

# Amos

Amos 1:1-9:15

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-07-08

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One of my pet peeves is that modern socialistic Christianity loves to cherry pick a few phrases on oppression of the poor from the book of Amos, take them out of context, and use those phrases to call for what they define as “social justice on behalf of the poor.” And by that they mean socialism. And there are two reasons their use of Amos is totally illegitimate. First, they refuse to let Amos define what justice looks like - and he defines it quite differently from the way that these Social Justice Warriors do. And secondly, they ignore the laws and commandments of the Old Testament that Amos appeals to. Amos is a book that is taking nations back to the law of Moses. It’s not just saying, “Care for the poor, but do it any way that you want to.” God defines the goals and the means towards those goals.

To give you some examples - many of the modern “social justice warriors” (SJWs) are calling for more state control, more theft from one group and redistribution of that wealth by the state to another group (usually an irresponsible group). And they are calling for more state imposed definitions of racial justice, gender justice, and workplace justice, and economic justice. Ironically, the Bible would call most of what goes in the name of “justice” as injustice and unrighteousness. Amos wants us to look at life through Biblical eyes.

So when Amos cries out the popular oft quoted verse, “But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream” (5:24), we need to ask, “Who gets to define justice and righteousness?” He who defines terms controls a society. Does Amos mean reparations for slavery that happened hundreds of years ago? Does he mean shame and guilt for things we never did and that many of our ancestors never did? No. Instead of social justice, Amos speaks of Biblical justice as defined by God’s law. The cry of all of the prophets was the same as Isaiah’s - “To the law and to the testimony. If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Prophetic covenant lawsuits by definition are an application of the law of God.

So what I would recommend when a Ronald Sider type of person appeals to Amos is to tell him that he doesn’t really believe Amos at all because everything Ronald Sider stands for is condemned by Amos. Press the details of Amos to show that God hates government inflation of currency (chapter

8:5), something that Ronald Sider has no problem with. Amos hates government taxation of its citizens (chapter 5:11), something that is absolutely essential for Ronald Sider's civil redistribution of wealth. Amos hates wars of aggression that do not submit to God's laws (1:3-2:5), whereas Sider has sided with Marxist guerrillas. Ronald Sider insists that the kind of economics that the law of God mandated has passed away. But what does Amos give as the central reason for all of his condemnations? Amos 2:4 says it was "Because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments."

Modern Social Justice Warriors actually stand condemned by Amos. So I think that Amos is a book that we Biblicists ought to get to know so that SJWs don't get away with abusing it. It's a marvelous book on true mercy, and true love, and true justice, and true righteousness. It is a call for all nations to submit to God's grace and His law. And I hope by the time we get through Amos in the next 35-40 minutes that you will come to love and appreciate Amos as well. It is a marvelous protection of citizens liberties.

## I. Brief biography of Amos

Who was Amos? He was the second earliest of the Minor Prophets in terms of dating, with only Jonah coming before him. Jonah prophesied in the fifteenth year of Amaziah's reign, and Amos prophesied during the reign of the next king, Uzziah. So Hosea and Micah would come next. Amos 1:1 tells us a little bit about Amos. The first verse says,

The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders 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 not simply a shepherd. The Hebrew word (טֹקַיִם - *nokaid*) refers to a very specialized industry of sheep breeders who produced specialty sheep with special kinds of wool.<sup>1</sup> It took a lot more skill to engage in this than your typical shepherd would have. So he had taken the raising of sheep to a whole new level. In chapter 7:14 he mentions again that he was a sheepbreeder and also a tender of sycamore figs.

