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C0913 – April 1, 2009 – Amos 2:6 – Judgment On Israel

Amos as the prophet of doom finally announces doom on the northern kingdom of Israel. Having drawn them in as poison drawn from a womb he now springs the trap and exposes their sinfulness. Caught red-handed they can do nothing more than sit in horror as the Lord proceeds to enter into a covenant lawsuit against them with Amos as His chief prosecuting attorney. Contrary to their expectation to soon be at the head of the nations Israel soon learns she will be at the foot, subject to a rising power to the northeast.

The proclamation of doom begins along the same structured lines as all the other nations but with two significant changes. First, the number of charges listed is far greater than any of the other nations. The obvious import is that Israel's sinfulness exceeds all the other nations. Since all of the nations had reached the point of a determined judgment it is evident that God's grace had striven longer with Israel than with all the other nations, including her southern relative, Judah. The second great change is the historical recital of God's grace toward Israel in chapter 2 verses 9-11. Here the Great Suzerain reminds them of three great historical things He had done for them. In v 10 the Exodus event, "I brought you out from the land of Egypt." Again in v 10, His protection in the Wilderness Wanderings, "I led you in the wilderness forty years." In v 9, the Conquest and Settlement, "I destroyed the Amorite." In v 11, He gave them prophets, men of special revelation, and Nazirites, men of example whose lives were dedicated to God. "I raised up some of your sons to be prophets, And some of your young men to be Nazirites." These acts of the Great Suzerain on behalf of Israel were all of grace, yet they spurned that grace and violated the covenant stipulations. They had been a disobedient Son and therefore as a Son the Father disciplines. "For whom the LORD loves He reprove, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights." So two significant differences with the eighth and final oracle; a greater number of

legal infractions and historical recital of God's grace. Let's read the indictment and legal infractions starting in verse 6,

⁶Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they sell the righteous for money And the needy for a pair of sandals. ⁷"These who pant after the *very* dust of the earth on the head of the helpless Also turn aside the way of the humble; And a man and his father resort to the same girl In order to profane My holy name. ⁸"On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined. Two more charges are mentioned in v 12, **"But you made the Nazirites drink wine, And you commanded the prophets saying, 'You shall not prophesy!'"** That's quite a string of disobedience; it's pretty coarse when we get into it. Let's start in v 6, **Thus says the Lord**, that's our "messenger formula," Amos is just a messenger, the words are the Lord's, **For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*,** nothing different so far, we've covered the formula, only now the nation Israel is in view and at this point I suggest that a silence swept over the crowd if Amos had a crowd, which I expect he did. They did not expect this. They probably thought that Judah, being seventh on the list, was last, seven being the Hebrew number of completion. So when Amos added the **For three transgressions of Israel and for four** they were probably quite surprised. They thought that the doom on all the surrounding neighbors meant they were justified. But they were wrong, their iniquity too was full and now we see just how full starting with the word **Because**. By the way, these are current infractions, things they were committing in Amos' day. This is not a historical analysis of past sins; this is the current state of affairs. In chapter 3 we'll get into the historical analysis of their sins. But we should all realize that when we sin a big whopper of a sin that kind of a sin doesn't just happen. People don't wake up one day and out of the clear blue do some big nasty thing. We work up to that; there is a period of spiritual laxity that leads up to that. So the list we're looking at here has been worked up to over a period of time.

Now another word about these sins. They all are violations of Torah. Israel was given the Abrahamic Covenant as a Royal Grant, in that God promised to bless Israel unconditionally with a land, a seed and a worldwide blessing.

That was a covenant of grace and it gave them their position as God's chosen people. But Israel was also given the Mosaic Covenant in the form of a Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty, God as the Suzerain was their Great King and Israel was His vassal. As the Great King God promised to curse His vassal Israel if she disobeyed His Torah given at Mt Sinai so every infraction here will link back to Torah. The prophet Amos is God's prosecuting attorney calling them back to the Torah, back to covenant loyalty to God. Now some of the charges are difficult in the Hebrew, they can be rendered different ways; we don't know everything there is to know about the Hebrew language, so we'll do our best to sort things out as we go along.

