

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

THE MINOR PROPHETS:

THE PROPHECY OF AMOS

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Introduction

Reading and understanding the prophecy of Amos reminds us that God is the sovereign and omnipotent Creator and Ruler over all nations and Heaven and earth. When we read Amos' prophecy-preaching against the sinful behavior of the nations as well as Israel, we can be reminded that nothing has changed through these many years from Amos' time to ours today.

In fact, the Prophecy of Amos reminds us that God is just and rules powerfully and righteously over his creation *even though sinful men continue to sin*. Although it may seem that God allows evil and sin to continue, his judgment is imminent (cf. 2 Peter 3:9ff). God uses the sins of mankind to actually further his sovereign will and purposes in allowing nations to rise and fall (although God is not the author of their sins).

History is a revelation of God's sovereign purposes and sin will be punished in the end. God will judge his creation for their disobedience. A New Testament scripture from the Apostle Peter's second letter is a good way to begin our study of the Prophet Amos:

ESV 2 Peter 3:1-10: *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

The central thesis of Amos' prophetic book is God's sovereign and omnipotent rule over all nations, and his universal judgment upon sin (1:2). God the Creator, Sovereign and Omnipotent Lord of Heaven and Earth is coming to judge his creation.

(1)

Amos the Prophet- Who was Amos? (2)

Amos the Prophet was from Tekoa (1:1). Tekoa is a village ten miles south of Jerusalem, and six miles south of Bethlehem in Judah. Tekoa is a village on high ground and its good pasture land attracted many shepherds in that ancient time. Although Amos was from Tekoa in Judah (the Southern Kingdom), God called him to minister primarily to Israel in the Northern Kingdom (although Amaziah the priest of Bethel in Israel tells him to “go home”, 7:12). There is not a lot of specific information about Amos the man and exactly how many years of ministry he had, but we can deduce a sketchy portrait from other scriptures.

Amos was a shepherd (2a)

Amos probably grew up in Tekoa and was taught to be a shepherd and sheep breeder (בִּנְקָרִים *This word ‘noqued’ can also imply a businessman such a sheep dealer in its meaning*). He also had knowledge in livestock herding as a cattle farmer (בוֹקֵר *boqer*-7:14) and was a dresser of sycamore figs implying knowledge of growing fruit and trees. Amos describes himself to the priest at Bethel as neither a learned prophet nor the son of one who had been part of the schools of the prophets:

ESV Amos 7:14 Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. ¹⁵ But the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’

Amos’ prophecy begins with God’s Word to the people:

ESV Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Amos was a prophet of God (2b)

It is interesting to note that Amos “saw” [רָאָה] or “envisioned” (NASB) the words that God gave to him (see also Isaiah 1:1; Micah 1:1) which means that he was recipient of God’s revelation. This reminds us that Amos as a prophet called by God speaks as God’s mouthpiece (as we learned earlier in our introduction to the prophetic word). The words of Amos’ lawsuit against Israel, are the very words of God himself. Amos is given power and authority to speak to God’s sheep. He is called from being a general ancient Near Eastern shepherd to tending the sheep of God and speaking on behalf of the Great Shepherd Himself!

God is gracious in revealing his will through his prophets; the prophets speak God’s revelation to those who have ears to hear:

ESV Amos 3:7 “For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

Amos is a partial fulfillment of some of the last words of Moses, where Moses tells the people that God will raise up a prophet like himself who will be God’s mouthpiece (Jer. 26:5; Ezek. 38:17):

ESV Deuteronomy 18:15-19: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers- it is to him you shall listen- ¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

In fact, Amos not only called the people back to the words of God through Moses, but acted out as a kind of Intercessor-Mediator a role similar to Moses:

ESV Amos 7:2 When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, "O Lord GOD, please forgive! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!"

Amos was a covenant prosecutor sent from God (2c)

Amos was a covenant prosecutor which means that he was a prophet appointed by God to bring a lawsuit against God's people for covenant unfaithfulness; particularly he prosecuted the people for breaking the covenant law that was revealed in the time of Moses. Amos' knowledge as covenant prosecutor reveals his understanding and knowledge of God's covenant with his people (2:4, 8, 11; 3:1; 4:7, 9-11; 5:11), as well as Israel's failure to repent many times in light of God's chastisement.