I love the fact that God uses people from all walks of life. Jesus spent most

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<sup>1</sup> "The Hebrew word translated here is used only one other time in the Old Testament (2 Kgs 3:4) where it is used of Mesha, the king of Moab, and where it has the meaning of "sheep-breeder." Sheep breeding must have been a rather profitable business as it enabled King Mesha to send the wool of a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams to the king of Israel each year. Texts from related cultures\* also seem to indicate that these sheep-breeders were well-to-do, and Amos was probably one of the important men of Tekoa. He was surely more than a simple shepherd." Jan de Waard and William Allen Smalley, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Amos*, UBS Handbook Series (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1979), 22-23.

of His life as a carpenter. Some of his apostles were fisherman (Matt. 4:18). David started off as a shepherd. The patriarchs were herdsman. Paul was a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). And the Bible mentions the importance of the fuller (who basically ran a laundry company - Mal. 3:2), musicians, inn-keepers, potters, soldiers, hunters (Jer. 16:16), cooks (1 Sam. 9:23-24), and many other occupations. Indeed, in Biblical times it was the rare person who went off to schools of higher learning. Yet these tradesmen could read, write, craft high literature, and do things that even the graduates of universities can't do nowadays. I think we put too much stock in schools and too little stock in self-learning. Amos' homeschooling was far superior to American education. Just saying. Amos' literary skills are up there with the best.

Now, verse 1 mentions that Amos' prophecies began two years before the massive earthquake that caused so much destruction in the days of Uzziah. The earthquake was so devastating that it was imprinted into the memory of the nation even 200 years later when Zechariah 14:5 prophesied another earthquake that would be similar to this one. Zechariah predicted an earthquake on Pentecost of AD 66 that would be as devastating as the one in the days of Uzziah. And in our Revelation series we saw that this happened exactly as prophesied and that the split of the Mount of Olives frightened the unbelievers, but enabled an escape route for the remnant of Jews to flee through and to escape to Pella. In any case, mentioning this huge earthquake sets an ominous tone for the book of impending judgment. God is about to shake this kingdom.

In verse 1 he mentions Jeroboam II of Israel in the north and Uzziah of the southern Kingdom of Judah. And the reason both are mentioned is not just for the dating, but to highlight the fact that even though Amos lived in the town of Tekoah in the southern kingdom of Judah, God sent him way up north to prophesy against Israel. This means that Amos gave up a lucrative trade (and it was a lucrative trade) to be a prophet. He gave up a prestigious trade to become a hated and persecuted messenger of God. And this speaks volumes about his character. God came before money. God came before fame. God came before honor. He moved in order to serve.

In chapter 7, when the priest of the northern cult of Jeroboam accused Amos of treason against King Jeroboam and ordered Amos to quit prophesying and to get out of the country, Amos refused and said that he wasn't doing his ministry because he wanted to. Several times in this book he mentions that he could not help but prophesy. God's Spirit overwhelmed him and forced him to prophesy against Israel, and the words that Amos spoke, though his own words and his own vocabulary, are clearly defined in this book as being

the very Word of God. God's Spirit used his vocabulary and background to communicate God's message in a powerful way.

And the power of God's prophetic message can be seen in verse 2:

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."

When God speaks words of judgment, they automatically produce historical judgments. There is a power in God's prophetic Word that casts down all obstacles. This is a book that speaks of God's judgments and punishments of the nations.

## **II. Keys**

### **A. Key words - punish/punishment 10x; name 7x**

And punishment is the key word in this book. It occurs 10 times. And it is frequently connected with the word "name," as in the name of the Lord. It is because God is jealous for His name that He judges those who claim to belong to Him and yet despise His law.

### **B. Key verse - Amos 3:2**

Even the key verse, Amos 3:2 reflects this punishment because they were his people. It says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." The idea is the same as in Hebrews 12 - whom the Lord loves He disciplines. So there was a difference between the punishment of Israel and the judgment of the nations.

### **C. Key chapter - Amos 9 - the restoration of Israel**

I'll save the key chapter for when we go through the book.

## **III. Some of the themes of the book of Amos**

But to get a bird's eye view of the theology of this book, let me outline just a few of the major themes.

