

**Family Feud
And the Lightning Round with Real Lightning is Coming Up
Amos 1:13 – 2:11**

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We stopped last time with our review of the oracles being pronounced by Amos on the nations. First, he dealt with those foreign nations who had not been kind to the Jews, and then he moved to the blood relatives. Edom was first on the list, followed by Ammon.

What we will see is the geopolitical ganging up seen today against Israel is nothing new but has roots in the history of Judah and Israel. Satan has one goal for God's chosen people, their destruction. He has the same goal for us as 21st century believers.

Satan uses deceit, lies and murder to achieve his goals of domination.

John 8:43–44

“Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (ESV)

By the way, Satan has already lost the war. He lost because of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We participate with Jesus in spiritual warfare from a position of victory. The outcome is already decided.

There is something else we shall see in what it is Amos has to say in this section of scripture. It has to do with compromise and syncretism in Judah and Israel. Unfortunately, that all translates to our culture and the state of the church in the west today.

The church is the body of Christ and is what He has chosen to change the world. Some parts of the body are a bit sick these days and in need of prayer. Pray for your church and the pastors in your church every day. Satan wants to destroy them, their ministry, and the church. You and I can wield amazing power on their behalf in prayer.

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)

The Bible teaches us that the rescue of Lot from Sodom, prior to the wrath of God falling on the area, is a type of the rapture of the church. Lot is referred to elsewhere in the Bible as righteous (2 Peter 2:7). But Lot also had some issues with his family. His wife looked back at the life she was leaving and was turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26).

His two daughters believed that their daddy was the only man left on earth, so they each took turns getting their dad drunk and engaged in incest with him (Genesis 19:32). Ben-Ammi and Moab were the two sons that resulted.

Ben-ammi means “son of my nation; son of my people; son of my own kindred.” That is a true statement since he is the result of incest. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 35)

The name his descendants took was Ammon. Obviously, a marketer got ahold of them since that name means “great people; son of my people; pertaining to the nation; people of strength. Tribal. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 15)

We see the name still showing up today in the name of the capital of Jordan, Amman.

The crime of Syria involved their choice of using a threshing sledge for humbling (torturing and murdering) the civilian population of Gilead exceeding what would be normal for warfare in that area. It appears that Ammon, who lived south of Gilead, also engaged in extra-curricular activities when they engaged in warfare with Israel in Gilead. Any woman who was pregnant was ripped open ensuring there would be no new generation born to threaten the Ammonites.

Based on what we see in the scriptures, this action was not only done by Ammon, Israel and others also engaged in this war crime (2 Kings 15:16; Hosea 10:14; Isaiah 13:16; Nahum 3:10). The people of Ammon had a notorious habit of inflicting barbaric acts on Gilead.

1 Samuel 11:1–2

“Nahash the Ammonite marched against Jabesh Gilead. All the men of Jabesh Gilead said to Nahash, “Make a treaty with us and we will serve you.” But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, “The only way I will make a treaty with you is if you let me gouge out the right eye of every one of you and in so doing humiliate all Israel!”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Obviously, they became candidates for the cursing promise we learned about last time from Genesis 12:3. When they did this was more than likely at the same time that Syria moved against Gilead and used the threshing sledges. “The Ammonites would naturally make common cause with the Syrians, as they did in the time of David (2 Sam. 10:8), and Hazeel, who was, in fact, accused by Elisha of being

capable of this very crime (2 Kings 8:12), would be just the leader to permit it in his followers.” (Mitchell 1893, 74)

Why did they do this, because they wanted to expand their territory.

Land was valued over the lives of their neighbors. Aside from breaking the covenant with all humankind about not shedding blood (Gen 9:5), it is possible that the Ammonites had a boundary treaty with Israel. A breaking of a boundary treaty was condemned in the Mosaic covenant and throughout the OT (Deut 27:17; Prov 22:28; 23:10; Job 24:2), as well as in the ancient near east in general. (Hoyt 2018, 76)

God saw this cruelty and through Amos, marked Ammon as overly ripe for judgement. The people of Israel, listening to Amos and his oracles, would be cheering by now. God is going to take care of their enemies. This is all good news to them.