Amos reveals in chapter 7 verse 14 that he did not study to be a prophet of God, but that God called him from his humble services as shepherd (similar to Moses in Midian, see Exodus 3) to make known his will to God's covenant people (In contrast to the sons of prophets or "schools" of the prophets who were learned and paid professional prophets in the community, Amos was raised and trained to be a shepherd (Amos 7:14-15; cf. 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15).

As a covenant lawsuit messenger, Amos must employ: "Thus says the LORD" ("Thus says YHWH" (1:5; 2:11; 3:1) as did Moses before him. In Amos chapters 1-2 we have several phrases or concepts that Amos uses in his covenant lawsuit that are designed to make Israel hear the words of Moses and to remember the covenant they have broken.

For instance Amos' prophecy begins with "The words of Amos" much like the Book of Deuteronomy (that is in covenant document form as we have seen in our introductory sermons begins with: "These are the words that Moses spoke..."). In Amos 1:9, the prophet uses the phrase "remember covenant" as was used often in the writings of Moses:

ESV Leviticus 26:42-45: Then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. ⁴³ But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes. ⁴⁴ Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God. ⁴⁵ But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD."

Amos also uses phrases in chapters 1 and 2 such as “keep statutes” with regard to obedience to God’s Law (2:4) and “walk after” (2:4) and “pervert justice” (2:7) and “brought you up out of Egypt” (2:10; 9:7) and “inherit the land” (2:10); all of these are used in Moses’ writings (Exodus 15:26; Deut. 4:3; 4:40; 11:28; 13:5; Exodus 23:6; Exodus 3:8).

These covenant references are to make the people remember the words of Moses that they had forgotten!

Amos was a faithful and courageous man (2d)

Amos’ faith in God is particularly encouraging and exemplary. Amos preached and prophesied in a time when Israel did not want to hear sound doctrine (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-5), but wanted to gather around them teacher-prophets that would tell them what their itching ears wanted to hear:

ESV Amos 2:12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'

Amos was a brave prophet who understood his responsibility to speak as God’s mouthpiece regardless of the response of the people. Amos showed courage as well as spiritual maturity in understanding his special call from God to preach.

If the “wise” teachers of Israel thought it prudent to keep silent for self-preservation, Amos in contrast believed that a true prophet showed God’s wisdom by speaking faithfully:

ESV Amos 5:13 Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time.

Amos knew that as prophet of God it was not wise to NOT speak when the Lord has spoken:

ESV Amos 3:7-8: "For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. ⁸ The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?"

Faithfulness and preaching “in season and out of season” (or at all times) regardless of the people’s reaction was Amos’ desire:

ESV Amos 7:12 And Amaziah [Priest of Bethel] said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, ¹³ but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

The people of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) did not want to hear his unpopular message from God, but nevertheless he bravely and courageously preached and told the people the truth of God’s Word:

ESV Amos 7:16-17: Now therefore hear the word of the LORD. "You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac.'"¹⁷ Therefore thus says the LORD: "' Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line; you yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land."

Amos was a knowledgeable man (2e)

Amos did not formally study to be a prophet as we have learned, but he nevertheless reveals a great deal of knowledge of God and his world in his prophecies. Amos shows a vast understanding of social, judicial and international affairs of his day. For instance, Amos spoke publicly at Bethel as a learned man (7:10-17) which was a major site of worship; he spoke at Samaria, Israel's cosmopolitan capital (3:9; 4:1; 6:1). Amos' writings reveal a knowledge of geography, history and the social and political life of the surrounding nations (or peoples). We will look further at this aspect of his prophecy later.

Amos was one of the "writing prophets" (2f)

Amos is one of the prophets in the *Book of the Twelve* known as a "writing prophet". Amos along with Isaiah, Hosea and Jonah's prophecies were preserved in writing because these prophets specifically as covenant prosecutors reminded Israel of God's faithfulness to her in history and called them to repentance, promising that if they would repent and keep the covenant, God would restore and redeem his people.

These were very important writings for the people of Israel, especially when they were exiled for their sins under foreign nations. These "writing prophets" helped bring the past into the present when Israel was in captivity and encouraged them that God would one day restore a remnant of believing people to himself.

