

Amos
Part 1: The Heart of a Prophet
Brokenness (Amos 5:1-5; 7:1-9)

Introduction: I've divided our study of Amos into three parts: the heart of a prophet, the purpose of Biblical prophecy, and the specific sins confronted by Amos. So far in part one, we've talked about the purity of Amos's drive to preach and his refusal to compromise what he was called to preach and to whom he was supposed to preach it. Today, we will examine one more aspect of the heart of a prophet: the brokenness they felt over the sins of the people.

There is a fine line between being broken about other people's sins and being angry. The difference in the purpose of the response generated by those two emotions is unmistakable. Neither is void of identifying sin as sin nor in the eternally destructive nature of sin. However, one emotional response seeks to bring a person to repentance, while the other leads to judgment. One lays out the consequences of sin in an effort to keep people from ending up in it, and the other lays out the consequences in hopes that they will.

When people read Biblical prophecy, they can mistakenly believe the prophets couldn't wait to pronounce God's judgment on people. But when you read Amos, you find out real quick that's not the case at all, nor is it the case of anyone who is actually being filled and led by the Spirit of God!

Amos was broken over the blatant rebellion of significant matters within the Law God gave the Jewish people that were clearly spelled out and obviously emphasized as significant within the Law itself! We aren't going to get into the specifics yet, but it is important to know that Amos wasn't acting like the Pharisees in Jesus' day who were adding all kinds of details to the law to ensure people were truly holy; self-inflicted laws that split hairs into such nonsensical pieces that the purpose of the law that God gave them was utterly lost in self-righteous bureaucratic thinking.

Fast forwarding to our day, Amos also wasn't acting like the modern religious legalists who attempt to inflict holiness standards on Christians that they insinuate are signs of true Christian maturity and dedication to the Lord—homeschooling your kids, doing formalized traditional liturgical things in your worship service, not using modern music or lighting, and only having one worship service, in one location on Sunday that everybody has to attend. The list goes on and on of the things that are frankly too exhausting even to have to listen to, especially when you hear the anger in the voices of the preachers who insist everybody should be doing what they are doing.

Ironically, as Paul wrote,

23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. (Colossians 2:23)

Legalists often seem eager to pronounce judgment on everyone, in part because they are so miserable trying to live up to all the standards they impose on others. Furthermore, those who believe they are faithfully living out their flawed understanding of holiness often end up with an arrogant spirit that fools them into believing their anger towards people who refuse to join them in their self-righteous efforts is righteous!

Amos, nor any of the other Biblical prophets, go down roads like that. The sin they addressed was always the blatant rebellion against the central and obviously emphasized commandments in the Law that turn out to not only be emphasized in the Covenant God made with the Jewish people that was fulfilled and replaced by Christ, but the universal standards God created for man to operate in from the very beginning; the very things we see leap off the pages of the New Testament as well! However, the heart they addressed these sins with was not one of arrogant condemnation as those who had themselves perfected obedience at some elite level worthy of the admiration and applause of others, but as those who knew their brothers and sisters were living in such blatant and stubborn rebellion that they were doomed to live under the judgment of God if they didn't repent! They weren't angry with their Jewish brothers and sisters; they were totally broken that the people they loved were ruining their own lives as well as the lives of their descendants; that they were exchanging the promised blessings of God for the misery and decay of a fallen world separated from God!

The brokenness of the prophets of GOD came from the Holy Spirit who filled the prophets; therefore, they longed for the people of God to live in the blessing of being God's chosen people and to abound in the life that only comes from God! They didn't pronounce God's judgment on people they hated, but on people they, like God, loved! In the Old Testament, we have a book written by the Prophet Jeremiah, called Lamentations. It's a book written about his complete despair over the people's refusal to repent from their sinful hearts and the consequences they were going to reap! Jeremiah mourned for Israel as a parent would mourn over the death of one of their children! Similarly, Amos DEEPLY grieved over the sinful reality of his Jewish family and the resulting future they were bringing on themselves. Specifically,

Proposition: There are two clear testimonies of Amos's genuine brokenness over the sinful reality of Israel.

The first testimony of Amos's brokenness is rather obvious.