To hear that war will come onto Ammon destroying their cities and having all the people and their ruling elites go into exile is truly good news to them. Assyria started this action and Babylon finished it.

Amos 1:14–15

““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)

The ‘day of battle’ comes from human war traditions, but the ‘day of the storm’ tradition indicates that the battle is a confrontation with the power of God. (G. V. Smith 1998, 92)

God’s judgement is coming to the leadership of Ammon. They will be made just as powerless as they made their victims in Gilead. They will be removed and taken into exile leaving the land and the people defenseless. The people of Israel would be giving Amos a standing ovation by now.

They are wondering, what about Moab. That was the brother after all. Some of the audience may remember what the Torah says.

Deuteronomy 23:3–6

“No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever, because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you. You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.” (ESV)

Amos 2:1–3

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime. So I will send fire upon Moab And it will consume the citadels of Kerioth; And Moab will die amid the panic of battle, Amid war cries and the sound of a trumpet. I will also eliminate the judge from her midst And slay all her leaders with him,” says the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Moab means “water of a father; i.e., seed, progeny; desire; progeny of a father; of the father. Waste; nothingness.” The name tells us the problem. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 177)

The people of Moab settled east of the Dead Sea and between Edom to the south and Ammon to the north in what is today part of Jordan. Their crimes against their cousins are numerous and include Balaam encouraging the young ladies of Moab to lead the young men astray with Baal-Peor.

But those fall into the “other” column. What is specifically referenced is how they treated the bones of the king of Edom. The Aramaic Targums provide us a bit more info on this.

Amos 2:1–3

“Thus says the Lord, “For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not forgive them; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom and used them for plaster on his house. So I will send fire upon Moab and it shall destroy the fortresses of the city. And Moab shall die in tumult, amid fanfare and the blast of the trumpet. I will wipe out her judges from her midst and kill all her princes with him”, says the Lord.” (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1990, Amos 2:1-3)

If the phrase is taken as “for the purpose of lime,” then the idea is that the king’s bones were burned to obtain lime in order to plaster something, like a wall or building (cf. Deut 27:2, 4). Either possibility displays callousness and blatant disrespect. (Carroll R. 2020, 171)

So, how does this also involve Genesis 12 since there is no direct reference to God’s people and why Moab?

No record has been preserved of this event in the historical books of the Old Testament; but it was no doubt connected with the war referred to in 2 Kings 3, which Joram of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah waged against the Moabites in company with the king of Edom; so that the Jewish tradition found in Jerome, viz., that after this war the Moabites dug up the bones of the king of Edom from the grave, (sic) and heaped insults upon them by burning them to ashes, is apparently not without foundation.

As Amos in the case of all the other nations has mentioned only crimes that were committed against the covenant nation, the one with which the Moabites are charged must have been in some way associated with either Israel or Judah, that is to say, it must have been committed upon a king of Edom, who was a vassal of Judah, and therefore not very long after this war, since the Edomites shook off their dependence upon Judah in less than ten years from that time (2 Kings 8:20). (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 169)

Moab will be conquered in war, the cities burned, and the ruling elites eliminated. Josephus tells us “on the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was the twenty-third of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, he made an expedition against Celesyria; and when he had possessed himself of it, he made war against the Ammonites and Moabites; and when he had brought all those nations under subjection, he fell upon Egypt, in order to overthrow it; and he slew the king that then reigned, and set up another; and he took those Jews that were there captives, and led them away to Babylon.” (Josephus 1987, Book 10 Chapter 9 Section 7 278)

Moab and Ammon both came to an end at the hand of Babylon in 582 BC.