Date of Amos' Ministry –*What was the date of Amos' prophetic-preaching ministry?* (3)

Amos prophesied and preached during the reigns of King Uzziah of Judah (791-740 B.C.; cf. Isaiah's ministry 6:1 ff) and King Jeroboam II of Israel (793-753 B.C.) which was a span of more than forty years. Amos was an older contemporary of Hosea and when we compare Hosea and Amos' prophecies respectively; we see that Hosea's focus in his prophetic word is more on the revelation of God's love and the knowledge of God while Amos focuses on the aspects of justice and righteousness in God's rule. Both prophecies are extremely important as God's Word, but it is helpful to consider the primary focus on how God reveals himself through each particular author in the *Book of the Twelve*.

The exact dates when he specifically prophesied during these span of years is unknown for sure, but most scholars date his preaching ca. 760s, late in Jeroboam II's reign and this is confirmed by history in a known earthquake that occurred during this time, see 1:1.

Amos preaches to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during a time of great prosperity and Jeroboam II was a economically successful king by worldly standards; King Jeroboam's military success is described in 2 Kings 14:

ESV 2 Kings 14:25 He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.

During Jeroboam II's reign there was not only prosperity but peace between Israel and Judah (although divided). On the larger international scale, Egypt and Babylon were weak economically and militarily. The Assyrian Empire was on the rise to expand their territories and this great empire would eventually invade and destroy Samaria, the capital of Israel in 722 B.C. (approximately 40 years after Amos' preaching to the Northern Kingdom, specifically in Samaria and Bethel, 7:10-17), but for now there was peace between the peoples.

The reference to the earthquake in verse 1 was remembered and interpreted later during Zechariah the Prophet's ministry as an act of divine judgment upon Israel (and it is probably to be dated from ancient history between 765 and 760 B.C. Archaeological discoveries at sites like Samaria and Hazor attest to an earthquake destruction right around this time period):

ESV Zechariah 14:5 And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

Israel was at "peace in Zion" (cf. Amos 6:1ff) but military and political trouble was coming (devastating military slaughter and slavery for the Israelites were just a few years away) and a historical earthquake had literally shaken the land and revealed that all the earthly hopes Israel had possessed were about to crumble. Around 760 B.C. Israel is beginning to crumble for their disobedience to God.

ESV Amos 6:1-8: "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes! ² Pass over to Calneh, and see, and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory, ³ O you who put far away the day of disaster and bring near the seat of violence? ⁴ "Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, ⁵ who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, ⁶ who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! ⁷ Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away." ⁸ The Lord GOD has sworn by himself, declares the LORD, the God of hosts: "I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds, and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it."

Little did anyone in Israel, particularly King Jeroboam II realize that Israel's end was so near! While Israel's leaders stretched themselves out on beds of ivory (6:4), busied themselves with idle songs (6:5), and enjoyed lavish food, drink and fashion (6:6), God's judgment was impending. While Israel's leaders lapped up the luxurious living, they were to be exiled and delivered over by God to judgment outside of the covenant land.

Outline of the Prophecy of Amos- How should we outline Amos' prophetic book? (4)

Amos' Book (of "oracles" or of "prophetic utterances") can be divided into **four sections**: (1) Chapters 1-2 consisting of superscription and an introduction, then a lengthy poem of eight oracles of judgment against the nations that border Israel and judgment upon Israel herself; (2) Chapters 3-6 contain Amos' covenant lawsuits against Israel and oracles of the judgment of God that will end in exile; (3) Chapters 7-9 which are made up of five visions; and (4) An epilogue promising blessing and renewal for Israel in chapter 9:11-15.

Covenant Lawsuit Form- How is Amos' prophecy written in covenant lawsuit form (This includes four parts) (5)

We should be reminded that God inspires the writers of the Bible not only in content *but also in form*. In Amos' prophecy for instance, the form of the message is in lawsuit form. In this lawsuit form, there is courtroom imagery that should be visualized.

There is a scene of judgment. There is the speech by the judge, then an address to the defendant, pronouncement of guilt and the sentence of the judge (that can occur in 2nd or 3rd person, McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*, Vol.1, pg. 318). From ancient Hittite treaties we can better understand this ancient covenant lawsuit genre. From an ancient text *The Annals of Mursilis*, Mursilis the king brings a covenant lawsuit against a rebellious vassal:

*“But I [Mursilis] sent an emissary to Uhha-lu-is
and wrote to him: ‘My servants, who came to you—
when I demanded them back from you, you did not
send them back to me. And you have treated me like a mere
child,
and abused me. Now then! We will do battle against each other!
and may the Storm God, my Lord, decide our trial by combat!’*

<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/ietexts/hit/hit-5-X.html>

In this ancient text we notice the “covenant lawsuit form” written with four parts: 1) Introduction (of suzerain, king, plaintiff, judge); 2) Introduction of Plaintiff and Historical Review; 3) Indictment; and 4) Judgment

Notice this form in Amos 1:

Introduction of the LORD (YHWH)/Plaintiff and Judge (1:3a):

“Thus says the LORD...”