### **A. The central theme - true justice and righteousness (5:7,24; 6:12)**

Most would agree that the central theme of the book is articulated in the two words, justice and righteousness. In chapter 5:7 and 6:12 he condemns Israel for having redefined those two terms; for having turned God's definitions upside down. It's not just Ronald Sider who twists these two words. The Israelites did it back then too. They preferred their own definitions of justice

and righteousness to God's definitions.

In chapter 5:24 he calls for true justice and righteousness, saying, "But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." I'll save my exposition of that for later. But Israel no doubt thought that what they were doing was right. Most rebels do. But they thought so because they rejected God's law. And as every prophet of the Old Testament did, Amos brings God's law to bear in his covenant lawsuit.

***B. The sovereignty of God (1:3-23; 2:4-16; 3:8b; 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6)***

But a second major theme found throughout the book is God's sovereignty over every detail of life and over every nation. In chapter 3:8 Amos could not resist God's sovereign call to be a prophet. So God was sovereign over Amos. In chapter 2:4-16 God asserts His sovereignty over Judah and Israel as His people who have fallen away. In chapters 1:3-2:3 God asserts that He is sovereign over the pagan nations. Every nation answers to God on a day-to-day basis for their inhumanity to man and for their lawlessness. The hymns scattered through the book show that God not only created all things in this universe but also sovereignly governs all things. Chapter 4:13 calls God, "He who forms mountains and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness." God even declares our thoughts. Chapter 5:8 says, "He made the Pleiades and Orion." Over and over we find that God is sovereign over everything that happens inside of man and outside of man. And these words are designed to make us worship Him, trust Him, submit to Him, and love Him. If God were not sovereign, He would not be worthy of worship.

***C. Manifestations of depravity and sin call for judgment (throughout)***

But of course, man's heart is depraved and refuses to respond rightly. So a third major theme is God's judgments against sin. And wow! There is a broad litany of sins. He speaks against national sins and even international sins. For example he blasts kings for wartime tortures in their wars against other nations (1:3,13), for deliberately provoking war with horrible treatment of a dead king's body (2:1), for breaking peace accords (1:6,9), for using more force than is needed (1:11), and for imperialistic land grabs (1:13). So it deals with international relations.

But to Judah and Israel he condemns them for materialism. Materialism is condemned in many ways. And by the way, it is not just the rich that are

materialistic. You would get the impression from Ronald Sider that poor people are good and rich people are evil. That is such a distorted reading of Amos. A pastor in Africa told me that the poorest of the poor in his nation were just as materialistic and preoccupied with stuff as the rich in our country are. But in this book he especially goes after the wealthy because of their abuse of power. When I think of Amos' outrage that some of the rich there spent more on shoes than they did on helping the poor, I thought of Imelda Marcos, the wife of the former president of the Philippines, who had 1,220 pairs of expensive shoes along with a vast collection of clothes and accessories. And people might think, "If you are a billionaire, who cares? You can afford it." But that is missing the point that the rich and the poor are all called to be stewards of everything they have, and to have 1,220 pairs of shoes is lousy stewardship on any definition of the word.

So Amos blasted those wealthy women of Israel as "you cows of Bashan" (4:1). Them's fighting words. That was his way of calling them fat cats who got rich at the expense of justice in their dealings. But with name-calling like that, you can see why he got in trouble. In chapter 7:11 Amos told Jeroboam that he would die by the sword and Israel would be led away captive. Amaziah (the priest representative of the king) accuses Amos of treason for saying such a thing and tells Amos to quit prophesying in Bethel, since it was the king's sanctuary and the royal residence. That makes Amos pour it on all the more, and he tells Amaziah the false priest,

Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; your land shall be divided by survey line; you shall die in a defiled land; and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land.

