The Book of Amos

Zanesville, OH | Sunday AM Bible Study

**Chapter 2**

* **2:1-3– Judgment on Moab**
* The Moabites were a people who descended from Moab brother of Ben-Ammi, son of Lot (Gen. 19:37-38). They too were related to Israel but were their enemies instead of their allies. They are said to be joined up with Ammon in Deut. 23:3-4 in order to lead the Israelites to commit sin. This was primarily instigated by Balaam and Balak in Numbers 22-24, 25:1-9, 31:16.
* The Israelites lived in oppression to the Moabites in Judges 3:12-14 because of their evil before the LORD. God ultimately delivers them with Ehud shortly after.
* In 2 Kings 3. Edom, Judah and Israel join forces to wage war against Moab.
* Ruth is a prominent Moabite figure who conceived Obed by Boaz who was the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David (Ruth 4:13-22). That would make Ruth David’s great grandmother. Ruth is a part of the Messianic line that brings forth Jesus (Matt. 1:5-6).
* The Moabites are called to judgment in several other places besides Amos including Isa. 15-16; Jer. 48; Ezek. 25:8-11; Zeph. 2:8-11.
* Moab’s location is north of Edom and South of Ammon.
* In v. 1, we are told their punishment is not revoked because he burned the bones of the King of Edom to lime. *“The burning of the bones of the king of Edom is not burning while he was still alive, but the burning of the corpse into lime, i.e., so completely that the bones turned into powder like lime”* (Keil & Delitzsch). We don’t know what this particular incident was although some suggest it has to do with the fact that Edom joined forces with Judah and Israel in 2 Kings 3 to fight them and later on in their history, Moab burned the bones of the King as an act of revenge.
* In v. 2, fire will come upon Moab and will consume the citadels of Kerioth (a chief city of Moab– cf. Jer. 48:24, 31). They will perish in tumult as war cries and trumpets sound.
* In. v. 3, the LORD will cut off the judge and its princes and they will all be slain. God judgment will not be escaped.
* The term *“judge”* may be a reference to a time where Moan had no king and therefore this *judge* has all authority in the land.
* **2:4-5– Judgment on Judah**
* Judah is the first covenant nation mentioned in this section of pronunciations of judgment. Judah was considered to be the southern Kingdom during the period of the *“Divided Kingdom”* (1 Kings 12:16-24; 2 Kings 17:2). Israel had no good Kings and Judah had about 5.
* Nevertheless in v. 4, they reject God’s laws and statutes. While the previous nations are called out for their cruelties, atrocities and crimes against humanity, Judah is singled out for rejection of God’s law (2 Kings 17:19).
* While the sins of the previous nations seem horrible, Judah’s rejection of God stands out more so because they were His chosen people. They were a nation responsible for the law; to practice it and to know it (2 Kings 22:11-20; Jer. 6:19).
* In v.4 c, the lies after which their fathers walk is a reference to their idolatry and following after idols that were centers of false hope and trust (Isa. 44:9-20; Jer. 912-16).
* *“Man, without God becomes autonomous which leads inevitably to anarchy in society-both political and ethical. This is exactly what it led to in Judah (read the book of Jeremiah and I1 Kings) just before the awful judgment of God fell by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar”* (Butler).
* In v. 5, fire will come upon Judah and the citadels of Jerusalem will be consumed. God’s wrath will not be avoided.
* **2:6-16– Judgment on Israel**
* The prophet Amos now finally comes around to the main audience of this book: Israel. Israel has enjoyed listening to its neighbors and enemies being called out for their evil and wicked deeds and now their turn has come to experience the wrath of the *“Lion that roars from Zion”* (1:2).
* Israel was located to the north in the *“Divided Kingdom”* and it is repeatedly said of their kings that they did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked after the ways of their father, Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
* Israel was given over to idolatry and immorality of a high order and rejected their true and Sovereign King, Jehovah. Israel as a people, were lost and confused and they practiced evil as God will now state.
* It would seem that the sins ascribed to Israel in 2:6-8 fall under four categories:
  + - **1. Perversion of Justice**
    - **2. Oppression of the poor**
    - **3. Uncleanness**
    - **4. Luxury with Idolatry**
* In v. 6, they *“sell the righteous for money”* and *“the needy for a pair of sandals.”*
* *“Sell the righteous…”* may refer simply to those who were rich and took advantage of others for gain or it may refer to judges that took bribes to condemn the righteous (Lev. 25:39-40; Ex. 22:2-3; Neh. 5:1-13).
