

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?

Session 1A: A Prophet Entraps His Audience (Amos 1:1-2:16)

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm and his teaching on the Book of Amos. Amos, the lion has roared, who will fear? Session 1 (A), The Prophet Entraps His Audience (Amos 1:1-2:16).

Welcome to our study of the Book of Amos. His name is pronounced Amos in Hebrew, but we're going to call him Amos. We're going to anglicize it.

Amos is one of the minor prophets, or what we sometimes call the twelve, because there are 12 of them, and Amos is the third one in. You've got Hosea, Joel, and Amos, so it shouldn't be too hard to find in your Bible. We're going to do a brief introduction to the Book of Amos, and then we're going to dive in, and I'm going to approach the text verse by verse, section by section.

We're going to go straight through. We'll stop along the way and summarize some important principles that emerge from the text that we're studying. But let's read the introduction to the book, chapter 1, verse 1. We read, I'm going to be reading from the NIV 2011 edition.

The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa, the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel. We're going to stop there and talk about the heading. So, Amos prophesied during the time of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam, and this is Jeroboam the second.

You might recall that there was a King Jeroboam who became the first king of the northern kingdom, Israel, back around 930, but that's Jeroboam the first. We are much later than that. This king has the name Jeroboam, and so historians refer to him as Jeroboam II, and he was ruling over the northern kingdom, Israel.

You will recall that when the country split back in 930, we had Israel in the north, Judah in the south. Well, Uzziah had a long co-regency with his father Amaziah, but he ruled independently over Judah from 767 to 740 BC. Jeroboam II was also a co-regent for a time.

He was an independent ruler over Israel from 782 to 753. So, we're looking for a window where both of them were independent rulers, and that would be 767 to 753. And so, we believe that Amos had his ministry during that period.

Now the heading also tells us that it was Amos who prophesied in the northern kingdom two years before the earthquake. This was a particularly well-known earthquake. There is archaeological evidence for it at Hazor, and so I think we can come up with an estimate of maybe 760 for that earthquake.

And so, Amos came along and prophesied a couple of years before that, and that's important information, as we will explain. So, in 760 BC, the Assyrians were not a major factor at this point. You will remember that in the 800s, in the 9th century, the Assyrians established their empire all the way over to the Mediterranean Sea. They conquered Israel and Judah, and they paid tribute to the Assyrian rulers.

But Assyria is not flourishing during this time. In fact, this is the time period in which Jonah visited Nineveh. That's all going to change in 745 BC.

Tiglath-Pileser, the third king of Assyria, is going to re-establish Assyrian power in the West, all the way over to the Mediterranean. The Assyrians are going to become a major factor, and Amos is really predicting that in his prophecy. He's coming along and saying, trouble is coming, judgment is coming, because Judah and Israel are actually flourishing during this time period. Things are going relatively well for them.

So that's the time period that we're talking about, but we also need to talk about the fact that this heading has special significance in a variety of ways. It's not just information about when the prophet ministered. It tells us that Amos is not a prophet by profession.

He is a herdsman, and we're going to discover in Chapter 7 that he was also a vinedresser. Sometimes these herdsmen would do other agricultural tasks, and so he's a herdsman, not a professional prophet. In fact, he's going to say in Chapter 7 that he's not a prophet or the son of a prophet.

So, he's kind of a layman, and the Lord calls him, and he's also from Tekoa. Tekoa is south of Jerusalem, and it's just a few miles south of Bethlehem, so he's from Judah, and he's crossing the border and coming up into the Northern Kingdom and ministering and prophesying about judgment upon the Northern Kingdom. This is not going to be a popular message.

The crown is going to be upset with him, and in Chapter 7, we're going to read about an encounter that he has with the priest of Bethel, and the priest pretty much says, You need to get lost. You need to leave. So, I think by telling us this, that he's a shepherd and he is from Tekoa, the text is making the point that this man has to be called from the Lord by the Lord, because who in their right mind would do something like this on their own? So, it kind of testifies to his authority and his calling as a prophet.

The earthquake is important because in this culture, in the Near Eastern world at this time, an earthquake would not have been viewed as a mere natural occurrence. No way, because they believe that the gods were kind of hands-on in the world, and things that happen came from the divine realm. The divine realm and the human realm are interlocked, and so they would not view it as simply a natural occurrence; it would be an omen of judgment.