Wow! Amos was fearless in his denunciations of all evil and oppression. He blasted them for their cavalier attitudes toward the poor, sexual sins, breaking the Sabbath, cheating people when selling products (8:5), injustice in the court system (2:7; 5:7, 10, 12; 6:12), cruelty in warfare (1:3-5), slave trading (1:6-8), border expansion (1:13-15), desecrating a grave (2:1-3). Yeah, that last one is interesting. If you don't think that mistreatment of a dead body is a sin, read chapter 2:1-3. You don't mistreat even a pagan's body. That's based upon the law of God, which said that even a criminal who was hung for a crime had to be taken down at the end of the day and his body dealt with in a dignified way. Our modern cavalier attitudes towards our dead bodies is not Biblical.

Amos also blasted Israel for debasing their currency. Chapter 8:5 says that it was a sin when they were "making the ephah small and the shekel large." That's exactly what our government does with its shameful and evil Keynesian economics. The dollar buys less and less all the time, and it is

especially the poor who suffer.

But Amos also blasted them for engaging in hypocritical worship (5:21-27).

It's an amazingly relevant book for our modern times. If Amos were present today, he would offend just about everyone.

***D. Israel's imminent end with the Assyrian deportation (2:13-16; 3:11-12; 5:2,18-20; 6:7,14; 7:8; 8:2; 9:1-4,8) in a devastating "day of the Lord" (5:18,20)***

As a result of these sins, another major theme in the book is that the nation of Israel would soon end. This was inconceivable to those who heard his message. That nation had been around for a long time and expected to be around forever. Jereboam II had brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity to the nation. He was a competent king, general, and administrator. He protected the nation. Everything looked secure. But the citizens were judging reality by economic indicators, not by God's moral compass. By God's moral compass they were doomed. And Amos encourages us to look at our own nation through the same eye-glasses.

## **IV. Structure of the book shows a central call to repentance and lamentation**

### **29.1 The Book of Amos**

- a **coming judgment upon Israel and its neighbors** (1:1-2:16)
- b **the prophet's compulsion**: destruction of Israel and Bethel's cult center (3:1-15)
  - c **condemnation of wealthy Israelite women**: empty religious activity and Yahweh's judgment (4:1-13)
  - d **CENTER**: call to repentance and lament (5:1-17)
  - c' **condemnation of wealthy Israelite men**: empty religious activity and coming judgment (5:18-6:14)
- b' **the prophet's compulsion**: destruction of Bethel's cult center (7:1-8:3)
- a' **coming judgment upon Israel** (scattering among the nations) and future restoration among the nations (8:4-9:15)

Careful analysis suggests that the entire book consists of seven symmetrically arranged main units, each fairly well delineated by various literary devices (29.1).<sup>14</sup>

In terms of structure, David Dorsey has done a good job of showing all of the micro-structures that make the book interlock in a beautiful series of chiasms. In your outlines I have only included his brief overall division of the book into seven parts. And I won't even comment on his outline other than to point out that the heart of the book is the lament that calls Israel to repentance. Repentance is the key to reversal. It always has been and always will be. Apart from repentance, America is doomed.

