

Amos 1:3–2:16

Nations' Wrath-Deserving Sin Against God

Wednesday, October 9, 2024 • Read Amos 1:3–2:16

Questions from the Scripture text: Who is speaking in v3a? Whose sin is He addressing (v3b)? How many? What won't YHWH turn away (v3c)? Why—what have they done to whom (v3d)? What will YHWH do to whom in response (v4–5)? Who is speaking in v6a? Whose sin is He addressing (v6b)? How many? What won't YHWH turn away (v6c)? Why—what have they done to whom (v6d–e)? What will YHWH do in response (v7–8)? Who is speaking in v9a? Whose sin is He addressing (v11b)? How many? What won't He turn away (v11c)? Why—what have they done to whom (v11d–g)? What will YHWH do in response (v12)? Who is speaking in v13a? Whose sin is He addressing (v13b)? How many? What won't He turn away (v13c)? Why—what have they done to whom (v13d)? To what end (v13e)? What will YHWH do in response (v14–15)? Who is speaking in 2:1a? Whose sin is He addressing (v1b)? How many? What won't He do (v1c)? Why—what have they done to whom (v1d)? What will YHWH do in response (v2–3)? Who is speaking in v4a? Whose sin is He addressing (v4b)? How many? What won't He turn away (v4c)? Why—what have they done to whom (v4d–e)? And what have they done to themselves (v4f–g)? And what will YHWH do in response (v5)? Who is speaking in v6a? Whose sin is He addressing (v6b)? How many? What won't He turn away (v6c)? What have they done to whom in v6d? And what to whom in v6e? And what to whom in v7a? And what to whom in v7b? And what to whom in v7c? And what to Whom in 7d? What are two examples of how they combine false worship and oppression (v8)? What had YHWH done for them (v9, cf. Num 21:21–32; Deu 2:26–3:11)? What else has He done for them (v10)? And what else (v11)? But what have Israel done (v12, cf. Num 6:1–21)? What does the Lord say about them and their sins (v13)? What is He going to prevent in response (v14–15)? And what will happen to whom in Israel (v16)?

What nations are accountable to God for what they do with His law? Amos 1:3–2:16 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **all nations are accountable to God for what they do with His law.**

Amos might have been a popular preacher for a minute. It was common among ancient near eastern peoples to have “prophets” denounce other nations and predict their downfall, especially when their own nation was about to go to war with them. Amos's prophecy isn't connected to any planned military campaign of Jeroboam II that we know of, but he certainly was hitting all of the surrounding rivals with zingers. And when he hit Judah (the southern kingdom) with prophetic denunciation number seven, this surely tickled his northern listeners. As we are reminded by the “for three and for four” repetition throughout (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6), seven is a number of completion, and they were likely to think that this was the climax. But he was setting them up, and the denunciation of Israel would be as long as any three of the others taken together.

These prophecies of judgment are absolutely certain. They are each bookended with “thus says YHWH” (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6) and “says YHWH” (1:5, 8, 15; 2:3, 11, 16), and include the divine declaration of finality “I will not turn away its punishment” (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). The first six address “secular” nations. Of course, the idea of “secular” is exposed as a great fallacy in this passage. Nations are under obligation to the living God. He has always been King over all the nations, and now does so all the more, exercising that reign through the mediatorial kingship of His Christ, the God-Man Who sits upon the throne. If Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab were nationally accountable to God and His law then, how much more is this true of nations now, under the reign of Christ!

We see this emphasized even by the inclusion of “fire” in each of the first seven judgments (1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5). Whatever the other details of how He would bring them down, it would be an expression of the fire of God's wrath. Nations don't fall as coincidences or natural consequences of various power dynamics. They fall because God is furious with them and sends His fire against them. He has established a certain amount of sin that He will tolerate from them in history, and as they approach the end, they are filling up the full measure of their sin (cf. Gen 15:16, Mt 23:32).

