

**What Happens When the Report Card is Sketchy?
Country Charm Sucks in the Audience
Amos 1:1 – 15**

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Amos, as we learned last week, was happy in his work and enjoyed identifying as a grower and herder. He is one of those guys who would have been happy to do that, go to the Temple three times a year per the law and that be it. But YAHWEH saw him as a man for his time and called him to deliver a message to the Jews living in Israel. God called; Amos obeyed.

As we learned from Amos 1:2, God has a message for Israel, and here is the hint; it is not one they want to hear.

Amos 1:1–2

“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he saw in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. And he said, “The LORD roars from Zion, And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds’ pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up.” (NASB 2020)

Amos tells us the Lord roars, speaking from Jerusalem, not Bethel or Dan, Jeroboam I got that wrong; and the word He has for them causes the pastures to mourn and the top of Mount Carmel in Israel to dry up.

Amos is talking about impending judgment on the nation of Israel. “By the adoption of the first half of the verse word for word from Joel, Amos connects his prophecy with that of his predecessor, not so much

with the intention of confirming the latter, as for the purpose of alarming the sinners who were at eas(e)t (sic) in their security, and overthrowing the delusive notion that the judgment of God would only fall upon the heathen world.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 163-164)

With that, Amos then begins a series of oracles, prophetic words, against eight nations. In order, these nations are Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel.

The first three mentioned are foreign nations, but they are followed by those nations which are blood relatives to the Jewish people. Since the message is to Israel, that blood relative list also includes Judah. Then Israel is mentioned last. This order is intentional and a great rhetorical tool.

The noose gets tighter and tighter until it is firmly around the neck of Israel.

There is another reason for the order here as well. Amos is doing as many of the prophets did, first we get everyone in the crowd nodding up and down in agreement for who the judgement is falling on. Syria immediately gets the crowd in Israel in full agreement with what Amos is saying. Isaiah did this and most famously this was done by the prophet Nathan when he confronted David about his immorality with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. The story Nathan told David had him sucked in with full agreement and he was ready to deal with the evil person, until Nathan said, “David, it’s you (2 Samuel 12:7).” Israel comes last intentionally.

At the beginning of his talk the people would presumably have been pleased to hear his condemnation of the neighboring hostile nations. They may even have been willing to hear judgments against Judah, the southern Jewish kingdom. But at last the net tightens, judgment is pronounced against Israel, and the people probably said, “This man is no longer preaching; he’s meddling in our affairs.” (Boice 2002, 170)

Sovereignty along with surprise is part of the purpose of this text. Israel’s horizons needed expanding. They should have viewed themselves as belonging exclusively to God; instead, they viewed God as belonging exclusively to them. More than once Amos had to shake them from complacency by stirring statements that showed God at work on a larger canvas than Israel had imagined, a canvas that included, for instance, Ethiopians, Philistines and Syrians (9:7). By enlarging the scale of God’s sovereign activities, Amos was showing Israel the might and majesty of the One with whom they had to deal. (Hubbard 1989, 135-136)

As we look at this, we will note that the crimes being referenced are not fully documented for us in the scriptures. If we rely on what God said to Abraham in Genesis, then we see that the crimes being enumerated would have involved mistreatment of God’s people the Jews.

Genesis 12:1–3

“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”” (NRSV)

It is for that failure to bless when the opportunity was there, cursing instead by committing crimes against God’s people, crimes for which judgement is required.

By the way, this word from God to Abraham still applies today too.

During WWII Germany, under the leadership of the Nazi Party, was behind the holocaust. The nation was split into two parts, east and west after the war and remained that way until after the death of the last member of the Nazi ruling party, Rudolf Hess, in August of 1987.

It was two years later, on November 9, 1989, that the Berlin Wall came down and Germany began the path to reunification with East Germany officially being dissolved on October 3, 1990. But not until those who were responsible for the holocaust were gone. God means what He says.

We see that Genesis 12 actions as the initial theme for the nations and most of the blood relatives, but once we get to Judah, there will be a change because Judah and Israel are under a very specific covenant with YAHWEH.

Amos 1:3–5

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they threshed Gilead with iron sledges. So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael, And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad. I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And eliminate every inhabitant from the Valley of Aven, As well as him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will be exiled to Kir,” Says the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Amos begins up north with Syria and the way he states this is to make it clear that Syria is way overdue the judgement of God.