And as we read through Amos, we'll see, especially when we get to chapters 8 and 9, that Amos says the Lord is going to come and shake the earth. And often in the Old Testament, when the Lord comes in what we call a theophany, when there's a divine appearance of the Lord, when he comes for judgment, to do battle, there's an earth-shaking motif that goes with that. And so, Amos says the Lord is going to shake the earth.

So, you've just heard Amos preaching, and he says the Lord is going to shake the earth, and two years later, maybe after he's gone back home, the Lord shakes the earth. There is a major earthquake, so major that they're still referring to it as the earthquake. And so that confirms Amos's message.

He announced that the Lord would do this, and the Lord did. And it's so, when that earthquake comes, it's kind of a signal that the Lord is on the move, and he is ready to bring judgment upon the people. This gets reinforced in verse 2. So, let's read verse 2. He said, The Lord roars from Zion.

And that's a verb that's often used of lions. In fact, in chapter 3, Amos is going to refer to the Lord as a lion roaring. So, the Lord roars from Zion.

Zion. It's another name. It's a poetic name for Jerusalem.

So, Amos is making it clear that the Lord is in Jerusalem, not in the northern kingdom, in one of their shrines. The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem. He actually uses Jerusalem in parallelism with Zion.

And the Lord gives his voice, literally, which is an idiom for thundering. So, he's roaring, he's thundering, he's coming as a warrior to do battle and bring judgment. And notice the result.

The pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers. And so, as the Lord comes as a warrior, the pasture lands, the well-wooded regions like Carmel, are just going to dry up. There's going to be a drought.

This imagery is important because, as we read the prophets, we need to realize that they are very much aware of what Moses said in the law. A lot of people today view

the prophets as innovators who come along, and they're contrary to the law. They'll put the law after the prophets.

Well, that's wrong. You're going to hear that in a university setting very, very often, but it's not the case. The prophets come as messengers from the covenant Lord, and they are very familiar with what Moses said.

In fact, in their judgment speeches, they will accuse the people of breaking the law. There are scholars who have correlated the judgment speeches of the prophets with Deuteronomy and the law, and you can see the correlation. Also, when it comes to judgment, the prophets, when they announce various forms of judgment upon the people, like drought, famine, loss of children, and ultimately exile, they're drawing on what we call the covenant curses, the threatened judgments that are in Leviticus 26 and also Deuteronomy 28.

And if you go to Deuteronomy 28 verses 23 and 24, we won't take the time to do that right now, but you can go to Deuteronomy 28, 23, and 24, you'll see that drought is a signal that you are under a curse, that God's judgment is coming upon you. And so, what we see here in Amos, Amos is announcing that the people have broken God's law, and they are going to experience the covenant curses that Moses threatened. So those first couple of verses are very, very important.

In my outline of Amos, I call this next section that we are embarking on as a prophet entraps his audience, and that's really going to begin with verse 3, chapter 1, verse 3. After the heading and the initial statement, a lion is roaring from Jerusalem, he's thundering from Zion, and the whole world is going to wither as a result of that. Now he's going to get into specific judgments upon specific nations. And so I've outlined this next section as outright foreigners go up in smoke, chapter 1, verses 3 through 10.

I'll explain what I mean by outright foreigners here in a distant relatives go up in smoke, chapter 1 verse 11 through chapter 2 verse 3. And then a brother goes up in smoke, chapter 2, verses 4 and 5. And then finally in chapter 2 verses 6 through 16, zeroing in on the primary target. So, let's kind of look at the forest first, the big picture of what's happening here, and then we'll go into each of these judgment oracles in more detail, because they're very fascinating. And so, let's think this through.

We need to know a little bit about the background. We discover this in Amos chapter 5, but it's important to know as you begin to read the book. The people of the northern kingdom, Israel, and remember that's Amos' primary target group.

He's traveled from Judah up to the northern kingdom, and that's where he's going to get in trouble with the authorities up there and the king. But the people of the

northern kingdom had experienced some prosperity under their king, and Jonah had actually prophesied this in 2nd Kings. You didn't know that Jonah was mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

He is in 2nd Kings 14, and Jeroboam the second, and Israel had experienced some prosperity. And they were anticipating the soon arrival of what they called the Day of the Lord. What's the Day of the Lord? We tend to think of the Lord's Day as Sunday when we worship.