Introduction of Defendant and Historical Review of Covenant Breaking (1:3a)

“For three transgressions of Damascus...”

Indictment (1:3b)

“I will not revoke (or “turn back”) the punishment...”

Judgment (1:4-5):

ESV Amos 1:4-5: So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad. ⁵ I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir,” says the LORD.

A longer covenant lawsuit begins in chapter 3 (the second section of Amos’ prophecy):

Introduction of the LORD/Plaintiff and Judge (3:1a):

“Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you...”

Introduction of Defendant and Historical Review of Covenant Breaking (3:1b):

“O people of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt...”

Indictment (3:2):

“You only have I know of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities...”

Witnesses are summoned to the court as evidence of covenant breaking (3:9a):

“Proclaim to the strongholds in Ashdod and to the strongholds in the land of Egypt...”

Judgment (3:11-15):

ESV Amos 3:11-15: Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “An adversary shall surround the land and bring down your defenses from you, and your strongholds shall be plundered.” ¹² Thus says the LORD: “As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed. ¹³ “Hear, and testify against the house of Jacob,” declares the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, ¹⁴ “that on the day I punish Israel for his transgressions, I will punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground. ¹⁵ I will strike the winter house along with the summer house, and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall come to an end,” declares the LORD.

Amos reveals in his prophetic oracles his knowledge of the history of the divided kingdom, and much knowledge and history that he had of the surrounding nations around Israel (1:3-2:3- There are different names for these geographical names, sometimes “Damascus” sometimes translated or interpreted as “Aram” or “Syria”; the point in the listing of these geographical places is to stress that those nations or peoples on Israel’s borders are under God’s judgment for sins against God as God is LORD God of the Nations!).

In chapter 1:3-2:3, Amos delivers a prophetic poem against the surrounding nations which include Damascus (Aram) (1:3-5), Gaza (Philistia) (1:6-8), Tyre (Phoenicia) (1:9-10), Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15), and Moab (2:1-3). God's indictment and judgment is specifically against eight Syro-Palestinian nations surround Israel- -as well as Judah and Israel herself (2:4-16).

This teaches us that God is not only the God of Israel, but is sovereign Lord and Creator over all the nations. All nations are accountable to God for their sins!

ESV Deuteronomy 32:8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

Amos was a literary master and great rhetorician

Amos' Form in Section 1: Chapters 1-2

Amos' form in his poem against the nations in chapters 1-2 form a "geographical chiasmus" (McComiskey, pg. 323) that lists the nations under the inspiration of God's Spirit in a certain X shaped form.

For instance, imagine a giant X and point A is the top right part of the X and point B is the bottom left part of the X. Amos lists Syria ("Damascus") to the northeast (Point A- 1:3-5), Philistia ("Gaza") to the Southwest (Point B- 1:6-8), Tyre to the northwest (1:9-11), and Edom, Ammon, and Moab to the southeast (1:11-2:3). Then the focus moves from Judah in the South (2:4-5) and up north to Israel finally (2:6-16).

This could be likened for the sake of illustration to a prophet in today's United States to prophesy in the X shaped form (geographical chiasmus) by saying something like: "From Maine all the way to Arizona", "From Washington State to Florida", "and from Texas all the way up to the Great Lakes, God's judgment is coming for covenant disobedience in creation."

The Revelation of God and His Attributes in Amos- How is God revealed in His attributes in Amos? (6)

God is revealed in a wide variety of ways in Amos' prophecy. He is the great and sovereign God over history. He has sovereign power over the world he made:

ESV Amos 4:13 For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth- the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!

ESV Amos 5:8-9: He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the LORD is his name;⁹ who makes destruction flash forth against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress.

ESV Amos 9:5-6: The Lord GOD of hosts, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn, and all of it rises like the Nile, and sinks again, like the Nile of Egypt;⁶ who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth; who

calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth- the LORD is his name.