(1) Amos mourned over Israel (5:1-5)

A. 1 Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:

1. "Imagine yourself sitting comfortably in your church pew on a Sunday morning as the preacher rises to begin the sermon. However, instead of

giving a sermon, the preacher begins the keening wail of a funeral dirge. This is what Amos does here.”¹

2. The “word” he’s about to deliver to them is certainly not one he’s delivering with joy, nor is it with vengeance and anger. Amos isn’t mad about something they are doing to him. He’s totally broken that the people he loves have so violated the covenant God made with them that God cannot be considered a holy and righteous God if he doesn’t respond with the extreme judgment promised in the covenant for such rebellion.
 3. Amos is literally delivering this message to Israel “in lamentation,” which is to say in the grief you feel when somebody you love has died. It literally means to publicly mourn. It references the actions of people singing a funeral dirge, a song sung at a funeral that expresses the profound, unexplainable grief over the loss of someone deeply loved.
 4. In this case, the actual judgment of God hadn’t come yet, but the death of the people to God had! Listen to what Amos writes next,
- B. 2 “Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel; forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up.” 3 For thus says the Lord God: “The city that went out a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went out a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel.”**
1. “*Fallen* in death, the dead girl has no inherent power of recovery (*never to rise*) nor any external aid (*deserted ... no-one to lift*).”²
 2. “Israel is spoken about here as though the nation is already dead, and Amos cries out, ‘Fallen is Virgin Israel, never to rise again, deserted in her own land, with no one to lift her up’ (v. 2) ... The death of someone who is unrepentant is a terrifying thing to witness. When I am taking funeral services I refuse to read Canon Henry Scott Holland’s popular poem which commences, ‘Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room ...’ I will not read this because it is untrue; death is not inconsequential. Death is the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). Death came into the world as a result of Adam’s disobedience. To die ‘without hope and without God’ (Eph. 2:12) is a horrifying thing. Amos tells us that the nation of Israel was ‘dead and done for’; she would soon be no more. Shortly, she would be carried away and treated abominably—and then extinguished, never to rise again.”³

¹ Birch, B. C. (1997). [Hosea, Joel, and Amos](#) (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 212). Westminster John Knox Press.

² Motyer, J. A. (1994). [Amos](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 800). Inter-Varsity Press.

³ Bentley, M. (2006). [Opening up Amos](#) (pp. 61–63). Day One Publications.

3. The imagery is of a virgin with nobody to rescue her, and it's highlighted by the illustration of cities that send out their men to battle only to see 90% of those men killed, never to return alive. The vast majority of those who live in the Kingdom of Israel would never again see the land God had given them. Although Judah would eventually be restored after the Babylonians conquered it, it would never again exist as it had under David and Solomon. However, the Kingdom of Israel, the kingdom of the ten northern Jewish tribes where Amos preached, would never be restored. Amos writes,
- C. **4 For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live; 5 but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing."**
 - D. The point I need you to see here is that Amos is not cheering on God's judgment of his brothers and sisters; he's mourning over it. Amos LOVES his Jewish brothers and sisters! You don't celebrate or feel vindicated when the people you love suffer the consequence of their sin; you feel broken-hearted that the people you love chose death over life!
 - E. Amos isn't filled with an arrogant religious spirit. He's a prophet of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and thus driven by a heart shaped by the Spirit of God. Amos is broken over their sin because their sin has brought the reality of living separated from God into their lives—death!

The second testimony of Amos's brokenness is that he prayed not for judgment, but mercy!

(2) Amos pleaded for mercy for Israel. (7:1-9)

- A. **1 This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, he was forming locusts when the latter growth was just beginning to sprout, and behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. 2 When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, "O Lord GOD, please forgive! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" 3 The LORD relented concerning this: "It shall not be," said the LORD. (7:1-3)**
1. "In the first of five visions Amos saw God actually preparing swarms of locusts at the nation's most vulnerable time of the year! (The Heb. expresses the prophet's amazement at such a thing; cf. "behold" in nasb.) The locusts were being loosed on the land after the king's share had been harvested and just as the second crop was coming up. The king had the right to claim the first cutting of the grain for his military animals (cf. 1 Kings 18:5). The "second crop"—either what grew after the first cutting or a separate late planting—was the final growth of the season before the summer's dryness. If it were lost the people would have nothing to eat until the next harvest. A