That's not what it is in the Old Testament. The Day of the Lord is actually an idiom. A scholar by the name of Douglas Stewart, I think, established this very well in a study that he did 50 years ago.

It's rooted in the ancient Near East, where a mighty warrior king would have his day. He would talk about his day, and his day was when he came as a warrior, and he defeated the enemy swiftly and decisively, maybe even in a single day, which could be done in this context, the way they fought battles. You meet, you fight, and it could be over in a day.

But he brings an end to an entire campaign in a single day. The Old Testament picks up on that imagery, and talks about the Day of the Lord. And so if you study where it's used in the Old Testament, the Day of the Lord can be any time, and sometimes it refers to historical events that have already occurred.

Other times, it's what we call eschatological. It's kind of moving in an eschatological direction. It's talking about a culminating Day of the Lord, and that's what we tend to think of when we read about it in the New Testament.

It's a culminating Day of the Lord, and often the historical days of the Lord foreshadow the culminating Day of the Lord. But they're expecting the Day of the Lord. For them, that means the Lord is going to intervene on our behalf, and he's going to defeat all of our enemies, roundabout.

We got enemies, and the Lord is going to give us victory on the battlefield. He is going to give us security. So the Day of the Lord is coming, and it's going to be a day of light.

It's going to be a day of salvation and renewed life. That's what they were expecting, and that becomes apparent in chapter 5. We'll talk about a little more when we get there. They were expecting a glorious day when the Lord would defeat the surrounding nations, and so Amos starts out as if he is giving a message to the Northern Kingdom.

So think of this. He arrives in the Northern Kingdom, and let's assume that this is the first message he delivers. They're going to be cheering.

They're going to be cheering because he starts with judgment on outright foreigners. He talks about judgment that's coming upon the Arameans, which today we refer to as Syria, to the northeast of the Northern Kingdom. And if you recall your history from reading through Kings, the Arameans and the Israelites have battles, and they're enemies for the most part.

And so the Arameans are going to be defeated and judged by God. And then the Philistines. Nobody likes the Philistines, and they're down there in kind of that southwest corner on the border of the Northern Kingdom.

They're going to be judged, and he mentions four of their five major cities as coming under God's judgment. And hey, how about the Phoenicians on the northwest border of the Northern Kingdom? They're going to be judged. So these are outright foreigners.

So Amos starts there. The Lord is going to bring judgment upon these nations, and he gives the reason why. And we're going to go through in detail each oracle here in a minute.

Then he moves to what I call distant relatives. He moves over across the Jordan and onto the other side of the Dead Sea over there, and he talks about the Edomites. At this point, the Edomites have become arch enemies, really, of Judah and Israel.

Doesn't mean that they didn't sometimes have some alliances, but the Edomites are an enemy. And remember, the Edomites are way down south, southeast of the Dead Sea, so far from Israel, but very close to Judah: the Ammonites and the Moabites.

The Ammonites are on the other side of the Jordan, and the Moabites as well. In fact, they're east of the Dead Sea. So, remember who the Edomites were.

They are the descendants of Edom, or Esau. So Esau is their progenitor, and it's interesting, Jacob and Esau got along once they were reconciled in their lifetimes. But as time went on, Edom became an enemy of God's people.

And so judgment is coming upon the Edomites, and you'd expect that. And also the Ammonites and the Moabites, who were they? Descendants of Lot. Remember when Lot fled Sodom, his daughters were concerned about perpetuating his line, and so he was drunk, and in a drunken stupor, they had relations with their own father, and lo and behold, that's how we got the Ammonites and the Moabites.

They came out of an incestuous relationship. Nevertheless, they are distant relatives, and the Lord showed respect toward all these peoples. He told Moses not to conquer them when the people came into the land.

But they're going to be involved in this judgment. So, if I'm hearing this, I'm seeing what's happening. Okay, we started with outright foreigners, real close to us.

This judgment is going to encompass the Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites, who are, for the most part, east and south of us. And then, number seven in the list, comes Judah in the south. And you might think, well, didn't Israel and Judah get along? Not really.

