  
Or sounds of blessing, rejoicing, and victory?

God likes noise. Not cacophony. But joyful noise.  
Shouting. “For the joy of the LORD is [our] strength” (Neh. 8.10).  
“Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!” (Ps. 32.11).  
“Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!  
Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious” (Ps. 66.1, 2).  
“Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.  
Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm,  
with trumpets and the sound of a horn;  
shout joyfully before the LORD, the King” (Ps. 98.4-6).

We can either die with tumult, shouting and trumpet sounds, or we can live with happy tumult, shouting, and trumpet noises. Praising God. Obeying His Law. Living exclusively for Him and His Kingdom.

Make no mistake. God sees, God judges, God is never confused about what is right and what is wrong.

Trusting and obeying Him.  
That differentiates between one sound and the other, and how they are heard.

Trumpets will sound.  
Will they be playing Moab’s tune or ours?

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4.16-18).

Tumult. Shouting. Trumpets.  
They will sound. How will it sound to us?

*Reflection*

1. What place does the sound of singing have in your relationship with the Lord?

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2. The Bible makes much of sounds in our relationship with God: singing, shouting, hearing music. Why do you think such noise and sounds are so important to God?

3. Whom can you encourage today to have a “noisier” relationship with the Lord?

*The meaning then is, that the Moabites could no longer be borne with; for in this one instance, they gave an example of savage cruelty.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Amos 2.1-3*

*Pray Psalm 58.1, 2, 10, 11.*

Pray for judges and rulers in our nation, that they might judge uprightly and speak righteousness in all their doings. Rejoice to see the work of God in our nation, and take up your own work in Him for this day.

*Sing Psalm 58.1, 2, 10, 11.*

(Arlington: [\*This Is the Day the Lord Has Made\*](#))

Do you indeed speak righteousness, you rulers of the earth?

And do you judge the sons of men according to their worth?

No, not at all, but in their hearts they seek unrighteous ways;  
their hands weigh out upon the earth cruel violence all their days.

The righteous will rejoice to see the vengeance of the LORD.

All men will say, “Then God must be, the righteous to reward.”

## 2 Judgment against Judah

*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 2.1-5; meditate on verses 4, 5.*

*Preparation*

1. What was Judah's great offense?
2. What was the result of their doing this?

*Meditation*

Reject God and His Law and you turn to lies. Lies caused Judah to be slack in God's Word: "We don't have to take this literally." "The Law of God? That was for a long time ago." "Nobody else is reading or practicing the Law." "We can't keep up with the times and remain stuck in some old laws."

Lies. All of them.

Judah listened to lies and turned from God's commandments to what? To more lies. And their lies caused them to lose their identity as a people holy unto the Lord. They looked like Israel, Moab, Edom, and everyone else on whom the judgment of God was about to fall. And they would not escape it. The Babylonians would bring a scorched earth campaign against the people of Judah, ultimately destroying Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord.

What about us? Do we despise the Law of the LORD? Or have we established it in our soul and life (Rom. 3.31) as the key to greatness in the Kingdom of God and growing in love for God and our neighbors (Matt.

5.17-19; 22.34-40)?

Don't listen to the lies. Live in the truth. Live in the love of God. Plant yourself squarely in the Law of God every day, and you will bear abundant and lasting fruit for Him (Ps. 1).

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Have you ever tried to put together an intricate model airplane without looking at the directions? How about a beloved child's multi-pieced kitchen on Christmas Eve without so much as a gander on the how-tos of it? What about baking an angel food cake without so much as casting an eye upon a recipe? What? Whip the egg whites? Nah, I'll just do it my way. How about a pancake instead?

God created the heavens and the earth. He keeps it all running day after day after day. He made and fashioned us and knows how our bodies work. Ever tried living without water and oxygen?

And yet, we, in all our "wisdom" think we know better than God about everything? Or if in our vast humility we might say, "Not everything." We behave as if we have pretty much got this whole thing sewed up.

God's Law? No, thank You. I can do this myself. I am, after all, the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul (many thanks to William Ernest Henley for the descriptive words).

