

AMOS: GOD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENT
II: God's Incensed Prediction Of His Punishment Of Israel
(Amos 2:4-16)

I. Introduction

- A. When God needed a messenger to the wicked Northern Kingdom of Israel when it was at the height of its spiritual rebellion against Him, the Lord sent a layman from Judah named Amos who was not a professional prophet to travel north into Israel to pronounce sharp judgment as a great warning to that nation.
- B. After introducing God's predicted punishment of the Gentiles in Amos 1:1-2:3, the prophet in Amos 2:4-16 told of God's incensed prediction of His punishment of Israel, and we view the passage for our insight:

II. God's Incensed Prediction Of His Punishment Of Israel, Amos 2:4-16.

- A. Having predicted God's incensed punishment against Israel's surrounding Gentile nations, Amos was directed of God to predict the Lord's incensed punishment of Israel's relative nation Judah to her south, Amos 2:4-5:
 - 1. Using the same literary formula as with the Gentile nations, God declared that for "three transgressions of Judah, and for four," He would not turn away His punishment of her, Amos 2:4a. Thus, due to Judah's "repeated and innumerable acts of rebellion" against God as in the case of the Gentiles (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Amos 1:3), the Lord's judgment would fall on even Judah, Israel's close relatives.
 - 2. Judah's great sins were violation of the Mosaic Covenant and being led astray by the "lies" by which her fathers had walked, Amos 2:4b. The Hebrew word translated "lies" is *kazab*, what is "a lie or something deceptive" (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1430-1431), is a figurative expression for Judah's false gods that "were deceptive for they were unable to help the people," Ibid.
 - 3. Accordingly, God would send a fire on Judah that would destroy the strongholds of Jerusalem, Amos 2:5.
 - B. By now, the recipients of Amos' prophecy in Israel knew that if God would impartially punish not only the surrounding Gentile nations, but even Israel's close relative for sin, God would punish Israel for her sin!
 - C. Indeed, Amos added the announcement that for three transgressions and for four, God would not withhold His punishment of Israel for her similar "repeated and innumerable acts of rebellion" against God, Amos 2:6a.
- III. The reasons for this punishment were varied, and Amos detailed some of them in Amos 2:6b-12 (as follows):
- A. Israel had violated the Mosaic Covenant in several ways, Amos 2:6b-8:
 - 1. First, Israel's people were selling into slavery honest ("righteous") people who had not defaulted on their loans for the silver they still owed, Amos 2:6b; Ibid., p. 1431. The poor were enslaved for not paying the sum they owed for a pair of sandals, Amos 2:6c; Ibid. Sandals were given to confirm the legal transfer of land (Ruth 4:7), so this statement on sandals may mean that the "poor were being sold either for money or for land," hardheartedness in violation of Deuteronomy 15:7-11 that called for generosity to the poor, Ibid.
 - 2. Second, the courts were in "collusion with the creditors," denying justice to the oppressed, Am. 2:7a; Ibid.
 - 3. Third, fathers and sons were being sexually intimate with the same temple prostitute or servant girl who had been taken as a mistress, what profaned God's name in violating His commandments, Amos 2:7b; Ibid.
 - 4. Fourth, though the Law forbade keeping items given as a symbolic pledge in financial transactions that were needed for the livelihood of the poor, the wealthy were keeping these things, and even spreading garments taken in pledge at their sacrificial feasts at every altar in disregard for the Law, Amos 2:8a; Ibid.
 - 5. Fifth, the wine the people had wrongly taken from the poor as fines was being raised to give toasts to false gods, a double sin of disobedience to God in mistreating the poor and committing idolatry, Am. 2:8b; Ibid.
 - B. Israel had sinned this way regardless of God's gracious acts in her behalf, Amos 2:9-12:
 - 1. Regardless of all these sins, God had graciously destroyed the giant Amorites of Canaan so Israel could possess the Promised Land, He had brought her up out of Egypt and led her through the wilderness for forty years and raised up prophets and Nazirites from their midst to minister to her, Amos 2:9-11.
 - 2. However, Israel had made the Nazirites drink wine in violation of their required abstinence before God and she had commanded the prophets God had sent to her not to prophesy, Amos 2:12.
 - C. Accordingly, God predicted His severe, inescapable punishment on Israel in Amos 2:13-16.

Lesson: *God revealed that to be impartial to all the nations, He had no choice but to punish Israel severely for her many violations of the Mosaic Covenant that occurred regardless of God's great grace toward her in her history.*

Application: *May we not view God's gracious acts toward us as an excuse to think He will not punish our sin, for God is impartial, and He will punish all sins, especially the sins of those who know His will! (Luke 12:47-48)*