There was tension, and sometimes war between the two, and so people in the north didn't like the southerners, the people from Judah. And this guy Amos is from Judah, but Judah is going to be judged. The significance of Judah being number seven in the list that's important, because often in the Bible. It's throughout the ancient Near Eastern world, by the way, it's kind of an idiom that you see throughout the culture, the broader culture. Number seven indicates completeness, sometimes perfection, and so if you're constructing a series of judgment oracles against nations, and you come to number seven, you're going to be thinking, that's the culminating judgment right there.

That's it. God is going to be judging these other nations, and he's moving closer and closer to Judah, and he's going to judge them. They're going to be last.

But then, we get the shocking surprise, because there's an eighth oracle. There's an eighth oracle. And sometimes in the culture, they'll use this formula, seven, yay, eight.

It's kind of an X, X plus one thing. Seven, no, eight. And so, lo and behold, Israel, the northern kingdom, is going to be the target of the judgment.

Yeah, God's going to get all of those nations. They have sinned, and they're going to pay for that, but he's going to bring that judgment to bear on Israel, the northern kingdom. And then Amos is going to say in chapter 5, the day of the Lord is coming, but it's not going to be a day of light.

It's not going to be a day of light and salvation. It's going to be a day of darkness and judgment that comes upon you. So that's why I refer to the prophet entrapping his audience here.

He uses a rhetorical device, gets their attention, and then there is a major plot twist in what he's doing, as he says, no, I'm here to tell you, day of the Lord is coming, yes, but you, Israel, are going to be the primary target of God's judgment, and that's

going to get him into trouble. After we've looked at each of the oracles, I want to then talk about another technique that Amos uses. It's a little more subtle.

As you go through, I'll develop it inductively as we talk about the oracles, but there's a hint right from the get-go that these nations are not the primary target. But let's dive in and look at the first oracle in chapter 1, verses 3 through 5. It's an oracle against Damascus, which is the capital of the Aramean kingdom. So, chapter 1, verse 3, this is what the Lord says, for three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not relent.

Now, see what he just did? We talked about this X, X plus one with the seven and the eight, but you can also do it with three, four, you can actually do it with any number, but this three, four, for three sins, yeah, for four, this pattern shows up in Proverbs chapter 30. They're sometimes referred to as numerical sayings, and there was actually an entire book, a little monograph, written on the numerical sayings in Proverbs, and if you study those sayings, when you see three, four, you expect to see a list of four things, the second corresponding to the second number. I think the reason they do this is Hebrew likes synonymous parallelism. Still, when you're doing synonymous parallelism, when you're saying it and then saying it again slightly different, it's kind of hard to do with numbers, so they start, they go below, one below, and then they give you the number they're actually going to work with in the second line, and so for three things, or four things. The list corresponds to the second number, that's what you expect to see, and it's that fourth one that's probably emphasized, that's the main point.

So here he says, for three sins of Damascus, no, let's make that four, I will not relent, and so we're going to expect to see a list of four sins, but before we talk about the structure here, we need to talk about that word that's translated sins. Hebrew has various words that can be translated sin, iniquity, transgression, that sort of thing. This particular one is Pesha, and it's used in the plural here. Pesha, if you study it, is not always used of sin against God; sometimes it's used of rebellion of a subject nation against their overlord. You see this in Kings.

So it's really looking at sin as rebellion, it's rebellion against authority. So, when sin is described as Pesha, it's really talking about sin as rebellion against God's authority, so implied in that is that God has authority over these nations, and of course, yeah, he created the whole world. We know how the nations came to be back in Genesis, and so yeah, he's got authority over them. Still, they wouldn't have recognized the God of Israel as their authority, they had their own deities, they had their own patron deities, Chemosh in Moab, for example, Milcom in Ammon, and so they wouldn't have recognized the Lord as their authority, but from the Lord's perspective and Amos's perspective, the Lord is their God, and he has authority over them. So, there's been a lot of discussion over what the background here is, what the prophet is thinking of, and I'm convinced that the Lord has authority over the nations via the

Noahic mandate. Remember in Genesis 9, the Lord tells Noah, I don't want you killing one another.