The format Amos uses here will be similar for all the nations. This too is intentional. Let’s be clear about this, we are talking about things which the Lord considers to be sin. The Hebrew word translated offense is the word פְּשָׁעַי (pise) transgression...transgression against individuals...of nation, against nation...against God. (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 833)

The plural noun appears ten times—Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:14; 5:12—and the verb twice, in 4:4. It encompasses crimes of one nation against another, of a nation against God (Amos 2:4), and of the people of Israel against one another (Amos 2:6ff.). (Paul and Cross 1991, 45)

It is all about the sin of each nation against His people. YAHWEH’s courtroom presents a summary of the charges. Events where the nation sinned against God’s people.

The beginning formula for each of these is the same. “First, Amos declared the judgment to come. Second, he defended the judgment by explaining the reason for it. Third, he described the coming judgment.” (Constable 2003, Amos 1:3)

Another element that shows up in all cases is a realization that the judgment being pronounced is irrevocable. We know this from the phrase “I will not revoke its punishment.”

There is also something else in the language here that some in Israel may have picked up on and again it goes back to that Hebrew word, פְּשָׁעַי (pise) transgression...transgression against individuals...of nation, against nation...against God. (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 833)

“The use of this noun suggests that the cities/states addressed are viewed as rebellious subjects who violated the covenant stipulations of their divine king. This is readily apparent in the case of Judah and Israel, who had broken the law of Moses, but what covenantal arrangement with the God of Israel had the surrounding nations violated? Some suggest that the nations had offended the Lord by attacking Israel, but atrocities committed against Israel are specifically mentioned only in the oracles against Damascus and Ammon (1:3, 13).

The Moabite king is denounced for committing crimes against Edom, not Israel (see 2:1). It is more likely that the Noahic mandate, recorded in Genesis 9:5–7, provides the background for the Lord’s indictment. In the mandate to Noah (which applies, by extension, to the entire human race), the Lord prohibited murder because it represents a blatant attack upon the image of God in man. Each of the nations indicted in Amos 1–2 had violated this mandate, at least in principle, by committing atrocities in conjunction with their imperialistic wars against their neighbors.” (Chisholm, Jr. 2002, 381)

Genesis 9:5–7

“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image. Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.” (NLT)

It is what these nations did in addition to the warfare they conducted. God claims His right (Amos 4:13, 5:8) to punish these nations as they have violated what He as the creator had outlined for them as the way to live.

One more thing, the phrase used, “This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Damascus, and for four....” (Amos 1:3a, NASB 2020) means the judgment being announced is based on completed sin. A possible view is “Four and three added together = seven, a complete number...” (Harper 1905, 14)

The first nation to be charged is one that anyone listening to Amos would completely agree with. Syria, also called Damascus or the Arameans, is enemy number one of Israel.

Under the sovereignty of Damascus, the Arameans were a source of considerable trouble for Israel not only in the ninth century, but also during the reign of Jeroboam II at the time of Amos. (Wolff 1977, 153)

Territorial disputes between Israel and Aram often erupted into border wars characterized by terrorist atrocities. Such wars were common during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., not only between Israel and Aram but among the other small nations of the region as well. (Smith and Page 1995, 46)

The atrocities referenced here took place in Gilead.

Gilead is two towns as well as a territory of Israel located east of the Jordan river.

Two towns Jabesh-Gilead in the north and Ramoth-Gilead in the southeast. Gilead stretched from the Golan Heights down towards the Jabbok River on the east side of the Jordan River. It was in the area of Manasseh’s inheritance.

Amos 1:3

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they threshed Gilead with iron sledges.” (NASB 2020)

Normally, a sledge is used in the process of threshing grain. “Grain was threshed by drawing over it a heavy sledge, the boards of which were curved upward at the front and the underside of which was studded with prongs; the use of iron knives, rather than flint-stones, for these prongs in the iron age significantly increased the efficiency of the sledge.” (Wolff 1977, 154)

2 Kings 10:32–33

“In those days the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel. Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the Valley of the Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan.” (ESV)

Amos appears to be referring to this. As the events unfolded, apparently Syria went beyond acceptable warfare standards and committed atrocities, war crimes. The Lord remembers what it is they did at Gilead where it appears sledges were used to torture the citizens of that area. One more example.