This is because nations' sins are against God. That which Syria and Ammon did to Gilead was done to the covenant God of Gilead. That which Philistia, Tyre, and Edom collaborated in doing to Edom's brother (Israel) was done to the covenant God of Edom's brother. But Moab is judged especially for what was done to Edom. Now, Edom was a son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, but the great sin in treating Edom as if he was under Moab's divine wrath was their self-deification and despising God's image in his neighbor.

But the more “Christian” a nation is, the more the guilt of its sin against God is aggravated. Judah is judged for what they did to God's law (2:4). And Israel's great guilt is especially over-against their covenant with God.

God raised up righteous among them, and gave them poor as an opportunity to display the righteousness of the nation in how it cared for them, but these they abused (2:6). Their sexual perversions (v7c) were especially offensive to the holy Name that was upon them (2:7d, cf. 1Co 5:1–2). Their abuse of the poor and condemned was mixed with immorality and drunkenness in worship (v8, cf. 1Ki 21:8–16).

And this was all in the face of great deliverance (2:9–10) and even greater grace (2:11). The holy God had taken from among sinners prophets to put His words in their mouth? He had worked graciously in the hearts of their young people to stir them up to take vows of devotion to Him to spend a season of life concentrated in fellowship with Him in the means of His grace?! Marvelous! And yet, these prophets they had attempted to silence, and these young people they had tried to overturn their zeal for the Lord (2:12).

Readers/users of this devotional are likely among the greatest debtors to God's grace that this world has seen. Whatever the Lord has done for us demands from us love and obedience, consecration and justice. And the guiltiness of our sins against Him is greatly aggravated by all of this grace. And this is corporately true for families and congregations that have been spiritually blessed and nations that have had among them the knowledge of God. Let those who have been shown such mercies take heed!

In the midst of the swelling economic and political/military success of Jeroboam II, Israel must have thought themselves great, like an abundant harvest of sheaves of grain, and the Lord uses this metaphor in v13 to describe them as great—a great burden!

None of their greatness or their great ones would be able to deliver them from the judgment that was coming. The swift, strong, mighty, armed, mounted, and courageous would be stripped of their hope and made to flee in the day of Israel's destruction (v14–16).

What nations or churches do you know of that are filling up the full measure of their sin against God? How does His wrath express itself against them in time/history? Of what greater wrath is this a reminder/indicator? What are some nations that have known and received more grace than others? Some churches? Some families? What grace have you been shown, and how does this make your sin against God worse than others'?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how careless we are about sin and guilt. We have not considered that there is a measure of sin that we might fill up and bring upon our house, our church, or our nation inescapable judgments in time. And while we have looked at those around us and agreed with Your justice and wrath against them, we have forgotten that the greatness of Your grace toward us makes our sins all the more guilty before You. Your justice is sure; it will not be turned back. And Your justice is great; it burns like fire. But like Israel in the time of Amos, we have been lulled to sleep by the comfort of our wealth and power, as if it were safe for us to provoke You to wrath continually.

Thank You for arresting us by Your Word before You, rather than by the breaking into our lives of a display of Your wrath. Forgive us, and make us tender of conscience, so that as those who have been shown so much grace, we would not willfully sin against that grace. And give us more grace until You bring us at last to be sinless altogether like Your Son, who is already our righteousness before You, and in whose Name we ask all of this, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP29 “You Sons of the Gods” or TPH141 “O LORD, to You I Call”

“(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)”

Amos 1, verse 3. Through 2 verse 16. These are God's words. Thus says Yahweh for three transgressions of Damascus and for four, I will not turn away its punishment because they have thrashed Gilead with Implements of iron But I will send a fire into the house of Hezekiel which shall devour the Palaces of bin Haddad but also break the gate bar of Damascus and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Avin.

The one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to cure. Says, Yahweh. That says Yahweh for three transgressions of Gaza, and for four I will not turn away its punishment because they took captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to eat them.

But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, which shall devour. Its palaces, I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashton and the one who holds the scepter from ashkelum. My hand against Akron and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish? Says Lord. Yahweh Thus says Yahweh for three transgressions of Tere and for four I will not turn away its punishment because they delivered up the whole captivity to eat them and did not remember the Covenant of Brotherhood, but I will send a fire upon the wall of tire.