The first charges, v 6, **Because they sell the righteous for money And the needy for a pair of sandals.** What we have in short here is corruption in the courts. This is a synonymous parallelism but it is not absolute synonymity. The **righteous** and the **needy** refer to two groups of people who were not being given justice in the courts. So we have two groups, the middle class and the lower class being oppressed by the upper class. Remember, this was the northern kingdom's period of prosperity. They were making money hand over fist, especially the upper class. And they'd become greedy and were making money through manipulation of the court system. Hold your place in Amos and turn to Exod 23:8 to see how some of the corruption took place. Eventually if this kind of thing keeps up then you'll create class warfare because you'll bifurcate society and you'll have the elite, the *Have's* and the nobody's, the *Have-Nots*. And the Have's here were oppressing the Have-Nots. Obviously this was a violation of the doctrine of the *imago dei*, the image of God in man. All men of all strata of society are made in the image of God and therefore are to be treated as equals.

Now the **righteous** Amos mentions are simply those that are "in the right" in a judicial proceeding, the *saddiq*. Now Exod 23:8, "You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the *saddiq*, the just, the righteous," same word used by Amos. So what was going on is the upper class litigant was in the wrong and some middle or low class Joe was suing him. So what does he do? He bribes the judge, pays him 50 pieces of silver or something. So the first thing we have is bribery in the courts. Turn to Deut 16:18 for another clear prohibition of this. There's nothing new under the sun. This went on eight centuries before Christ and it's indicative of our times as well. Bribery is an ancient ploy. Verse 18, "You shall appoint for

yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. ¹⁹“You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. ²⁰“Justice, *and only* justice, you shall pursue,” why? “that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” See? See how there were conditions on living in and possessing the land? The title deed to the property was Israel’s permanently but enjoyment of the land was conditioned on obedience. Otherwise, God kicks them out (also cf. Deut 1:16; Prov 17:23).

The other crime committed in the courts was **the selling of the needy for a pair of sandals**. The point of this phrase **for a pair of sandals** is that sandals were considered something of little worth. In other words, they would sell someone off into slavery for petty cash. In other words, the kind of situation where Joe owes you \$5 and they were dragging these guys into court, “Joe owes me \$5 and I want payment today,” and the judge was selling these guys off for \$5. The law said you were to be patient; we’re talking about someone who’s poor. But rather than be patient and work it out they’d just sell them into slavery. Think of the economic greed that had infected Israel. Exod 23:6, “You shall not pervert the justice *due* to your needy *brother* in his dispute.” Another case of this is in 1 Kings 4:1-7: a righteous father who was paying off his debt died and the creditor came to the widow and obviously she couldn’t pay him so he insisted on taking her two sons to serve him as slaves to pay off the debt. Israel was to take care of widows, not exploit them. The rich were exploiting the poor to get richer. Again, this is nothing new; the same thing is going on today. Money, money, money, it’s all about the money and the socialist agenda at work in the present administration is not going to help the poor, it’s going to make them poorer and it’s going to make the rich richer, the *Have’s* vs the *Have-Nots*.

Verse 7, and here we have a couple of renderings of this, **“These who pant after** that word can be translated “tread upon” or “crush,” those who crush the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, that’s the idea, it’s oppression of the poor, **Also turn aside the way of the humble**, which should be rendered, **And pervert the justice of the afflicted**. This is more court injustice, in this case oppression and perversion of justice. Turn to chapter 5, verse 12 for some of this. We’ve already seen bribery, we’ve seen injustice,

now verse 12, “For I know your transgressions are many and your sins are great, *You* who distress the righteous *and* accept bribes And turn aside the poor in the gate.” Note the last phrase, “turn aside the poor in the gate.” In other words, they don’t even give them a hearing at all at the gate was where court was held. So they won’t even hear the case and by this they were crushing the poor into the dust, they were oppressing them, not giving them justice. We know this goes on today, some rich guy gets his attorney and is there really any chance for the poor guy who has a state attorney assigned to him? It has nothing to do with the facts of the case, it has everything to do with who’s got the money, who’s got the influence!