2 Kings 13:4–8

“Jehoahaz asked for the LORD’s mercy and the LORD responded favorably, for he saw that Israel was oppressed by the king of Syria. The LORD provided a deliverer for Israel and they were freed from Syria’s power. The Israelites once more lived in security. But they did not repudiate the sinful ways of the family of Jeroboam, who encouraged Israel to sin; they continued in those sins. There was even an Asherah

pole standing in Samaria. Jehoahaz had no army left except for 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers. The king of Syria had destroyed his troops and trampled on them as dust. The rest of the events of Jehoahaz's reign, including all his accomplishments and successes, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel." (NET 2nd ed.)

This took place at the conquest of the Israelitish land to the east of the Jordan by Hazael during the reign of Jehu (2 Kings 10:32, 33, cf. 2 Kings 13:7), when the conquerors acted so cruelly towards the Gileadites, that they even crushed the prisoners to pieces with iron threshing-machines, according to a barbarous war-custom that is met with elsewhere (see at 2 Sam. 12:31). (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 164-165)

YAHWEH is letting the people of Syria know that because they have sinned, nothing is going to stop what is coming their way. Yes, the actions of the leadership on behalf of the people appears to accrue to the entire nation.

For the Jewish people, they had individual responsibility to YAHWEH and, as a nation, jointly had responsibility to YAHWEH. As New Testament believers, we too have individual responsibility for our own sin, yet as a body of believers, the church, we can sin corporately. We see this clearly in Revelation 2 & 3 when Jesus addresses seven churches providing a report card to each one. He calls for the churches to repent of their sin, yet He also addresses individuals in the church who have not participated in the sin of the church.

This is a hard concept for us to deal with in the 21st century west. Oh, and nations sin too.

Proverbs 14:34

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (ESV)

There are national sins in the sense of sins committed by a great part of a nation—sins that shamefully characterize it. (Spence-Jones 1909, 281)

It is difficult to make an unchristian nation behave in a Christian manner. The sermon on the mount was addressed to disciples of Christ (Matt. 5:1). National righteousness will follow national submission to the will of Christ. The reason why the nations snarl at one another like wild beasts is just that the inhabitants of the nations do not yet follow Christ. (Spence-Jones 1909, 281-282)

As believers, we have not been charged to take dominion and create a believing nation, by force if need be. This is not our charge.

Matthew 28:18–20

"Then Jesus came up and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."" (NET 2nd ed.)

Our role is as follows. Make disciples and to be in prayer for those in authority over us. Enabling us to make more disciples.

While in prison, during the rule of Nero, who would later have Paul and Peter murdered, Paul writes.

1 Timothy 2:1–6

"First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people, even for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior, since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one

intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time." (NET 2nd ed.)

From Tertullian, who lived in Carthage between 155 and 220 AD, who wrote this to encourage believers being actively persecuted by the Roman Empire, we read the following.

For, in our case, we pray for the welfare of the emperors to the eternal God, the true God, the living God, whom even the emperors themselves prefer to have propitious to them before all other gods. (Tertullian and Felix 1950, 85)

From Clement, writing in 95 AD under Emperor Domitian, the same one who sent John to Patmos, living in the midst of persecution we read.

You, Master, have given them the power of sovereignty through your majestic and inexpressible might, so that we acknowledging the glory and honor which you have given them, may be subject to them resisting your will in nothing. Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, harmony, and stability, that they may blamelessly administer the government which you have given them. (Clement 1999, 99)

Seriously counterintuitive but wholly and completely in alignment with what Jesus would have us do. Our example today is simple, as believers, we should be in prayer for our president, congress, the governor and all who are in authority over us, even the boss at work.

If the Lord leads you to be involved in politics or in a leadership role, great. But there is accountability to govern or manage as the Lord would have us to.

Amos continues with the national sin of Syria.

Amos 1:4–5

"So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael, And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad. I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And eliminate every inhabitant from the Valley of Aven, As well as him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will be exiled to Kir," Says the LORD." (NASB 2020)

The picture is here is one of the King, visiting judgement on a vassal nation for their revolt. "The attack begins in each case with a fire that would eventually consume the walls and/or fortresses of the city and leave it a smoldering ruin (vv. 4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5)." (Sunukjian 1985, 1429)

They may think they are independent of YAHWEH, but they really are not. He holds them accountable for their actions. Just as He holds unbelievers accountable today.

Note what the fire burns. The fire, or the coming judgement, is going to be on the house of Hazael. This does not mean that his home will burn down, but that normally was the case, but it instead means that there will be no further descendants. The line will be cut off.

Also, the forts, the strongholds used by the military will also be destroyed. Those who were directly involved in the atrocities perpetrated, will be dealt with in this judgment.

