

# Amos 1 - Judgments of Heathen Nations, Israel, Judah: Damascus; Gaza; Tyre; Edom; Ammon

## I. Introduction (Amos 1:1-2)

### (1) Biographical information about Amos (1:1)

(A) Name: Amos (1:1a)

(B) Profession: sheepherder (1:1b)

(C) Residence: Tekoa (1:1c)

(D) Subject matter: visions (1:1d)

(E) Time frame: Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel two years before the earthquake (1:1e)

### (2) Message: divine judgment (1:2)

## II. Eight prophecies of judgment against the nations (Amos 1:3—2:16)

### (1) Damascus (1:3-5)

(A) Because they threshed Gilead (1:3)

(B) God will exile Damascus (1:4-5)

### (2) Philistia (1:6-8)

(A) Because they captured some Israelites and sold them to Edom (1:6)

(B) God would kill the Philistines: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron (1:7-8)

### (3) Tyre (1:9-10)

(A) Because they captured some Israelites and sold them to Edom and ignored the covenant between Israel and Tyre (1:9)

(B) God will destroy Tyre (1:10)

### (4) Edom (1:11-12)

(A) Because they purchased Israelite slaves from the Philistines and the Phoenicians and sought to harm Israel for material gain (1:11)

(B) God will destroy Teman and Bozrah (1:12)

### (5) Ammon (1:13-15)

(A) Coveted Gilead and ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to expand her borders (1:13-14)

(B) God will destroy her capital Rabbah and send her king into exile (1:15)

## I. Introduction (Amos 1:1-2)

### (1) Biographical information about Amos (1:1)

(A) Name: Amos (1:1a)

(B) Profession: shepherd (1:1b)

(C) Residence: Tekoa (1:1c)

(D) Subject matter: visions (1:1d)

(E) Time frame: Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel two years before the earthquake (1:1e)

**1** The **words** of **Amos**, who was among the **shepherders** from **Tekoa**, which he saw *in visions* concerning **Israel** in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, **two years before the earthquake**.

**1** The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

**1** The words of Amos, who was among the sheep breeders of Tekoa, which he spoke concerning Israel during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah and during the reign of Joash's son Jeroboam, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

**1** The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

- "...words" - collected messages (Cf. Prov 30:1; 31:1; Eccl 1:1; Jer 1:1)

- "...Amos" - "burden-bearer"

- "...shepherders" - *noqed*, "sheep-breeder"; Amos evidently managed or owned large herds of sheep and goats, and was in charge of other shepherds

— In 7:14 the prophet described himself as "a shepherd" and as one who "took care of sycamore-fig trees"

— The three terms together indicate that Amos, as a breeder, rancher, and farmer, was a substantial and respected man in his community

- "...Tekoa" - 10 miles south of Jerusalem; the city stood at a comparatively high elevation from which you could see the Mount of Olives to the north, as well as the surrounding countryside in every direction

- Amos' words expressed what he saw in visions that came to him from God. The visions concerned Israel during the time he wrote, which was during the reigns of King Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II (son of Joash), king of Israel

- "...Israel" - in Amos, "Israel" refers specifically to the northern kingdom rather than the combined Israel and Judah (as it often means in the prophets) because of the many references that Amos makes to people and places in the northern kingdom

- "...two years before the earthquake" - perhaps about 762 BC

- 250 years later, it is referred to in Zech 14:5 and likened to the same earthquake that will occur at the Second Coming, when Jesus' foot will touch the top of the Mount of Olives
- Josephus refers to this earthquake in his writings, and relates it to Uzziah's sin in acting as a priest (2 Chr 26:16)
- In the ANE culture, an earthquake was not viewed as a natural occurrence, but as an omen of judgment
- Amos warned that the Lord would shake the earth (8:8; 9:1,5, as well as in 4:12-13). When the earthquake occurred just two years after he delivered his message, it signaled to the people that the Lord was ready to make the words of Amos a reality.

The opening words make it clear that what follows is a covenant lawsuit commanded by Israel's suzerain, the Lord himself.

(2) Message: divine judgment (1:2)

2 And he said, "**The LORD roars from Zion**, And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds' pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up."

2 He said, "The LORD roars from Zion And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds' pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up."

2 He said, "From Zion the LORD roars, and from Jerusalem he shouts aloud. The shepherds' pastures will languish, and Carmel's summit will wither."

**2** And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

- This verse summarizes the message that Amos received from the Lord...

