



God's Righteous Roar

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared—who will not fear? The Sovereign Lord has spoken—who can but prophesy? Amos 3:7–8

God's ominous roar from Jerusalem resounds over the entire promised land and out to the surrounding nations. It is the hot breath of judgment, of drought, of death. The pastures are drying up and even the lush, iconic Mt. Carmel is withering and bare.

Amos: Background

Amos

A shepherd/businessman from Tekoa (in Judah) – small town 11 miles southeast of Jerusalem; not far from En-gedi, where King David hid from Saul. Israel and Judah almost functioning as one nation. Time of prosperity. Amos probably preached in about 760-750 BC, mainly to the Northern kingdom. No active threat, but Israel will be taken into exile within a generation! The clouds are on the horizon, and Amos is giving a clarion call. If God can forgive Nineveh....Did Jonah's experience cause Israel and Judah to be jealous for repentance themselves?

Kings during Amos's Time

Judah: Uzziah (Azariah)

(for his story, see 2 Kgs 24 and 2 Chron 26)

Uzziah (Azariah)—a pretty good king, but did not destroy the high places. Exceedingly successful. Strong army, many building projects, riches in livestock; lots of water; military machinery. Fought against the Philistines. The Ammonites brought him tribute. He became proud and wanted to burn incense in the temple, as if he were a priest. The true priests tried to stop him. He became infuriated and God struck him with leprosy. After that, he lived in a separate house and his son Jotham reigned for him. Rebuilt Elath. (Zechariah was a prophet during his time). "As long as he sought the Lord, the Lord gave him success."

Israel: Jeroboam II

(Amos, Jonah and Isaiah are around the same time)

Jeroboam is a wicked king, but during his reign, Jonah's prophecy that Israel would extend its boundaries from Lebo-Hamath to the Sea of Arabah was accomplished.

Two years before "the earthquake" (like saying "2 yrs before 9/11")

There was a solar eclipse in 763 BC and an earthquake, whose exact date is hard to determine. It is referred to in Zechariah 14:4.

Time of reasonable peace and prosperity – only a generation or two after Jonah

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Amos 1:1–2:5, Rebecca Jones

Though there is much emphasis on “worship,” the morality is deplorable (we will see this later in the book)

Three or Four Sins

This doesn't mean they only had a few – say...three or four...sins. In fact, we only get one main sin on the whole. Maybe a “summary” of the sin, or the “last straw.” Like parents who decide, “Enough is enough!” All of the nations receive an irrevocable verdict. Their punishment will not be revoked.

The Sins of Three Pagan/Foreign Nations

1. Damascus

Capital of the land of Syria, inhabited by the Arameans; Abraham and his brother Laban were from Aram; descendants of Shem.

Israel recalled an ancestral connection with the Arameans: “a wandering Aramean was my father” (Deut. 26:5). In the biblical genealogies the Arameans are described as descendants of Aram, grandson of Abraham’s brother Nahor (Gen. 22:20–21; cf. 25:20; 31:24). (Holman Bible Atlas, 124)

2 Kgs 10: 32–33: In those days [Jehu’s reign] the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel. Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the Valley of the Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan. 2 Kings 13:22 Now Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

- The Sin of Damascus: They threshed Gilead

Punishment:

1. Fire on the house of Hazael to consume the citadel of Benhadad
2. Break the gates of Damascus
3. Keep anyone from living in the valley of Aven
4. Keep the king from Beth-eden
5. Send the Arameans to Kir

Their gods were **Rimmon** (male) and **Atargatis** (female – a blended name: Astarte plus her sister Anath). Damascus fell to the Assyrians in 732 BC

2. Gaza

- The Sin of Gaza: They deported an entire population into the hands of Edom

Punishment:

1. Fire on the wall of Gaza that consumes the citadels
2. Keep anyone from living in Ashdod
3. Keep the king from Ashkelon
4. Unleash my power on Ekron
5. The remnant of the Philistines will perish

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*The Philistines were famous for capturing whole villages and selling them into slavery to Edom and from there they were sold to other parts of the world.
Bible.org/seriespage/amos*

Their gods were **Ashtoreth**, **Dagon** and **Baal-Zebub**

3. Tyre

- The sin of Tyre: They delivered an entire population to Edom and did not remember the covenant with their brothers

Punishment:

1. Fire on the wall of Tyre to consume her citadels

Their gods were (Astarte) **Ashtoreth**; See also Ezekiel 27 for an amazing description of Tyre.

The Sins of Three Related Nations

4. Edom

- The sin of Edom: They pursued their brother with the sword, while stifling compassion; Their anger tore continually; kept their fury forever

Punishment:

1. Fire on Teman to consume the citadels of Bosrah

The readers may have expected the three, even four pattern to hit the fourth nation as particularly bad – and they would be right, for Edom was cursed particularly severely. But Amos continues to circle around to nations 5, 6, and 7.

*2 Chronicles 25:20 But Amaziah would not listen, for it was of God, in order that he might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought **the gods of Edom.***

5. Ammon

- The sin of Ammon: They ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead to grab territory

Punishment will not be revoked:

1. Fire on the wall of Rabbah to consume her citadels
2. War cries on the day of battle
3. A storm on the day of tempest
4. Their king will go into exile with his princes

Ammonites descendants of Lot by his daughter. Their god was **Molech**

6. Moab

- The sin of Moab: They burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime

Punishment will not be revoked:

1. Fire on Moab to consume the citadels of Kerioth
2. Moab will die amid tumult, with war cries and the sound of a trumpet
3. Cut off the judge and slay her princes

Their god was **Chemosh**

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The Three or Four Sins of God's Own People

7. Judah

- The sin of Judah: They rejected the law of the Lord, did not keep his statutes and were led astray by the lies of their fathers

Notice the different quality of this sin?

Punishment will not be revoked:

1. Send fire on Judah to consume the citadels of Jerusalem

This 7th nation seems to finish the list, but is the reader now waiting for another surprise—"for 7, even 8 nations"? And...We stop here!! The secret is for next week – the worst nation of all! BUT

By the Covenant Lord's own sovereign determination, the worship of Yahweh would eventually broaden to encompass a worldwide community as a consequence of the nation's restoration after exile. In the prophetic vision, this restoration would expand so that it became universal in nature, embracing all the nations of humanity.¹

Were God's punishments irrevocable? Remember God's mercy on Nineveh? We get a longer view than the one Amos's readers had. Some mystery characters from this broadened restoration:

Mystery Character #1: Damascus

Mystery Character #2: Gaza

Mystery Character #3: Tyre

Mystery Character #4: Edom

Mystery Character #5: Ammon

Mystery Character #6: Moab

Mystery Character #7: Judah

Messy family? Weak faith? Led astray by the lies of your fathers? Superficial worship? There's hope! Our messes have sent us into exile from God. We deserve his wrath. But Jesus brings us in from the cold. He not only died to take our punishment, but lived to provide us perfect righteousness!

¹ Roebertson, O. Palmer, *The Christ of the Prophets*, 197.