

Amos

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish
February 9, 2022



Amos 1:11 – 2:3

Vss. 11-12

- Again crisscrossing the country, Amos goes from Tyre in the northwest to Edom to the southeast. Edom has been mentioned twice as the recipient of slaves, entire tribes that were captured and sold by Gaza and Tyre.
- But receiving slaves is not the primary charge against Edom. Recall that “three transgressions” means enough and four means too much. Sin stacked on top of sin. Here the charge is that Edom “pursued his brother with the sword and stifled/corrupted/restrained his compassion.”
- The Edomites were distant relatives, the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. The Edomites had occupied an area south and east of the Dead Sea shortly before Israel followed Moses out of Egypt. From that time there was conflict between the two nations. Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through its territory on the way to Canaan. Saul fought with Edom, but David eventually conquered Edom and Solomon fully incorporated the territory into his empire. It is not certain what is meant by Edom pursuing his brother with the sword, but the last two lines of verse 11 suggest that Edom never really accepted being incorporated into Israel, that “his anger also tore continually and he maintained his fury forever”, which is reminiscent of how the Palestinians today feel toward Israel.
- So for their constant rebellion, “Teman” will endure the fire of war. Teman is the region of the city of Edom, so no citadels are destroyed except in Bozrah, the northernmost city and capital of Edom’s kingdom.
- Such a pronouncement from Amos would send an already excited crowd into a frenzy!

Vss. 13-15

- Amos now moves northwest from Edom to Ammon and its capital Rabbah. Like the Edomites the Ammonites were closely related to Israel. Genesis 19:30-38 tells us that the Ammonites were descendants of Lot through one his daughters. The Arnon River served as its southern border with Moab. Rabbah is the only city of Ammon mentioned in the Old Testament and sat at the head of Jabbok River. It is today the site of the capital of Jordan, Amman.
- Both Ammon and Moab were pagan countries, fond of worshipping a fire god to whom children were regularly sacrificed. Both countries kept their distance when Israel came back into Canaan from Egypt, but their paganism was a constant negative influence on Israel and in 2 Samuel they were

conquered by King David who treated them savagely. Ammon evidently regained a level of independence following the collapse of David's empire when Solomon died.

- It is not certain when Ammon's attack came to Gilead, but border skirmishes were common. Amos' charge of Ammon's war crimes is explicit as Ammon tried to expand its borders and influence. But its punishment was to be the fires of a war that would be terrible and bring Rabbah to rubble, sending its king and royal family into exile.
- The noise of the cheering of the people of Bethel who heard these pronouncements of Amos would have gathered the whole city!

Vss. 2:1-3

- Moab sat east of the southern half of the Dead Sea with Ammon to the north and Edom to the south. It sat on a plateau 50 miles wide and 30 miles long with plentiful water and good soil for growing. Thus it was able to support a population of around 150,000. Ancient Moab is part of modern Jordan.
- There was constant friction between Moab and Israel, with the time of Ruth being the one exception as she was originally from Moab herself (Ruth 1:4). In 2 Samuel 8, King David is said to have defeated Moab and brutally put down all resistance. Later in 2 Kings 3, the Kings of the Southern Kingdom and the Northern Kingdom, and the King of Edom united against Moab, the country having likewise regained some independence following the collapse of David's empire. The three allied kings were victorious on the battlefield, but before the Moabite capital of Dibon was sacked, the Moabite King, Mesha, offered his eldest son and heir as a sacrifice to the god Chemosh. Shaken by that level of resolve, the three allied kings withdrew and Moab survived. The Moabite version of the same story was found on a large stone (now known as the Moabite Stone) by archeologist excavating Dibon in 1868.
- From what Amos is saying, evidently Moab retaliated against Edom for what they would have considered a betrayal for allying with the two Hebrew kings. It is unlikely that the Edomite king would have been captured alive so it may be that the hatred of the Moabite king extended as far as finding the dead king and cremating his body as an act of hatred and vindictiveness. The Protestant English Reformer John Wycliffe had a stroke and died during church worship in 1384. 44 years after his death, the Roman Catholic church having regained some authority in England, declared Wycliffe a heretic and ordered his body to be exhumed and burned and his ashes scattered into the River Swift which flows through Wycliffe's hometown of Lutterworth. Hate very often extends well beyond the grave.
- For Moab's inhumane war crimes against Edom, the flames of war will come to Moab and this time the nation will be utterly destroyed, the punishment equaling the crime. The palace and fortifications

in the city of Kerioth will be destroyed, Kerioth being mentioned in Jeremiah 48:41 as being destroyed by the Babylonians between 580-586 BC and Kerioth is also mentioned in the Moabite Stone.

- Thus Amos concludes the judgement of God on the foreign countries. We should not miss that the last judgement here concerns one pagan nation's crimes against another pagan nation, demonstrating that God is Lord over all the earth, over the people who recognize Him and bow to Him and over those who do not. War crimes, unrestrained hatred, and the buying and selling of people who God so loved that He would one day send His only Son to die for will surely bring His judgement.