Now we turn, middle of verse 7 to sexual perversions. We move from court perversions to sexual perversion. One sin leads to another. **And a man and his father resort to the same girl In order to profane My holy name.** Notice, **In order to**, that’s a correct rendering. It’s a purpose clause, sometimes the force is lessened when the translators put “so that His holy name is profaned.” That’s not the point. These people are deliberately engaging in illicit sex to **profane** God’s **holy name**. They’re trampling His character before the nations. This is blatant rebellion. The **girl** here is probably a temple prostitute, this is not likely a servant girl or a female relative because it’s never used that way of a relative. Verse 8, **“On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, they stretch out beside** the altars. This is where the illicit sex is taking place. Down at the local religious shrine. At the time, Hosea tells us the chief god was Baal (Hos 2:8, 13). Baal was a fertility god. Baal would supposedly make your crops grow. So you’ve got your little farm back home and you want to get a good crop, so these people would go down to the local Temple of Baal and have intercourse with the Temple prostitutes, father and son with the same girl, and Baal would see this and he’d say, “Oh, you want your crops to grow. See it was their physical act of intercourse which is the cause of fertilization that stimulates Baal to make their crops grow. Now what kind of a god is this? Baal requires an object lesson to get the point? Yes, that’s the point, that’s what was going on. And notice, not only is this going on but on what? **On garments taken as pledges**. See, these are the same people from the courts and they took these **garments as pledges**. The **garments** were large so they could be used as coverings at night to keep warm. But they were supposed to be returned by nightfall so these poor people could keep warm (Exod 22:25-26; Deut 24:12-13). But rather than returning them at nightfall

they used them for the bedding to have sex with the temple prostitutes. And they did this next to **every altar**, which I take to be multiple altars. There were **altars** in Dan (8:14) and Bethel (3:14), those we've spoken about, but also in Gilgal (Hos 12:12) and other localities (Hos 8:11; 10:1-2, 8). So this is going on all over the northern kingdom.

Continuing, **And in the house of their God** and that's a plural not a singular, this is not a house of YHWH, this is a house of Baal, where they worshipped Baal and Astarte, the fertility goddess as well as other gods, and **they drink the wine of those who have been fined**. So they're getting drunk, another infraction of the Mosaic Law.

Now we want to take a moment to look at the Hebrew because most translations lose the picture. The only two translations I think give the true sense are the KJV and the ESV. What you have, starting in the middle of v 6 is a series of conjunctions. If you took grade school grammar then you may know the song, "conjunctions connect," which is what vv 6-8 are trying to show. V 6 you have one important connection, verse 7 you have one connection and verse 8 you have two important connections, usually translated by the word "and," if the translators happened to translate it. They didn't get them all in the NASB. So there are things that get lost in translation. Usually they're trying to make it easier for you, by which they mean to say, "You're too stupid to understand this, so here, let me make it like baby talk for you." That's what the NIV translation was all about. Granted there are some good things with the NIV but more bad than good. The ESV doesn't break it all up, it connects the whole thing. And what this does is it shows you this whole string of infractions goes back to the justice department, the higher ups that control the courts. So you've got corruption at the highest level of society. Is anything new today? It's always the higher ups that are the greatest criminals. We all know their names. There's no need to announce their names. Just read the papers. These people are criminals *par excellence*. But what are you going to do about it? They control the system, they have all the resources and they use those resources to corrupt. So let's paint the whole picture, starting with a reading of the ESV and you'll see how the translation team said, "aha, I see the conjunctions."