## **V. Overview of the book**

But I do want to draw your attention to my chart that is titled, "Progressive

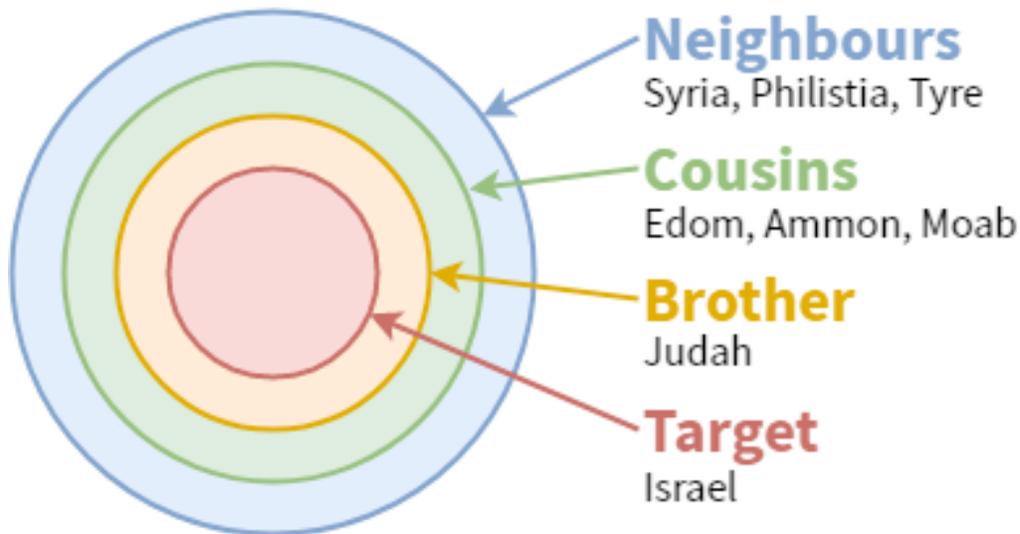
Outline of Amos.” It shows the overall logical flow and linear progress of the book. I think this is the chart that will help you to make the most sense out of the book of Amos, and I am going to use it right now to give you a chapter by chapter run down.

Progressive Outline of Amos																																																	
By Phillip G. Kayser																																																	
Judgment on Nations						Reasons			Results for Israel		Results for Judah +		Messianic Glories																																				
1:3-5	Damascus	1:6-8	Gaza	1:9-10	Tyre	1:11-12	Edom	1:13-15	Ammon	2:1-3	Moab	2:4-5	Judah	2:6-16	Israel	3:1-15	Special privileges	4:1-13	Refused to be corrected	5:1-17	No repentance	5:18-27	Hypocrisy	6:1-11	Complacency	7:1-3	Locusts	7:4-6	Fire	7:7-9	Plumbline	7:10-17	Exile of Israel 722 BC	8:1-3	Rotten fruit	8:4-10	Exile of Judah 607 BC	8:11-14	400 yrs silence 400 BC	9:1-10	Destruction in AD 70	9:11	A new Israel (church)	9:12	Spread to Gentiles	9:13	Millennial Glories	9:14-15	Salvation of Israel

You will see from the different colors on the chart that it moves from the promised judgment on the nations in the first two chapters, to the reasons for those judgments in chapters 3-6 to the results for Israel and then the results for Judah, and finally ending in the green text with predictions related to the New Covenant Messianic times. So there is a very logical flow to the book.

Let’s start with the black text on the left. The first two chapters deal with imminent judgments that are coming upon all of the nations. And the covenant lawsuits start with Damascus (the capitol of Syria) and move to the climax of judgments in Israel. Why does he do that? Well, there is a psychological effect. He would be a rather popular prophet when he starts pronouncing doom upon Israel’s enemies. By the time Amos gets to the end of chapter 1, the citizens are probably cheering. They are happy that their enemies are coming under judgment. This is a great prophet! But just as he gets their attention and their approval, Amos starts hammering Judah and then Israel. That’s where he goes to meddling.

I have put another graphic that helps to visualize the logic of these first chapters just under the first part of my chart. It’s in the shape of a bulls-eye target. And it again shows where God is aiming.



So the first nations mentioned are on the outer ring of the target. Those three nations are much more distant in terms of genetics, but are still neighbors. They constitute Syria, Philistia, and Tyre. The next smaller ring on the target that God is shooting at are Israel's cousins. Edom descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob. So they were distantly related. Moab and Ammon are on that ring as well, and they were the children of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. So that ring constitutes genetic cousins that are now being judged. The next smaller ring is Israel's brother, Judah. Judah would suffer from the imminent invasion of Assyria as well. Assyria would swing through all of Judah bringing devastation, and almost capture the capital, Jerusalem. It was only because of Hezekiah's humility and prayer that Jerusalem was spared. But you will see that the center of the target is Israel. That is the key focus of this book of Amos. So there is a logic even to the ordering of the nations in chapters 1-2.