- "...The LORD roars from Zion" - Yahweh roared from Zion as a lion roars before it devours its prey, or as thunder precedes a severe storm (Cf. 3:4,8; Jer 25:30; Hosea 5:14; 11:10; 13:7)

— *Yahweh* is the first word in the Hebrew sentence; typically Yahweh is preceded by a verb, so here "LORD" is emphatic by its position

— The Lord spoke from Zion (Jerusalem) because that is where He manifested Himself in a localized way (in the temple) in Amos' day. In Israel, the primary worship centers were Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12-13).

- All the land would "mourn," from the shepherd's pastures in the lowlands, to the summit of Mount Carmel (a merism), because the Lord would "dry up" the whole land

— This was one of the curses if God's people proved unfaithful to His covenant (Deut 28:20-24; Cf. Lev 26:22; Deut 32:24)

II. Eight prophecies of judgment against the nations (Amos 1:3—2:16)

Amos delivered eight oracles of judgment, seven against Israel's neighbors, including Judah (1:3—2:5), and one against Israel (2:6—6:14). The order is significant: The nations mentioned first were foreign, but those mentioned next were the blood relatives of the Israelites, and Judah was its closest kin. Upon hearing this list, the Israelites would have felt "a noose of judgment about to tighten round their [the Israelites' own] throats." Each oracle follows the same basic pattern: First, Amos declared the judgment to come. Second, he defended the judgment by explaining the reason for it. Third, he described the coming judgment. All the things condemned by Amos were recognized as evil in themselves, not merely in Israel, but by all the nations of the ancient Near East (ANE). You can imagine Amos's hearers approving the denunciation of these heathen nations. They could even applaud God's denunciation of Judah because of the deep-seated hostility between the two kingdoms that went as far back as the dissolution of the united kingdom after Solomon. But Amos played no favorites; he swooped down on the unsuspecting Israelites as well in the severest language and condemned them for their crimes.

(1) Damascus (1:3-5)

(A) Because they threshed Gilead (1:3)

**3** This is what the LORD says: "For three **offenses** of **Damascus**, and for **four**, I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they **threshed Gilead** with iron sledges.

**3** Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they threshed Gilead with *implements* of sharp iron.

**3** This is what the LORD says: "For three transgressions of Damascus —and now for a fourth— I will not turn away; because they have trampled down Gilead with ironclad threshing sleds.

**3** Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron:

- "...offenses" - *pesa'im*, rebellions

- "...Damascus" - the capital city of Aram (Syria); it represents the entire nation

- "...three offenses...and for four" - one of Amos' trademark phrases (Cf. v6,9,11,13; 2:1,4,6)

— It refers to numerous transgressions (Job 5:19; 33:29; Ps 62:11-12; Prov 6:16; 30:15-16,18-19,21-23, 29-31; Eccl 11:2; Micah 5:5-6)

— "three offenses" means fullness; the fourth means overflow

— Amos mentions only the last "offense"; essentially "the straw that broke the camel's back" and made judgment inevitable

- "...threshed Gilead" - Gilead was part of the Transjordan; "threshed" pictures the plowing up of that area militarily (Is 41:15; Micah 4:13; Hab 3:12)

- Israelite residents suffered greatly during the constant battles with the Arameans, especially in the Transjordan (Cf. 2 Kings 8:7-12; 10:32-33; 13:3-7)
- Aramean kings Hazael and his son Ben-hadad III repeatedly invaded and conquered Israel between 842-802 BC

(B) God will exile Damascus (1:4-5)

4 "So I will send **fire** upon the house of Hazael, And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad.

4 "So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad.

4 So I will send down fire upon the house of Hazael, and it will devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

4 But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad.

- "...fire" - judgment; sending fire upon the main cities of the land recurs throughout Amos' oracles, illustrating coming destruction (v4,7,10,12,14; 2:2,5)

5 "I will also **break the gate bar** of Damascus, And eliminate every inhabitant from the **Valley of Aven**, As well as him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will be exiled to **Kir**," Says the LORD.

5 "I will also break the *gate bar* of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, And him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir," Says the LORD.

5 I will shatter the gate bars of Damascus, and I will cut off the residents of the Aven Valley, along with the one who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Aram will be exiled to Kir," says the LORD.

5 I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD.

- "...break the *gate bar*" - breaking the gate bar that secured the city would make the city impossible to defend (1 Kings 4:13)

- "...Valley of Aven" - "the valley of wickedness"

- "...Kir" - the Arameans would be exiled to Kir in Mesopotamia from which they originated (Cf. 9:7)

— Basically God would send them back to where they came from after He obliterated all they had achieved

— This prophecy was fulfilled when Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria captured Damascus and took the Arameans captive in 732 BC (2 Kings 16:7-9)

(2) Philistia (1:6-8)

(A) Because they captured some Israelites and sold them to Edom (1:6)

6 This is what the LORD says: "For three offenses of **Gaza**, and for four, I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they **led into exile an entire population** To turn *them* over to Edom.

