

Amos: The Shepherd Prophet (Part 2)

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[0:00] Amen. Okay, we really kind of spent our time last week, we're looking at the first couple of verses, what Amos was, kind of his background, his calling, and so forth.

And now we're going to really get into what Amos said. And we're going to get into the prophecies of Amos.

And so that's where we'll begin with what Amos said. And you might remember that I said you could divide the book into two parts.

And the division, or how the book is divided, is revealed to us in the very first verse with the phrases, the words of Amos, or what Amos said, and then what Amos saw.

Those two parts in the first verse give us the division of the entire book. So we have the words of Amos. Actually, they're really God's words, but Amos is speaking them.

[1:31] And as we're going to see in a moment, his words are delivered in the first person. It's not Amos saying it's God speaking, but it's Amos' voice. So these will be the words of Amos, what Amos said.

And then starting with chapter 7, on to the end of the book, then we're going to be considering what he saw. That would be his visions. All right, so his words, his visions, or what Amos said.

And then the last part of the book would be what Amos saw, his visions. All right, so tonight, what Amos said. In chapter 1, really starting with verse 2, or 3 rather, and then continuing all the way to chapter 2, verse 16, we have Amos showing us how God's, remember we talked about this last week, his roaring and his thundering, how that roaring and thundering affected each nation around Israel that bordered all the way around the nation of Israel or the northern kingdom of it.

And not only will we see how God's words, his roaring and thundering, affected these six nations bordering Israel, but also how that will affect Judah, the southern kingdom, and then ultimately how that will affect Israel itself.

And so this is what we'll have in these verses. Now we're not going to get all the way through all of these. We'll get through the six bordering nations and look at his prophecy or what God said to them, and then next time we'll take up Judah and Israel and maybe go a little bit further than that.

[3:26] Now he begins then with six foreign nations that border Israel. I'm going to show you a map here in a little bit. In fact, I think I'll put a map in your notes so you can see kind of where these nations were located.

Now, there's not going to be any kind of real definable order. He's not going to start, say, at 12 o'clock and move all the way around the clock around Israel.

We're going to kind of go back and forth. But the idea is he's zeroing in ultimately on the bullseye. If you can picture the land there or Israel and the surrounding nation, if you can picture that as a target, he's going to get all around Israel and then ultimately hit Israel directly.

All right, so six foreign nations that God is going to pronounce judgment upon. Now, there is a pattern.

This is the first thing we really need to consider before we get to the actual judgments that are pronounced upon these six nations. There's a pattern. And if you have ever read Amos, especially this part, then the pattern is really very clear.

[4:47] It's almost redundant. It seems redundant. But it's kind of a four-point kind of outline or pattern for these prophecies, what Amos said or said in behalf of God.

The first one is the source and authority of what Amos said. And that is revealed with the phrase, thus says the Lord.

And it doesn't just say that one time at the beginning of this section of prophecy. He says it at the beginning of each pronouncement against these six, really ultimately eight nations, if you count

Judah and Israel.

Each one of them begins with that phrase, thus says the Lord. All right, so what's that about? Well, with that statement, Amos is claiming authority for himself, all right, but also for his message.

So that's why I say it's the source. He begins with each one of these pronouncements. He begins with the source and the authority of his message. And so when he says, thus says the Lord, then he is then ascribing everything that he says to God.

[6:16] And therefore, the authority that God carries with his word is the authority with which and from which Amos is going to give his prophecy.

So his message. And he was a, we could say, a herald of the king. And that is a proper description of all prophets in the Old Testament.

The proper, I think, very fitting description. In fact, the Bible uses this description for all modern day prophets. Not prophets in the sense that Amos was a prophet, but I'm a prophet in the sense of forth telling of God's word, proclaiming God's word.

I consider myself a herald. In fact, it doesn't matter what I consider myself. That's what God calls me. A herald. Now, what is a herald? Well, in ancient times, we don't so much have this anymore, but in ancient times, a herald was a very important part of a nation.