The image itself is rooted, of course, in the reality of warfare, in which conflagration accompanies the capture and destruction of enemy cities and citadels (compare, for example, Josh 6:24; 8:8; 11:11; Judg 1:8), as is so often confirmed by archaeological excavations. (Paul and Cross 1991, 49)

For Damascus, YAHWEH states that He will leave Damascus defenseless. He will break the gate bar.

The weakest point in the wall of any city during this time period would be the wooden gates at the entrance to the city. Most of the walls were made of stone, but not the gate to the entrance. In order to

shut the doors, a large piece of wood, a wooden bar, would be placed horizontally across the two doors or the door used to enter the city.

Once the nation has been made defenseless, they will go off into exile. This is described with the removal of everyone to include the ruling family and with them, the scepter or the right to self-rule.

Amos goes further and states that when Syria is judged and the people are taken into exile, you will know this prophecy is fulfilled because Amos tells us where they are taken to.

When Ahaz became the King of Judah, he cut a deal with the Assyrian empire who moved against Syria and Israel eventually capturing and taking both away into exile.

Israel is being told this at a time they are a military and economic power, but that all ends in less than 75 years.

2 Kings 16:9

“The king of Assyria responded favorably to his request; he attacked Damascus and captured it. He deported the people to Kir and executed Rezin.” (NET 2nd ed.)

As Amos relates this prophecy, he is more than likely being cheered. The people of Israel hate the people of Syria. Now they are listening because hearing that the enemy will be punished, is good to hear. Amos is not done. Number 2, another well-loved nation, the Philistine city states.

Amos 1:6–8

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they led into exile an entire population To turn them over to Edom. So I will send fire on the wall of Gaza And it will consume her citadels. I will also eliminate every inhabitant from Ashdod, As well as him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; And I will direct My power against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish,” Says the Lord GOD.” (NASB 2020)

Philistia initially consisted of 5 city states aligned together. We get a list of all five from the time of Samuel.

1 Samuel 6:17–18

“These are the gold sores that the Philistines brought as a guilt offering to the LORD—one for each of the following cities: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The gold mice corresponded in number to all the Philistine cities of the five leaders, from the fortified cities to hamlet villages, to greater Abel, They positioned the ark of the LORD on a rock until this very day in the field of Joshua who was from Beth Shemesh.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The Philistines were not on the Facebook friends list for either Israel or Judah.

The largest town is the one mentioned first, Gaza. Today known as the Gaza strip. They were a consistent and constant threat to both nations. At one point, during the reign of Jehoram, they sided with the enemy moving on Judah.

Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat and became part of the sordid story behind the reason for the locust invasion in Joel. He did not take after his dad, but aligned himself more with his mother-in-law, Jezebel.

2 Chronicles 21:4–6

“Jehoram took control of his father’s kingdom and became powerful. Then he killed all his brothers, as well as some of the officials of Israel. Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. He followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel, just as Ahab’s dynasty had done, for he married Ahab’s daughter. He did evil in the sight of the LORD.” (NET 2nd ed.)

He was bad news and drew the attention of another prophet, Elijah who had this to say about him.

2 Chronicles 21:12–15

“Jehoram received this letter from Elijah the prophet: “This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: ‘You have not followed in the footsteps of your father Jehoshaphat and of King Asa of Judah, but have instead followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel. You encouraged the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem to be unfaithful to the LORD, just as the family of Ahab does in Israel. You also killed your brothers, members of your father’s family, who were better than you. So look, the LORD is about to severely afflict your people, your sons, your wives, and all you own. And you will get a serious, chronic intestinal disease which will cause your intestines to come out.’ ”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Here is where the atrocities committed by the Philistines come in. They took advantage of the weakness of this Judean king and joined together with the Arabs in an attack.

2 Chronicles 21:16–17

“The LORD stirred up against Jehoram the Philistines and the Arabs who lived beside the Cushites. They attacked Judah and swept through it. They carried off everything they found in the royal palace, including his sons and wives. None of his sons was left, except for his youngest, Ahaziah.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Amos 1:6b

“...Because they led into exile an entire population To turn them over to Edom.” (NASB 2020)

That is the pillaging of Jerusalem thanks to the fine leadership of Jehoram who two years later died of an intestinal disease. He was King for only 8 years total.

Edom also hated Judah, so who better to sell the recently acquired slaves from Jerusalem, to include members of the royal family to. We will also find that the merchants at Tyre got involved in the process as well.