As silly as it seems, we steadfastly remain ridiculous creatures for thinking we know better than God and spurning His Law. Judah spurned it too and paid the price.

Which of God's Laws (Ex. 20.1-17) would you like broken against you? I daresay, none. Why would we ever choose to do one against another? Or why would we not acknowledge God as God? What good comes from disrespecting the Sabbath Day or our parents? Who benefits when we kill them by word or deed? What spouse longs to have an unfaithful partner? What would you like stolen from you first? And how about the lies? What whoppers do you want told about you? And if everyone wants what you have, you never really know if they like you or just want your stuff; and will most surely take it when your back is turned. Ah, a glorious life, no? So relaxing. So secure. Yet we long for the freedom to do what we want: which makes us dumber than a bag of hammers.

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,' says the LORD of hosts, that will leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4.1). Not good.

"But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 4.2, 3). All good.

"For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life, to keep you from..." everything bad and whatever (Prov. 6.23, 24).

"The law of the LORD is perfect..." (Ps. 19.7).

"...Your law is truth" (Ps. 119.142).

"...obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life (Deut. 32.46, 47 NIV).

"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'" (Matt. 22.37-40).

And Jesus also said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14.15).

And Paul's rejoinder, "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed" (1 Cor. 16.22).

Keeping God's Law is serious business. Keeping God's Law is how the Kingdom is run. Keeping God's Law is how He chooses for His people to live in the world. So, we must each day seek out the rules: the whys, hows, whats, and wherefores on His way to accomplish this.

God judged Judah for despising His Law. We can avoid God's judgment. Simply love and keep the commandments of God.

*Reflection*

1. How would you explain to a new believer why the Law of God matters so much?
2. Judah listened to lies and turned from God's Law. What should you do whenever you hear lies about keeping God's Law?
3. How can believers help and encourage one another in keeping the Law of God?

*Judah is reckoned with for dishonor done to God. Judah despised the law of the Lord; and Her justly gave them up to strong delusion; nor was it any excuse for their sin, that they were the lies, the idols, after which their fathers walked. The worst abominations and most grievous oppressions have been committed by some of the professed worshippers of the Lord. Such conduct leads many to unbelief and vile idolatry.* Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Amos 2.1-8*

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

Pray for yourself and your church, that you will keep the Law of God and all His Word central and foundational to all you do. Thank God for the blessings He will surround you with 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 Israel

*Pray Psalm 106.6, 48*

We have sinned with our fathers,  
We have committed iniquity,  
We have done wickedly...  
Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel  
From everlasting to everlasting!  
And let all the people say, “Amen!”  
Praise the LORD!

*Sing Psalm 106.6, 48.*

(Trust in Jesus: [\*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus\*](#))

We have sinned, just like our fathers; we have done iniquity.  
Just like them, our hearts have wandered; we have acted wickedly.  
*Refrain, v. 48*

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!  
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

*Read Amos 2.1-8; meditate on verses 6-8.*

*Preparation*

1. Why was God angry with Israel?
2. How did their behavior affect Him?

*Meditation*

The judgment of God at last lands on Israel, the northern kingdom of the people who were heirs of the promises of God.

But the sins of Israel were great. They preferred wealth instead of righteousness and regarded the poor and needy as of less significance than a pair of sandals (v. 6). They trampled the poor into the earth (v. 7). If they found a humble man, they corrupted him and caused him to lose his way (v. 7). Sexual immorality was widespread (vv. 7, 8), even at religious sites. Wine set aside for religious purposes—albeit false ones—they drank for their own pleasure (v. 8).

These sins and more characterized the people who had been entrusted with the Law of God, were participants in His covenant, and bore His Name upon them. All the surrounding nations knew this. But instead of showing the wisdom of God through faith and obedience (Deut. 4.5-8), they had become merely a reflection of the religion and morality of their pagan neighbors. Their great sin was that they had defiled the Name of God by their pagan ways. Instead of being the Prince with God—the meaning of “Israel”—they had become the kingdom of crud. And now their time was up.