Short of our its palaces. That says Yahweh for three transgressions of Edom. And for four, I will not turn away its punishment. Because he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity. His anger tore perpetually and he kept his wrath forever. But I will send a fire upon to man.

Which shall devour the palace as a bodra? That says, Yahweh for three transgressions of the people of Ammon and for four. I will not turn away its punishment. Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead. That they might enlarge their territory. But I will Kindle a fire.

In the wall of rubber. And in short of our, its palaces, Mid shouting in the day of battle and a tempest in the day of the Whirlwind. Their King shall go into captivity. He and his princes together. Thus says Yahweh for three transgressions of Moab, and for four I will not turn away its punishment.

Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime. But I will send a fire upon Moab. And it shall devour the Palaces of kariat. Moab shall die with two molts with shouting and trumpet sound. And I will cut off the judge from its midst. And slay all its princes with him.

Thus says Yahweh for three transgressions of Judah. And for four, I will not turn away its punishment. Because they have despised the law of Yahweh and have not kept his Commandments. Their lies, lead them astray. Lies which their fathers followed. But I will send a fire upon Judah. Then it shall devour the Palaces.

Of Jerusalem. Thus, as Yahweh. For three transgressions of Israel. And for four, I will not turn away its punishment. Because they sell the righteous for silver. And the poor for a pair of sandals. They pant after the dust of the earth, which is on the head of the poor.

And pervert the way of the humble. A man. And his father, go into the same, girl, to defile. My only name, They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge. And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their God. Yet it was, I who destroyed the Amorite before them?

Whose height was like the height of The Cedars and he was as strong as the Oaks yet. I destroyed his fruit above and its roots beneath Also, as I, who brought you up from the land of Egypt and led you 40 years to the Wilderness to possess the land of the Emorite?

I raised up some of your sons as prophets and some of your young men, as nazarites. It not so you children of Israel says Yahweh. But you gave the nazrites wine to drink. And commanded the prophet saying, do not prophesy. Behold, I am weighed down by you as a cart full of sheaves is laid down.

Therefore, flight Shall Perish from the Swift? The strong shall not strengthen his power, nor shall the mighty deliver himself. He shall not stand. Who handles the bow, the Swift of foot shall not Escape. Nor shall he. Who rides a horse deliver himself. The most courageous men of might Softly naked in that day.

Says, Yahweh.

So far the reading of God's inspired. And Aaron toward, You can hear just reading them all together the pattern that's given here. For three transgressions. And for four that is for a full complement of sinfulness just like the Lord had said about the amorites when he was promising Abram their land and he said it would not be yet because the sin of the amorites was not yet complete and then there would come a day when the sin of the amorites was complete.

And at that point, the Lord. Destroyed the amorites used Israel to do so and gave to Israel that which had belonged to the Emirates that which the Lord had promised. And yet, now, Israel among all these other nations, Has sinned just as the amorites had sent. And there is The completion then of the sin of Israel, there is Behind this repeated for three transgressions.

And for four. There is the principle that the Lord gives Nations. A certain amount of time, a certain amount of sin. That he is tolerated in his Redemptive plan and his bringing Christ into the world in this case or in Bringing the world to Christ in our case. Each nation has its season.

Each Nation has its allotment of sin. And then the Lord comes when the sin is completed. And he destroys it and he doesn't just destroy it by the Historical details of the various sieges and attacks and battles that are described here. But notice that, in every case, he talks about the sending of fire or the kindling of fire, it is the wrath of God.

That is against the Nations as they are destroyed. When our Nations sin has been filled up. And the Lord comes and destroys it. It will be in the fire of his wrath. Now, if there was a prophecy against the United States, like there is here against Syria and the Philistines and tire, and Edom, and Ammon and Moab and Judah and Israel.