6 Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they deported an entire population To deliver *it* up to Edom.

6 This is what the LORD says: "For three transgressions of Gaza —and now for a fourth— I will not turn away; because they exiled the entire population, delivering them to Edom.

6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom:

- "...Gaza" - the chief city of Philistia

- "...led into exile an entire population" - the particular sin for which God would judge the Philistines was their capture and deportation of entire communities to Edom as slaves (Cf. Joel 3:4-8)

— During the reign of Israel's king Jehoram (852-841 BC), Philistines and Arabs carried off the royal household (2 Chr 21:16-17), plundered the temple (Joel 3:5), and sold the people into slavery (Joel 3:3,6)

(B) God would kill the Philistines: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron (1:7-8)

7 "So I will send **fire** on the wall of Gaza And it will consume her citadels.

7 "So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza And it will consume her citadels.

7 So I will send down fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it will devour their fortified citadels;

7 But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof:

- "...fire" - destruction, judgment

8 "I will also eliminate every inhabitant from Ashdod, As well as him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; And I will direct My power against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish," Says the **Lord GOD**.

8 "I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish," Says the Lord God.

8 and I will cut off the inhabitants of Ashdod, along with Ashkelon's ruler. I will turn to attack Ekron, and the rest of the Philistines will die," says the Lord GOD.

8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

- Amos mentioned four of the five major cities of Philistia, all except Gath, which had fallen under control of Judah (6:2; 2 Kings 12:17; 2 Chr 26:6)

— The lands of the Phoenicians and Philistines were given to Israel as an inheritance (Joshua 13:1-7)

— They were instructed by God to drive these people from the land, but failed to do so (Judges 1:21-36); a thorn in their side ever since (Judges 2:1-6)

- "...Lord GOD" - this title occurs 19x in Amos but only 5x in the other minor prophets

— It stresses both His Lordship over all things and His covenant relationship with people

- This prophecy was initially fulfilled when the Judean kings Uzziah and Hezekiah invaded Philistia (2 Chr 26:6-7; 2 Kings 18:8), and when a succession of Assyrian conquerors captured these towns. It was completely fulfilled during the Maccabean period (169-134 BC) when the Philistines passed out of existence.

(3) Tyre (1:9-10)

(A) Because they captured some Israelites and sold them to Edom and ignored the covenant between Israel and Tyre (1:9)

9 This is what the LORD says: "For three offenses of **Tyre**, and for four, I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they turned an entire population over to Edom And did not remember *the covenant of brotherhood*.

9 Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they delivered up an entire population to Edom And did not remember *the covenant of brotherhood*.

9 This is what the LORD says: "For three transgressions of Tyre —and now for a fourth— I will not turn away; because they delivered the entire population to Edom, and did not remember their covenant with their relatives.

9 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:

- "...Tyre" - the leading city of Phoenicia during Amos' period

- The sin of Phoenicia/Tyre was the same as that of the Philistines (v6): they had sold whole communities of people to the Edomites as slaves

— Ironically, many people of Tyre became captives and were sold as slaves when Alexander the Great destroyed Tyre in 332 BC (Cf. Ezek 26-28)

(B) God will destroy Tyre (1:10)

10 "So I will send fire on the wall of Tyre, And it will consume her citadels."

10 "So I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre And it will consume her citadels."

10 So I will send down fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it will devour their fortified citadels."

10 But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.

- After this destruction, Phoenicia declined as a major power in the ANE and never revived

## Tyre's Destruction

It took Nebuchadnezzar 13 years (585-573 BC) to besiege Tyre, he then completely destroyed and enslaved this people (Ezek 26-28). A remnant of Tyre escaped to a small island offshore. For 240 years they survived until Alexander the Great laid siege for seven months, and ultimately built his famous causeway to it from the mainland in 332 BC. Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled (Ezek 27:32). They were destroyed and sold into slavery by Alexander the Great. Although rebuilt (Matt 15:21-28; Acts 21:3-6), it was ultimately destroyed by the Muslims in 1291. Sidon was the sister city (Ezek 28:21-28) and the Philistines (Is 14:28-31; Ezek 25:15-17) suffered the same fate as Tyre. See [Arab States in Prophecy](#) for an overview of the final disposition of Arab nations.

### (4) Edom (1:11-12)

(A) Because they purchased Israelite slaves from the Philistines and the Phoenicians and sought to harm Israel for material gain (1:11)

**11** This is what the LORD says: "For three offenses of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because he pursued his brother with the sword And stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever.