Eight more kings would reign in Israel following the ministry of Amos, and each one would lead the nation more deeply into the wrath of God until the Assyrians would end it all. Those who had defiled the Name of God would ultimately become the despised Samaritans of the New Testament.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

While at the grocery store, we may hear a crash from an aisle over, accompanied by much hubbub and “terrible-two” crying. Or perhaps we spy at a restaurant another couple’s little darling screaming and throwing

food about. On these occasions it is easy for us to raise an eyebrow and call down judgment upon the offending children. “Why doesn’t somebody do something?” But it is quite another matter, more grievous, when it is our very own beloved children who have stepped outside of acceptable behavior, and we must deal with them lovingly yet firmly.

Such scenarios seem simple enough, but it is in the small things that formative behaviors are cemented. Little things become big things. Small infractions become larger ones. As our Bible study teacher, Pat Hunter, used to say, “Watch your deviations.” Because when we are veering off the path of righteousness, even in small ways, we will never hit our goal of being like Jesus.

God had been warning His children from the beginning to obey His Law. They got off track here and there and before you know it, they were behaving in a most horrid fashion. One can only say, “Ew” about some of their shenanigans. God was offended. God had to deal with their sin. It must have been sad and grievous for Him to do that. He had such great expectations for His people.

His love was so great for His beloved children, though, that He ultimately sent His perfect Son to pay the price for our sins—sins that elicited a giant “Ew” from Him—as even our best efforts are not good enough. “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...” (Is. 64.6).

Now that we are forgiven and have the potential to behave in a more Christlike fashion, we must set our hearts and minds daily to obey His Law. “My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end” (Ps. 119.112 NIV).

And we appreciate God’s guiding and disciplining hand in our lives—to keep us on the Jesus Path.

“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole” (Job 5.17, 18).

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12.11).

God, please keep a close eye on me, for I would much rather be scolded for screaming, breaking stuff at the grocery, and throwing food in a restaurant, than pay the price for doing things that demand an “Ew” from You and all observers—and worst of all, in so doing “defile [Your] holy Name” (Amos 2.7).

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps. 51.10).

#### *Reflection*

1. What’s the best way to know when you are departing the path of God, even if only in a small matter?
2. Why is it such a terrible thing for us to defile the Name of God?
3. Where sin is concerned, we need to keep short accounts with God. What’s the best way for you to do that?

*The import of the whole is, that if the Moabites, the Idumeans, the Tyrians, the Sidonians, and other nations, and that if the Jews as well as these were irreclaimable in their obstinacy, so that their diseases were incurable, and their wickedness such as God could no longer endure, the Israelites were also in the same condition; for they also continued perverse in their wickedness, and provoked God, and repented not, though God had waited long, and exhorted them to repent. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Amos 2.6-8*

*Pray Psalm 106.1-5, 7-12.*

Pray for believers everywhere, that we would confess and repent of our sins and seek the Lord for revival,

renewal, and awakening.

*Sing Psalm 106.1-5, 7-12, 48.*

(Trust in Jesus: [\*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus\*](#))

Praise the LORD! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!  
More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

*Refrain v. 48*

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!

Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

LORD, when You Your people favor, help me, O, remember me,  
that I may Your blessings savor and in joy and glory be!

*Refrain*

For Your love we have forgotten; we rebelled against Your grace.  
Yet You save us by Your power, make us stand before Your face.

*Refrain*

## 4 Ingrates

*Pray Psalm 78.1-4.*

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;  
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.  
I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings of old,  
Which we have heard and known,  
And our fathers have told us.  
We will not hide *them* from their children,  
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,  
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

*Sing Psalm 78.1-4.*

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)  
Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,  
dark sayings and parables sent from the LORD,  
things we have before by our Fathers been told,  
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

*Read and meditate on Amos 2.1-12; meditate on verses 9-12.*

*Preparation*

1. What had God done for the people of Israel?
2. How did they respond?

*Meditation*

Through Amos, God reminded Israel of His mighty works on their behalf. Despite the odds against them, Israel was able to drive the Amorites out of Canaan because God “destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath” (v. 9). That is, God destroyed them utterly.