Amos has been on a roll. The folks at Bethel where he has come to make his proclamations are excited over what has been said. The crowds are growing as this is a prophet who is zapping the bad guys, finally.

Now comes the twist. Judah is referenced and their primary crime, rejecting the law. Wait a minute. Where is this now going?

Amos 2:4–5

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they rejected the Law of the LORD And have not kept His statutes; Their lies also have led them astray, Those which their fathers followed. So I will send fire upon Judah, And it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem.”” (NASB 2020)

This is not all bad news, there has been bad blood in the past between Judah and Israel, but at the current moment, there is peace and prosperity beyond all reason in both nations. What is so bad that Judah is referenced?

Remember, those in Bethel who are listening are rather euphoric about what they have heard so far. Now, Amos, who is from Judah, announces judgment on Judah. This is good news too. This would move the listeners to be comfortable with Amos and in full agreement with the coming judgment. It is all a set up for the coming big finish.

What Judah has done is couched in the same terms as the other nations and punishment is not going to be revoked.

Yes. But the crime being listed should wake them up a bit.

As we examine what Amos has to say about Judah, we can also hear him talking, at the same time, about many churches in our culture today. Much of this was already happening pre-covid and in fact have roots reaching back to the 19th century. Post-covid, it has accelerated showing up as church closings, apostasy, cultural churchianity, Biblical illiteracy and the loss of a Biblical worldview. Many churches in our culture today are in a mad dash to emulate the churches of Thyatira and Laodicea. Compromise and spiritual malaise is not what the Lord wants for His body today. Researcher George Barna has concluded the following based on 2022 data.

First the relatively good news. 75% of pastors who are in independent or non-denominational churches hold a Biblical worldview. Being a Calvary Chapel, in other words, nondenominational and independent, that is good to hear. But everything moves south and quickly from that point.

Per Dr. Barna.

“Among non-denominational and independent Protestant churches, three-quarters or more of those pastors held 12 biblical views, while between half to three-quarters of the pastors from those churches embraced a biblical perspective on the other five beliefs in question.”

“We know that just 37% of pastors have a biblical worldview, and that the dominant worldview among pastors is syncretism,” he noted. “As our survey demonstrates, large numbers of pastors have abandoned even the most basic and hallowed biblical teachings for ideas that now permeate our culture.” Barna continued, “Because pastors teach what they believe, many churches are becoming centers of syncretism and secular thought. Perhaps without even realizing it, thousands of pastors have become leaders of a movement away from God, toward narcissism.”

“With so many churches and their pastors in the culture’s grip, rather than fervently committed to serving God and teaching His word,” Barna stated, “you can clearly see why most church-going Christians are being more influenced by the culture than the culture is being influenced by America’s Christians.”

“To see American culture transformed,” he concluded, “will require a time of Christians and pastors devoted to repentance and the scriptures unlike anything we have seen in more than a century. And until that happens, there is little hope of America becoming a godly, Bible-friendly nation once again.” (Barna 2022)

With that in the back of our mind, let’s see what Amos has to say about Judah. Part of God’s people.

Amos 2:4b

“...Because they rejected the Law of the LORD And have not kept His statutes; Their lies also have led them astray, Those which their fathers followed.” (NASB 2020)

Judah has rejected the law of God. This is a rejection of allowing YAHWEH to be the Lord of the nation. This is ingratitude of the highest degree. They were saved from Egypt and rescued by YAHWEH. He led them through the wilderness and into the promised land. He has loved them, disciplined them, restored them only to be thoroughly rejected by them. God is not on the throne, they are.

This shows up today in the removal of the Bible as the source of truth. The undermining of this started in the 19th century with a bunch of dead German theologians. It was a deep concern of R. A. Torrey and others around 1909 and he became part of a group that published a twelve-volume set of books reduced eventually to a four-volume set called The Fundamentals.

The twelve-volume set was sent, free of charge, to over 300,000 involved in ministry throughout the world. It is still available today. The term Fundamentalist grew from this set.