You know, be fruitful and multiply. The creation mandate of being fruitful, multiplying, filling the earth, is repeated to Noah, and so by extension, all of Noah's descendants, all of these people, we all come from Adam via Noah, and then his sons, and so there the Lord makes a promise that he's not going to destroy the earth again in the way that he did through a flood. Still, there is a requirement placed upon the descendants of Noah and his descendants that you're supposed to respect the image of God in your fellow human being, and if you don't, you forfeit your life. That's the basis for capital punishment right there.

It doesn't go back to the Old Testament law, it goes all the way back to Noah. And then in Isaiah 24, the Lord is bringing judgment upon the whole earth, and it talks about how they have broken the Berit olam, which is a perpetual or lasting covenant or treaty. So, what is Isaiah talking about there? It seems to me that he's talking about the Noahic mandate as a covenantal relationship.

So, the Lord expects the nations to observe what he told Noah. I want you to be fruitful and multiply, I don't want you killing each other. And nations are disobeying the commandment of not murdering your fellow human being on kind of a national or mass scale, and so I think that's what's in the background here.

Not everybody's going to agree with this. I've had people object to my interpretation because I put this in writing, but I'm going to stand by it. I usually try to think things through very, very carefully before I put them in writing, but I do change my mind, but I haven't been convinced to change my mind on this one.

So, I think the background is the Noahic mandate, and as we go through these oracles, we will see that each of these nations broke the Noahic mandate to respect the image of God in your fellow human being. They broke it, at least in principle, sometimes directly, sometimes in principle, and I think that's the main reason why I think the Noahic mandate's in the background. Now when we come to Judah and Israel, they've broken the Mosaic law, but so that's the authority they're under.

But anyway, let's dive in. So, three or four. Because NIV translates it as "she, it's actually they in Hebrew, because they threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth, and that's it.

There's just one accusation. There's one judgment. And so, because of that, I will send fire on the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.

I will break down the gate of Damascus. I will destroy the king who is in the valley of Aden, and the one who holds the scepter in Beth-eden. We'll talk about what all these names signify here in a minute.

The people of Aram will go into exile to here, says the Lord. And that's the end of that oracle. And then we're going to move on to the Philistines.

So, let's unpack this a little. There's only one crime. So, if I'm listening to this, I'm saying, whoa, this sounds like he's streamlining things.

Why would he do that? Well, maybe Aram isn't his major concern. He's signaling, no, I'm going to streamline things because I got more important things to say to someone else along the line here. Just one crime.

Threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth. This is agricultural imagery. When you harvested the grain, you would take it to the threshing floor, and they would use a threshing sledge, which had like sharp nails on the bottom of it.

And the animals would take it over the threshing floor, and it would separate the husks from the grain. It was the part of the process of harvesting. In some way, they did this to people living in Gilead.

Now, you could argue that it's literal, because Gideon did this to his enemies in Judges chapter 8, but I think this is metaphorical language. It's prophetic poetry, and I think it's referring to cruel treatment of the people who lived in Gilead, who were probably Israelites. Israelite population living on the east side of the Jordan, and they came in, and they, as it were, threshed them with sledges having iron teeth.

I think this refers to cruel behavior in war, and warfare was awful in this culture and this time. And so, they came in, and to me that, in principle, is a violation of the Noahic mandate. When you do something to someone that's comparable to threshing them with sledges having iron teeth, you have violated the principle of showing respect for the image of God in your fellow human beings.

And so, the Lord says, I will send fire on the house of Hazael. Hazael was an Aramean king, and he would consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad. Hazael became king by killing a Ben-Hadad, and then his own son was named Ben-Hadad.

So, these are royal names that the Arameans have used. And so, the Lord is going to send fire. Think about fire.

I think even today, it's along with water that's flooding, as we discovered here in Texas recently. It's one of the most destructive things in nature. And so, the Lord is going to send fire, the ultimate destructive instrument, on the house of Hazael.

In other words, he's going to attack the Aramean kingdom, and he's going to start at the top with the king and the leadership. He's going to break down the gate of Damascus. Damascus is their major city, and the city gate is part of the defense system.

And so, when the Lord says, I'm going to break the gate, that's going to leave the city open for invasion. I will destroy the king who is in the valley of Beit Avin. That's debated.

You'll see that it's handled differently in the translation, because the word Bekka is used here for the valley. Some try to associate it with the Bekka Valley that's in Lebanon, but Avin means wickedness. And so, I think you'll see some translations say, the king who is in the valley of wickedness.

