

# Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?

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

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### Keywords

Amos, Prophetic Entrapment, Covenant, Moral Accountability, Social Injustice, Divine Judgment, Israel, Yada, Noahic Mandate, Royal Bureaucracy

### Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. Robert Chisholm examines Amos 1:1–2:16 and 3:1–2, focusing on how the prophet Amos rhetorically traps Israel by first pronouncing judgment on surrounding pagan nations before turning to Israel's internal corruption. While pagan nations are judged for violating universal ethical standards established in the Noahic Covenant, Israel is held to a higher standard due to its specific Mosaic covenant revelation. Israel's transgressions—including legal injustice, exploitation of the poor, idolatrous syncretism, and suppression of spiritual leaders—lead to a complete, sevenfold military judgment. Ultimately, the text illustrates the principle that to whom much is given, much is required, as God punishes His covenant people for failing to reflect His righteousness.

### Outline

#### I. Introduction and Theological Foundations (Amos 1:3–2:5 Review)

- A. The Overriding Principle of Regional Oracles
  - 1. God holds all nations accountable for violating universal moral standards.
  - 2. Surrounding nations face divine judgment despite Israel being God's primary focus.
- B. Foundation in the Creation and Noahic Covenant
  - 1. Universal human dignity rooted in the Divine Image (Imago Dei).
  - 2. Mandate given to Noah prohibiting murder and societal brutality.
  - 3. Disrespecting fellow human beings constitutes disrespect toward the Creator.
- C. Historical Reality of Corporate Judgment
  - 1. Divine accountability applies to national entities throughout human history.
  - 2. Historical examples illustrate corporate consequences for systemic brutality.

#### II. The Oracle Against Israel: A Prophet Entraps His Audience (Amos 2:6–16)

- A. Rhetorical Entrapment Strategy
  - 1. Progressive setup using seven regional judgment speeches.
  - 2. Israel's initial approval of prophetic condemnation against neighboring rivals.
  - 3. Abrupt turn toward Israel as the primary target of divine judgment.

## B. Four Specific Categories of Transgression in Israel

### 1. Legal and Economic Exploitation of the Poor (Amos 2:6b–7a)

- a. Debt slavery for trivial amounts ("selling the needy for a pair of sandals").
- b. Systemic legal corruption and denial of justice to vulnerable classes.
- c. Historical context: Royal bureaucracy expanded since 1 Samuel 8, disenfranchising landowners into day laborers.

### 2. Exploitation and Idolatrous Practices (Amos 2:7b)

- a. Father and son going to the same girl, profaning God's holy name.
- b. Interpretations: Sexual exploitation of the vulnerable vs. participation in pagan Marzeach social banquets.

### 3. Sacrilegious and Hypocritical Worship (Amos 2:8)

- a. Reclining at altars on garments confiscated from the poor as unreturned debt pledges.
- b. Consuming wine extracted through illegal fines inside places of worship.
- c. Convergence of vertical covenant unfaithfulness and horizontal social injustice.

### 4. Rejection and Contempt for Dedicated Leadership (Amos 2:11–12)

- a. Inducing Nazarites to violate sacred vows by forcing them to drink wine.
- b. Silencing prophetic voices with explicit commands not to prophesy.

## C. Historical Review of Divine Redemptive Acts (Amos 2:9–10)

- 1. Supernatural victory over the formidable Amorites during the Conquest.
- 2. Deliverance from Egyptian bondage and forty years of wilderness protection.
- 3. God's gracious gift of spiritual leaders (prophets and Nazarites).

## D. Announcement of Irresistible Divine Judgment (Amos 2:13–16)

- 1. Imagery of divine crushing: God pressing down like a cart overloaded with grain.
- 2. Complete sevenfold collapse of Israel's military defense (Amos 2:14–16):
  - a. The swift runner shall not escape.
  - b. The strong warrior shall not maintain strength.
  - c. The mighty soldier shall not save his life.
  - d. The archer shall not stand ground.
  - e. The fleet-footed infantry shall not flee.
  - f. The horseman shall not save himself.
  - g. The bravest warrior shall flee naked in panic.

## III. Core Theological Application and Higher Accountability (Amos 2:6–3:2)

### A. Divine Expectation and Moral Standards

- 1. God imposes higher ethical expectations on those possessing clearer divine revelation.
- 2. Israel's sins, though self-justified as legal or minor, are severe under covenant light.

#### B. The Principle of Responsibility

1. Core axiom: "To whom much is given, much is required."
2. Danger of self-righteous comparison against pagan atrocities.

#### C. Meaning of Covenant Election (Yada in Amos 3:2)

1. Theological definition of Yada: Sovereign choice, recognition, and intimate covenant relationship.
2. True knowledge of God demonstrated through active loyalty and justice for orphans and widows.
3. Direct consequence of election: Special privileges entail stricter divine accountability and punishment.

### **IV. Preview of Upcoming Prophetic Themes (Amos 3:3–6:14)**

#### A. Cause and Effect Relationships in Prophetic Revelation (Amos 3:3–8)

#### B. Unraveling of Salvation History

1. Covenant disobedience leads to the reversal of Exodus blessings.
2. Impending exile and judgment replacing promised national security.