Before that, however, God had delivered Israel from Egypt and sustained them forty years in the wilderness (v. 10). Then he enabled them to take possession of the land of the Amorite, that is, the land of Canaan.

Then God gave prophets to Israel to guide them in the way of His commands and promises, that they might know how to love and serve Him, and that they might realize the blessings He was preparing for them. He even called some of their young men to lifelong service as Nazirites, men set apart to serve in the tabernacle and, later, the temple of God (v. 11).

And how did the people of Israel respond to all this divine largesse? They corrupted those who had set themselves apart for God, so that they could no longer serve, and they commanded the prophets not to preach the Word of God to them (v. 12).

They might have been more thankful. So might we. Consider the mighty work of Jesus on our behalf. Do we betray that work by our sinful lives, deny it by our silence, minimize it by our lack of daily thanksgiving and praise? “Remember My works!” is a constant refrain throughout the Old Testament. And that refrain continues through the New. Let it be a constant refrain in our lives as well.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Hannah was grieved because she had no child. In fact, “she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD

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and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, ‘O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head’ (1 Sam. 1.10, 11). Hannah’s child was the prophet Samuel.

Manoah’s wife, too, was barren. “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Now therefore, please by careful no to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines’” (Judg. 13.3-5). This child was the Nazirite Samson.

These are the children that the world would have missed out on if they had been treated to the Israelites’ contempt.

God said it was:

“I Who destroyed your enemies.”

“I Who brought you out of Egypt.”

“I Who led you for forty years in the desert.”

“I Who raised up some of your sons as prophets and Nazirites” (Amos 2.9, 10).

“But it was you who ruined the Nazirites.”

“It was you who told the prophets not to prophesy” (Amos 2.12).

It makes one wonder, does it not, how many “Nazirites and prophets” have been set aside or ruined because we tainted them or would not listen to them? And how many churches have failed because God’s people have not kept His Law?

Church people have been selling the “righteous for silver” (Amos 2.6) for a very long time—Jesus being Judas’ vindictive bloodlust sale for power and prestige. “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priest and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him” (Matt. 26.14-16). Those hideous sales started before Jesus and will continue until the end of time.

Those ingrates were not thankful for God’s care, His love, and His deliverance from sin.

The online definition for ingrate is: 1. An ungrateful person. 2. An ungrateful person. And 3. A person who shows no gratitude. Think they are ungrateful and unthankful? I think, yes.

As God’s people, we do not want to be those who keep God’s Nazirites and prophets from doing their job. We do not want to be those who defile God’s holy Name. We do not want to be those who despise the law of the LORD and do not keep His commandments. (Amos 2.4, 7, 12).

What we *do* want is to be those people of God whose lives are so filled with His Spirit that all who observe us give glory to God and wonder about the hope that is within us. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5.16).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...” (1 Pet. 3.15).

Never ingrates—always thankful for God’s salvation and the work we have been given to do—always promoting and grateful for the Nazirites and prophets among us.

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*Reflection*

1. Why is it important to remember the works God has done and is doing for us?
2. What are the best ways to do this?
3. Whom will you encourage today to remember the works of God done on their behalf?

*God expostulates here with the Israelites for their ingratitude. He records the benefits he had before conferred on that people; and then shows how unworthily and disgracefully they had conducted themselves; for they forgot their many blessings and proudly despised God, and acted as if they were like other nations, and not bound to God for the singular benefit of adoption. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Amos 2.9-12**

*Pray Psalm 78.5-17.*

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 78.6-16.*

(Foundation: *[How Firm a Foundation](#)*)

LORD, let all our children arise and declare  
the truth of the LORD every day, everywhere,  
and set all their hopes in God's wonderful Word,  
and never forget all the works of the LORD.

Our fathers were stubborn; they would not obey;  
when faced with their foes they in fear turned away.  
God's work of redemption they wholly despised,  
forgetting the power He had shown to their eyes.