And again, these chapters are great chapters to go to in order to prove that all nations are subject to God's laws, not just Israel and Judah. Virtually all anti-theonomists have to assert that the Old Testament laws were for Israel alone. It doesn't matter whether they are Radical Two Kingdom, Dispensationalist, Amish, Pietest, or some other form of law-hater, you have to hold to some theory of why the law doesn't apply to us and only applies to Israel. Well, Amos is a good book to go to in order to disprove that.

Just like the other prophets we have looked at, Amos treats all nations as subject to God's law, whether they are cousin nations or totally pagan nations. He blasts Ammon for deliberately killing non-combatative civilians in war - something condemned by the law of God. He blasts Moab for treating the dead body of the pagan king of Edom disrespectfully. If God's law was

irrelevant to these nations, that would make no sense.

And for each of these pagan nations God says, “For three transgressions . . . and for four” they are about to be punished. The word “transgressions” all by itself shows that these pagan nations were stepping over the law-boundaries God had set for them by covenant. And you might think, “How could pagan nations be in covenant with God?” Well, since Noah, all nations are in covenant with God and are subject to His laws. As the New American Commentary words it, “The wrongdoing named in each oracle represented rebellion against God’s standard of conduct.”<sup>2</sup> I love the way Paul and Cross word it in their commentary. They say,

All of mankind is considered the vassal of the Lord whose power, authority, and law embrace the entire world community of nations. His sovereignty is not confined merely to the territorial borders of Israel and Judah. Offenses against him are punished directly, wherever they are committed and whoever the guilty party may be. The Lord enforces the law he authors and imposes punishments against his rebel vassals. His law binds all peoples, for the God of Israel is the God of all the nations.<sup>3</sup>

Amen and Amen! That paragraph from Paul and Cross is such a rebuke to the modern law-haters. God did not give up His position as king of the nations. He does not excuse nations from accountability to His laws. And to say that America does not have to submit to the Mosaic civil laws is to rebel against God. That is the clear message of Amos.

Now, some might wonder why Amos says, “for three transgressions and for four,” but then he goes on to only list one violation of God’s law for each nation? Commentators point out that this is a Hebrew idiom for saying that they transgress God’s law over and over again. He mentions one violation, but says that three and even more sins that could be specified.<sup>4</sup> So each of

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2 Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, vol. 19B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 47.

3 Shalom M. Paul and Frank Moore Cross, Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 46.

4 Here are some sample statements from commentaries: “The collocation of one number with the next higher, as in three and four, is a well-known method in Hebrew of indicating an indefinite number; cf. Jer. 36:23; Prov. 30:15, 18, 21, 29.” Shailer Mathews, “General Introduction,” in A Commentary on the Books of Amos, Hosea, and Micah: Commentary, ed. Shailer Mathews, The Bible for Home and School (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), 16. “On the contrary, they were responsible for multiple atrocities and were to be judged at last by the God who had already been more than merciful. This is the point of the idiom that begins each oracle: “For three sins of \_\_\_\_\_, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath” (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). The idiom refers to repeated violations, atrocity upon atrocity. The item cited is merely one illustration.” James Montgomery Boice, The Minor Prophets: An Expositional Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 171. “The expression (lit., “for three sins, even four”; cf. NLT mg) indicates that the city or nation indicted is guilty of “crime after crime” or repeated sin (Andersen and Freedman 1989:217). The number “four” is emphatic or climactic since Amos mentions only the last or worst crime committed, what Hubbard (1989:129) terms the “back-breaking transgression that triggered the divine judgment.”” Richard D. Patterson and Andrew E. Hill, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 10: Minor Prophets, Hosea–Malachi (Carol

these nations is being judged for repeated violations of the laws of the Old Testament. Just as the Canaanites were vomited out of the land for violating the laws of Moses, these nations are vomited out of the land for violating the laws of Moses. No nation can escape a similar fate if they cast off the laws of Moses. And since God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever, you can expect that he treats modern nations the same way. If anything, they are more responsible because they have more light.