He performed a very important role. I mean, they didn't have email, right? Didn't have newspapers. Didn't have satellite and TV and, you know, other forms of communication.

[7:34] So when the king wanted to issue his edict or law or some announcement for something, he would send out his herald. Well, heralds. They would have a number of those.

And they would go out to the corners of his nation, of his kingdom, and they would go to each city, each place of population, go to the center of that city.

And they would, you know, you can almost visualize it. They would unfurl that scroll. That would be the king's law or some major announcement or whatever. And he would then read that to the people.

Now, the herald was just a regular person. He wasn't a king. You know, he didn't have any authority of his own, but in his office, he carried the authority of the king.

And so what he said had to be taken as authoritative. And if it was a new law or some edict of the king, some requirement, some action that needed to be taken, then the people had to do it.

[8:38] Not because the herald spoke it, but because it was the word of the king. And so that's what Amos is. He's saying the source of everything I'm saying and the authority, the full authority is from God because this is his message.

And so, you know, we can today, as preachers, can stand behind the pulpit. That is, if we are going to actually preach God's word and not our own word or man's word, if we're going to actually preach God's word, then we have every right to say, this is what God says.

Now, preachers don't speak in the first person for God, though, in effect, we could. We could say, based on this word, I say to you, not because I'm anything, but because the one who said it has full authority.

And preachers are heralds of God. We are like Amos in that sense. The source of everything we have to say is from God's word. The authority is the authority of God.

And I would extend that also to every believer. Because we are all to be heralds of God. Now, I am in an official sense as an office within the church.

[9:57] God has given to the church. He's given to the church pastors and teachers. But we all are heralds in the sense that we've all been given the Great Commission to proclaim the kingdom of God and to proclaim the gospel.

All right, so, the source and authority of his message. The second part of this kind of four-part pattern, and it's going to be very consistent throughout this part of the prophecy, that will be the declaration of judgment.

So, first, it's announced the source and authority of it. This is what God says. And then the declaration of the judgment. In these words, I will not turn away the punishment.

That's a declaration of judgment. And you'll see that same phrase repeated in the judgments against all six, actually eight of these nations, including Judah and Israel.

I will not turn away the punishment. And so, when you and I read through the prophecy, and these judgments may sound repetitious.

[11:12] And you can just jot this in there if you want to. I didn't include this in your notes. I don't know why I just skipped it. But what we have here developing this formula, we have here is what's called a messenger formula.

That's the technical term for this. A messenger formula. It begins with the source, and always in the third person. The Lord, He says.

And then the messenger shifts to the first person. I will. I will. And that's what you see there, this shift to the first person. Amos is speaking, and he says, this is what God says.

This is what He says. That's the third person. But then very quickly, it shifts to the first person. I will. Now, I in this case is not Amos. It's God. And so, here's the pronouncement of judgment, or declaration of judgment.

I will not turn away, verse 3. I will send fire. I will break. And so forth. Alright? So, the first person.

[12:21] And this is called, I guess I've got a little behind on my... my PowerPoint. This is first person divine speech.

That's the technical terminology for this. And it applies to all Old Testament prophets. They all use this device, this technique of communication.

First person, divine speech. And so, again, in this way, Amos could first point out the source and the authority of his message in the third person, and then he could confront his audience directly in the first person because he's speaking for God.

Also, under the declaration of judgment, we have these words. In fact, these words come before the I will not turn away, or I will not turn away the punishment.

This modifies that, and it is for three transgressions and for four, I will not turn away the punishment. Now, if you were to read this section of the prophecy all the way well into chapter two, you would see that repeated.

[13:40] Each time, judgments are declared against these nations. It's almost redundant. For three transgressions and for four, I will not turn away the punishment.

This is a declaration of punishment. Now, to the ancient people of this day, ancient Hebrews, numbers were significant.

Now, I think maybe today there are scholars who make way too much about this particular aspect, but there's no doubt about the fact that numbers were significant.

