

Amos Part 2: The Purpose of Biblical Prophecy Proclaim the Universality of the Judgement of God

Introduction: Often, we view the Old Testament actions of God as being exclusively concerned with the Jewish people knowing and following Him, that is, that God did not extend the opportunity to know and follow Him to people who were not descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But that's fundamentally untrue. The Great Commission didn't originate in the New Testament; it was just made way clearer and way more inviting by it!

It is very true that the Jews had been chosen by God and had a special Covenant with God in how they were going to be used by Him to bring salvation, Jesus, to the world, but that didn't mean only Jews could have a relationship with God! Right out of the gate, God made it clear that His intention with the nation He was building out of Abraham's descendants was not to isolate and hide Himself from the world, but for Abraham's descendants to shine forth His Glory to all the world so that the world can know Him! Genesis 12:3 certainly points us to Jesus, but it does not imply that the world was previously hidden from God until Jesus. Instead, God would consistently testify of Himself through the Jewish people at a minimum in the blessings that fall on those who bless Israel and the wrath that falls on those who curse Israel.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

Centuries later, the Psalmist wrote of how God was using the Jewish people to point the world to Him,

**1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah
2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.
(Psalm 67:1-2)**

God has never excluded Gentiles from having a relationship with Him. However, the Covenant God made with the Jewish people did exclude Gentiles from the unique relationship, purpose, and specific promises He made with the Jewish people. In this way, the Mosaic Law was never for, nor could it ever apply to, the Gentiles. Under the Mosaic Law, Gentiles were always guests, never family. For instance, Gentiles who converted to Judaism were not allowed to participate in some of the mandated rituals in the Law or even enter certain parts of the Temple. Gentiles were never allowed to participate in the privileges God promised the Jewish people, either. For instance, Gentiles could never have rights to the land that God promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

However, never being fully allowed into the Mosaic Covenant and Law doesn't mean God didn't have a Law for all mankind. God didn't invent the law with Moses; He added to it (Galatians 3:19). In fact, God has always had law. As we discussed last week, He is the sovereign King over everything and everybody, and in ruling us, He rules with expectations that He designed us to live in. For instance, Paul wrote,

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)

Why is that important for our study in Amos? If God's universal Law, which has existed since He created Adam and Eve, ultimately governs our relationship with God, and was indeed not created by God at Mt. Sinai with Moses, then we should read about God expecting mankind to live that way before Mt. Sinai, and in fact, we do. God judged the world and sent a flood millennia before the Mosaic Law was given. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah before the Mosaic Law, and the list goes on and on. And right here in the book of Amos, in the very first chapter, we read about six different Gentile nations that were not bound by the Mosaic Law but are clearly being judged by God for violating His universal Law.

Clearly then, even though the nations around Israel would not be expected to obey the Mosaic Law, there was still a universal law of God that starts and ends with us bowing down to Him as the only sovereign King and God, and as such, living in the morality and ethics God designed mankind to live in. Loving your neighbor was not something God only commanded Jews to do; He commanded all mankind to live that way, and as the Sovereign King, He holds everyone accountable to do so.

This is precisely the basis of Amos's pronouncement of the judgment on the Gentile nations that surrounded the Jewish people. In pronouncing God's judgment on them, Amos is clearly communicating God's standard and the expectation that everyone should repent, believe in, and obey God, not to receive the blessings exclusively promised to the Jewish people in the Mosaic Law, but to receive the greater blessing of knowing and abiding in God and His life. Let's take a look at what God said through Amos. Specifically,

Proposition: In Amos 1:3-2:3, Amos uses six different nations as examples to call out four egregious violations of God's universal law.

The Syrians committed the first egregious violation of God's universal law that Amos identified.