⁶Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals— ⁷those who

trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted; a man and his father go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned; ⁸they lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge, and in the house of their God [gods] they drink the wine of those who have been fined.

Now that's more like it apart from a few small translation blunders. Let's see if we can paint the picture now that we see the conjunctions connect these things together. Basically what you have here is a judicial crime syndicate making money off the low and middle class, eventually what you're going to have is two classes, they're going to get rid of the middle class and then it will be low class and high class and high class will be the Haves and the low class will be the Have-Nots. So the picture is that here you have the courts and daily you have decisions that are made in the courts. But the judges are corrupt and therefore the judicial procedures or distortions of justice. Justice as defined by God in the Mosaic Law was to give a fair trial to everyone and apart from bribery. But the right people of the middle class and the poor people of the low class weren't getting a fair trial. What was happening here was the poor people came in, and let's say you were the poor person and you owe a debt; your husband just died off, you have no way to pay off the debt, you want to pay off the debt, it just can't be done. The creditor brings you to court, "Oh lady, I'm sorry, we'll just have to sell you into slavery, oh, you've got two boys, we'll sell them off two," this kind of operation. And so they take the proceeds and put that into the party treasury, because by the end of this all the proceeds of the day's judicial proceedings are going to be used for their, shall we say, extracurricular activities. Or another scenario that was going on, some middle class Joe comes in to prosecute the upper class and the upper class has connections to the judge, so they have their smoky back room deal going on and the righteous person can go through all the arguments he wants To. Why he's in the right doesn't matter, the deal has already been sealed and so he's sold off for silver, and the silver goes in the party treasury to fund that evening's festivities. It was all a big farce and the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer. And uh, some poor person might say, "Alright, I owe you how much?" "\$50" and they'd said, "Alright, I'll get you the money and in the meantime here's my cloak for a pledge. I'm good for it." And they'd take the cloak as pledge and then they were supposed to return it by evening so these people could have something to cover up with in the cold night. But instead did they return them? No, they used that for the

bed at the party. That's what we'll have sex on, your jacket. And of course, some of the fines they levied were used to buy wine and at night all the high court, the judges and high class lawyers and all their family and friends would meet down at the local Baal altar and they'd pull out the booze and start going at it. Then the temple prostitutes would show up and the illicit sexual relations would start up and to top it all off they would do all this on the garment of a poor person. So, this is the kind of crime operation we have running in vv 6-8, it's a distortion of the court system, it promotes class warfare, it's to raise supplies for tonight's party, that's all in the world this is.

The thing you have to keep in mind in all this, because this just shocks people into horror, "They really knew about prostitution and alcohol back then?" Oh yes, they knew. We know this is like reading modern headlines: corruption in the courts, bribery, and prostitution. Sex, my goodness, do you realize that sex is the number one commodity in the world? There is more pornography available in the world than any other product, period. Why? Because sex sells. And many, many people are caught in this; most people are caught in it in some way or another. This is nothing new. Now granted we're not a theocracy, Israel was, but the sin nature is the same 3,000 years ago as it is today. And what this causes, this perversion, is social chaos. It caused economic chaos. It was terrible socially, it was terrible economically, and it was terrible judicially. But the primary thing is not the social ramifications, the primary thing is that it violated God's standard. The social and economic chaos was bad, it's bad in our society, but the question is how did it get bad? And the way it got bad was because they were violating God's standard. They had rejected the word of God. If they had been following the word of God and giving a fair trial none of this would have happened. And so Amos is calling them back, he's trying to get a decent court proceeding going against those who carried out these judicial horrors.