You see that very clearly in Scripture. Now, just how far some have gone with that, I'm pretty skeptical. You know, they've got some kind of weird formulas out there concerning numbers, and they, you know, almost now even to the point where they are, you know, saying that they can find hidden messages in the Bible because of numbers.

But the Hebrew people did pay close attention to numbers, and it was a way that the Bible writers communicated certain truths.

[14:50] And so, I would say to you that the number three and the number four are significant, and they mean something. Number three meant fullness.

The idea is fullness. And we can kind of see that, can't we? Just take, for example, the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the fullness.

The Trinity is the fullness of God in all of His persons. So, number three stands for fullness. And so, what's Amos saying?

He's saying that you are full of sin. Full of sin. That's what he means. He's not necessarily referring to some specific sins, though there are specific sins present, and we're going to get to that here in a little bit.

He's really making a statement about the fullness of the enormity of their sin, the seriousness of it. And then we get to the number four because that's added there.

[16:00] Then the idea is one more than full. What's more than full? I mean, how can something be more than full? Well, it means that you're not just full of sin, but you are full and overflowing with sin.

And so, this is kind of a superlative in sin. It's a literary technique to say this. More than just full, you're overflowing. I mean, your cup is to the brim and it's flowing over.

And that's not a reference to blessings because there is a reference to that in Scripture. cup runs over. That's a metaphor to speak of our blessings.

We're not only full of God's blessing, but overflowing. But in this sense, it's their sin, their transgressions, and it's an overflowing, abundant sin.

And then, third, would be the identification of one specific sin. Again, this is part of the pattern.
[17 : 10] Very consistent. Four-part pattern that you'll see in each of the seven pronouncements, or eight, rather, pronouncements of judgment. sin.

And in each one of those, he's going to identify a specific sin. And these are unique to each nation addressed.

Now, there are some similarities in sins, but each one is just a little bit different and specific and unique to each of these nations.

Now, the specific sin mentioned could be representative of the four sins.

All right, now, the three, he says, three sins and four, he doesn't name those, does he, in Scripture? They're not mentioned, not specified.

[18 : 10] And I really take that to mean that he's just making a statement about the seriousness of their sin and how huge their sin is and not necessarily referring or making a reference to any specific sins at that point.

There are those who would say that what we have here, he says three and then four, and then he mentions one specific, is that this specific sin is somehow a representative or a category of sin that represents the other four.

Or, it's descriptive of the climactic sin. A descriptive of the fourth and climactic.

See, he says three sins and four. I will not withhold my judgment, my punishment. And so, maybe this fourth one whatever it is, is named specifically.

And it is the, I don't know, the climactic sin, the one that pushes God over the limit of his mercy, over the limit of his tolerance.

[19 : 24] And that could be, I think, is probably more correct than the other one. All right, the fourth, the fourth, the fourth would be the announcement of God's judgment.

All right, so he says what? Here's the source and authority of this prophecy, God says. Then he identifies one specific sin and then he's going to announce the judgment for this specific sin.

And so, you have repeated, I mean, throughout each prophecy, more than once in each one of the judgments, I will, I will, I will.

This is an announcement of God's judgment. I will, I will, I will, says the Lord. Not Amos, but what the Lord says. And again, you notice that the first person is there in each one of those.

And so, the Lord himself will be the agent of judgment. All right, now, let's look at these eight nations to be judged.

[20 : 47] And again, we'll just get through six of them here tonight. The nations that surround Israel and Judah. And then we'll get to Judah and Israel next time.

The first one is listed here in the text as Damascus. Now, Damascus is not a nation. Damascus is a city, and it is the capital city of Aram.

Aram, and here's a map to show you where it's located in relation to Israel and Judah. You see in the green Israel, the northern kingdom, and Judah in the purple color is the southern kingdom, so we have the divided kingdom.

And then here are the nations all around. It begins with Aram. They're kind of to the northeast of Israel. Now, Aram was a very powerful enemy of Israel.

In fact, all these nations around Israel were not their friends. They were enemies. But Aram was a very powerful enemy. And their land bordered Jabesh-Gilead there.

