[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.”  
   
 Amos continues with Edom. We notice the terminology continues with the 3 transgressions, and for four. As we saw last week, and as we will continue to see for this week, this does not mean a specific number of sins, but sin upon sin. For their many sins God will not revoke the punishment which He has allotted for them.  
 Like all of the prophecies which we have experienced, the question is, what does Amos specify when discussing what the Edomite have done? The answer is that Edom “pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity.” What does this relate to? It relates to two things.  
 The first is, Edom came from Esau. As we remember, Esau was the brother of Jacob who is one of the patriarchs for Israel and Judah. For Edom to pursue his brother with the sword is a reference to that relationship. Israel, Judah, and Edom are essentially brothers, but Edom, as we can see, never loved the people of Israel or Judah.  
 The second is the focus of pity. This likely references two things. The first is the slaves which have gone through Edom which was referenced in the denunciation of both the Philistines and Tyre. Not having pity on the slaves is evident by how Edom was involved with the trade. Likewise it may even reference before that time when Moses sought passage through Edom, and instead of allowing passage the Edomites pursued them with the sword.  
 Concerning his anger, this is a reference to the continuing feud between Israel, Judah, and Edom. There was never much love or peace between the nations, and more often they were like their forefathers Jacob and Esau, having enmity and strife.  
 Thus the Edomites, instead of subduing their wrath and contempt, ever kept it with them.  
 Because of this, God will send fire upon Teman, and the fire will be so great that it will devour or destroy the strongholds of Bozrah. As we remember, fire is associated with destruction and divine wrath. In this case, Teman was Edoms southernmost city, and Bozrah was its northernmost. Thus, the destruction will be complete and total for the nation.

[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.

The next nation to be judged is Amon. As we see, and as I will continue to point out as long as Amos says it, the paradigm of three and for four transgressions continues, and again meaning many sins rather than a particular number, and like the previous nations because of these transgressions God will not withhold His judgement.

A quick note about the Ammonites is that they were descendants of Lot. As you may remember, Lot’s daughters thought the world was ending, and so they ended up sleeping with Lot in order to continue the generations. Despite this relationship with Israel and Judah, since they were related through Abraham, there remained hostility between Israel/Judah and Ammon. Likewise it is interesting to note that God did not allow the Israelites to take any of the land of Ammon since He gave it to Lot.  
 We see the hostility with the first statement, that they “ripped open pregnant women in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.” This is a serious atrocity. Some believe that this means the devastating battle tactics of the Ammonites, but it can also be that they literally ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead. If they had done this, it makes sense since that way it would keep future generations from claiming the territory which they were seeking to capture. This, of course, is interesting since God forbade the Israelites do this same thing to the Ammonites. Thus, the Ammonites repaid God’s kindness with evil against His people.  
 Regardless, it is still such atrocities which God’s anger is against, and like the other oracles and prophecies God will use fire. However, there is a difference here because we see that God will kindle a fire, rather than send a fire. This likely represents, more so than in the other oracles, how God will be using armies and warfare to enact His judgment.  
 This is further seen with the statement, “with the shout of battle.” It implies that God will be sending a fire through the use of armies and warfare, and the battles which will be fought will be of such force of a tempest or whirlwind. Indeed, the wrath of God is great when it has come, and the Ammonites will experience God’s judgment through these armies.  
 The ultimately conclusion is that the kings and princes of Ammon will go into exile. This ultimately came to occur first with the coming of the Assyrians who exiled their kings and princes, a common practice of the Assyrians, and then further by the Babylonians, and as one scholar notes under Judas Maccabee the nation itself ceased to exist. Thus, the prophecies were fulfilled in time and by warfare.

[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.

The final nation we will look at today is Moab. Amos continues his trend of three and four transgressions. So, again, for the many sins of Moab God will not revoke the punishment.  
 A bit about Moab is that it was the brother, so to speak, of Ammon, in that both came from Lot. Traditionally, the Moabites did bother the Israelites, though more often than not they paid tribute to Israel and Judah and was often under their control.  
 Regardless, what we learn about Moab is that they burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime, or to a powdery ash. A doctrine during that time was that if ones bones were burned then it was at least less likely, if not completely unlikely, for one to be raised in a resurrection. While this is not a doctrine held today, nor does it seem to be a doctrine held in Judaism or Christianity, it does indicate complete hostility between Edom and Moab, to the point of this international crime against the people of Edom.  
 The result of their vengeance and hatred will be that God will send a fire on Moab, devouring the strongholds of Kerioth. Kerioth may or may not be another name for the capital of Moab which was Ar, but regardless if it is Kerioth was known for being the cult center for the god Chemosh, which may likely be the reason for it being the only city named.  
 However, we also notice that Moab ceases to be just a nation, but is personified. This is seen especially when Amos says, “Moab shall die amid uprour, amid shouting, and the sound of the trumpet.” This is similar to the prophecy/oracle against Ammon in that God will bring His justice through warfare.  
 The end result is that the king and his princes will be cut off. Again we see this as the ultimate judgment as the leaders will be destroyed by God. Thus the completion of the destruction of the Ammonites will culminate with the kings and princes being destroyed.