Even though the first section gives one reason for the judgments and implies many more, the next section of the book that is in yellow letters outlines more reasons for why Israel was judged. The first reason (given in chapter 3) is that Israel had enormous privileges as a chosen nation and a nation that had God's law so clearly taught. As he says in verse 2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." The word "know" in the Hebrew is *yadah*, and can refer to the kind of knowledge that comes from marital love - as in "Adam knew his wife and she conceived." Israel was the only nation that had this close marital relationship with God. Yet she spurned her husband and committed adultery. To whom much is given, much is required. And as you progress through the chapter, you see other metaphors of how Israel had a special relationship as a sheep and as a son. There was no excuse for Israel's rebellion. So that is the first supporting reason that God documents for why He was bringing His covenant lawsuit.

In chapter 4 we have yet another reason why Israel was being judged. As God's son, he absolutely refused to be corrected despite repeated disciplines in the past. It's not as if this is the first judgment. He documents numerous times that he had given milder judgments. And they had ignored them. Look for example at verses 7-8. This is chapter 4:7-8.

"I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered. So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

In verse 9 he says that he blasted them with blight and mildew. He sent locusts, yet they did not return. Repeatedly God had sent lesser disciplines to no effect. And why is this considered a reason for dropping the hammer and killing the nation? Well, consider the law of God. What happens in the law of God to a juvenile delinquent who absolutely refuses to change despite discipline? He is brought before the elders with witnesses to prove his

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Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 166.

incorrigibility, and he is stoned to death. That's what God was going to do with His child, Israel. Israel had become incorrigible. Israel had ignored all previous disciplines.

The first seventeen verses of chapter 5 show a third reason for dropping the hammer. No matter how many times they had been called to repentance, they refused to repent.

The fourth reason in the yellow text was hypocrisy - they pretended to honor Yehowah in their worship while disobeying God. And God says, "I hate your worship." You can't come to church with rebellion and expect God to be pleased. You can't ignore God's law six days a week and expect God to receive your worship on the Sabbath. So in verse 21 God says, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies." Verse 23 says, "Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments." I could see God saying that to many antinomian churches today.

And here comes what at least some people consider to be the central verse in the whole book - "But let your justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Who defines justice and righteousness? Not Social Justice Warriors. Only God's law can define those two terms. The first term, "justice," refers not only to following God's law in a court of law, but being just in the way that all of society is ordered. The word "righteousness" deals with the fulfillment of God's laws in our relationships with each other and with God. God wants individuals transformed so that they in turn transform society.

The last reason given in the yellow section of your chart is complacency or uncaring attitudes in chapter 6. They had been warned by prophets, but didn't seem to be fazed by the warnings. And God basically says you won't be complacent anymore once the hammer falls.

The red section of that chart shows the results. First, God gives the results for Israel using the figures of locusts, fire, and a plumbline, and predicts an imminent exile of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BC.

Chapter 8 begins by pointing out that Judah will remain, but it will be like late summer fruit. Yes, there will be a godly remnant, but the bulk of the fruit basket will spoil. But even the good fruit would be removed in Judah's own exile in 607 BC.

Some might question whether chapter 8 even refers to Judah, but the fact that Israel is already prophesied to be cast out in chapter 7, the presence of

good fruit, the mention of Jerusalem's temple in verse 3, there being only one son left to God in verse 10, shows that it is Judah. After northern Israel had been exiled, the southern kingdom expanded its borders all the way to the northern tip of Israel. And according to 2 Chronicles 34 Judah controlled even the northern region of Naphtali. But Josiah's conquering of all the territory of former Israel in 2 Chronicles 34:6-7 did not stop people's worship of the false gods of Samaria. Indeed, those false gods were embraced by the southern kings after Josiah. His revival was a short-lived revival, and even Judah would be exiled.