## 5 Heavy

*Pray Psalm 81.11, 12.*

“But My people would not heed My voice,  
And Israel would have none of Me.  
So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart,  
To walk in their own counsels.”

*Sing Psalm 81.11, 12, 8.*

(St. Petersburg: [\*My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less\*](#))

“My people would not listen to Me,  
but hardened their hearts most hideously;  
I cursed them for their hard-hearted ways  
to wander in darkness all of their days:

*Refrain (v. 8)*

“O Israel, hear, admonished now be;  
My people, repent, return to Me!”

*Read and meditate on Amos 2.1-13; meditate on verse 13.*

*Preparation*

1. How did God describe the sins of Israel?
2. Why do you suppose He said this twice?

*Meditation*

Only one verse today, but it is packed with significance. This verse is embedded in a poem. Indeed, everything thus far in the book of Amos has been a poem, or a series of poems, except for Amos 1.1. If it is a series, then the introduction to them all is Amos 1.2. Each subsequent poem, or section of the one poem, begins with “Thus says the LORD”. The poem, or section of a poem, we are now considering began at verse 6. It is by far the longest section or poem, and this itself stresses the intensity of God’s wrath against Israel.

Hebrew poetry does not rhyme sounds; it rhymes images and ideas. Here in verse 13, God compares Himself to a cart, one used to bring in the harvest from the fields. For emphasis, He states the central idea of His image twice: He is weighed down. He is weighed down like a cart about to break. This image of a cart weighed down with sheaves should be evidence of the blessings of God (cf. Ps. 126.5, 6). Instead, it is the “last straw” of His judgment. The sheaves are not sheaves of blessing but tares of wickedness and rebellion. And God has had enough of it.

But there is a second idea here, which only becomes clear in the light of Paul’s comment in 2 Corinthians 4.17, where he likens the glory of God to an eternal “weight.” The meaning of the word “glory” in Hebrew is related to the idea of being heavy. God’s intention is to “weigh” on His people with His glory, that they might know His Presence with them and rejoice with gladness. Here, the idea is reversed, the far opposite of the “weightiness” God intends. For it is not the weight of glory and God’s holy Presence, but the weight of their sin which God has borne patiently for many years, but which now is about to be thrown off in wrath.

Just so the Lord Jesus bore the weight of our sins and suffered the brunt of God’s wrath against us. What “sheaves” will we offer to Him today?

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

I AM *weighed down* by you,  
As a cart full of sheaves  
Is weighed down. (Amos 2.13)

Your New Moons and your appointed feasts  
MY SOUL hates; they are a trouble to ME,  
I AM *wearied* of bearing them. (Isaiah 1.14)

Have you ever opined (maybe only once or twice), “That child is jumping on my last nerve”? Now, I know God is perfect, and His thoughts and ways are not my thoughts and ways (Is. 55.8, 9), but the two preceding verses have just the tiniest ring of similarity to our nerve jumping statement.

And we, as His children, can either cause Him to experience and say that about us—or not.

Which child do you enjoy more? The one jumping all over your last nerve or the one trying to please you? You love both, no question, but enjoy? Hmmm.

And of course, God loves His children constantly, as well. But enjoy? Delight in? (Prov. 11.20; 12.22; 15.8)

But His love is so complete that the restoration of His weighty and wearying children is always a possibility.

For example, let’s look back at God’s judgment of the Amorites in Amos 2.9: “Yet I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath.” But in Isaiah 37.31 He says, “And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.” Poetic, no?

God has been restoring people to a right relationship with Him ever since Adam and Eve were not a delight.

“Fear not O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things!” (Joel 2.21)

“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten... Then you shall know that I AM in the midst of Israel: I AM the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2.25, 27-29).

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal. 4.4-6)

Just, how about, we don’t jump on His last nerve! Don’t weigh down His heart or weary Him with sin. How about, we keep the Law? We give Him delight? Then He rejoices to hear us cry out, “Daddy!”

### *Reflection*

1. Does it delight you to know that God delights in you? Explain.
2. Why would we ever do anything to jeopardize that mutually delightful relationship?
3. What sheaves of God’s blessings do you hope to reap today? How should you prepare for that?