[22 : 04] I don't have the map back up. You can look at that on your own. And so, apparently, while trying to conquer Israel, this particular area, they used a certain tactic that was cruel and unusual.

And it evoked God's judgment. It's described here as threshed. Threshed Gilead. Gilead was just in the border there of Israel.

Jabesh-Gilead. And apparently, in this battle or warring that was taking place where Aram is trying to conquer Israel or conquer a part of it, maybe scoop out part of its border, part of their lands, they did a terrible thing.

They threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron or implements of iron. Now, what in the world was that?

It's a little difficult to determine that, but apparently the people of Gilead were tortured and killed.

[23 : 25] The captives were. And they were tortured and killed by being run over with some threshing machines, pulled by oxen or something.

And it just described a very inhuman, very cruel treatment. God's going to judge them. Again, this is the culmination of their sin, the last straw.

And he mentions this one specifically. Now, what was his punishment? Well, verses 4 and 5, we won't read all those verses, but he said, I will send a fire.

That's the first part of the judgment. And that's a reference to the attack of an enemy. I will send fire. I will break down the second part of what he says in this judgment. And I will cut off the inhabitant.

[24:31] So, there's kind of a progression here. An invading army is going to come and attack you. Break down your walls. Cut off your inhabitants.

And they shall go into captivity. So, it's pretty easy to see the progression of the judgment that God or the punishment of God is going to place upon the country of a ram.

And now, these are all metaphors, of course. Fire, breaking down the gate, cut off the inhabitant, captivity. These are kind of metaphors, and they point to a total destruction.

Total destruction. And so, that would eventually end the Arameans' history.

And so, the question is, did all this ever happen? I mean, did this prophecy that God has pronounced, did it take place? Yes, it did.

[25:38] It was fulfilled. The fulfilling, you can read about it in 2 Kings chapter 16 there, about this prophecy fulfilled. Now, not all of the prophecies here can we read about in Scripture, because some of them took place after.

But we do know that each of these prophecies have come true. That leads us to the second nation, and that would be Gaza. Well, it's not the nation.

That, again, is a city. And Gaza is a reference to a Philistine city-state, and you can see on the map that that would be Philistia, and that's located over here.

So we started up in the northeast, and we now come to the southwest. Not really taking in order around, but up here, then down here, and Philistia, Philistia is the nation that God's judgment is pronounced upon.

Now, their sin was given to us there in verse 6.

[26:53] They took captive, the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom. Now, what does that mean? He's talking about the capture and sale of entire communities into slavery.

Many of them, quite possibly, being near that border, would have been Israelites as well. And so they're selling entire communities into slavery.

And the Bible tells us in 1 Samuel that there was a peace treaty between these two peoples and so they broke that peace treaty.

And so their judgment from God seemed pretty much the same as A-Ram. But I will send a fire which shall devour its palaces, I will cut off the inhabitants, I will turn my hand against them and the remnant shall perish.

So there's the judgment, sounds very similar to the judgment of A-Ram. And so Felicity is going to be judged in a similar way. And again, I think it's clear that it describes a military attack that would eventually bring about total annihilation because he says in verse 8, the remnant of the Philistine shall perish.

[28:32] And so did that come to pass? What does history tell us? Well, history tells us that the Assyrian army conquered all of the Philistine city-states and today they no longer exist.

So God's word is true. Third, Tyre. Tyre was the strongest of the Phoenician cities.

Where's Phoenician? Phoenician. It's back up here. The northwest, or extreme north of Israel. So here's the nation of the Phoenicians.

I said Phoenicia last time, didn't I? That's Philistia actually. Their sin was similar to that of the Philistia, the nation of Philistia.

And by the way, Tyre, that region is present day Lebanon today, just to give you kind of a reference there. They delivered up the whole captivity of Edom.

[29:46] So that's a similar thing. They sold them into slavery. And then he adds something else and did not remember the brotherly covenant. And so apparently there was a covenant between Tyre and Israel which made the act of selling slaves an even more grievous or egregious kind of sin.

