

**LESSON TWO** Amos 1:2 – 2:3

Lesson Two, Day One Called from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Amos prophesied in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

1. From the first several words of Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, and 13, what was the role of an Old Testament prophet?

2. a. Amos introduces the theme of his prophecy in Amos 1:2. What is it?

b. From a reference work or map, locate Zion, Jerusalem, and Mt. Carmel. Where are they?

c. How would this introduction by a prophet from Judah have been received by his audience in Israel?

d. What does this introduction tell you about Amos?

Lesson Two, Day Two Damascus was (and is) the capital city of a nation to the north of Israel.

1. a. From Amos 1:3-5 and a reference work, describe the nation called Damascus and Aram.

b. From 2 Kings 8:7-15; 10:32-34, describe King Hazael.

c. From 2 Kings 13:1-3, why did God allow this nation to do what they did to Israel?

2. What does Isaiah predict in Isaiah 17:1-4?

3. List some things you learn about the Lord from what you have read today.

Lesson Two, Day Three The region of Gaza and the city-state of Tyre were on the Mediterranean coast near Israel.

1. a. Read Amos 1:6-8; Psalm 83:1-8. Who were the people of Gaza, and what did they, and others, do to Israelites?

b. How do enemies do similar things to Israel's people today?

***** SYLLABUS CHAPTER TWO *****

II. PROPHECIES AGAINST SURROUNDING NATIONS

Amos 1:3 – 2:16

- A. Damascus 1:3-5
- B. Philistia 1:6-8
- C. Tyre 1:9-10
- D. Edom 1:11-12
- E. Ammon 1:13-15
- F. Moab 2:1-3

Having declared the object of his mission and the authority by which he was sent, Amos now gives several messages from God. How gracious God is! God gives warnings of danger before the flash of His judgment falls and the fire consumes them.

It isn't easy to give out God's warnings. People like to hear pleasant things, good tidings. Perhaps God has to look hard to find persons with enough courage, trust, and self-denial to go against public opinion and declare truth at the risk of their lives. Amos was sent to deliver very unpleasant messages. The first was to the surrounding nations, grouped into two classes. The first group included Damascus (Syria), Gaza (Philistia), and Tyre, more distantly related to Israel. The second consisted of Edom, Ammon, and Moab (allied in origin), all nearer to Israel. Then Amos gave messages to Judah and finally to Israel. The messages increase in intensity.

Here is a picture of how we are responsible for what we know. That is, the more "light" a nation or an individual has, the greater is the responsibility to respond. Israel was greatly privileged. They knew about Jehovah God firsthand. When we get to the judgment of Israel, we will see a climax of guilt.

II. PROPHECIES AGAINST SURROUNDING NATIONS

Amos 1:3 – 2:16

A. Damascus 1:3-5

"For three transgressions of Damascus and for four." All of the judgments are introduced by the same formula—which does not mean that four more transgressions were added to three. It means there was a series of sins, each one greater than the one before it, and the last sin was the worst of all. Damascus (Syria), under the reign of Hazael, had invaded and subdued the regions of Israel that were east of the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River. They treated the Gileadites there with inhuman cruelty, mangling the bodies of prisoners under heavily-studded threshing sledges. Elisha had foretold this king's cruelty (2 Kings 8:12). When Hazael heard what Elisha had said, he was aghast at the prediction. He must have forgotten his shock because later he did those things. Women of Israel were thrown like sheaves on the threshing floor. God pronounced judgment against Damascus, and it was irreversible (v.3).

There are times when consequences may be averted. There are times of warning and times when God waits. But when a nation abuses God's patience, continuing in sin, they finally cross over a line and must reap what they deserve. The Syrian palaces were strongly built and richly furnished. Nevertheless, the habitations of the rich are no protection against the wrath of God. They felt safe behind their walls, but the bars (the gates of the city) were broken. Their wealth and their gods could not protect them. How easily God can uproot and transplant a nation that sins against Him and acts with cruelty towards His people! Those who abuse the power they have been given to uproot others shall themselves be uprooted.

The last prediction Amos gives concerning Syria is that its people will go into exile in Kir (1:5). That is exactly what happened. The Assyrians, known for their cruelty to their victims, invaded Syria and took the survivors of the invasion captive to Kir, one of their cities.

B. Philistia 1:6-8

It was the same for Gaza, the leading and most influential city of the Philistines. Sin spreads, grows, and ripens for judgment. In Gaza, sin had been added to sin continually. The Philistines had intended to destroy Israel completely. They had also taken numerous captives. Amos emphasizes the hatred the Philistines had for the Jews. They added affliction to affliction by giving the Jews over to implacable foes who drove them like sheep to the slaughter.

The sentence on Gaza stands out because it was the key city of five, all forming one commonwealth. They all had their part, and now as they had treated Israel, so God would deal with them. They were doomed. Fortified cities and magnificent palaces were to be leveled to dust, their regions depopulated, their princes dethroned, and their empires reduced to slavery and ruin.

This prophecy delivered by Amos was literally fulfilled during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. "From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory" (2 Kings 18:8).

C. Tyre 1:9-10

Like the other nations, Tyre was guilty of many sins. They were trafficking in human souls. If they didn't take the Jews as slaves for themselves, they sold them to Greeks, who were mortal enemies of the Jews. The Greeks had completely forgotten the covenant of cooperation and peace their forefathers had made with David and Solomon. Instead, they helped Edom in cruelty and in trading off the Jews as slaves. For their punishment, fire would sweep through their city.