Old Testament scholar Willem Vangemeren notes how God reveals his sovereignty and omnipotent rule over His creation in each part of Amos' prophecy (*Interpreting*, pg. 131):

- **Withering of Creation caused by God's Judgment (1:2)**
- **God is Creator of mountains, wind, light and darkness (4:13; cf. Gen. 1:1-2)**
 - **God is Creator of constellations, light and darkness, seas and land, destruction (5:8-9)**
- **Theophany of God: God is sovereign over water, sea, and land. God is King over heaven and earth and Judge of all (9:5-6)**

God is not only sovereign over all of history and is the Ultimate Cause providentially of the rise and fall of nations; he is also the One who is compassionate with the people when sinners repent:

ESV Amos 3:2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

ESV Amos 4:8 so two or three cities would wander to another city to drink water, and would not be satisfied; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

God reveals himself as a forgiving and merciful God to those who repent. While God's message through Amos is a judgment upon the creation (the nations including Israel) for their many sins, there is restoration hope and salvation for those who turn and put their trust in God! God says through Amos:

ESV Amos 9:14-15: I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵ I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them," says the LORD your God.

Amos addresses two major sins of fallen people in God's World: 1) Idolatry and 2) Social Injustice (7).

Amos addresses many sins of the nations and the people of God despite the special revelation that they had received from God, and their covenant call to be devoted only to him and to show forth his grace and ways. The nations are wickedly sinful and this is emphasized in what is known in Hebrew poetry and written in "wisdom style" as **"ascending enumeration" (8)**

This means that when in chapter 1:3a, Amos says: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four..." (Which is used for all the judgments, see 1:6a, 1:9a, 1:11, 1:13a, 2:1a, 2:4a, 2:6a), God is saying through Amos that his judgment is coming from sin upon sin, or "many sins" (not literally that they are only guilty of three or four sins; think of God's faithfulness or judgment upon the "third and fourth generation" to those who love or hate him). The stress in this way of speaking is to say that the nations and

Israel herself are guilty of multiple sins or rebellion against God (see also Proverbs 30:18-19).

These sins of rebellion include specifically: International treaties are broken between nations (1:9); people are taken into exile and made slaves (1:6, 9); brothers pursued the death of brothers in war (1:11); violent soldiers cut pregnant women open with swords (1:13).

Sin knows no end to the great atrocities it causes in the world. In Amos' day, as well as in our own, social injustice, bloody warfare, and idolatry continue and are a blatant disregard for God's clearly revealed Law and justice.

It is interesting to ponder why specifically the nations are being charged. Amos may be charging the nations with rebellion because they were once part of the Davidic Empire at its height and were involved in the covenant with God in that way, or Amos is appealing to a "natural law" that the Apostle Paul speaks of in Romans 1-2 that all men know that there is a God and that they know what God requires of them in the sense of right and wrong.

Amos' message to Israel is that Israel had become like the nations rather than being a light to the nations as God had called them to be (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Rather than loving the LORD their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut. 6:4ff) Israel was guilty of blatant and shameful idolatry against God along with the other nations under God (which was a breaking of the first commandment God gave to the people of Israel at Sinai (Exodus 20:1ff). In the Second Book of Kings, this is how Israel's idolatry is described:

ESV 2 Kings 17:14-17: But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. ¹⁶ And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. ¹⁷ And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

Amos calls the specific idolatrous images ("gods") by name in his indictment against Israel's covenant unfaithfulness:

ESV Amos 5:26-27: You shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyun your star-god- your images that you made for yourselves, and I will send you into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

Rather than loving their neighbor as themselves, there was great hatred and social injustice especially with regard to their poor revealing not her separate-ness (i.e. "holiness") from the ways of the nations (and worldly living and thinking) but how much like the world she had become:

ESV Amos 2:6-8: Thus 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-⁷ those 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;⁸ they lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.

ESV Amos 4:1 "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!'

Israel even broke the Sabbath because of covetousness and greed, doing business when they should have been hearing and learning God's Word. The Sabbath day was given to the people of Israel as the visible sign that God had given her as a special nation of people who lived under His Royal and Holy Law:

ESV Amos 8:5 saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances,

Because Israel became like the nations, there was no love or compassion for neighbors (4:4-5), there was blatant and gross idolatry (2:8), and the people trusted in anything and everything *other than their Covenant God YHWH* who was the Creator and Sustainer of life, health, giver of rain, crops, and peace (4:6-11).