locust swarm was one of the most dreaded plagues of the ancient East. As a swarm made its ravenous way across the land, people despaired because it was an enemy against whom they were helpless. When the plague was past, suffering and death by famine followed. This misery was intensified in Israel, for locusts were recognized as God's instrument of punishment for covenant violations (Deut. 28:38, 42; cf. Amos 4:9; Joel 1:1-7). ... In his vision Amos saw that the locusts stripped the land clean of all vegetation—both seeded crops and wild growth. Knowing that the nation would die if this vision became a reality, Amos begged the sovereign Lord to forgive the people of their sins. Though Israel was unrepentant, though her guilt was overwhelming, and though the punishment was just, Amos nevertheless pleaded with God not to bring this punishment on the nation. Jacob would never survive it. Jeroboam II's proud people might think themselves invulnerable (6:1-3, 8, 13; 9:10), but when viewed in the face of God's awesome might and wrath they were in reality so small, so helpless, so pitiable. ... Moved by the prophet's prayer, the Lord relented and promised that the swarm of locusts would not happen. (The word "relent" suggests a turning away and a relief from an earlier decision because one has been deeply stirred by the appeal of another; cf. comments on Ex. 32:11-14.) The nation was not forgiven, but this particular punishment was withdrawn. Amos did not ask for forgiveness again (cf. Amos 7:2 with v. 5), for some judgment on Israel was inevitable. But by his prayers he was able to affect what form that judgment would take."⁴

2. "These visions are not set in mystifying language but are clear and plain for everyone to grasp. Verses 1 and 4 of chapter 7 and verse 1 of chapter 8 all commence with these words, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me'. God is reminding Amos and the people that these visions are of great importance. The first thing that he saw was the Lord preparing swarms of locusts (v. 1). These small insects can devastate whole crops within a few minutes. Amos also saw the crop beginning to sprout again after the king's animals had already eaten the first green shoots (maybe as payment for the royal tax). However, when this second, stronger growth of crops was just coming into view, the prophet saw the swarms of locusts chomping their way through every field until the whole land had been 'stripped clean'. (Israel was at its zenith of prosperity and influence in the region) This was a dreadful thing to happen, particularly for people who depended upon agriculture for the majority of their food. This would mean severe shortages of food for everyone—except, perhaps, for the royal household. Amos was distraught when he saw this vision. He did not respond by saying, 'The people deserve this kind of thing because of their disobedience to the Lord's commands.' Instead, his heart went out to the people and he immediately cried out, 'Sovereign Lord, forgive!' When someone seeks forgiveness they

⁴ Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). [Amos](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 1444-1445). Victor Books.

are admitting that they have done wrong. Amos, therefore, does not plead for God to overlook the people's sin. Realizing the danger the people were in, Amos cried out even more, 'How can Jacob survive? He is so small!' Amos is more realistic than the 'notable men' who felt themselves to be in the 'foremost nation' of Israel (see 6:1). ... Verse 3 tells us very plainly, 'So the Lord relented.' This means that the numerous swarms of locusts did not descend upon the land. However, the Lord did not promise forgiveness. ..."⁵

B. 4 This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, the Lord GOD was calling for a judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land. 5 Then I said, "O Lord GOD, please cease! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" 6 The LORD relented concerning this: "This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD. (7:4-5)