Before we go into v 9 let's bring the two additional charges of v 12 into the picture, one of which is physical violence and the other of which is new legislation. **"But you made the Nazirites drink wine, And you commanded the prophets saying, 'You shall not prophesy!'"** Now some people lighten the impact of the **Nazirites** drinking wine. They say this was just peer pressure. So that what you would have is some of the **Nazirites** standing around the courtroom watching the procedures, and just like today, there are always a few clowns that can't work past about 2:15 and so they

start drinking booze early, they tie one on out back and then they start cruising around and they see these **Nazirites** around the court. They know they are **Nazirites** because the **Nazirites** didn't cut their hair, their whole life they were never to put a razor to their head, and so these are the long haired guys. Jewish men didn't have long hair, Jewish men had short hair. It never fails, the picture people have in their mind of Jesus Christ is some hippie from the 1960's. Jesus didn't have long hair and a beard, he had short hair and he was clean shaven. All you have to do is go back in Church History and if you research this you'll find that for the first nine centuries of the church it's almost unanimous in the mosaics and frescoes that Jesus Christ had short hair and was clean shaven, almost unanimous. The only men among the Jews that had long hair were the **Nazirites** and that was because they'd made these vows, one of which was never to cut their hair, the other of which was to never drink wine or hard drink (Num 6). So the drunken clowns are cruising around and they see brother Nazirite, "Hey, Brother Nazirite, how would you like to tie one on out back, c'mon brother Nazirite." And they make a lot of fun because the Nazirites were the real religious type, that's how they viewed them, probably just like a drunken person would treat an Amish. These people minding their own business and someone just has to make fun. So week after week they tie one on and they come up to Brother Nazirite, c'mon, just one drink brother Nazirite, and finally brother Nazirite gives in and takes a drink. That's what some people say verse 12 means, **you made the Nazirites drink wine**. The other view is that they literally, by an act of physical violence, held them down, pried open their mouths and poured it down their throats. And that's the view I prefer, these people were in absolute rebellion against the word of God and so to see these Nazirites standing around bugged them to death because the Nazirites were the devoted ones, they were the examples in society of godliness and these people were in such rebellion against God that they physically destroyed these examples of godliness by corrupting them. So, that kind of a procedure was going on with the **Nazirites**. The other group God sent them was the **prophets**, and he says, **you commanded the prophets saying, 'You shall not prophesy!'** Now, that's emphatic in the Hebrew, it means they passed new legislation, not Mosaic legislation, they made a new law, they shifted the basis of Law from God to man, they were legislating from the bench in the courts, and we know very well that Israel had no legislative branch because God was the Legislator, He gave the law, so this is another act of rebellion, absolutely no prophesying, we don't want to hear what the prophets have to

say. Why not? Because they know they're not going to like what they say, so they just prohibit them from prophesying. And this is the verse that indicates why Amos had to use this entrapment procedure. Remember, Amos has to sneak up on them to get a hearing. Why did he have to do that? Because it was against their law. God had sent them prophet after prophet after prophet to warn them, you're breaking covenant, you're breaking covenant, your breaking covenant and they got sick of hearing it so they just made it the law of the land that we don't allow God's prophets to say anything! But Amos has slipped under the radar by condemning all these other nations, they had no problem with that, they enjoyed that actually. By the time you get to chapter 7 what is the priest Amaziah going to say to Amos? They have a little run in because by this time they've figured it out. What does he say in verse 12, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there." Amos got in the door but they realized what he was up to, **"You shall not prophesy!"** It's always the operation of the flesh that when we have a sin problem we just legislate our sin problem out of existence. It's a very fine thing to do, nice way of handling it; just eliminate it by legalizing our sin problem.