And God is going to judge it. So what is the judgment against Tyre? Well, it's interesting that the judgment against Tyre was not complete.

Not complete like the ones before and the ones we're going to see after. Not complete. There will be a military attack. I will send a fire on the wall.

He says that again in verse 10. So there are going to be attacks. There is going to be judgment. There is going to be punishment. But nothing is said of destruction or captivity like the other prophecies, the other punishments on the other nations.

Nothing about destruction, nothing about captivity. And it's interesting that history bears this out. First Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, conquered Tyre after a five-year siege.

[31:08] But he left the city intact. So the city was not destroyed and the people were not taken away, captive. Later, Nebuchadnezzar, that would be Babylon, the empire of Babylon, besieged the city for 13 years.

That's a long time to keep after it. But eventually had to give up, did not conquer it. Still later than that, Alexander the Great, that would be the Greek empire, besieged the city for seven months. I guess Alexander the Great, and having much patience, is Nebuchadnezzar. But the city still survived. And it still exists today, by the way.

The city of Tyre is still there. God's word is true, isn't it? It's amazing that these prophecies were given before the fact, and each one of them have come true.

And so God's word is true. Edom is the fourth one. You can see where Edom is. Now we're back down here to the south, kind of crisscrossing back and forth.

[32:20] Edom is south of Judah, actually, but part of its border, of course, well, it doesn't really come up to Israel, but it was a nation around their border.

Edom was an enemy of Israel, again, like nearly all these nations were throughout their history. And this particular judgment begins a certain group of judgments that are against nations who have a connection, they have an ethnic connection with Israel.

If you know your history, biblical history, Edom was founded by Esau. Who was Esau? Jacob's brother. Who was their daddy?

Isaac. Alright, so, and you know the story about Esau and Jacob, so there's a connection there, an ethnic connection there. Now, there has always been, of course, a hatred between the descendants of Esau and Jacob.

And do we still have it today? We still have it today. What about the sin of Edom? Well, basically, if you read verse 11, he pursued his brother with the sword.

[33:47] And by the way, it's interesting, he doesn't say they, he says he, reference to Esau, the founder of Edom, he pursued his brother with a sword and cast off all pity, his anger tore perpetually, that's a key word, and he kept his wrath forever, that's another key word here, or continually, really is the idea behind that word forever.

And so this is his sin. And so what are we talking about here? Well, the word perpetually and the other word forever, continually, again, suggests the ongoing hatred that Edom had, and hostility that Edom had for Israel, or Jacob.

Remember, Jacob's name was changed to what? Israel. Israel. And so, just highlighting this, and it's not fleshing out the specific things that they did, other than it's very specific about the sword, you know, having no mercy, and this being a kind of anger that was perpetual, just continued, this hostility toward Israel, and God is going to judge them for it.

God's punishment, he says, I will send a fire upon, and then he names this city, Teman, and devour the places of Basra. And these are two cities located on the two opposite streams, ends of Edom, and so the meaning is total destruction of the nation.

That's the idea, by naming these cities that are on the opposite ends of the country. history. What happened? Today, Edom no longer exists.

[35:49] Ancient historical records that have been uncovered by archaeologists, of course, over the years. The course that Edom was subject to Assyria, and so today, Edom no longer exists.

Number five, Ammon. Ammon was located east of the Jordan River, and so here we are, Ammon, right there in the border of Israel.

Ammon. And what was their sin? Well, it's terrible. They ripped up the women with child of Gilead. That's pretty serious. I can't even imagine. And, I mean, here's a real clear example of kind of the overflowing sin, the kind of an act of utter cruelty that we can't even begin to imagine.

And yet, a couple places in scripture, we discover that this was apparently a common tactic when there would be border wars where one nation would try to scoop out or conquer a part of a

neighboring nation.

[37:19] They had these border wars, and this was apparently something that was very common, but God, of course, is going to judge that. Their judgment would be, again, devastating warfare.