And what follows the exilic period? Obviously there is a return from exile. But verses 11-12 predict a period future to that when there will be no prophecy. This period is spoken of as the four hundred years of silence from Malachi to the birth of Christ. Chapter 8:11-12.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, But shall not find it.

Unlike the days of Eli when "the word of the LORD was rare in those days" and when "there was no widespread revelation" (1Sam. 3:1), Amos predicts a time when there would be no revelation whatsoever. ("shall not find it"). And it was God Himself who sent the famine of revelation. God says, "I will send a famine... of hearing the words of the LORD."

And notice that this absence of revelation between Malachi through to the birth of Christ is not because God's people were failing to seek prophetic insight. Prophecy doesn't come by the will of man anyway. Amos describes passionate searching for revelation: "They shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it." You didn't get prophecy because you sought for it. God sovereignly gave it or withheld it.

And this cessation of revelation was predicted to be universal. The phrase, "from sea to sea" is used elsewhere to speak of a global universality (see for example Psalm 72:8; Zech. 9:10; Mic 7:12). Since the Mediterranean bordered Israel on the West, the phrase, "from north to east" would include all the other pagan lands to the north and east.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the famine of

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5 Hans Wolff comments: "If the intention here were to delimit the boundaries of Palestine, one would not expect 'from the north to the east' in the parallel colon. One must rather think here of the vast regions into which the people of God were scattered. The peculiar combination of north and east is most easily understood in this way." Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 331. Douglas Stewart, in the *Word Bible Commentary on Amos* says, "...the mention of the other directions—north and east—in 12a completes the compass, saying in effect that people will wander/stagger 'everywhere' without success."

revelation was everywhere in the world; it was universal. Not until the Messiah came would that change. And other Scriptures indicate that there would be a flurry of revelation at that time.

Chapter 8 ends that section of 400 years by pointing to yet another apostasy on the part of Israel. And this gradual rejection of the Bible leads into chapter 9 that predicts a final exile of Israel in AD 70 in the first ten verses. But verse 8 gives hope that a remnant of Israel will still be saved during that time. He says, “Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob...” and goes on to show how though they would be scattered throughout the world, they would still be preserved. And it is remarkable to see that Jews indeed were preserved in virtually every nation - even China. But the focus of that section is first century.

And verse 11 begins the hope section of the book (the green letters) in the first century. It starts first of all, predicting that there would be a new Israel established. And Acts 15 quotes verses 11-12 and says that those two verses were predicting the establishment of the church from the remnant of Israel (the early church was 100% Jewish) and the inclusion of Gentiles into this new Israel. And when I preached on those verses in a previous sermon, I showed how the phrase “tabernacle of David” so perfectly prefigures the New Testament church which is composed of both Jew and Gentile. David’s tabernacle was not the temple. It only had the ark of the covenant in it and did not have any sacrifices. It had Gentiles as priests, and the ark of God’s presence was visible to all who went to that tabernacle.<sup>6</sup> It is such a beautiful symbol of the New Testament church that has access directly to the throne of God. And you can see the apostle’s inspired interpretation of that in Acts 15.

Finally, verses 13-15 show much later progress of the New Testament church as Christ’s kingdom advances. Verse 13 shows millennial glories beautifully symbolized as a harvest where reaper can’t keep up with plowman and mountains literally dripping with wine and hills flowing with rivers of wine. It is beautiful image of the incredible success that the Gospel will eventually have worldwide. The church will have a hard time keeping up with the influx of new believers.

Following this Gospel success, verses 14-15 show that the nation of Israel according to the flesh will be grafted back into the true Israel from which they had been cut off, so that all nations are saved and all nations constitute the true Israel of God. That, my friends, is the message of Amos.

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6 For details on this, see Phillip Kayser, *Musical Instruments in Worship: A Critique of the Non-Instrumentalist Position* (Omaha, NE: Biblical Blueprints, 2019). Available at <https://kaysercommentary.com/booklets.md>