* *“The needy for…”* may refer simply to one selling another for little gain or those who took bribes to condemn the poor and needy in the form of a pair of sandals or its value.
* In v. 7, they pant (long eagerly for, prey over) the head of the helpless. They are like animals seeking their prey. Whatever little the helpless have, they desire.
* In v. 7b, they turn aside the way of the humble. They are too focused on their pride and prosperity that their exposure to humility causes them to turn it away. They turn away the poor man, the humble and behave with disdain towards them (Amos 5:12).
* Notice those the innocent that are sinned against in this section are described as *“righteous” “needy” “helpless” “humble”* (vv.6-7).
* In v. 7c, *“a man and his father…”* God speaks of the sexual immorality and uncleanness his people have reverted to *“in order to profane His Holy name.”* *This act of sin is “an open defiance of the law of God”* (Motyer). It is not known for certain if this woman is married to either the father or the son stated in the text but if so, it would be contrary to God’s law (Lev. 18:7-8, 15; 20:11). Others have suggested that this is an idol ritual in which a prostitute (“Naarah” word translated girl of damsel in Hebrew) along with some men committed this act of immorality as a form of worship.
* *“The damsel meant is one of the prostitutes attached to the idol of Astarte's temple: the prostitution being part of her filthy worship. The Canaanite religion thought that the performance of the human actions of procreation could be used to remind the god to fertilize the earth. It is this practice which Amos sees and denounces in Israel. The holy Yahweh is being worshipped as a Canaanite Baal”* (Jamieson).
* The word profane in v.7c, would suggest that this is in fact tied to some form of a religious worship (Deut. 23:17).
* Verse 8 speaks concerning Exodus 25:26-27; Deut. 24:12-13 where a man’s cloak was taken as a pledge. In this case it is not returned and used as a means of committing idolatry and possibly sexual immorality. They drink wine at the expense of those they have oppressed. Israel is living it up in their greed and wickedness.
* In vv. 9-11, God speaks about the great things He has done for His people Israel. It is a rhetorical way to suggest they should have served Him granted all He did for them.
* The emphatic use of the pronoun *“I”* in vv. 9-11 starkly contrasts the actions of the people as described by the demonstratives *“they”* and *“their.”*
* V. 9, *“I destroyed the Amorite…”* The event being referred to here has reference to when God’s people were going to enter the promised land. The Amorites were a people living in the land of Canaan who were strong and mighty and reported by the spies (Num. 12:25-33). They were tall as the cedar trees and strong as oak God says but He overthrew them and gave them such a defeat that they never were really able to recover from (Josh. 10-12).
* V. 10, *“I brought you up…”* The prophets will often state the example of deliverance from bondage of God’s people from Egypt as one of the great acts of God’s mercy and power (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6; 6:12; Neh. 9:8-12; Psa. 136:10-11). It is considered *“The Act of Salvation”* in the Old Testament. God oversaw the wandering in the wilderness (Num. 14:20-45; Deut. 2:7) and brought them to the promised land.
* V. 11 speaks concerning the prophets (Deut. 18:18) among whom were Elijah and Elisha and the Nazarites (Num. 6:1-21; Judg. 13:5; 1 Sam. 1:11; Lk. 1:3-17) that God raised up.
* VV. 12-16 revert back to the disobedient actions of the Israelites and the consequences to come.
* V. 12, where God raised them up, the people sought to bring them down. Rejection of God and His purpose (Isa. 30:10; Amos 7:12-13).
* V.13 is perhaps the most difficult passage in Amos. It may mean that the people are evil and wicked, and God is describing them as heavy burden (Isa. 1:14) or it may be a reference to God judging the people.
* V. 14, There will be no place of escape for the swift of feet and the strong man will become weak and the mighty one will not be able to save his life (Job 11:20; Psa. 33:16). God’s judgment is coming, and it is inescapable.
* V. 15, Failure to him who reaches for the bow, the swift will not be able to run and he who rides the horse will not save his life (Psa. 33:16-17).
* V. 16, ***“In that day”*** This phrase is a cause for fear and trembling and not for celebration (Amos 5 :18-20). Even the bravest men among warriors will flee naked. God is a force to be reckoned with and those who think they are strong and can stand against Him will experience a rude awakening (Jer. 48:41; 51:56).