R. A. Torrey tells us some background. "In 1909 God moved two Christian laymen to set aside a large sum of money for issuing twelve volumes that would set forth the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and which were to be sent free to ministers of the gospel, missionaries, Sunday School superintendents, and others engaged in aggressive Christian work throughout the English speaking world." (Torrey 2005, 5)

This was done with idea in mind of revival in the church and stopping the influx of aberrant doctrines.

The attack began on God's word, and it has expanded since. Once you have removed the truth of God's word, just as Judah had removed God's law, then other things begin to replace that truth. For Judah, they moved away from His decrees and ordinances.

They do not keep His decrees. Judah has not only rejected God's law for them, but they have rejected all His word. They would prefer to worship God on their terms rather than His. The people of Judah had embarked on a process of intentionally turning away from God's will for their life. They had intentionally turned away from His word.

In 1909, this was already a problem. The Dean of Moody Bible Institute writes that "God caused every word in the Bible, true or false, to be recorded, the answer should be yes. There are words of Satan in the Bible, words of false prophets, words of the enemies of Christ, and yet they are God's words, not in the sense that He uttered them, but that He caused them to be recorded, infallibly and inerrantly recorded, for our profit. In this sense the Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, it is the Word of God." (Gray 2005, 12)

They have lied to themselves about the law of God and about His word and His ordinance. This is a multigenerational problem. The lies they are telling themselves about YAHWEH and His word are those which their fathers followed. This is deep seeded apostasy showing up in Judah and Amos is laying it out for examination by us.

How are the lies expressed, some say via idolatry, or false prophets.

Just as we see today evidence that much of the church has already moved away from the fundamentals of the faith, Judah experienced the same. Progressive Judaism isn't and the same goes for Progressive Christianity.

Instead of holding to His objective truth, they let themselves be led astray by the same false gods which had deceived many of their ancestors. The word for false god is *kāzāb*, "a lie or something deceptive." The idols were deceptive for they were unable to help the people. (Sunukjian 1985, 1430-1431)

Because Judah places more value on worshipping the way they want to and, in the manner, they want, in other words, the practice of idolatry, they are to be judged. Listening to false prophets who affirm ungodly lifestyles is not worship. For today, listening to false teachers affirming sinful lifestyles and avoiding teaching the truth of the word is also not worship. Discernment is required today. That is not knowing the

difference between right and wrong but knowing the difference between almost right and right. Too many not only love the sinner but accept the sin as well.

2 Peter 2:1–2

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.” (NKJV)

Amos 2:5

“So I will send fire upon Judah, And it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem.” (NASB 2020)
This would be fulfilled, literally.

Jeremiah 52:12–13

“In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king’s house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.” (ESV)

The people in Bethel, listening to Amos, would not be in objection to what he has said to this point, but when he started talking about Judah, they may have begun to wonder a bit. A surprise is coming.

Amos is still speaking; He is in the King’s personal chapel in Bethel and so far, the message has been attractive to the people and the ruling elite. “Amos is getting closer to home. He’s going to start meddling.” (McGee 1997, 690)

Up to this point, Amos has been simply warming up, now he is presenting the message he went to Israel to present.

Amos 2:6–8

“This is what the LORD says: “For three offenses of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke its punishment, Because they sell the righteous for money, And the needy for a pair of sandals. These who trample the head of the helpless to the dust of the earth Also divert the way of the humble; And a man and his father resort to the same girl So as to profane My holy name. And on garments seized as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.” (NASB 2020)

The rhetorical advantage of surprise heightens the dramatic effect of the conclusion and burns the word of God deep into the listener’s conscience. Israel is not only guilty of inhumanity like the ungodly nations, it treats its very own people with the same disrespect and barbarity that the nations save for foreigners. Because of their transgressions, they too will suffer destruction. (G. V. Smith 1998, 102)

God is sovereign. He is King over all of the nations, Gentile and Jewish, as He has just demonstrated. Now He has a word for Israel and the format has not changed, the length has though. “What are condemned are not crimes against other peoples but violations against its own population.” (Carroll R. 2020, 182)

What is it like in Israel?