(1) The Syrians sadistically slaughtered the Jewish citizens of Gilead. (1:3-5)

- A. War is an awful, terrible thing because people die, including people who had no choice in the matter. However, when a nation unjustifiably encourages, empowers, and even demands its leaders direct their military to unethically attack another nation, in my opinion, that nation has the right to defend itself by not only attacking the military threatening them, but also the nation itself that is demanding it. It's why I believe the United States was totally justified in bombing German and Japanese cities in World War 2. The German and Japanese

armies didn't start a war; Germany and Japan did. However, in the totality and horror that war is, there are still morals that cannot be crossed. It's one thing to destroy a city to defeat an enemy; it's another thing to conquer that city, then sadistically kill defenseless survivors in the most inhumane way possible for your own pleasure and their horror. This is exactly what the Syrians were known for doing, and they did it against one of the cities of Israel.

- B. 3 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of **Damascus**, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because **they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron**. 4 So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad. 5 I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir," says the LORD. (1:3-5)**
- C.** "Amos reveals the sin of the Arameans; it was the brutal treatment of their Israelite prisoners when Aram had invaded Gilead. He says the Arameans will experience God's judgment because they 'threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth' (niv). 'Threshed' refers to the process of separating seed from the stalk. The process often involved an animal walking back and forth over the harvested grain pulling a heavy sledge that was curved upward at the front along with knifelike iron prongs driven through it. Amos describes an atrocity when the Arameans drove animals pulling these sledges over their prostrate Israelite captives. Some suggest this description should not be taken literally but as a descriptive way of conveying the cruelty of the Arameans when they invaded Gilead. However, given the excessive brutality common to warfare in that day, the hatred between Israel and Aram, and the fact that the rest of the accounts of the other nations' sins seem to be literal, there is every reason to accept this description literally as well. Either way, Amos makes his point. Aram probably committed numerous brutal atrocities against the Israelites, and Amos' description probably provided a vivid picture summarizing them. What's more, God was holding Damascus accountable for these atrocities."¹
- D.** "Motyer aptly describes the heart of the matter: 'War or no war, Hazael had no liberty to treat people as if they were things. It is the first absolute moral principle for which Amos campaigns: people are not things. Let us suppose that the description of Hazael's conduct as 'threshing' Gilead does not actually mean that he used animals to drag flint-studded, weighted platforms of wood back and forth across prostrate bodies of living Gileadites. Take it metaphorically, but ask what the metaphor means. 'Threshing' is what a man does to a thing, a grain crop, in order to extract his own profit from it. This is what Hazael did in Gilead. He treated people as things. But found no sympathy, allowance or forgiveness in heaven.'"²

¹ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (pp. 23-24). Christian Focus.

² Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (p. 24). Christian Focus.

- E. "Because of this their punishment will be like fire burning them up. The people of Syria will be punished by the destruction of all their palaces and pleasant places of recreation (i.e. the places frequented by Hazael, the king of Syria). The self-important Syrians, who had power in the Valley of Aven and in Beth Eden, would be scattered and flee far away to Kir (which location is unknown today) from where they had originated (see 9:7)."³
- F. "Therefore, their destruction was sure. God Himself would wage war on the Arameans, apparently beginning with Damascus, the most prominent city-state of Aram, and then moving on to the Valley of Aven, meaning 'the valley of wickedness', and to Beth Eden, literally 'the house of pleasure.' These were probably two more Aramean city-states. Fire was a common instrument of war because of its power to consume, and a broken gate indicated the enemy could easily come in to destroy a city. God used the Assyrians as His instrument of destruction as they totally decimated the cities and lands of Aram and carried its people off into exile. Anyone who treats people as things of no value will not escape God's judgment."⁴

The Philistines and the Phoenicians committed the second egregious violation of God's universal law that Amos identified.

