

Amos 2:1 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:

Amos 2:2 But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, *and* with the sound of the trumpet:

Amos 2:3 And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD.

Moab is the next nation to whom the prophet directs his message from YHWH. It occupies the land area between Ammon and Edom. Moab faces judgment because of her lack of respect for the dead body of the king of Edom. I would assume that the nation merited judgment because of a general national spirit of approval and satisfaction in this act. This is a very thought-provoking judgment. We know that man is made in the image of God and that God alone has the right to end a human's life or to establish the appropriate guidelines by which one can take another's life. One translation assumes that this is a reference to desecration of a grave to accomplish their purpose. It actually makes more sense to me that they burned him alive. The Hebrew can reference the body in general or the bones specifically. Scripture also declares that it is God who sets up kings and takes them down. If my logic is correct, then this would mean that Moab disregarded God's authority on two counts. This would be a major example of the pride of the people of Moab as declared by the prophet Jeremiah.

Jer. 48:29 We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.

Jer. 48:42 And Moab shall be destroyed from *being* a people, because he hath magnified *himself* against the LORD.

I think it is interesting to note that this judgment is a result of actions taken by a Gentile nation against another Gentile nation. It's a clear statement of God's authority over all peoples—not just the Israelites. The wording of Jeremiah 48:42 indicates to me that the people of Moab were acting in direct rejection of the authority of Almighty God.

Kerioth is evidently one of the ruling cities in Moab and was singled out for judgment. It makes me think that those who burned the body of the King of Edom probably came from this city. Point is made, however, that the whole of Moab would be destroyed to the extent that there were no qualified men to rule as judges or princes in the land.

Amos 2:4 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked:

Amos 2:5 But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

The LORD's message is now directed to Judah. Can't you just see the smug looks on the faces of the Israelites, or could there actually be some who recognize that they are the next ones to whom God will direct His attention. Judah's sin is public and in direct rejection of God. They have disregarded God's laws. I think

the NLT has it right regarding the last part of verse 4—They have also “been led astray by the same lies that deceived their ancestors.” I think this is a reference to how they allowed themselves to be seduced by false prophets and lured into idol worship. It’s another verse that declares the importance of the fact that the way we live our life is a major influence on our family. It’s also a statement regarding the responsibility of the individual before the Lord. They may have been subject to the bad example of their parents and grandparents, but they were not ignorant of God’s laws; they made their own choice to reject God’s authority in their life. God’s judgment on Judah seems to be directed toward their physical property. Following false teaching and worshipping idols always directs one’s thinking toward material possessions and away from spiritual treasures.

Amos 2:6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;

Amos 2:7 That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name:

Amos 2:8 And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned *in the house of their god.*

Amos now directs the message of the LORD to Israel. The indictment against them is

- They have sold people into slavery and / or accepted bribes to judge against the righteous and the poor.
Ex. 21:16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

Deut. 1:16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between *every* man and his brother, and the stranger *that is* with him.
- They abused the poor and meek—those who could not defend themselves.
Deut. 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:
- They were immoral in direct defiance of God and His law. This wasn’t just sexual immorality. It was father and son in league with one another in joint defiance of God’s authority. It was complete disregard of the family structure established by God.
Lev. 18:6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedness: I *am* the LORD.
Lev. 18:7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she *is* thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

Some commentators point out that this is in reference to making use of the same temple prostitute as they engaged in the rituals associated with their idol worship.

- They kept garments given in pledge, again in direct defiance of God's law. This would be a reference to garments given in pledge by people who were seeking help; they were needy.
 Ex. 22:26 If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down:
 Ex. 22:27 For that *is* his covering only, it *is* his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I *am* gracious.
- They cheated the people for monetary gain to support their drinking habits.

Amos 2:9 Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

Amos 2:10 Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

Just to put an exclamation point on the wickedness of the people of Israel, God reminds them how He has provided for them in the past. The destruction of the Amorites and their five kings is described in Joshua 10. Their destruction was complete.

Josh. 10:40 So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.

Josh. 10:41 And Joshua smote them from Kadeshbarnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.

Josh. 10:42 And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, **because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.**

He also reminds them of how He delivered them from slavery in Egypt and provided for them through the forty years of wilderness wanderings preceding their taking possession of the land of Canaan. Their history as recorded by Moses makes it clear that it was God's Almighty hand that accomplished their deliverance and that provided for their every need. They could take no personal credit for their achievements.

Amos 2:11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. *Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD.*

Amos 2:12 But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not.

God continues to declare through the prophet how He had been faithful to raise up prophets and Nazarites to provide leadership and deliverance from their enemies. The prophets Samuel, Elijah and Nathan come to mind from their early history, as well as Samson the Nazarite. Those making a Nazarite vow were to abstain from wine or strong drink, to not cut their hair, and to avoid touching anything dead. The Nazarites and prophets had succumbed to the desires of the people and had become wicked and rebellious before God. Instead of providing the righteous, godly leadership that was needed, they chose to tell the people what they wanted to hear—much like the “seeker sensitive” ministries of today. What people *need* to hear from the Lord is not often what they *want* to hear.

[Side note: In my study it was interesting to find out that only 3 men are mentioned in scripture as being Nazarite's for life—Samuel, Samson, and John the Baptist. The Nazarite vow was usually taken for a limited time period of 30-100 days.]

Amos 2:13 Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves.

Amos 2:14 Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself:

Amos 2:15 Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall not deliver *himself*: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself.

Amos 2:16 And *he that is* courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

I think the KJV for verse 13 is confusing; the CJB translation makes much better sense and is supported by every other translation I checked but one.

“Enough! I will make all this crush you, just as a cart overloaded with grain crushes what’s under it.

In other words, their judgment will be in direct proportion to their sin—which is great. Even their fastest, strongest, most skilled and most courageous men will be unable to stand against the enemy. Their defeat is certain. Just as God had fought on their behalf in the past, He would now position Himself against them.