A royal military bureaucracy ruled Israel at this time. As this bureaucracy expanded, it acquired more and more land and gradually commandeered the economy and legal system. At various administrative levels, it invited bribery and other dishonest practices. The common people outside the administrative centers, through confiscatory taxation, conscription, excessive interest rates, and other oppressive measures, were gradually disenfranchised and lost their landed property and, with it, their means of survival and their rights as citizens. (Chisholm, Jr. 2002, 385)

On the outside looking in, it looked prosperous, but once inside, the culture had multiple losers and one specific set of winners, the ruling elite.

In the formation of the breakaway state of Israel, the Torah was disregarded, and Jeroboam I instituted idolatry disguised as YAHWEH worship as the state religion. He kicked out all the Levites and used those non-Levites he wished to curry favor with as priests. All in clear violation of God's law. Because of that, the crimes to be listed are those which are clear violations of the Mosaic covenant.

Amos 2:6b

"...Because they sell the righteous for money, And the needy for a pair of sandals." (NASB 2020)

Crime number one involved social injustice. Anyone who could not repay their debts was sold into slavery. These were honest people who had every intent of repaying, instead, they appear to have been foreclosed shortly after obtaining the loan and sold off. This is counter to some of the bad theology going around which even prevailed into the time of Jesus. Those who are rich are blessed of God and those who are poor are obviously sinners. Amos just shot a hole in that theory.

Jesus did the same. When He told the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the beggar Lazarus was the one who was righteous, and the rich man was the sinner condemned to sheol (Luke 16:23). Some reversed that picture as well based on Amos.

We tend to believe some of the same myths today. There are those who believe you cannot possibly be Godly unless you are poor or have given everything away. They would also teach that money is evil. The Bible teaches the love of money is evil but is ambivalent otherwise.

Neither poverty nor wealth is in itself good or bad, but there is an inevitable tendency in the Bible to associate wealth with the wicked and poverty with the pious in spite of opposite traditions from earliest times, which saw wealth as a sign of divine favor (blessing) and destitution as a mark of divine disapproval (curse). This ambivalence to wealth as a mark of either wickedness or virtue, and poverty as a sign of punishment or righteousness, is present throughout the biblical materials. (Anderson and Freedman 2008, 310)

For instance, among evangelical pastors, about four out of every 10 (43%) do not believe that the personal accumulation of wealth is provided by God in order for the individual to manage those resources for God's purposes. (Barna 2022)

Here in Amos, the problem is the rich became that way on the backs of those who they were selling into slavery. This abuse did not end with only those who could repay, but also victimized the destitute.

The emphasis being that in exchange to giving someone a pair of sandals, they would then sell that person into slavery pocketing the money from the sale. With these two practices taking place, the ruling elite would obtain property from those who they foreclosed on, they would obtain money in excess of their initial investment from the slave market transactions, and then the destitute sale was simply nothing more than a cash opportunity for them.

All of this in violation of Torah. They are busy economically oppressing their own people. Brothers and sisters.

Amos "indictment is leveled, on the one hand, against the sale of individuals who were personally innocent and, on the other hand, against the sale of needy persons who had only incurred debt for some minor necessity of life." (Wolff 1977, 165)

We see this form of economic oppression taking place today in our culture today in various forms.

For example, raising prices beyond what is reasonable in order to make a larger profit on items everyone needs such as food or fuel. It may also show up in the form of taxes being levied and the proceeds then used to pay someone else's debt or provide those unwilling to work a source of income.

Economic oppression is also seen in the incessant efforts being taken by lending institutions to basically encourage you into debt by using shrewd marketing ploys to show you the advantages of having the cash or the item right now will be. You can pay this off over time, and then hits the oppressive 18% to 24% interest rates.