**11** Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever.

**11** This is what the LORD says: "For three transgressions of Edom—and now for a fourth—I will not turn away; because he pursued his brother with a sword, refusing to be compassionate. His anger was raging continuously; he kept up his unending wrath.

**11** Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever:

- God's main complaint against Edom, which brought His divine wrath, was the way in which the Edomites treated the Israelites

— The Edomites had been very hostile to their "brother" Israel (Cf. Gen 25:29-30; Num 20:14; Deut 2:4; 23:7; Obadiah 12); this hostility existed throughout the history of these nations

— This animosity even led the Edomites to attack the Israelites "with the sword" (Cf. Obadiah 10)

(B) God will destroy Teman and Bozrah (1:12)

**12** "So I will send fire upon **Teman** And it will consume the citadels of **Bozrah.**"

**12** "So I will send fire upon Teman And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah."

- 12 So I will send down fire upon Teman, and it will devour the fortified citadels of Bozrah."  
 12 But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.  
 - "...Teman" - the chief city of southern Edom (Jer 49:7; Ezek 25:13; Hab 3:3)  
 - "...Bozrah" - the chief city of northern Edom (Is 34:6; 63:1; Jer 49:13,22)

The Judgment against Edom is mentioned in more OT books than any other foreign nation: Is 11:14; 34:5-17; 63:1-6; Jer 9:25-26; 25:17-26; 49:7-22; Lam 4:21-22; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; 9:11-12; Obadiah 1-21; Mal 1:4.

### Judgment on Edom

The land SE of Judah, extending from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba, bordered on the W by the valley of Arabah, on the E by a large mountain range, and on the N by Moab. At one time it was a very cultivated area enjoying the "fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven." (Gen 27:39; Cf. Num 20:17). Edomites descended from Esau. There should have been a close feeling between the two; instead, perpetual enmity (Ex 15:15; Num 20:14-22; 2 Sam 8:14; 2 Kings 8:20; 14:7; Ps 83:6; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 10). See [Arab States in Prophecy](#) for an overview of the final disposition of Arab nations.

(5) Ammon (1:13-15)

(A) Coveted Gilead and ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to expand her borders (1:13-14)

**13** This is what the LORD says: "For three offenses of the sons of **Ammon**, and for four, I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their borders.

**13** Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their borders.

**13** This is what the LORD says: "For three transgressions of the Ammonites —and now for a fourth— I will not turn away; because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to enlarge their national borders.

**13** Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:

- "...Ammon" - Moab and Ammon were descendants of Lot (Gen 19:29-38)

— A lust for land 325 years earlier (1085 BC): Ammonites confronted Jephthah with a claim on Gilead which had "belonged to them before Israel had entered the land" (Judges 11:12-30)

- Ammon was in trouble from God because its soldiers brutally attacked and killed the Israelites, even the pregnant women and their unborn children, who lived in Gilead to the west of Ammon

— This brutal slaughter terrorized and decimated the attacked populace. The Ammonites did this "to enlarge their borders" (territory) to the west, namely, for materialistic advantage, not self-preservation.

— They attacked Jabesh-gilead under Nahash (Cf. 1 Sam 11:10) and joined the Chaldeans in their invasion for plunder (2 Kings 24:2)

14 "So I will kindle a fire on the wall of **Rabbah**, And it will consume her citadels Amid war cries on the day of battle, *And* amid a storm on the day of tempest.

14 "So I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah And it will consume her citadels Amid war cries on the day of battle, And a storm on the day of tempest.

14 So I will send down fire upon the wall of Rabbah, and it will devour their fortified citadels with an alarm sounding in the time of battle, and with a whirlwind in the time of storm.

14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind:

- For the destruction wrought by Ammon, God promised to destroy Rabbah the capital, and Ammon's walled cities ("citadels")

- "...Rabbah" - Rabbah was the capital (Deut 3:11), now known as Amman (Jer 49:3)

— Desolation was pronounced prophetically on Ammon (Ezek 35:5; Zeph 2:9)

(B) God will destroy her capital Rabbah and send her king into exile (1:15)

15 "Their king will go into exile, He and his princes together," says the LORD.

15 "Their king will go into exile, He and his princes together," says the LORD.

15 Their king will go into captivity— he and his princes together," says the LORD.

15 And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD.

- This destruction happened when Tiglath-Pileser III invaded Ammon in 734 BC, but Ammon's final demise came when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Rabbah and took many of Ammon's citizens captive to Babylon around 586 BC