Israel claimed that they longed for the Day of the LORD, thinking this meant salvation from all their enemies, but Amos told Israel that the Day of the LORD would mean judgment upon covenant breaking!

ESV Amos 5:18-20: Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,¹⁹ as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.²⁰ Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

The end and judgment of Israel came in 722 B.C. when the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and earth raised up Assyria to judge the unfaithful Northern Kingdom.

How does the coming of Jesus Christ fulfill Amos' prophecy to Israel and the nations? (9)

Like many in our day no one truly believed the prophet; like many later in the Apostle Peter's day, no one truly believed the prophet (this includes many outside and inside the visible covenant community of God). Although Amos (and later Peter) were faithful to God's Word, the people scoffed about a judgment to come:

ESV Amos 9:10 All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, 'Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.' (cf. 2 Peter 3:5-11).

But God will preserve a faithful remnant who will believe God's Word; God will save those who continue to trust in his promises:

ESV Amos 3:12 Thus says the LORD: "As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed.

In Amos 9:11-15, the Prophet Amos tells the remnant of God that there will be restoration when "David's fallen tent" or "tabernacle" (referring to the Davidic dynasty) is rebuilt in a new time of hope; this will be a time that will be after the restoration of God's people from exile and a time of new creation when all of believing Israel and all believing nations (Gentiles) will be gathered permanently back into the land where God will permanently rule and dwell in their midst (cf. Rev. 21:1ff; 22:1ff).

David's "fallen tent" or "tabernacle" or "dynasty" that was currently split and divided into northern and southern kingdoms would again be united, rebuilt and restored! The benefits of this rebuilt Davidic dynasty will be hope and salvation for Israel and also for the world- -all those who believe in Jesus Christ the greater son of Davidic and one who sits upon David's throne at God's right hand:

ESV Amos 9:11-15: "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, ¹² that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name," declares the LORD who does this. ¹³ "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. ¹⁴ I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵ I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them," says the LORD your God.

Dr. Luke in the 'Acts of the Apostles' teaches us from the Council of Jerusalem that clearly this day spoken of by the Prophet Amos has dawned with the coming of Jesus Christ:

ESV Acts 15:14-19: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, ¹⁶ "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸ known from of old." ¹⁹ Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God...

The exile of God's people (both Jew and Gentile) is coming to an end with the coming of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Peter 1:1, 17, 2:11 for the language of "exiles" being used for the church made up of Jew and Gentile).

With the coming of Jesus Christ, the Day of the LORD's judgment is imminent. Salvation is extended to all who believe- - including the nations or Gentiles (*goyim*). The Book of Acts tell us that Jesus Christ "rebuilt the fallen tent of David" and its ruins and

restoration is found when Jew and Gentile repent and submit in Lordship to the King of kings and Lord of lords who sits on the greater Davidic throne at God's right hand!

This rebuilt tent or tabernacle is the true Temple of God that was founded upon Jesus Christ and His Work (and the Apostles and Prophets) (Eph. 2:20) and is being built up into a Holy Temple unto the Lord!

1 Peter 2:4-6: As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

When Christ returns, he will ultimately establish His Kingdom over all the earth and in his sovereign and omnipotent power as Ruler of Heaven and Earth, will strike the unrepentant nations with desolations:

^{ESV} Revelation 6:15-17: Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Who can stand this imminent Day of Judgment? Only those who have repented and received hope and salvation from Jesus who sits upon the throne!

Seek the LORD while he may be found! Call upon him while he is near!

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A Survey of the Old Testament- Andrew Hill and John Walton

Amos, Pt 2

Amos begins his prophecy with a Theophanic description of God's judgment upon Israel:

ESV Amos 1:2 And he said: "The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."

The LORD or YHWH ***roars from Zion*** Amos says! Zion was the City of Jerusalem but it was also known for the place where God resided or "tabernacled" with his people in the Temple mount at Jerusalem (Isa. 24:23; 31:9; Joel 3:16); the Prophet Joel also used this Theophanic imagery of God's judgment:

ESV Joel 3:16 The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

The LORD YHWH will roar like a great lion pouncing on his foes- -his foes being his covenant people who have been unfaithful and disobedient to the covenant with him. Israel has become like the nations and so they can expect to be judged for their sins against YHWH. As in Joel's prophecy, Zion's land will be cursed so badly (cf. Deut. 26-29) that "the pastures of the shepherds mourn" (v. 2c) because of his judgment.