And so, the valley occupied by the Arameans is a valley that's characterized by wickedness. And, by the way, that's why you should never name your church Beth Avin. Beth Avin Bible Church, house of wickedness.

No, don't do that. It sounds nice in English, but don't do that. So, I will destroy the king who is in the valley of Avin, the valley of wickedness, and the one who holds the scepter in Beit Eden.

Some scholars associate this with an Aramean group called, it's a place called Beit Adini in Akkadian, and it's located quite a ways from Damascus, but it was an Aramean region. And so, some people say it's referring specifically to that, others are going to say, no, Eden here means pleasantness. And so, the house of pleasantness, it's ironic.

The one who's holding the scepter, the symbol of rulership in the house of pleasantness, maybe the house of prosperity is the idea. Well, sorry, but the Lord's going to destroy that individual. And the people of Aram will go into exile to Kir, says the Lord.

We're not sure where Kir is, but what we do know is that later in Amos, the Lord refers, in chapter 9, to the fact that he is sovereign over all peoples, and he was the one who brought the Arameans in the first place from a place called Kir. So, they originated in Kir, and then they migrated to where they were at this point in time. And so, you put the two verses together, and what the Lord is saying is, you're going to go into exile to Kir, your whole history is going to be reversed.

You're going back where you started. And so, we don't pick up some of these nuances in English, but it's important to know the background, and also to look at other passages in the book. That's why I always say, you read a Bible book once, and

you have questions, and then you come back and you read it a second time, now that you've seen the whole story, and lots of details make sense the second time around, once you have the full picture.

So, that's the oracle against the Arameans. Severe judgment is going to come upon the Arameans. People in Israel would be cheering at this point.

Now, this is what the Lord says about the three sins of Gaza, but that's in the news today. That's a Philistine city, Gaza. Even for four, I will not relent.

And I think when he says, I will not relent, the Hebrew is a little difficult there, but I think the idea is, I will not call back my decree of judgment, or I will not relent from my anger. Those are two options that are given for this statement. So, the Lord says three sins, four.

I'm expecting a fourfold list at this point. Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom. So, kidnapping and slave trade.

Hmm, bad, bad, but that's it. I will send fire on the walls of Gaza that will consume her fortresses. I will destroy the king of Ashdod, and the one who holds the scepter in Ashkelon.

I will turn my hand against Ekron, till the last of the Philistines are dead, says the Sovereign Lord. So, notice that four of the five major Philistine cities are mentioned there. What about Gath? It does show up in chapter 6. So, the Lord is aware of Gath.

But here, he mentions these four because they were ruled over by lords, and they had a confederation, basically. And so, but you can refer to the whole area as Philistia, and the Lord's gonna bring judgment on the Philistines. And you look at that judgment, kidnapping people and selling them as slaves.

Well, you're not murdering them, necessarily, although some do get murdered in that kind of scenario. But you are definitely showing disrespect for the image of God in your fellow human beings. And by the way, I mean, I was a history major and journalism major at Syracuse University.

And so, I took history classes where we were about the antebellum period, pre-Civil War in America. And we were required to read primary sources. And so, we would read the abolitionist arguments, and we would read the statements that were being used in the South by slaveholders.

And they often appealed to the Bible to defend the institution of slavery. But this passage in Amos is enough to overturn the kind of slavery that was in place back then, because they're kidnapping people and selling them as slaves. Well, how did

the slaves get here? People back in Africa, other tribes often, were kidnapping other people and then selling them on the coast and across they'd come.

That's just a sidebar discussion. But if you're ever involved in that debate, you know, you're kind of going back and thinking through the debate, and you see slave owners defending the institution from appeals to the Bible, let's get this verse in there. Kidnapping and slavery is a standard as seen in the Noahic Mandate.

So, the Philistines are going to be judged, and then we move on to Tyre. Tyre is a city that's north of Israel along the coast, you know, Tyre and Sidon. This is the Phoenicians, people we know as Phoenicians, seafaring people who engaged in a lot of trade, including with Egypt.

And so, Phoenicians, for three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not relent. Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, apparently Edom is in the slave purchasing business—so, same thing.