1. Amos saw another consequence of Israel's sin, another judgment of God on them. This wasn't in lieu of the previous, but in addition to it. God agreed not to send the locust, but Amos then realized fire was also coming; therefore, Amos cried out to God to hold this consequence back as well, and the Lord agreed.
2. "In a second vision the sovereign Lord showed Amos a second terror—a judgment by fire. God intensified the blazing summer heat till all grasslands and trees became tinder dry. Then fires broke out and spread in every direction with incredible speed (cf. Joel 1:19–20). Attempts to combat the sweeping inferno were futile, for the great deep, the subterranean waters that fed all springs (Gen. 7:11; 49:25; Deut. 33:13), had dried up. With the source of all waters consumed, the rivers and streams disappeared, and the flames raged unchecked until they had devoured the land (cf. Deut. 32:22). 7:5–6. Again, distraught by the vision, Amos begged God to stop, and the Lord relented a second time. Neither would fire be the means by which He would punish the nation (see comments on v. 3)."⁶
3. "... The second picture that Amos saw was a great fire that would dry up the great deep and devour the land (v. 4). This punishment would be even more overwhelming than the locusts, because now the water under the earth (from which the roots of the crops would draw much of their nourishment) would be dried up in the fierce heat of the fire. Again Amos appeals for his people but this time he is even more intense as he pleads, 'Sovereign Lord, I beg you, stop!' Then he adds as before, 'How can Jacob survive? He is so small.' When our loved ones, especially our children, are very ill, we immediately pour out our hearts to God, pleading that he will heal and restore them to full health and strength again. ... In answer to Amos's prayer,

⁵ Bentley, M. (2006). *Opening up Amos* (pp. 86–90). Day One Publications.

⁶ Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). *Amos*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1445). Victor Books.

the Lord did relent and added, 'This will not happen either.' This time (unlike in v. 3) God is described as 'the Sovereign Lord'. God did not relent because Amos forced him to change his mind; rather, the Lord knew from the beginning what he would do ..."⁷

4. "While people think of the role of the prophet as one who represents God to the people, many fail to realize the role of the prophet was also to mediate on behalf of others, especially the people of God. Speaking to Abimelech concerning Abraham the Lord said, 'He is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live' (Gen. 20:7). Abraham also interceded for Sodom (Gen. 18:23–33). Early in Israel's history Moses demonstrated his concern for God's people through intercessory prayer (Num. 14:11–14, 31–32). Samuel also interceded for God's people when the people suffered (1 Sam. 7:5–13) or turned away from God's will (1 Sam. 12:18–23). It is the prophet's responsibility to stand in the breach when God's people are in harm's way (Ezek. 13:4–5; 22:30). Like prophets who came before him, Amos interceded for the people, hoping God would relent of His plans for Israel. Amos' request was not for forgiveness based upon Israel's repentance; it was a request for Israel's complete pardon based only upon God's mercy and grace. Through Moses the Lord said, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin' (Exod. 34:6–7)."⁸
- C. It's at this point in this passage that we need to press pause and make sure we don't misinterpret what we just read.
1. In Genesis 18, a similar story is presented. Abraham pleaded with God not to destroy Sodom because his nephew Lot and his family lived there. So, he begged God not to destroy it if there were at least 50 in Sodom who were righteous, and God agreed. Then Abraham began to negotiate the number down, offering 45, then 40, 30, 20, and finally 10; each time, God agreed. However, God, having not even found 10 righteous people within Sodom, did however provide a way of escape to Lot and his family, and as such honored the motive in Abraham's plea – **"23 Then Abraham drew near and said, 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?' (Genesis 18:23)**
 2. Some readers conclude that Abraham and Amos altered God's will with their prayers. We need to be particularly careful here, as this is one of those biblical paradoxes where there is no explanation of how God works, only the presentation of how God worked. The Bible is very clear that we do NOT change the will of God:

⁷ Bentley, M. (2006). [*Opening up Amos*](#) (pp. 86–90). Day One Publications.

⁸ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (pp. 133–135). Christian Focus.

- a. 2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. (Job 42:2)
 - b. 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ (Isaiah 46:10)
 - c. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (Ephesians 1:11)
3. So how then do we reconcile those statements with passages like these:
- a. 7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11)
 - b. 20 As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. 21 And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” 22 And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:20-24)
4. So which one is it? Is it that God only does what He intended, or is God influenced by the prayers of the faithful? Well, as I stated, the Bible tells us how God responds to prayers, but it doesn’t give us an explanation of how, in that it doesn’t outright explain how my prayers could influence a God whose will and desires cannot be changed. It does, however, give us some insight into how this relationship works between God and His children, and that is what we see happen with Abraham and Amos. John wrote,

Note: 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. 18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. (1 John 5:13-18)