*God carried that people on his shoulders; and when they loaded him with the burden of iniquities, it is no wonder that he said that they were like a wagon — a wagon filled with many sheaves... John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Amos 2.13*

*Amos 2: Judgment against Israel*

*Pray Psalm 81.13-16, 8.*

Pray for revival, renewal, and awakening. Pray that God's people would hunger for Him and His Word and would look to Jesus for healing grace. Pray for a great worldwide awakening to faith in Christ.

*Sing Psalm 81.13-16, 8.*

(St. Petersburg: [My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less](#))

Now let us all abandon our ways  
and listen to God, and offer Him praise!  
Our foes He will so quickly subdue,  
extending His hand to save and renew.

*Refrain (v. 8)*

“O Israel, hear, admonished now be;  
My people, repent, return to Me!”

Then even those despising the LORD  
would falsely obey and follow His Word;  
in vain they seem to follow His way,  
yet judgment awaits on God's chosen day.

*Refrain*

The finest foods for us He will buy,  
and furnish us an abundant supply.  
How sweet our lives can be in the LORD,  
when only we heed His glorious Word.

*Refrain*

## 6 No Escape

*Pray Psalm 12.1, 2.*

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!  
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.  
They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;  
*With* flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.

*Sing Psalm 12.1, 2*

(Hamburg: [\*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross\*](#))

Help, LORD! The godly cease to be! They who believe in You are few.  
Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock what is true.

*Read Amos 2.1-16; meditate on verses 14-16.*

*Preparation*

1. What kind of people are in focus here?
2. What happens to them?

*Meditation*

When a nation is in trouble, especially from an outside military force, it looks to its strongest and best to deliver and save them. With that in mind, God's condemnation of Israel begins by aiming at just such people.

The "swift" shall not be able to flee the judgment to come. The "strong" shall have no power against what God will do. The "mighty" will not even be able to deliver himself, much less the nation (v. 14). Archers shall not stand; cavalry shall fail; and the "most courageous men of might" will "flee naked" in the day of God's wrath (v. 15).

Where does that leave the people? The farmers and homemakers, children and old people, shopkeepers and priests and lawyers and teachers and all the rest? Defenseless and ripe for being taken into captivity. And the Assyrians would be just the people to oblige in a few more years. The people of Israel probably believed such a calamity could never happen to them. They cheered God on as He threatened the surrounding nations. But now Israel was in the crosshairs and utter desolation was His aim.

"But who is this Amos guy?" they probably reasoned? He's not even a real prophet. He's a shepherd, for crying out loud! Why should we listen to him? And so they did not. Yet Amos fulfilled his calling faithfully.

Who are we? Why should anyone listen to us? But we have a charge from God: Be witnesses to Jesus (Acts 1.8). We can't make people believe, but we can help them hear. And we must not fail in our calling.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162 |*

Everyone was failing miserably at their calling: the runners were slow, the strong were weak, the mighty were powerless, the archers missed their mark, the speedy were caught, even those on horseback, and the mightiest of all were humiliated. And the main reason? They had taken their eyes off the LORD, and not only were they not keeping His Law, they despised it. They were being led astray because they had no basis to their lives—whatever was acceptable in their culture was okey-dokey with them. Thus, they fell into disrepair and judgment.

That really happened to them. And we should read of it not as a Grimm fairytale, but as the honest to

goodness truth. And here's the deal: God never changes. This same thing could happen again. Will happen again unless we repent and turn to His ways and live on the Jesus Path (1 Chron. 7.14). Next time it will be the Church who has not been a delight, and those who wear His Name as Christians, will bear the brunt of His displeasure (1 Pet. 4.17).

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.  
Your faithfulness endures to all generation; You established the earth, and it abides.  
They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants.  
Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction.  
I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life.  
I am Yours, save me; for I have sought Your precepts” (Ps. 119.89-94).

“Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless.  
Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies” (Ps. 60.11, 12).