It would maybe say something about how Washington would be decimated. The helplessness of the people at the time, Etc. But we don't have that here and yet we do know because of that which is common to all of these destructions. That it will come not just as a Consequence of History.

play Wicked Games, Get Wicked prizes, kind of thing. But then it will come as the intentional personal Wrath of God upon the nation. The. Burns. His fire. Upon Nations, not just upon Judah and Israel. But all the nations have obligation to God. There is There is no other Creator.

There is no other Lord. In whose Providence they have been given their place. And their time, they all have his moral law. They are all obligated to him for it. Notice that this is punishment not just for their sins against God's people, God's covenant to people. Although that is very much in view Syria is judged for what they have done to Gilead.

Philistines are judged for what they did to the Israelites and alliance with Edom. Tire is judged for the same thing. Emma is judged again, for what they did to the people of Gilead on the east side of the Jordan in order to Enlarge their own territory. But notice that Moab is judged for something he did to eat him.

So yes, there are nations here being judged for what they did to God's covenant people because what you do against God's covenant people is against God. That's why God's covenant people are judged for what they have done. Against God. But everyone is made in the image of God. And so, even that, which is done to Edom by Moab is Avenged by God.

Who made Edomites in His Image. And Esau was the son of Isaac and a grandson of Abraham and there is special regard for him. Even though he is not a Believer. But even for the sake, Of his father, and His grandfather. So the Lord Reigns over history. And when we see the sins of the Nations filling themselves up, we must not.

Be shaken or anxious. Or perplexed, as if God has somehow not on his throne, not only now as God on his throne as he ever and always has been But even the God, man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Role as the mediator in his place. As the mediator, has the office of King and sits as king over the Nations. And so remember, That God has already decided in advance. How much the three sins and four is going to be for each country and when that time comes, there's no negotiation.

Notice chapter 1 verse 3. I will not turn away its punishment. Chapter 1 verse six. I will not turn away its punishment. Chapter 1 verse 9. I will not turn away its punishment. Chapter 1, verse 11. I will not turn away. Its punishment to chapter 1 verse 13. I will not turn away its punishment.

Chapter 2 verse 2. I will not turn away its punishment. Chapter 2 verse 4. I will not turn away its punishment. Chapter 2 verse 6. I will not turn away its punishment. And so, there is A line in the sand. Historically speaking. In which God says so far, and no further.

And when the time comes, He destroys him. In his rough.

This is something that when we hear about. Because we are. Not so tender hearted towards God and aware of our own sins and so forth. It's very easy for us to talk about others. And this is what God is doing. You can imagine Amos From the Prophesying these things during the reign of Jeroboam II and the North and Jeroboam, the second is at the height of his power.

There are feeling Really good about themselves in the city of Samaria. Northern Kingdom, which sometimes Called Ephraim using the name of the largest tribe for the whole of the the ten tribes up north and he starts prophesying against Syria. Syria was immediately to the east of the northern kingdom, was their strongest drive on there like, yeah, Syria is gonna be destroyed and he prophesies against the Philistines, the Philistines were immediately to the west of them.

Prophesizing. Its tire was immediately to the north. prophesies against Edom, a little bit, south of Syria. He prophesied against Ammon. A little bit to the east of there. He prophesies Against Moab a little bit to the south of both of them. And they're like, yeah, get them all and then to their sheer Delight in the northern kingdom.

He says in verse 4 of chapter 2 for three transgressions of Judah. And for four, they're like yeah we knew those Southerners were horrible. And then he says, Because they have despised the law of Yahweh. And have not kept his Commandments. And even before we get to verse six, The northern kingdom's in trouble.

Because now, the Lord isn't Just judging for what has been done to. The Covenant people who are in Covenant with God. Or Edomites who are made in the image of God. God is especially judging what has been done? Done to God himself. And Israel are not about to find themselves innocent here.

Says their lies lead them astray. Lies which their fathers followed. I will send a fire upon Judah. And it shall Devour the Palaces of Jerusalem. God would not destroy the line. Of David. The line of Christ. Depending on which end of that line, the beginning or the end of it, you're thinking about But he would destroy their pride.

He would punish them for their sin. And suddenly then, Verse 6. As he's kind of been circling all around them. Hitting the darts all around them, and Like one of those things where the person stands against the wall and the dart never hits, they just hits them right in the middle of them that Bullseye.