(2) The Philistines and the Phoenicians captured and sold entire towns into slavery for nothing but profit (1:6-10)

- A. When a nation conquered another, some form of contractual labor for the conquered nation was common in ancient times. It was understood as a consequence of war and was seen as a merciful form of justice on your enemy. Instead of killing them, you put them to work for your nation. However, the slavery Amos confronted with the Philistines and Phoenicians was the kind that left a permanent, ugly stain on American history. It was not about defeating and subjugating your enemy so that they are a benefit to you rather than a continual threat; what Amos was confronting was slavery for nothing more than profiteering, and in the case of the Phoenicians, it included profiteering off people they had made a covenant of brotherhood with!
- B. **6 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom. 7 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour her strongholds. 8 I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn my hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish," says the Lord GOD. (1:6-8)**

³ Bentley, M. (2006). *Opening up Amos* (p. 21). Day One Publications.

⁴ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (p. 24). Christian Focus.

1. "Another long-time enemy of Israel were the Philistines. They came and settled in the southwest portion of Palestine in the early twelfth century b.c. It was not long before they had established a pentapolis of five city-states in the region made up of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. This confederation of Philistine city-states became a major power in the region until about 1000 b.c., the time of David. The Philistines were astute warriors, with strong iron weapons and chariots, accompanied by a desire to expand their territory. Therefore, as they moved eastward into the foothills of the central hill country of Canaan they came into conflict with the Israelites."⁵
 2. "In the days preceding those of Amos, these same people had '[taken] captive whole communities and sold them to Edom'. They had done this for gain (as had the people of Tyre—see 1:9). Edom had long been the enemy of Israel. Because of their sin, each of the local leaders of the Philistines, the kings of Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron, were going to be destroyed. This prophecy is echoed in Zephaniah 2:4–7."⁶
 3. "Like the Arameans, the Philistines also treated others as objects or things but with a major difference. While the Arameans treated others as objects with no value, the Philistines treated others as objects to be exploited for their value. Their sin was the capture of entire towns and villages for the sole purpose of turning a profit as they sold their captives into slavery. These raids probably had nothing to do with being at war with another nation. They seemed to be for the sole purpose of kidnapping people in order to turn a profit. Their actions were much like the slave traders of early America who went to Africa and captured entire villages, enslaved them, and then sold them for a profit. The Philistines saw other people as objects of personal gain; they dealt in human trafficking. Their biggest concern was how much they could get out of these people."⁷
- C. 9 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. 10 So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her strongholds." (1:9-10)**
1. "Tyre was chief city of splendid Phoenicia, which had been one of the leading seafaring nations of the past. In 1 Kings 5:1 and 12 we read that the king of Tyre and King Solomon had made a treaty of friendship. But selfishly the

⁵ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (p. 25). Christian Focus.

⁶ Bentley, M. (2006). *Opening up Amos* (pp. 21–22). Day One Publications.

⁷ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (pp. 25–26). Christian Focus.

people of Tyre had broken their agreement and had sold slaves to their enemy (Edom).”⁸

2. “The Phoenicians often served as the ‘middlemen’ in the trading of all manner of commodities including slaves. It is possible they were in collusion with Gaza and Edom’s slave trade. About one hundred and fifty years later the prophet Joel brought up the fact that the nations had joined together in a cooperative effort in selling slaves (Joel 3:4–8).”⁹
 3. “Nevertheless, even though Tyre might have played a smaller role than that of others in the trading of slaves, they were no less guilty of treating people made in God’s image as things and exploiting them for profit. In addition, as appalling as that sin was, their wickedness went deeper because the very people they sold were their friends. Their debauchery was intensified by their treachery. Apparently, Tyre had turned on someone with whom it had made a treaty or covenant of peace. It is possible that this betrayal was perpetrated against Israel. Since the time of David and Solomon, Israel seems to have had very close relations with Tyre (1 Kings 5:12). In fact, King Ahab’s marriage to Jezebel surely entered Israel into a covenant with the Phoenicians (1 Kings 16:31). Such covenants made the parties involved ‘brothers’ (1 Kings 9:13), an expression used to describe a close relationship characterized by love and loyalty. There is no record of a war between Israel and Tyre. Nonetheless, Psalm 83 indicates Tyre was among a coalition of nations surrounding Israel that conspired against God’s people. If it were Israel whom Tyre betrayed, Amos’ inclusion of Tyre’s sin in his address to Israelites would make sense. Some have suggested that Tyre actually turned against another Phoenician city, and Amos’ mention of this disloyalty to a brother demonstrates God’s concern for people everywhere and not just for Israel. Either way the people of Tyre were traitors. Whether Tyre victimized Israel or someone else, the Lord would hold them responsible for the exploitation of their brothers. The Assyrians and Babylonians brought Tyre under submission several times.”¹⁰
- D. Interestingly, Abraham Lincoln saw the American slave trade for what it was, the same thing God punished the Philistines and the Phoenicians for doing. As such, Lincoln viewed the Civil War as God’s judgment, not just on the South but rather on the entire nation for its prolonged history of justifying such an egregious, immoral practice. In Lincoln’s second inaugural address, he said,
- E. **“Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.” If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the**