Mindfully and willfully to be His friends, and not His enemies (Jn. 15.14). We never want to say with the comic strip character Pogo, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

When we are His friends and doing His commandments, we can joyously say is the face of battle, “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the LORD” (Prov. 21.31). We will never experience what the Israelites of old did when their dependence was on a horse that could not deliver them (Amos 2.15). No one can outrun the judgment of God. But those who trust in Him will be delivered by Him.

His wrath, love and forgiveness are indeed awful (commanding awe).

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) sums up the story succinctly with his beautiful hymn, *How Sweet and Anful Is the Place*:

*How sweet and anful is the place with Christ within the doors,  
While everlasting love displays the choicest of her stores.*

*While all our hearts and all our songs join to admire the feast,  
Each of us cries, with thankful tongues, “Lord, why was I a guest?”*

*“Why was I made to hear Thy voice, and enter while there's room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come?”*

*'Twas the same love that spread the feast, that sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste, and perished in our sin.*

*Pity the nations, O our God, constrain the earth to come;  
Send Thy victorious word abroad, and bring the strangers home.*

*We long to see Thy churches full, that all the chosen race  
May, with one voice and heart and soul, sing Thy redeeming grace.*

Why would anyone rather starve than come to God, and His Law, and amazing love and grace?

#### *Reflection*

1. How would you explain to an unbelieving friend what it means to be a “friend of God”?
2. What does it mean for us to help people “hear” the Gospel?

*Amos 2: Judgment against Israel*

3. Why do you think Christians today are so reluctant to talk with others about Jesus?

*When men reject God's word, adding obstinacy to sin, and this becomes the general character of a people, they will be given up to misery, notwithstanding all their boasted power and resources. May we then humble ourselves before the Lord, for all our ingratitude and unfaithfulness.* Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Amos 2.14-16*

*Pray Psalm 12.3-8.*

Pray that believers everywhere would know a renewed desire to feed on and obey the Word of God.

*Sing Psalm 12.3-8*

(Hamburg: [\*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross\*](#))

Stop, LORD, the lips that utter lies, all tongues that speak with boastful pride,  
who say, "Our own lips we will prize; no lord will ever us override!"

Rise up, O LORD, and rescue all the poor and those so sorely distressed.  
Give them the safety for which they call; grant that they be no more oppressed.

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined.  
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

Proudly the wicked strut and stand; Your indignation builds on high.  
Men may exalt their wicked plans, but You will judge them by and by.

## 7 Weighed Down, Weighed Down

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 14.1-3*

The fool has said in his heart,  
“*There is no God.*”  
They are corrupt,  
They have done abominable works,  
There is none who does good.  
The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men,  
To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.  
They have all turned aside,  
They have together become corrupt;  
*There is none who does good,*  
No, not one.

*Sing Psalm 14.1-3*

(St. Anne: [\*O God, Our Help in Ages Past\*](#))

The fool within his heart proclaims, “There is no God at all!”  
His deeds are wicked, filled with shame who on God will not call.

No good in such as these is found; corruption fills their breast.  
God from His heav’nly throne looks down, their hearts and ways to test.

*Read Amos 2.1-16; meditate on verse 13.*

*Preparation*

1. What phrase did God use to show that Israel’s sins were as bad as those of the nations?
2. Why is the section on Israel longer than the others?

*Meditation*

The people of Judah and Israel had become fools. Like the nations around them, they did not believe in God, protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. Indeed, by their conduct they showed their confidence He did not exist, and that there was nothing to be gained from His Word and Law and no need to fear anything He might do. And now God was weighed down with such sin.

All the beautiful teachings of God’s Law on loving God and neighbors had been set aside. In their place, pagan practices ruled; and pagan deities allowed the people of Israel and Judah to justify whatever morality suited their pleasure or whim.

Israel had defiled the holy Name of God, forgotten His works of deliverance, scorned His promises, received His blessings without gratitude, and assimilated the pagan ways of those whose rank ungodliness had been the reason for God driving them out of Canaan in the first place. Israel chose to imitate the immoral and wrong-believing people of their day, and God would remove them from the land of promise as well.