Now we come to the historical recital in v 9. They did all this despite vv 9-11, look at all the grace God had given them. **"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them,** notice the 3rd person plural them, it's almost as if God's talking to Amos here. Look at what I did for them Amos. And this is how they repay Me? **Though his [the Amorite] height was like the height of cedars And he was strong as the oaks; I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below.** ¹⁰**"It was I who brought you now the shift to the 2nd person, It was I who brought you...up from the land of Egypt, And I led you in the wilderness forty years That you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.** ¹¹**"Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets And some of your young men to be Nazirites. Is this not so, O sons of Israel?" declares the LORD.** Notice over and over I did this, I did that, **I destroyed, I brought you, I led you, I raised up...** the sovereign grace of God, the sovereign grace of God, what I did in history for you, I did all this and how do you repay Me? The same thing is true for you Christian. This, by the way is another way of saying, salvation is a work of God, it's solely a work of God, and salvation is a sovereign work of God's grace. There is no way those people would have come out of Egypt on their own. God brought them out. There is no way they could have cleared out

the Amorite on their own. God did that. And Christian, it is God who saves you, and how do you repay Him? Are you legislating your own morality and enforcing it on others? Are you into sexual promiscuity? Are you unjust toward the low class? You have absolutely no excuse.

And so what we have here is God reminding Israel of His grace and how they spurned that grace. The first event God pulls out as what He did is the Conquest and Settlement, **it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them**, then in v 10 He reminds them of what He did for them at the Exodus, **It was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt**, and then what He did for them at the Wilderness Wanderings, **I led you in the wilderness forty years**, and then what He did for them in terms of giving them more special revelation, keeping the lines of communication open. V 11, **I raised up some of your sons to be prophets** and I gave you godly examples in the **Nazirites**, all events that emphasize what? God, what God did, what God, of mere grace, did for Israel. And how do they respond to God's grace? They reject it, reject it, reject it.

So let's work these historical events in their chronological sequence. The first event chronologically is the Exodus, notice the phrase, v 10, **It was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt** and turn to Exod 20. What's the context of Exod 20? Mt Sinai, the giving of the Ten Commandments. And how does it begin in v 2? "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt..." Why does he quote that? Because that was purely of God's grace. Here they were enslaved to the greatest superpower on earth and God by powerful judgments literally destroyed Egypt. You get the impression from modern commentators that the Exodus plagues were minor events in an otherwise tranquil year. It's not that way in the Scriptures. The reason they present it that way is because I'm convinced they've got the chronology all wrong. They just accept flat out, this is in the 18th dynasty, the Pharaoh was Amenhotep. The problem is the 18th dynasty was the strongest attested dynasty, and not one mention of the Exodus plagues, and further, we know where Amenhotep's mummy is, he's in the Cairo Museum, so he couldn't possibly have died in the Red Sea, he was sitting on the banks or something, "Go get'em guys." And so, a major catastrophic disruption of that society can't have happened, we lessen the force of the Biblical text, minimize it and try to make it fit profane history. It won't work. What this event was is the most significant event of Jewish history. If you want the picture of the cross in the

OT, this is it; it doesn't get any bigger than the Exodus from Egypt. Velikovsky says, and I don't agree with all his chronology, but he says this wasn't an event where Egyptian families just lost their sons. Ancient Egyptian reports, when you correct profane history, say that nine out of ten Egyptians were killed in the plagues. Now, try that one on for size, nine out of every ten people dead in America? That's 280 million people. And not one Hebrew dead? That's the kind of thing God did for Israel. And they repay Him with this corrupt court system? By the way, why do you think Amos quoted Exod 20:2? Why did he deliberately take that clause from there? Because that clause is the motivation to obey what follows in God's law. So he's reminding them of the motive, "God did this for you, now you should obey Him."