Amos 2:7

"These who trample the head of the helpless to the dust of the earth Also divert the way of the humble; And a man and his father resort to the same girl So as to profane My holy name." (NASB 2020)

From the Aramaic Targum

Amos 2:7

"They trample the heads of the poor into the dust of the earth and pervert the cause of the needy. A man and his father go to the same girl in order to profane my holy name." (Cathcart, Maher and McNamara 1990, Amos 2:7)

Not only are the ruling elite of Israel selling folks into slavery in order to line their own pockets and take their land, but they are also oppressing the poor who do not have the resources for them to steal. The oppression takes the form of a denial of justice. In other words, the courts are stacked against the average person ever receiving justice.

The abuse and oppression taking place in Israel and how severe it had become is seen in 2 Kings 4.

2 Kings 4:1-7

"Now a wife of one of the prophets appealed to Elisha for help, saying, "Your servant, my husband is dead. You know that your servant was a loyal follower of the LORD. Now the creditor is coming to take away my two boys to be his servants." Elisha said to her, "What can I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" She answered, "Your servant has nothing in the house except a small jar of olive oil." He said, "Go and ask all your neighbors for empty containers. Get as many as you can. Go and close the door behind you and your sons. Pour the olive oil into all the containers; set aside each one when you have filled it." So she left him and closed the door behind her and her sons. As they were bringing the containers to her, she was pouring the olive oil. When the containers were full, she said to one of her sons, "Bring me another container." But he answered her, "There are no more." Then the olive oil stopped flowing. She went and told the prophet. He said, "Go, sell the olive oil. Repay your creditor, and then you and your sons can live off the rest of the profit." (NET 2nd ed.)

Then we learn of where the idolatry has led to. Recall that Israel has already gone through it's love affair with Baal. Fertility gods are now part of the state worship.

This is no different than what we saw in our study of Hosea. The worship centers in Israel made use of temple prostitutes, both male and female. In this worship center, "a father and son going to the same harlot, or the same young wife, or a girl (the article being generic), i.e. one of the temple prostitutes who were in the service of Baal and Astarte, and plied their business near the altars and temples (cf. Gn. 38:21, 22; Dt. 23:17; 1 K. 14:24); or a servant taken as a concubine (Ex. 21:8, 9, cf. Ez. 22:11; Lv. 18:8, 15)." (Harper 1905, 51)

Two verses in and the listeners in Bethel have moved from in favor of what was being said to surprise and then anger as now it is all about Israel and their sin.

By this action, they were treating YAHWEH's name as common, profaning His name.

Crimes so far, selling debtors and the poor into slavery reflecting a hard heart towards their own brothers. Second, they were denying justice to the poor with the courts colluding with creditors. Third was the issue of wanton promiscuity. Now we come to loan practices.

Amos 2:8

“And on garments seized as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.” (NASB 2020)

The law was clear regarding what could and could not be taken as collateral for a loan.

The cloak of a poor man was not to be kept as a pledge overnight (Ex. 22:26–27; Deut. 24:10–13; also note Job 22:6); a widow’s garment could not be taken in pledge at all (Deut. 24:17). Yet the people openly and flagrantly were lying down with the forbidden garments, going so far in their contempt for the Law as to spread them at the sacrificial feasts by every altar (cf. 1 Sam. 9:12–13). (Sunukjian 1985, 1431)

And their fifth crime, idolatry. They were taking those foods and wines which they had extorted from those they were oppressing and using and were using the items taken as collateral to lay out and have a picnic at the altar of their fertility gods. “The prophet vividly portrays those who mercilessly take what they should not and then flaunt their gain by lying down on the clothing of the needy as trophies of their impunity.” (Carroll R. 2020, 191)

The phrase “...And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.” (Amos 2:8b, NASB 2020) has another possible meaning as well. This could be an indictment levied against the leadership of the nation. It involves the misappropriation of fines and taxes redirecting those funds to their own pockets and those of their supporters to enjoy as they see fit.