⁸ Bentley, M. (2006). *Opening up Amos* (p. 22). Day One Publications.

⁹ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (pp. 26–27). Christian Focus.

¹⁰ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (pp. 27–28). Christian Focus.

providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."¹¹

Edom and Ammon committed the third egregious violation of God's universal law that Amos identified.

(3) Edom and Ammon justified intentional horrific atrocities against defenseless women. (1:11-15)

A. 11 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of **Edom**, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because **he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity**, and **his anger tore perpetually**, and he **kept his wrath forever**. 12 So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah." (1:11-12)

1. "Edom had an unusual relationship with Israel. On the one hand, the biblical writers often referred to Edom as Israel's 'brother.' The Lord told the Israelites, 'You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother' (Deut. 23:7). This relationship went back to Jacob and Esau who were brothers. The descendants of Jacob became the nation of Israel, and the descendants of Esau became the nation of Edom. On the other hand, since the time of Jacob and Esau the relationship between their descendants was strained at best and was more commonly one of open hostility. From the beginning of Israel's monarchy its kings went to battle against Edom. Saul fought against the Edomites and inflicted heavy casualties upon them (1 Sam. 14:47), but it was David who brought them under complete subjugation during his reign (2 Sam. 8:13-14). As Solomon's reign came to a close Edom rebelled against Israel and eventually won its independence during the time of Jehoram, Judah's king (2 Kings 8:20-22)."¹²
2. "Edom was a nation set up high on the rocks to the south of the region. Their territory guarded the south-west entry into the Promised Land. When Moses

¹¹[https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/12.4 Primary Source Abraham Lincoln%2C Second Inaugural Address %281865%29 .pdf](https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/12.4_Primary_Source_Abraham_Lincoln%2C_Second_Inaugural_Address_%281865%29.pdf)

¹² Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (p. 28). Christian Focus.

arrived at Kadesh (having travelled through the desert for many years) he asked the king of Edom for permission to pass through his land. This consent ought to have been given readily and cheerfully because the Edomites were descended from Jacob's brother, Esau, but it was rudely and vigorously refused (Num. 20:14–21). This set up a stream of hostility which continued throughout the generations until the time of Amos. We have already had hints about the cruelty of these people because they purchased slaves from Gaza and from Tyre (see above). Because of their sinful behaviour God was going to destroy their main cities of Teman and Bozrah; and with them, the power of the people would disappear.”¹³