5. Some view the “sin that leads to death” as something we do that guarantees an unavoidable discipline of God in the termination of our opportunity to labor with Him and those we love on earth. Other people believe John is speaking of the unpardonable sin that there is no escape from, which is coming to the end of your life on earth without ever repenting and believing in Him. Either way, the point we need to see today is that John tells us God answers prayers that align with what He’s doing.
6. As children of God, the Holy Spirit is in us, working in us, and even speaking to God on our behalf, the things we are too ignorant and spiritually immature to say (Romans 8:26-27), but He is also aligning us with Him. That means, as we walk with God and grow in our relationship with Him, what we ask of God will align with God’s will. As we grow in our faith in Him, our hearts will increasingly resemble His Heart, and as such, reflect more and more of what He’s doing.
7. In this way, our prayer life with God works like a leader who coaches people to make the decisions the leader already knows they need to make, but does so in a way that helps the person figure it out themselves. For instance, in leadership, sometimes you have to provide people with every detail of what they need to do. However, there are also times that you try to help people come to the decision they need to make without making it for them. In this case, you not only want them to do what you need them to do, but you also want them to begin thinking on their own, so that in the future, you have to tell them less and less about what you need them to do. So you present them with a problem, ask them questions that get their minds churning in the right direction, and if necessary, you might even put the issue in its proper context so that you shrink the available options for them to logically consider. If they kick out a solution that isn’t where you need it to be, the answer is “no.” However, if their minds can truly align with what needs to be accomplished, then the answer will likely be “yes.”
8. That’s the best shot I have at explaining Biblical prayer. Prayer is not me telling God what to do; it’s the genuine conversations we have in a relationship with God that, if we are walking in step with the Spirit, will increasingly reflect His heart and mind as well!

9. In the case of Amos, he is praying for something we know God loves to do—forgive! It is the desire of God that all come to repentance, not in that all will come to repentance, but that is his heart (2 Peter 3:9)! God doesn't love punishing people; He loves blessing people! But God is also JUST and HOLY, and in that He promised the Jewish people that there were harsh consequences for violating the covenant He made with them. God had been incredibly patient with the Jewish people, but as Amos is praying for mercy, he is doing so with the knowledge of what the will of God is in response to the rebellion of the Israelites. Moses said,

Note: 15 "But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. ... 49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, 50 a hard-faced nation who shall not respect the old or show mercy to the young. (Deuteronomy 28:15, 49-50)

10. In this case, the first two responses to Amos's appeal for mercy demonstrated that God is indeed patient and merciful. They deserved the locust and the fire, but God wasn't going to put on them what they fully deserved. However, in showing Amos that He is merciful, God was also aligning Amos's heart with what He was going to do and why. God's response to Amos for mercy proved that what God was about to do was not because He loves pouring out His wrath, but rather because He is just. There was a severe, unavoidable consequence coming that Amos would now understand God had to do, or He would be an unjust and untrustworthy God.

D. 7 This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. 8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them; 9 the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." (7:7-9)

1. His judgment was going to set a plumb line for Israel to understand that God is Holy and Sovereign, and must be obeyed—a judgment that would make it clear that He means what He says. God cannot be continually ignored and disregarded. God told the Jewish people that the opportunity to live in the promised blessings would only go so far and that if they continued to disobey Him, He would eventually remove His blessings and protection, which is what is getting ready to happen to the northern tribes. The Assyrians were eventually going to conquer and enslave the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Not long after that, the Babylonians took over the

Assyrian Empire and ultimately conquered and enslaved the Kingdom of Judah. However, only the Kingdom of Judah would eventually be restored. The northern Kingdom of Israel, to which Amos was speaking directly, would never again exist.