Verse six that says, Yahweh for three transgressions. Of Israel. And for four, I will not turn away its punishment. And not only have they broken God's law, but they have attacked those God's law, especially identified with him. Which includes especially the righteous and the poor. They sell the righteous for silver.

A land should treasure the righteous. That it has among the people more. Then it treasures wealth. The United States government should be. More concerned. With preserving faithful churches and protecting Christians. Than with increasing the wealth of the National Treasury. With how much it can collect. And taxes. They saw the righteous for poor and the poor.

Sorry for silver and the poor. For a pair of sandals. They so disregard the image of God and man. That whatever they can obtain. By taking advantage of those who aren't able to. Defend themselves. They do. They pant after the dust of the earth. Which is on the head of the poor.

So they see a dirty poor guy. Is not of. A Noble class and therefore, Is unwashed. We still use That language today, the unwashed masses, they say, Of those who are lower class. And when they see the dirt,

Unconcerned for the person themselves that they think, oh, that could be valuable dirt.

They pervert the way of the humble. When someone has brought, They think nothing of taking advantage of. Dire Straits, they're needy situation. In order to Make a profit off of them. They commit. The most vile sins. Man, and his father go into the same girl. This is the same vile sin.

That was in the church in First Corinthians 5. That they were saying, oh, Grace allows us just to forgive these things. And they were boastful of how they were all about Grace. And anything could be forgiven, without repentance and Corinth, First Corinthians 5 and he says, you are proud, you should be mourning.

You should have known from Amos chapter 2. The kind of Judgment that you're bringing yourself under the wrath of God for You're defiling my Holy Name. He says here. In chapter 2, verse 7. Not only are they committing perversion? By altars of worship and probably flattering themselves that they're worshiping Yahweh that way.

All worship that is according to our own pleasure. Participates in the same Spirit as that which defile defiles. The worship of God, which that which is already morally perverse in itself, even if it wasn't done in worship, And not only that. What are they laying upon in verse 8?

Clothes taken in pledge. The garments of the poor that they had nothing else to offer because they were down literally to the clothes on their back. And when they borrowed the money. To try to eat to try to live. They gave those clothes and pledged and rather than giving it back to them, so that they could take care of themselves during the night, like, they were supposed to According to the law.

They are using them for a little extra padding for Comfort. While they do their wickedness. They drink the wine of The Condemned. In the house of their God. And again. Although God has given to us here and with a lowercase G, this may be This may be a false God not for Yahweh at all.

It may well, however, be that they think they are worshiping the true God As they as they drink the wine in this place but where did they get the wine? Is it the first fruits that they are to bring into the house? No. They got it off of the estate of a guy who has been sentenced to death or maybe has already been executed.

And probably or perhaps, even because of their false testimony. Getting people executed in order to take their stuff. We know, at least. Clear situation. In the northern kingdom. In which this had been the case. Remember with Ahab and Jezebel and Naboth's Vineyard. Naboth was this great Vineyard that the king wanted for his vegetable garden.

And is almost a certainty. That the house of Ahab and the house of Jezebel when they went would drink offerings. To worship Baal and Asherah. That they would have come on one or another occasion. With wine from Naboth's Vineyard the man condemned by the false testimony. To execute him and take his land.

And so, here they are. Not just despising and abusing righteous men and poor men who are identified with God. They are committing the most foul adulteries and idolatries. Against God, it all comes from the same place whenever we look at it. The same. Disregard for God. Whether we're sitting against the first table, or the law of the law, or the second table of the law.

Both come. From a disregard for God himself. And then God puts the question to them. It's not just, don't you remember everything I have done for you. He's highlighting the Amorites themselves. Because, they are the predecessors in the land whose sin was completed? Which is the reason that the Lord destroyed them from before Israel.

And if those Amorites who are so great and powerful were destroyed for such sin, what does Israel think they will get? And so he reminds them when he says Amorite thinks Ivan and OG, that's especially what he's talking about here. He talks about tall as the cedar. And he destroys them from head to toe, or as if.