The second thing in Amos 2:10, God says, **I led you in the wilderness forty years**. That too was purely a grace procedure. God didn't have to keep them around. In Exod 32 Moses goes to the top of Mt Sinai, the people stay down below, they're supposedly under the authority of Aaron. What's going on after a few weeks? They're building the golden calf and worshipping it as YHWH. In fact, they're not even sure if it was Moses or the calf that brought them out of Egypt. Mind you, it's been a few weeks, they saw the ten plagues, they saw the Red Sea divide, they just saw all that, now they're building a calf? And God says, you know what's going on down below Moses, you better get down there because your people are all messed up. God threatens to wipe the whole nation out and start over with Moses. But Moses intercedes, there's the need for a faithful intercessor, and because Moses was a faithful intercessor God keeps the nation around, **I led you in the wilderness forty years**, that generation was constantly led by God; fire by night, cloud by day, God provided manna and quail for them, day in day out, they learned about 100 different ways to prepare the stuff, and God gave them water day in day out. Just think of the logistics of this kind of operation, supplying all the needs of ~2million people. What's the NT verse, "My God shall supply all your needs" (Phil 4:19). You need clothes, you need shoes, did those wear out? Apparently not. God did all that. Grace operation. How did they repay Him? By corrupting His courts. You see how much trouble they're in? This is like a father providing for his son, providing for his son, year after year after year and the son spurns it all, just blows it. Obviously a good father will discipline his son.

The third thing Amos mentions, chronologically speaking is in verse 9, the Conquest of the Land, **I...destroyed the Amorite before them Though his height *was* like the height of cedars And he *was* strong as the oaks; I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below.** So let's go back to Gen 15. This is Abraham, the key chapter where the founding sacrifice of the Abrahamic Covenant occurs and the Land promise is amplified. Verse 12, "As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him." This was a terrifying event when the Lord made this oath. "Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years." Where are they going to be afflicted 400 years? Egypt. ¹⁴"But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions." That's the Exodus. They went down into Egypt and God brought them out of Egypt. Verse 16, "And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of" who? "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." So they needed 400 years, the Lord just waited and waited and waited until the Amorites corrupted themselves and then He was sending the Israelites in to wipe them out, the Conquest. And then in v 18 you see the land promise and obviously if the land is being promised to Israel but these other nations are in the land then there's going to be armed conflict. The Amorites were actually on both sides of the Jordan, King Sihon was an Amorite. Then you had five kings of the Amorites west of the Jordan. These were mostly removed by Joshua and his armies. But not really, it was God who destroyed them. And they were a superior force, superior to the Israelites of course, not superior to God.

Verse 13, here's the pronounced judgment, but we have another Hebrew difficulty, "**Behold, I am weighted down beneath you** could be rendered **Behold I am going to crush you** which would speak of the disciplinary wrath, that's my preference as per the context, Behold I am going to crush you **As a wagon is weighted down when filled with sheaves.** The idea there is a cart weighted down to the point it cuts out ruts in the road and then it's very difficult to move and therefore, ¹⁴**"Flight will perish from the swift, And the stalwart will not strengthen his power, Nor the mighty man save his life.** ¹⁵**"He who grasps the bow will not stand *his* ground, The swift of foot will not escape, Nor will he who rides the horse save his life.** ¹⁶**"Even the bravest among the warriors will flee**

naked in that day,” declares the LORD. 14, native ability will not save them, v 15, skills they have acquired will not save them, v 16, character quality will not save them **in that day, “declares the Lord.** This will come in a short 30 or so years under the Assyrian’s Tiglath-Pileser III.

And so we have seen Israel condemned for a series of vile infractions: the perversion of justice in the courts, oppression of the poor, sexual promiscuity, idolatry, drunkenness, violence, illegal legislation and most of all, spurning of God’s grace. These are what we would call big sins; and as we said they do not happen out of the clear blue, they are arrived at over a period of time. How are they arrived at? Well, it starts with the essence of sin which is unbelief; you don’t believe the word of God. But if you don’t believe the word of God you don’t move into a position of neutrality, you move into a position of enmity to the word of God. That works its way out in autonomous rebellion, where you begin to make a name for yourself, to define reality. And finally autonomous rebellion works its way out in immorality. So we move from the essence of sin which is unbelief, to rebellion and finally to immorality. It is a dangerous progression and if you are in that progression then I fear for you because your time is coming for the disciplinary wrath of God to come upon you.

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