2. “For the third time the prophet was shown a vision of judgment. This time the sentence was unalterable. 7:7–8. The Lord held in His hand a plumb line. A plumb line was a cord with a lead weight used by builders to make sure that walls were constructed straight up and down. A plumb line was also used to test existing walls to see whether they had settled and tilted, needing to be torn down. God was setting a plumb line (possibly the covenant Law and its requirements; cf. Isa. 28:17) among His people Israel. The nation had been built “true to plumb,” but now was out of line and needed to be torn down. God quickly precluded any appeal from His prophet. The matter was settled; He would spare them no longer. This was the form His judgment would take (see comments on Amos 7:3, 5–6). 7:9. Having failed the test of the plumb line, the nation’s chief “structures”—both religious and political—would be demolished. The numerous high places (hilltop shrines) of Isaac would be destroyed. Like “Jacob” (see comments on 3:13) and “Joseph” (cf. 5:6, 15; 6:6) “Isaac” was a name for the Northern Kingdom. The larger official sanctuaries of worship, such as Bethel and Gilgal, would be ruined (cf. 3:14; 4:4; 5:5–6; 7:13). And the house (political dynasty) of Jeroboam II would crumble under the stroke of God’s sword (cf. 2 Kings 14:29; 15:10).”⁹
3. “... A plumb-line is used to measure the uprightness of walls. Amos knew what a plumb-line was for, and he would certainly have known the purpose of walls—to keep out the enemy. So there was no ambiguity in this vision. When the Lord asked him what he saw, he replied immediately, ‘A plumb-line’. It was obvious from the Lord’s next statement what he meant; he had set a clear standard for God’s people—the law which he had given to them all those years ago at Sinai. Because of their false worship and unjust behaviour they were ‘out of true’; they had not been building their lives, and the life of their nation, in strict accordance with God’s Word. This had been the repeated message of Amos right from the beginning; the people had deviated from the straight and narrow of God’s law, and now they were going to have to suffer for it. Amazingly, in giving this illustration of their sinful behaviour, God calls Israel ‘my people’. This is the first time in the book of Amos that God calls them this, but even so he says that he will spare them no longer. He was to tell the people of Judah that, after they had been taken into the captivity of Babylon, he would gather them in his arms and bring them back to their land (Isa. 56:8). But the people of Israel would be spared no longer. The Lord was also going to destroy ‘the high places of Isaac’. It would seem that they had erected various shrines in places

⁹ Sunukjian, D. R. (1985). [Amos](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1445). Victor Books.

associated with their forefathers, as though they thought that this would give them a special sense of holiness, for example at Beersheba where Isaac had worshipped God (Gen. 26:25). But now these areas would be ruined. The people were not to rely on the faith of their fathers; they were to put their trust in God for themselves. So far the warnings of punishment had been addressed particularly to the 'notable men' of the land (6:1), but now the king and his house are singled out (v. 9). God was going to raise his sword of judgement against the whole of Jeroboam's house. This prophecy was fulfilled in about 746 B.C. with the assassination of Jeroboam II's son Zechariah (2 Kings 15:10)."¹⁰

New Testament Application:

The New Testament and the Gospel fully reveal to us the brokenness we should have regarding our own sin and that of others.

- (1) 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate. (Matthew 23:37-38)**
- (2) "41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (Luke 19:41-42)**
- (3) 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. (Romans 9:2-3)**
- (4) 21 I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced. (2 Corinthians 12:21)**
- (5) 18 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:18-19)**

Therefore, as we respond to the sin of others with the TRUTH, we need to remember the following:

- (1) We cannot effectively point a lost world to Jesus if we hate it. (Matthew 5:43-48, Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)**

¹⁰ Bentley, M. (2006). [*Opening up Amos*](#) (pp. 86–90). Day One Publications.

(2) We cannot effectively point rebellious brothers and sisters back to Christ if we hate them for turning away. (Galatians 6:1-2, Ephesians 4:31, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, 1 John 3:15)

Note: As we learned at the end of 2 Thessalonians, separating ourselves in love from people who call themselves Christians but demonstrate a consistent refusal to repent isn't hatred or vengeance, its the Biblical last-ditch effort to try to get them to repent and be rescued! When I was a lifeguard, they taught us how to do this very thing. If you tried to save somebody who refused to let you do it, who kept thrashing around and, as such, risked drowning you as you tried to save them, then you kicked away from them. Sometimes you have to let people pass out before you can help them! That's not vengeance, that's love. I can't rescue you if I let you drown me!

Hatred never leads people to change; love does. It is HIS love that causes us to repent. Love doesn't overlook sin, nor does it not call it sin; but love does totally change why we are calling it sin and what we hope to accomplish in doing so.

So,

Challenge: What does the attitude of your prayers, or lack of prayers, for those who are openly rebelling against God say about the condition of your heart? What do your prayers say about your heart for those who have sinned against you?