

Date: 27 Nov 2022

Scripture Passage: Amos 1:2 – 2:3

Title: Judgement Upon The Gentile Nations

Introduction

- Amos was one of three “minor prophets” to the northern nation of Israel, after the nation split into two.
- Amos came with a message of judgement to Israel who have broken God’s moral law. In this message, we consider God’s judgement on the surrounding gentile nations. We will look at Amos’ prophecy on Judah and Israel in subsequent weeks. The grace of God in Jesus Christ should be in the context of the Law. We have all broken God’s law. We must never separate the gospel from the law. The law alone will not save, but it must be preached.
- This message is about a call to the nations of the world to come to Christ for salvation. All nations will be judged, as we have all broken God’s law. The gospel call and the law of God are inseparable.

A message of judgement (1:2)

- The lion roars. This is a picture of God’s wrath. From Mount Zion where Jerusalem is located. Although judgement is pronounced on the gentile nations, this is the God of Israel speaking, not the gods of pagans. The law applied not only to Israel, but also to all nations. So also are judgement and salvation, it is to all nations and not just the Jews. God’s law and the gospel are linked.
- Judgement on sin is directed to all nations in the world, as it is pictured by this passage where nations surrounding Israel & Judah were judged. These nations were at the brink of God’s punishment. Amos was ministering during a period of peace, but some 30 years later the Assyrians were going to destroy Israel and the surrounding nations.
- Judgement upon six nations were being prophesied: Aram (Syria), Philistia, Phoenicia (Lebanon), {Edom, Ammon, Moab} (Jordan). It is a spiral of judgement, leading to Judah and Israel. We consider what is there to learn from the judgement of the surrounding Gentile nations.
- This message is to the world, of judgement to come. Are our own sins at the brink of God’s judgement? You have heard the call to turn from your sins and trust in Christ, are you like these nations at the brink of being punished?

The nations addressed

- Aram (1:3-5). Capital Damascus. Royal town Beth Eden in Valley of Aven. A repeated phrase, “For three transgressions and for four”. Total seven, the number of God’s perfection. The multitudes of sin seen here is ripe for judgement. There was extreme wickedness. Hazael succeeded Ben-Hadad, by prophecy of Elisha (2 Kings 8:10-13). He was a ruthless murderer, using sledges with iron teeth (3). Not mentioned are atrocities mentioned in 2 Kings 8:12. The people of Aram will eventually be conquered and taken away to Kir in Assyria (5), as were all the other nations.
- Philistia (1:6-8). Capital Gaza, royal city Askelon (8). Other major cities were Ashdod & Ekron. Philistines attacked Israel & Judah on a number of occasions. They sold whole communities of Israelites to Edom, the bitterest enemy of Israel & Judah.
- Phoenicia (1:9-10). Capital Tyre. Their sin was the same as Philistia. They sold Israelites to Edom. They broke the treaty made by David between Solomon & Hiram. Hiram sold wood to Solomon.
- Edom (1:11-12). Another name is Teman (12). Capital was Bozrah. They were related to Judah & Israel. They were descendants of Esau, brother of Jacob. Moses had tried to pass through when leading the Israelites to the promised land, but the Edomites were hostile despite being brothers. The Edomites stifle brotherly compassion. They were brutal towards the Jews. They pursued them with the sword and tore like wild beasts.

- Ammon (1:13-15). Capital Rabbah. Related to Israel & Judah through the descendants of Ben-ammi, son of Lot through younger daughter. Lot was the nephew of Abraham. Ammonites joined Syria to attack Gilead (north of Ammon). Their wickedness matched that of Syria (1:13b).
- Moab (2:1-3). Capital Kerioth. Descendants of Lot through first daughter. During the reign of Jehoram in Israel, in Elisha's time, Moab rebelled against Israel. God's judgement upon Moab is seen in 2:2-3. In the past, Israel, Judah & Edom united against Moab. Moab's king sacrificed his son (2 Kings 3:26-27) to rile up the anger of the people against Israel. Killed king of Edom, burned his bones to ashes out of spite (2:1).

Lessons learned

- That was the state of the nations. There was no sense of morality, no sense of ethics, no sense of spirituality. God through Amos was pronouncing judgement to the surrounding nations. There is a day of judgement. Whoever you are or wherever you may be, we will all be judged. Just like the Gentile nations, their sins were full and God was to judge them.
- We have only this life to put things right. How much more life do you have to put things right, to be spared from God's judgement? In what ways have we rebelled against God? Have you been putting on a show of godliness when in fact you are far from God? You may go to church, and you may have a Christian background, but you have not truly submitted your life to God. Your guilt is greater than those who have not heard the gospel.
- When people are left to themselves, they will become worse than what they are now. The doctrine of "Total Depravity" does not refer to the degree of depravity. The "total" refers to the extent, meaning all parts of us have been affected by sin. Left to ourselves without the restraint from God, we will be worse than what we are. When restraints of God's law are removed, we will have no brotherly love, no mercy, no grace. The moral law that is written in our conscience holds us back, without which we will be far more depraved than what we are.
- Only the blood of Christ can cleanse of our sins. How are we to stand before the holy God? It is only if you are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, then we can be accepted by God. This message turns us to the cross of Jesus Christ again. All our cruelty, all our sins, all our filth, may only be pardoned at the cross of Calvary. May we turn our eyes to Jesus Christ, the savior of sinners.