It's, oops, kidnapping and slave trade. And disregarding, I have got to turn my Outlook off. Let's quit that.

Sorry about that. There's always something you forget to do before you start to start speaking. So, she sold whole communities of captives to Edom.

There's one. Disregarding a treaty of brotherhood. Now, you could see that is just one crime, but it's got two facets here.

So, if we're counting them up, let's say there's two. So, the slave trade, but in doing this slave trade, they disregarded a treaty of brotherhood. In the ancient Near East, nations would sometimes have parity treaties.

And in a parity treaty, there isn't a father and a son, there's a brothers. So, they're equals. And apparently, they had made a treaty with someone.

Some people might say, well, maybe it was Israel or Judah, doesn't need to be. And they violated this treaty. They captured whole communities that were living in the lands of their treaty partner and then sold them as slaves.

So, Lord doesn't like that. He doesn't like it when treaties are violated. And so, maybe two crimes, but not four.

I will send fire on the walls of Tyre that will consume her fortresses. We're not sure when this was fulfilled. Some of these others, we know when they were fulfilled.

For the Arameans, they were defeated by Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian king, probably 15 or so years after Amos prophesied. We know that. The Philistines were conquered by the Assyrians.

We have a lot of evidence of that. Tyre? Tyre seems to have escaped. Nebuchadnezzar threatened Tyre, and he didn't destroy the city, but he did become their suzerain, their overlord.

It wasn't really destroyed until much later in the 4th century. But judgment is coming upon Tyre, according to the Lord. And then he moves on to Edom.

This is what the Lord says. And we might be expecting Edom to get a little more severe judgment in light of their engaging in the slave trade the way they were. They've already been mentioned.

So, this is what the Lord says. For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not relent. Because he pursued his brother with a sword and slaughtered the women of the land, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked.

Now, there are four statements there. So, and you're trying to figure this out, some people would say, well, you just kind of count up formally how many statements are made. So there are four.

Well, if you do that here, when you get to Israel, you're gonna have like seven or eight. You've got to be consistent in the way you count. I think there are just two here.

He pursued his brother with a sword and slaughtered the women of the land. That's military violence. But stated twice in parallelism may be for emphasis.

And because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked. Well, that's part of that military violence package. So, you could say it's just one with a bit of extra emphasis, but I'll give you two on that with some emphasis.

But I don't think there are four distinct crimes like there will be when we get to Israel. You probably have already anticipated where this is going. So, I will send fire on Teman that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah.

Those are locations within Edom. So, the Lord is going to bring fire upon them. Notice the consistency in the fire.

All right, next one. This is what the Lord says. For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not relent.

Once again, I'm expecting a fourfold list. Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders. Poor Gilead.

They're really suffering here. The Arameans, as it were, threshed them with a sledge that had iron on the bottom. And I think this is literal, because we have references to this elsewhere in ancient warfare.

He ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead. If we're ripping open pregnant women and killing babies, what hope do the others have? Mass violence and murder and bordering on genocide, it sounds. And he did it all to extend his borders.

Well, maybe you could say violence and greed and get two crimes out of that, but it's all part of the military violence package. So, to me, it's just one. I will set fire to the walls of Raba, which is a major city in Ammon, that will consume her fortresses amid war cries on the day of battle, amid violent winds on a stormy day.

The Lord is coming, and there's going to be war cries, and there's going to be violent winds, which is a symbol of divine judgment that we see in the Old Testament. They're going to get what they deserve. You rip open pregnant women and warfare is going to come your way, and you're going to be the victim.

And we don't know for sure, but this probably happened in conjunction with the Assyrian invasions, maybe the Babylonian invasions later. We do know that the Assyrians conquered this area. And her king will go into exile, and he and his officials together, says the Lord.

So, the Ammonites are going to be judged, but we're still looking for a fourfold list. This is what the Lord says. Now we're in chapter 2, verse 1. It all goes together.

I think the chapter division is unfortunate in this case. The chapter divisions were made much later. This is what the Lord says.

For three sins of Moab, even for four, I will not relent. Kind of an ongoing drumbeat here. Each oracle starts the same way.

What did he do wrong? Because he burned to ashes the bones of Edom's king. So, apparently the Moabites had conquered the Edomites, and I don't think this is referred... I think this is tomb desecration is what's going on here. As we see this in the Assyrians would sometimes make their conquered victims burn the bones of their ancestors.