He said, I will kindle a fire in the wall of Reba, and it shall devour its places. now, Reba is mentioned here because I think for emphasis that there's no way to avoid, no way to stand against God's judgment, because Reba is located on a flat top of a hill, and on two sides there was 200, 200 to 300 foot drop, so it was quite a fortress, positionally, geographically, was in a perfect location.

The third side was enclosed by the Jabbok River, so that made a natural defense for that side, and then the city was also surrounded by a massive wall, which made it virtually unconquerable.

By the way, in 2 Samuel, I think I put that in your notes, 2 Samuel 11, 117, you remember Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, that David sent out into the head of the battle so that he could be murdered, and so David could have Bathsheba, you know that story.

Well, it was here, in the battle against Reba, that Uriah died, just as a point of reference. Alright, so an impregnable city, apparently, and yet, God's prophecy did come true today, though the city where it exists, still exists today, but it's no longer called Reba, and it's no longer a city in Ammon, the Ammonites no longer exist, but it is a city, a very well-known city today, and it's Ammon, Ammon, Jordan, is where this, what this city is called today.

[39:46] Alright, Moab is the sixth and final one we're going to look at tonight. Moab is located right there between Edom and Ammon, bordering the southern part of Israel, and Moab was a brother nation of Ammon.

And why do we say a brother nation? Because their ancestors were half-brothers born to Lot, Abraham's nephew.

And their sin, Moab's sin, seems a little strange, burned the bones of the king, that should be of, not odd, of Edom to lime.

Now that's kind of an interesting sin. What in the world would that be? And it just says it burned his bones, I mean the guy, this guy already dead, and burned it into lime.

What in the world could that be? It doesn't even sound like a very serious sin. well, there are three possibilities about what that could mean. First of all, he was burned to death.

[41:05] That would be maybe the first possibility. Burned his bone. It would mean they burned it completely up. That could have been how he died, how they killed him.

Or, his corpse was burned after death. Like, he died in battle, or died however way, and when they conquered, they dug up his body and burned his bones.

That's one possibility. And by the way, that's something that did happen quite often in ancient times. Kind of an insult, kind of a disgrace against a nation. The third possibility is that his skeletal remains, well, and this is what I meant to say.

I guess I was putting these two together. Number two, the corpse, they killed him and then they burned him after death. The third one is that they dug up his skeletal remains and burned them.

[42:16] And, again, that was something very common, and it's very likely that it's this third point. That is the meaning here. So, the idea may be because it says into lime that into lime might mean that the Moabites used the ashes from the bones of the king to mix it with a substance that would be used to whitewash houses.

That's pretty interesting. You say, well, what's the big deal about that? Well, it really, I think the idea is it reveals a certain treatment of a human body with such irreverence, something God has created, and it called for God's judgment.

We have similar things happening today. Remember, of course, the Nazis were guilty of extinguishing, exterminating Jews, and they would use parts of their body, not only for experiments, but you've read the stories about taking skin and making lampshades out of them, such as that.

Of course, obviously, they murdered them to begin with, but in our day, what's the difference between murdering innocent infants pre-born through abortion, and then taking their stem cells and using them for all manner of things that are supposedly beneficial to man.

Or, you know, they're still in our day, maybe not in our country, I hope, taking aborted babies and getting collagen that's used for cosmetics and such.

[44:08] So, you know, this evokes God's judgment. It did in this day, it will in our day. And the judgment is, but I will send a fire upon Moab and it shall devour the places of Kiriath.

Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting and trumpet sound, and I will cut off the judge from its midst and slay all its princes with him. That's pretty much the same kind of judgment.

And, again, the idea is total annihilation, and today, Moab no longer exists. So, God's word has come true.

The seventh one, and we're not going to get into it, but it's Judah, of course. And Judah was the southern kingdom of what was once called Israel during the divided kingdom.

And, you already know, there's where Judah is. And we'll, next time, we'll look at not only God's judgment upon Judah, his own people, but also Israel.