3. “The phrase ‘cast off all pity’ or ‘stifled his compassion’ is a little ambiguous in its original language of Hebrew. Consequently, it may be understood in a number of ways. First, it could mean the Edomites ignored the natural affections one should have toward one’s own family. This understanding of the phrase seems to be the prevailing one we find in most English translations. Second, the phrase could be translated ‘destroyed his allies,’ a translation that corresponds nicely to the preceding phrase if one understands ‘brother’ to be a treaty-partner. A third possibility may be to understand the phrase as ‘he did violence to his women,’ following the example of Judges 5:30. If this is the correct understanding of the phrase, then it is referring to the infliction of sexual violence and physical harm on Israel’s women by Edomite soldiers. Given the parallelism of the passage and the actual usage of these words in Hebrew, this third interpretation appears to make the most sense. Hence, Amos is describing the complete suffering and subjugation of God’s people to the cruelty and brutality of the Edomites. These atrocities were executed not only on the men who would have defended themselves but also upon defenseless women.”¹⁴
4. “Why did Edom commit such horrific acts? It is because ‘his anger raged continually’ (niv) and ‘his fury stormed unchecked.’ It is as if the hatred of the Edomites continued to fuel itself until it was totally out of control. ... ‘See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled’ (Heb. 12:15). Instead of uprooting its bitterness toward its brother, Edom nurtured it until it became an uncontrolled inferno that resulted in devastation upon Israel and judgment upon Edom.”¹⁵
5. “Amos describes how God’s judgment will come upon Edom. Just as Edom’s anger blazed against its brother so the Lord would send fire down upon Edom as enemies would come and torch their lands and cities. Teman and Bozrah appear to have been prominent districts in the south and north of

¹³ Bentley, M. (2006). [*Opening up Amos*](#) (pp. 22–23). Day One Publications.

¹⁴ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (p. 29). Christian Focus.

¹⁵ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (pp. 29–30). Christian Focus.

Edom respectively. They were the main centers of power in Edom. God's judgment, therefore, would be wide-ranging (as it encompassed Edom's lands) and devastating (as it brought down Edom's foundations of financial and military security). As profound as the depth of Edom's sin was against its brother, so God's judgment would be upon Edom."¹⁶

B. 13 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border. 14 So I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour her strongholds, with shouting on the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; 15 and their king shall go into exile, he and his princes together," says the LORD. (1:13-15)

1. "We have noted that Edom was descended from Esau; Ammon's father was Lot. These people did not have a promising beginning because they sprang from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters (Gen. 19:30–38). As time went by, things became even worse. Like Edom, the people had little compassion and were even prepared to murder whole populations, including mothers and their unborn babies. They too, had 'stifled' all possible attitudes of kindness in their selfish desires to extend their borders. Their main concern was to increase their power in the area. But God's judgement was going to fall on these people too, and they and their leaders would be taken away into exile."¹⁷
2. "As with Edom, the Israelites were distant relatives of the Ammonites. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew, by way of an incestuous relationship between Lot and his younger daughter. The child's name was Ben-ammi (Gen. 19:30–38). The Ammonites lived in a cramped area between Moab to the south, Israel in Gilead to the west, Aram to the north, and the Syro-Arabian Desert to the east. At that time, as throughout much of history, nations believed increasing their borders demonstrated power and prestige to neighboring kingdoms. In the Bible, the people of God saw it as a blessing upon their nation (2 Kings 14:25–27; Isa. 26:15). Therefore, the limited amount of land that belonged to the Ammonites, along with their desire to make stronger their political position with their neighbors, appeared to have made them eager to expand whenever the opportunity afforded itself to do so."¹⁸
3. "In this instance, Amos condemns the Ammonites for an incident when their ambition to increase their borders into Gilead led to the most heinous acts of brutality: the ripping open of the bellies of pregnant women. This hideous

¹⁶ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (p. 30). Christian Focus.

¹⁷ Bentley, M. (2006). *Opening up Amos* (p. 23). Day One Publications.