Cue the Assyrians.

God declared that He was weighed down, weighed down, with Israel’s sins. He refused to bear with them any longer, for it was time for judgment to begin from within the household of God.

*Amos 2: Judgment against Israel*

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

As we are busy casting aspersions and a judgmental eye on the people of God in Amos' day, we need to take a careful look at the similarities to the Church today. Those people of old showed their disbelief in God by their poor conduct, by living like "there was nothing to be gained from His Word and Law and no need to fear anything" about Him.

What about us? How popular are the "Five Minutes with God" devotionals? Do God's people even spend five minutes in the Word? How many merely listen to a podcast on the way to work and count that as their special time with God? Are we a people of prayer? How does the Church look at God's Law today? Askance, perhaps? How does the behavior of church people stack up against non-believers in the world? If you were to sit on a street corner, in a store, at work, at school, at a restaurant, or anywhere really, and played "I Spy" with a friend would you be able to pick out the people of God?

God created us to know Him. What is the chief end of man? The catechism says that it is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." God is always thinking about us. Wouldn't we do well to do the same regarding Him? And His Law? And His Word? And His amazing love and grace?

"For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant.  
He brought out His people with joy, His chosen ones with gladness.  
He gave them the lands of the Gentiles, and they inherited the labor of the nations,  
that they might observe His statutes and keep His laws. Praise the LORD!" (Ps. 105.42-45)

Please note that He didn't just save them, or us, so we'd all have fire insurance against hell. He remembered His holy promise to all of us so that we would "observe His statutes and keep His Laws."

We raise our children with some hope of a future for them. We do not feed and house and teach them so that they can sit on the couch for the rest of their lives doing nothing. We want what is best for them. God wants the same for us and from us.

Solomon wrote these words to his children, but surely God thinks the same way about us: "My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice—indeed, I myself; yes, my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things. Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off. Hear, my son, and be wise; and guide your heart in the way" (Prov. 23.15-19).

"The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways" (Prov. 23.24-26).

Paul wrote these words to his children in the faith, but surely God is saying the same to us: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain" (Phil. 2.12-16).

What we should long for most of all is to be pleasing to the LORD, then we can cherish these precious words given by God to the prophet (Zephaniah 3.17):

"The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save;  
He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love,  
He will rejoice over you with singing."

*Amos 2: Judgment against Israel*

Love His Word and keep His Law—and instead of being weighed down by us—  
He can rejoice over us with singing.

*Reflection*

1. What would you say to a new believer about getting started in a devotional life with the Lord?
2. How would you help that new believer accomplish that?
3. Whom will you encourage today in their walk with and work for the Lord?

*[Amos] wished to set before them, as in various mirrors, the judgment of God, which awaited them, that he might the more effectually awaken them: and he wished also to exhibit in the Jews themselves an example of the extreme vengeance of God...*  
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Amos 2.6*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 14.4-7*

Pray that God will call His people to repentance, and that Christians everywhere will be revived and renewed, so that the Gospel “comes out” of the Church more powerfully and more consistently unto a great worldwide awakening of faith.

*Sing Psalm 14.4-7*

(St. Anne: [\*O God, Our Help in Ages Past\*](#))

None understands, none seeks the LORD; they all have turned aside.  
Deception leads them from God’s Word who have His grace denied.

The workers of iniquity consume God’s sheep like bread;  
they trust not in the LORD, and He shall fill their hearts with dread.

For Jesus with the righteous stands, though they be put to shame.  
He holds them safely in His hands who shelter in His Name.

Restore Your Church, let Zion sing; our captive hearts release,  
that we may Your salvation bring, rejoicing and in peace.

*Amos 2: Judgment against Israel*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why do you suppose God left the judgment of Judah and Israel for last?
2. Why was Judah condemned? Does this still anger God today?
3. How had Israel defiled the holy Name of God? What does that mean, and why is it such a bad sin?
4. What was God's purpose in reminding His people of all the mighty works He had done for them? What had Israel done in response to those mighty works?
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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