In the case of the metaphor with a cedar or an oak instead of head to toe, you say, fruit to root in verse 9. It was the Lord who had given them the land. And the Lord had not only given them the land. He had given them the greatest gift of all.

To be especially identified with him. To take some of their own children. These people who had been sinners and he took them to himself, and he gave them to the land and he took some of their own children and made them prophets. Put his word in their mouth. And what do the people say?

Don't prophesy. All of the prophets being opposed. By the people. The Lord gave some of them. To have their young men as Nazirites, those who. In whom the Lord did such a work in their hearts that they wanted to be devoted to God even more than being an Israelite.

That they wanted to make these voluntary vows to devote themselves to God and take the vow of an Nazirite and not touch wine, and not cut their hair, but take this special season of fellowship with God, and meditation upon his word and prayer. What an astounding blessing. When God gives to our young people.

A heart for him. A desire. A seal for the Lord himself. Something we pray for often. For you. Our dear children, and all the young people, of his. And yet the Lord had done, that an occasion. Among the people. And what did they do? They gave them wine to drink, they're like, oh come on, don't be so spiritually fanatical.

You've got to be practical about things, it's okay to have some worldly enjoyment, don't be so spiritual people will think you're odd and you'll make people feel bad or whatever it is. And so they had to disregard it and resist it. Even these great spiritual blessings. That the Lord had given them.

And so they thought they were so wonderful. But had neglected. That it was the Lord. Who is carrying them all along? Verse 13, like a cart upon which the Bountiful Harvest. So many sheaves of grain on this particular Harvest year that the cart that was ordinarily designed to be able to carry the grain.

Was groaning under the weight of it. He says You are not great in yourself. The only reason you have anything. Is because the Lord is carrying you.

And so, he tells them about the

Exile, that's coming. The destruction that's coming. And that none of them not even the strongest or the mighty. Or the courageous or the Swift. Or even someone who's on a horse. We'll be able to be delivered. Because there's no escape from the wrath of God. There's no escape from the chastening of God.

The language of the it's not being used here, but he's repeated it. Throughout the passage.

And all of these things. All of these. Judgments. Of course, Israel's. As long as any three of the others put together, it starts with thus, says Yahweh. And it concludes with says,

This is the word of the Lord that controls all of history. And so, let us let us always be mindful of what our sin is against him, a disregard for him. And that the newer he brings us to himself. The more offensive, our sin is. This all of the sins of all of the nations in this passage were offensive but Israel's here, at least.

in the description given. They are the most, so because they've been against the Lord himself and against his grace. Now, we have been brought near the Lord. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been shown his grace, not just in the membership that we have and the doctrine that we have.

But especially when he's done work in our hearts, and given us to know him and walk with him. How much worse than how much more horrible? As the sin that we commit and we pray and we hope that he never allows us leaves us to ourselves that we would backslide and commit such sin as is described in this passage.

The sin that we commit is against greater Grace. Even then Israel or Judah. Enjoy. And so we must hate it. And we must recoil from it. And love him. Who has been so merciful and gracious to us. Let's pray.

Father, we praise you for your Justice against the Nations and against all evil. And we pray that you would help us. Not to be. Inflated with, when we consider it. But humbled to realize. That our sin. Greater our guilt is aggravated. By how much Grace you have shown us.

Thank you for your patience with us. Help us. To love you. Have mercy on our nation. Which quickly fills up its sin against you. And provokes, the fire of your wrath,

But glorify yourself, we ask by doing justly. In the histories of the Nations.

We thank you and praise you. For your perfect righteousness and Holiness. And for your patience and kindness for your Justice and Vengeance. Grant. Oh God. That we would interact, genuinely with you and remember. That we are before your face. And that though there may be hundreds of years in which people don't seem to be able to see.

What you are doing with the Nations yet? Your eyes are upon them and you are ruling and over ruling. Give us. Hearty certainty. About the sovereignty of your Providence and of your Reign over all things. And especially, even now Christ's Overall things, we ask in his name, Amen.