¹⁸ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (pp. 30–31). Christian Focus.

crime against humanity was not unheard of in the ancient Near East. Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions mention the practice in their records of battles. For instance, the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III speaking of one of his conquests said, he 'slit the wombs of the pregnant women, he gouged out the eye of the infants, he cut the throats of their young men.'²⁷ Furthermore, the Old Testament mentions it on three other occasions. First, Elisha prophesied the Arameans would rip open the bellies of pregnant women and dash to pieces their infants (2 Kings 8:12). Second, Menahem, the king of Israel, committed this atrocity against his own people in the Israelite city of Tiphseh and in its surrounding region because of their lack of submission to him (2 Kings 15:16). Third, Hosea prophesied this act of viciousness along with the dashing of infants into pieces would happen in Israel at the fall of its capital, Samaria (Hosea 13:16). Such acts of brutality appear to have been common in the ancient Near East, instilling fear into the hearts of one's enemies and minimizing the chances of reprisals from later generations."¹⁹

4. "It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time this incident happened since Israel and Ammon had such a long history of conflict. It has been suggested the Ammonites coordinated their attacks with Damascus when it invaded Gilead from the north, 'subjecting Gilead to a pincer movement' (Amos 1:3). This suggestion is logical given the Ammonites propensity to join other nations attacking Israel and Judah at other times (Judg. 3:12-14; 2 Kings 24:1-3). Whenever the incident took place, God was going to exact judgment on the Ammonites as they gratified their lust for conquest and expansion through their ruthlessness upon the weak and helpless. Kings of that era may have thought such brutality was an effective way to wage war, but the Lord condemned the Ammonites for their crimes against those who could not defend themselves. Nothing gives rise to God's vengeance any more than senseless brutality committed upon those who are defenseless."²⁰

The Moabites committed the fourth egregious violation of God's universal law that Amos identified.

(4) The Moabites unjustly attacked and brutally dehumanized a neighboring nation. (2:1-3)

- A. I've presented why scholars believe much of the previous offenses were targeted against Israel. As such, some might say the only reason God judged the previous five nations was because their offenses were against Israel and not necessarily because of the offenses themselves. However, what we see here has nothing to do with Israel, only the immoral nature of the offense. In fact, the offense of

¹⁹ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (pp. 31-32). Christian Focus.

²⁰ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (p. 32). Christian Focus.

Moab was against a nation that also stands under God's judgment, but that doesn't justify the offense nor change God's response!

- B. 1 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom. 2 So I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the strongholds of Kerioth, and Moab shall die amid uproar, amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet; 3 I will cut off the ruler from its midst, and will kill all its princes with him," says the LORD. (2:1-3)**
- C.** "Mesha, the Moabite king, paid tribute to Israel's King Ahab, but when Ahab died, Mesha rebelled against Ahab's son, Jehoram. With the help of Judah and Edom, Jehoram defeated Mesha (2 Kings 1:1; 3:1–27). It is possible when Mesha recuperated from this defeat he exacted reprisals against Edom. If so, Amos may have been referring to this time in his indictment of Moab. It would have happened about ninety years before Amos."²¹
- D.** "Moab lay between Ammon (to the north) and Edom (to the south). The Lord's chief complaint against this people was that they desecrated the bodies of their enemies. Instead of giving the king of Edom a decent burial, they had burned his bones, grinding them to powder, perhaps to use as mortar for their building work. We can be sure that the people of Moab were guilty of many other sins as well. Even though Edom was the persistent enemy of Israel and Judah, God would not sanction any disrespect towards the body of a dead person—be it of a king or a commoner. And for this reason he says that he will 'send fire upon Moab that will consume the fortresses of Kerioth' (their chief city or perhaps group of cities). Just as they burned the body of Edom's king, so they themselves would be consumed by the fire of God's judgement."²²
- E.** "Like the Ammonites, the Moabites were distant relatives of the Israelites. Moab was the product of Lot's incestuous relationship with his older daughter (Gen. 19:30–38). The relationship between Israel and Moab mostly was one of open hostility and conflict. When Moses led the Israelites through the Transjordan as they neared Canaan, Balak, the Moabite king, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites because he feared the threat they posed to his kingdom. When Balaam's attempts failed, Moabite women went into Israel's camp and enticed them to worship Baal of Peor and sexually seduced them into acts of immorality. The Lord punished Israel for its unfaithfulness by slaying twenty-four thousand Israelites (Num. 22–25). When Israel settled in the Promised Land, the tribes of Reuben and Gad inhabited the region just north of Moab. Their settlement in this region became a source of contention between these two tribes and Moab.