Wine bought with money received from exacting fines from the poor. It is impossible to know whether these fines were legal or not and whether the parties were actually guilty. Whatever the case, fines are not to be exacted in order to allow the wealthy to indulge their appetites, feasting and drinking by the shrines. (Paul and Cross 1991, 86-87)

And with that, Amos pauses in his description of the violations of the law being engaged in by Israel.

If these sound familiar, they should, Hosea dealt with the same practices. In term of chronology, the ministry of Hosea is yet to take place in the future.

Now the conversation will shift from an indictment, to what it is that YAHWEH has done to establish Israel. This is done to show all who are hearing this just how justified He is in taking action against the nation. This is also done to show the stark contrast with a nation who is currently oppressing the poor and economically oppressing their own people through unjust fines and taxes to simply use the funds on themselves.

Amos 2:9–11

“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Though his height was like the height of cedars And he was as strong as the oaks; I also destroyed his fruit above and his roots below. And it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you in the wilderness for forty years So that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite. Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets, And some of your young men to be Nazirites. Is this not so, you sons of Israel?” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Amos takes us back to the last days of Moses and the work done by Joshua.

We learn something about the Amorites here. This was the name given to those who were kicked out of the land by Israel when the Jews entered the land under Joshua’s leadership. The land had an obvious gene pool problem caused by the same kind of foolishness that took place in Genesis 6. There were not just a few giants, but it sounds like it was more pervasive than we would consider.

The use of this term is fully intended to take the listeners back to Genesis 6. The intent is also to recall the reason why 40 years in the wilderness.

Numbers 13:32–14:4

“So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.” Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”” (ESV)

As a result of the rebellion and lack of faith, the people wandered around the wilderness until an entire generation died off. But we tend to overlook a statement made by the spies and assume it is hyperbole. Giants? Really. I thought they all died in the flood. They did. The Jewish scriptures tell us the story.

Genesis 6:4

“It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim appeared on earth—when the divine beings cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.” (Jewish Publication Society 1985, Genesis 6:4)

The later too was after the flood. Another group of fallen divine beings came down and cohabited with women in and around Canaan. That is one of the reasons the men of Sodom reacted as they did when they saw two angels come to town.

The “when” in the verse could be translated “whenever,” thereby suggesting a repetition of these pre-Flood events after the Flood. In other words, since Genesis 6:4 points forward to the later giant clans, the phrasing could suggest that other sons of God fathered more Nephilim after the Flood. As a result, there would be no survival of original Nephilim, and so the post-Flood dilemma would be resolved. A later appearance of other Nephilim occurred by the same means as before the Flood. (Heiser 2017, 21)

Numbers 13:32b

“...and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.” (ESV)

Based on what Amos is telling us, there is a whole lot more truth to that statement than we would normally apply to it. Satan had 400 years to lay a “giant” minefield for the Jews. At first, they panicked, but after that generation was gone, so was the lack of faith.

There is a reason why the Lord commanded the people to kill everyone in certain communities. There was an apparent gene pool problem that had been developing in the promised land.

“Canaanites” and “Amorites” were therefore generic terms used to describe the enemies of Israel. Of the two, “Amorites” takes on a more sinister tone in the context of the Babylonian polemic that precedes this point in Israel’s story. Tarring and feathering the inhabitants of Canaan with a label that would take an Israelite reader back to supernatural disasters of Genesis 6 and 11 would have a profound theological effect. But the connection is actually more direct than rhetoric. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 197)

These hybrid beings had multiple names as we can see in the scriptures and in local area literature. Anakim, Nephilim, Rephaim, Sons of Anak, Amorite, Canaanite, or Apkallu.

The Lord, speaking to Israel, is going to remind them of a few things and show them graphically where the origins of their rebellion are actually from.

More on this next time.

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