The attention is on the violence and the inhuman conduct to which the captives were submitted, and not on the commercial aspect of selling slaves. (de Waard and Smalley 1979, 36)

Some scholars conjecture that the Philistines had a habit of kidnapping whole villages and then selling them into slavery using Tyre or Edom as an intermediary. We do know of the situation in Jerusalem though. It appears they did this, because they could.

The crime is not that soldiers were enslaved after being taken in battle, which was the standard practice, but that the Philistines used their temporary supremacy to enslave whole populations—soldiers and civilians, men and women, adults and children, young and old—for commercial profit. Gaza did not even need the slaves. She merely sold them to Edom for more money. (Boice 2002, 172)

As a result, God says He will remove the rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Askalon and Ekron. What happened to Gath?

Gath is not mentioned, probably because it was not independent in the days of Amos. After Hazael had seized it from the Judeans (2 Kgs 12:18 [17]), it may have been briefly restored to Judean control under Uzziah (2 Chr 26:6). (Wolff 1977, 158)

Judgement is coming.

Amos 1:7–8

““So I will send fire on the wall of Gaza And it will consume her citadels. “I will also eliminate every inhabitant from Ashdod, As well as him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; And I will direct My power against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish,” Says the Lord GOD.” (NASB 2020)

They did not have to wait long to begin to see this fulfilled. First Uzziah, the current King in Judah for Amos, will attack the Philistines.

2 Chronicles 26:6–7

“He went out and made war against the Philistines and broke through the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod, and he built cities in the territory of Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines. God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabians who lived in Gurbaal and against the Meunites.” (ESV)

That was just the beginning. Next would be King Hezekiah.

2 Kings 18:8 “He struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.” (ESV)

Right after that, Philistia was a speed bump for the Assyrians as they moved to deal with King Hezekiah in 701 BC. Removal of the scepter, or ruler from Ashkelon took place. The ruler of Ashkelon, “Šidqa, his family and their family gods were deported to Assyria and his cities and villages were occupied and plundered. His replacement on the throne, Šarru-lū-dâri, was a son of Rukibtu, the man whom Tiglath-Pileser III accepted as ruler of Ashkelon a generation before.” (Mayer 2003, 176)

Sidqia, however, king of Ashkelon, who did not bow to my yoke, I deported and sent to Assyria, his family-gods, himself, his wife, his children, his brothers, all the male descendants of his family. (Pritchard 1969, 287)

The fulfillment completed “during the Maccabean period (169–134 B.C.) when the Philistines passed out of existence.” (Constable 2003, Amos 1:7)

Next is Tyre.

Amos 1:9–10

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they turned an entire population over to Edom And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. “So I will send fire on the wall of Tyre, And it will consume her citadels.”” (NASB 2020)

Just like the people of Philistia who had become slave traders dealing in Jewish slaves, we come to Tyre (Phoenicia) who it appears was also involved in the same activity. This would have been possibly in direct violation of an agreement cut by King Solomon with King Hiram.

1 Kings 5:10–12

“So Hiram supplied the cedars and evergreens Solomon needed, and Solomon supplied Hiram annually with 20,000 cors of wheat as provision for his royal court, as well as 120,000 gallons of pure olive oil. So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he had promised him. And Hiram and Solomon were at peace and made a treaty.” (NET 2nd ed.)

That agreement of brotherhood was breached. The charges refer to that breach. We do not know the specifics though of that breach or if this is the treaty being referred to. We do know such a treaty existed. There is also one other treaty we know of, although it produced serious problems.

Omri, the king of Israel, negotiated an alliance with the Phoenicians and had his son Ahab marry Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the Sidonians. This brought a renewed surge of Baalism to Israel (1 Kings 16:29–33) but had the advantage of producing positive economic conditions with Tyre, which was famous for its merchants and international trade (Ezek. 27–28). (G. V. Smith 1998, 84)

It appears, based on how Amos is presenting the case, that Tyre is deeply involved in the same aspects of the slave trade as the Philistines. They are the middlemen dealing in entire villages, based on what we

see here, and merchandising them. There appears to have been a serious egregious event where both were involved in doing this and sending the enslaved people to Edom.

The charge here is similar to that leveled against the Philistines and yet is still a bit different. The Phoenicians are accused of acting as agents in slave commerce by delivering people to the Edomites. (Paul and Cross 1991, 59)

Tyre may have decided to become involved in the breach of these two contracts because of the purging of Ahab and Jezebel which took place at the hands of Jehu as he came to the throne of Israel.