²¹ Betts, T. J. (2011). *Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message* (p. 33). Christian Focus.

²² Bentley, M. (2006). *Opening up Amos* (pp. 23–24). Day One Publications.

During the time of the judges Israel came under Moabite rule for eighteen years until Ehud liberated Israel when he killed Moab's King Eglon (Judg. 3:12–30)."²³

- F. "What was Moab's sin? Amos says Moab 'burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom'. This act demonstrated Moab's deep hatred and absolute scorn for Edom. Not only did the Moabites show total disrespect to Edom's king, they rendered worthless the people of Edom as well. ... The Moabites used the bones of Edom's king as an ingredient in the making of plaster used to whitewash their walls. The Moabites' message was clear: 'The worth of an Edomite is the same as the lime we use to whitewash our walls.' Their act was to dehumanize the Edomites and portray them as of no value. ... Amos is denouncing such horrendous acts of dehumanization and disregard of others. Such crimes against humanity will bring about God's condemnation and wrath. These acts are not only sins against humanity who was created in God's image, but against God Himself. Amos' message indicates God will judge those who commit such acts of indecency whether they are perpetrated on God's elect or upon anyone else. There is a common sense of morality all people share as persons made in the image of God, and God will hold us all accountable to it."²⁴
- G. "As the Moabites were guilty of 'burning' the bones of the Edomite king, so they too will experience 'burning' as the Lord will send burning upon Moab. The fire will consume the fortifications of Kerioth, one of Moab's foremost cities. Amos describes the battle depicting Moab's demise, and the last sounds Moab will hear will be the blasts of trumpets of warfare and their enemies' triumphant shouts of victory. The decimation will be complete, as Moab's king, along with all his officials, will perish. The Assyrians laid ruin Moab on numerous occasions, but it was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who destroyed Moab once and for all in 582 b.c."²⁵

In conclusion, the universality of God's judgment on all mankind is most clearly proclaimed in the New Testament. **In it, we learn the following three truths about God's universal law and judgment of mankind:**

(1) God has a universal Law, and He judges all by it.

- A. **28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such**

²³ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (p. 33). Christian Focus.

²⁴ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (p. 34). Christian Focus.

²⁵ Betts, T. J. (2011). [*Amos: An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Message*](#) (pp. 34–35). Christian Focus.

things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:28-32)

- B. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:15-16)
 - C. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
- (2) At The Judgment Seat of Christ, all who are in Him will stand justified by His blood, but all others will be condemned.
- A. 31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ... 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31-33, 46)
 - B. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)
- (3) All who are in Christ will be saved, but they will still be judged. All that was done in submission to Christ will be rewarded, and all that was done according to the flesh will be burned up.
- A. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—13 each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

B. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)

C. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. (Revelation 2:23b)

Challenge: Stop living as if you will not be judged.

We are going to talk about what it means to repent next week, but this week we just need to deal with the intentional and on sometimes unintentional drift that happens in our life when we start living as if there is no accountability with God; that somehow He has no standards and even He if does, it's not that big of deal to break them as long we feel ok about breaking them! If I think it's okay, then God must be okay with it, and therefore He won't judge me for it. Please understand,

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. (2 Peter 3:10)

No ONE will escape the judgment of God, so let today be the day you stop living as if you will not be judged. As I stated, we will flesh this out more next week, but it boils down to this: acknowledge you are justifying sin and rebelling from God, confess it to Him, claim His forgiveness, turn to Jesus, and start obeying Him!

Our Campus Pastors will come out and talk with you a little more about how we, as a church, can help you if you have found yourself facing the consequences of a life lived as if you won't be judged by God. Your drowning may be totally secret or it may be seen by everybody, but you know your drowning, and you know it's because you keep living like you are never going to have to give an account for your life to God! Decide today to stop living like that and turn your heart and life over to Jesus!