Burial is really important in this culture. It's important to receive a proper burial, and tomb desecration is one of the worst things you can do. It's just total disrespect for the image of God in your fellow man.

Total disrespect. In fact, we have tomb inscriptions. There are some from the Phoenician area where someone will have an inscription put on their tomb, and it basically calls a curse down on anybody who violates that tomb.

Don't you dare touch my tomb. Herein lies so-and-so. Don't you dare touch this tomb, because the gods will get you.

So there's a curse attached to this kind of thing. So that's what the Moabites are doing. Hopefully, you've seen that through here.

There's a lack of respect for the image of God in one's fellow human being, and I think this is how they have rebelled against God. They violated the Noah mandate, and you might think, how would they even know about that? Ignorance is no excuse where God's concerned. He expects peoples to perpetuate his truth.

I will send fire on Moab that will consume the fortress of Kiriot. Moab will go down in great tumult amid war cries and the blast of the trumpet. I will destroy her ruler and kill all her officials with him, says the Lord.

So we've had three outright foreigners, three distant relatives, and now we come to brother Judah down south. And, by the way, this is so sad, because remember, the family was very divided in the days of Joseph when Jacob was alive, and the brothers hated Joseph. They hated him, and they tried to kill him, and they shipped him off as a slave, but ultimately they were brought back together.

And Judah, who was kind of a ringleader in the plan to kill Joseph and then sell him into slavery, remember what he did when Joseph was testing his brothers, and he said, I want you to bring your youngest brother to me that you mentioned, Benjamin, blood brother to Joseph, their same mother. And basically, they did that, and then Joseph threatened to, remember he rigged a theft, made it look like Benjamin had stolen something, and he said, I'm going to imprison this kid. He's going to stay here with me.

And Judah steps forward, and he says, no, no. And what he does is amazing, because his attitude's completely changed. This is daddy's new favorite, Benjamin, because Jacob favored, he favored Rachel's two sons, he did, and that engendered jealousy among the others.

But Judah has come to grips with that, and he's saying, no, this will kill my father. We can't put, you know, in his mind, he's thinking, I can't put him through this again. And so he's willing to sacrifice his future for the sake of Benjamin.

And so the family is unified, and that's the ideal and the model, and it's just very tragic in Israel's history. Jacob's descendants, as it plays out, and the kingdom divides. It's just very, very tragic.

And so Judah and Israel are not united now, and so they're going to be cheering, I think, when they, when they read this. It's so far from the ideal that we see in Genesis, because they have rejected the law of the Lord, and have not kept his decrees. I think we're moving beyond Noahic mandate now, and we are talking about the Mosaic law, which is what Judah and Israel are responsible for.

Of course, the thou shalt not murder is an important part of the Mosaic law. But they've rejected the law of the Lord, and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by, and NIV translates it, false gods, which may very well be correct, but in the text it just refers to them as their lies, lies. Sometimes idols are referred to as lies.

They're false. They're false gods. And so that may very well be the idea here, but it's a little interpretive, false gods.

It could be false prophecies, lies from their prophets, because we know that there were prophets who, like Jeremiah encountered them much later, who were giving false messages of hope when, in reality, judgment was coming. So we're not sure. But idolatry makes good sense.

That would be a primary way that you would reject the law of the Lord. And so, the Lord says, I will send fire on Judah that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem. I'm not seeing four crimes anymore, still.

They've rejected the law, have not kept the decrees. That's just two ways of stating one. And because they've been led astray, that's simply telling me how they rejected the law of the Lord.

The most you can get out of that's two, I think. So, we haven't had four yet. And so maybe at this point, though, Israel is thinking, ah, he's put the noose around their necks and now he's going to pull it tight.

Our enemies are going to be defeated. This is a wonderful message. It's a prelude to the coming of the day of the Lord, which is going to be the day of salvation for us, where the Lord defeats our enemies and gives us security and blesses us going forward.

And that's simply not the case. And so, I think we can get started on this next section. Or we could take a break right here.

I think we'll take a break.

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm and his teaching on the Book of Amos. Amos, the lion has roared, who will fear? Session 1A, The Prophet Entraps His Audience. Amos 1:1-2:16.