In the case of Tyre and the Phoenician people, they broke the treaty by raiding villages in nearby Israel and selling all their inhabitants as slaves, in particular to the Edomites. Tyre's sin was far worse than those of other nations because of a long-standing treaty of peace and trade that had existed between Tyre and Israel. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 2008, 80)

The fall of Tyre would have two phases. The first would be at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon.

Ezekiel 26:7

“For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people.’” (NKJV)

Unlike Jerusalem which fell in 18 months, the people of Tyre held out for thirteen years when the Babylonian forces broke through the walls and discovered that the people of Tyre had moved to an island ½ mile offshore. They did not have the boats to press the attack.

Ezekiel 29:17–18

“And it came to pass in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre; every head was made bald, and every shoulder rubbed raw; yet neither he nor his army received wages from Tyre, for the labor which they expended on it.” (NKJV)

That island became Tyre until 332 BC and Alexander the Great. He spent 7 months building a causeway to the island.

“It took all of the rubble of the ancient city, right down to bedrock, to build the causeway to the island. This made the site of Tyre like a smooth table-rock, an ideal place for fishermen to wash and mend their nets and spread them out to dry. This they have done for centuries at the site of Tyre.

After seven months of work, Alexander captured the island fortress of Tyre. Tyre was sacked and savaged. Alexander killed ten thousand of the residents and took thirty thousand captive as slaves. The fortress was left in ruins.” (Schmitt and Laney 2014, 215)

Just like Amos said. Ezekiel too.

Philistia and Tyre were both involved in taking Jews, an entire community, and then providing them as slaves to Edom. Amos has also provided us the preview of the judgment to come.

What about Edom? The people of Edom were blood. The fact that Amos moves to them next is both encouraging for those listening, and somewhat discouraging because now this is not some unknown group of heathens. These are brothers.

Amos 1:11–12

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword And stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever. “So I will send fire upon Teman And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah.”” (NASB 2020)

Amos knows exactly where Edom is. He probably can see it off in the distance to the southeast most days while he is out working. Edom is the nation that are the descendants of Esau, and they despise their brothers and sisters.

Edom is to the east of the Dead Sea and covers the area south including Petra and Bozrah.

It is because of this continuing hatred that God is judging Edom. This is reflected in the language used.

The NET Bible translation makes this much clearer for us to see.

Amos 1:11–12

“This is what the LORD says: “Because Edom has committed three crimes— make that four—I will not revoke my decree of judgment. He chased his brother with a sword; he wiped out his allies. In his anger he tore them apart without stopping to rest; in his fury he relentlessly attacked them. So I will set Teman on fire; fire will consume Bozrah’s fortresses.”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Edom continually waged war on Judah and Israel. Because of that, they were to be judged. The two cities, Teman and Bozrah, would be destroyed.

About Bozrah, judgment did indeed fall upon the city per Amos and it took place at the hands of Jewish troops. The prophecy was fulfilled “in the times of the Maccabees, when Judas Maccabeus took this city, put all the males to the sword, plundered it, and then set fire to it, which literally fulfilled this prophecy, 1 Maccab. 5:28.” (Gill 1810, 483)

1 Maccabees 5:28

“Then Judas and his army quickly turned back by the wilderness road to Bozrah; and he took the town, and killed every male by the edge of the sword; then he seized all its spoils and burned it with fire.” (NRSV)

This predilection towards warfare was not all that unexpected. Remember, Esau gave up his birthright for some stew and then was cheated out of the blessing Isaac intended for him. Instead, it was given to Jacob.

It is in the blessing Isaac gave we see the prophetic word given and realize all we are seeing is the fulfillment of that.

Genesis 27:39–41

“Then his father Isaac answered him: “See, away from the fatness of the earth shall your home be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose, you shall break his yoke from your neck.” Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”” (NRSV)

Isaac predicted Esau would live by the sword and here Amos says “he pursued his brother with the sword.”

Rebekah thought that Esau’s anger towards his brother would be a temporary thing. What we read at the end of verse 11 it says otherwise. “...His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever.” (Amos 1:11b, NASB 2020)

The two cities named as destroyed is a way of saying the entire nation will be judged.

Next, we jump to the northeast and to Ammon.

Amos 1:13–15

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of the sons of Ammon, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their borders. “So I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah, And it will consume her citadels Amid war cries on the day of battle, And amid a storm on the day of tempest. “Their king will go into exile, He and his princes together,” says the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

More about this cousin, next time.

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