Main Point: The main point of these texts are to cast judgment on the peoples who are presented for the crimes they have committed. Because of their numerous crimes, and these specific ones mentioned, God will not relent His anger and justice. Thus, they will face the judgment of God for their continued transgressions.  
  
Application Points:  
1. The Sovereignty of God: Today is a good example of the Sovereignty of God being displayed. Before we go much further, I want everyone to consider this map again. I want us to look at the nations which have been seen throughout this time. We notice…they are not Israel or Judah, but other nations. They are pagan nations.  
 So why is this significant? Because it reminds us that God is in control, He is sovereign, over all nations not just a particular group of nations. Even though none of these nations served or worshipped God, that does not mean they are any less under His sovereign control.  
 Very often we can conclude that the nations of Israel and Judah were God’s only nation, and in a particular sense they were His only nations, yet what we see in these prophecies is that God is in control of all of them. He will judge all of them, and He did judge all of them according to His Word. Though Israel and Judah belonged to God in a particular way, that does not mean that God is not sovereign over the rest.  
 This can, and should, have consequences when we look at our own nation, or the other nations across the world. The simple reality is that even if our nation does not worship God, or if other nations do not worship God, if societies do not worship God, then that doesn’t mean God is any less powerful or any less sovereign over them. Ultimately, God is sovereign and His Kingdom is greater than all other kingdoms and encompasses all other kingdoms.  
 That is the important point to remember of God’s judgment on these pagan nations. It reminds us of the sovereignty of God. It reminds us of how He will be the one to bring justice against nations because He is sovereign over them whether they accept it or not. It also reminds us that God’s judgment is not only on individuals, but that God’s control is so great that He even judges entire nations.  
 This may all seem commonsense, but how often to we forget the sovereignty of God in this world? How often do we tend to forget that God is the ultimate judge, and that He is the one who is really in control above all else? How easy is to forget when our elections come, or when our leaders mess up, that God is the one in control, and that all He asks and requires of us is to be faithful to Him regardless of the society and the leadership of the society? That is all we need to be, faithful to God right where we are.  
 We as a people can never forget the sovereignty of God over this universe. He who created the heavens and the earth, He is still God, and He is still in control. As we move forward from this, we can rest assured in His sovereignty. We can have peace knowing that God is faithful to those who seek Him, and that He will bring about His righteousness, His justice, the passing of time.  
 So as you live your life, and as you wonder and are astounded over the ways of the present darkness of the world, be encouraged to rest under the sovereignty of God, knowing that by His Him this world turns, and by Him it will be judged. Evil will not win in the end, God wins, and His righteousness will be revealed, and we will know rejoicing over His justice.  
  
2. Responsibility: This next application causes us to reminisce on the reality of two forms of responsibility. The first is, human responsibility with his freedom in general, and our particular responsibility in this world as Christians. We will look at both of these to get a better understanding of it.  
 So what do I mean when I say human responsibility with his freedom? What I mean is, humans do have a limited free will. I say limited because as it is, our human freedom is not complete. Simply put, even if I were to will to be able to fly, if I jumped off the Church steeple right now, guess what? I’m going to hit the ground rather hard.  
 Thus, I do not have complete and total freedom. I have laws that I need to obey. There are physical laws which my body obeys despite my will. Entropy is a physical law that my body will obey as long as I continue on this Earth in this form. As long as I continue as I am in my physical form, I will need to obey the laws of cause and effect, and the laws of thermodynamics. The only way to get around these laws are by some miraculous event, but I am not able to perform such a miraculous event, because I am finite.  
 Thus, we all recognize certain laws we experience. However, we also need to recognize that our freedom is also bound to another set of laws just as significant and prevalent as the physical laws which we experience. We are also bound to laws in our nations, we are bound to laws within the U.S. which we need to follow. If we do not follow these laws then we will experience the legal consequences. Just as if we disobey the physical laws, like trying to jump off the building and trying to fly, we will experience the consequences of breaking those laws.  
 Ultimately, there is another group of laws we are to abide to as well, and that is the moral law which all humans are bound to. This moral law is not given to us by men, but instead it is given to us by God. Thus our human will, our human freedom, while we are free, are bound to this moral law no less than we are bound to the other laws which we experience while we are here.  
 As Amos condemns these nations, we notice that God judges them because of their irresponsibility to the Law of God. Another way to say it, he judges them because of their lack of responsibility with their freedom. Instead of using their freedom to follow the Law of God, the Law which all humans have been given by nature, the Law that recognizes human beings as made in the image of God and thereby deserving of dignity, sanctity, and having intrinsic worth, they forgo these laws for their own profits, their own gains, their own desires.  
 In this way, we see that humanity as a whole falls under the condemnation of law breakers, just as these various nations do. All humans are descendants of two particular people in the Scriptures. The first is Adam and Eve, and the second is Noah. From both of these there came certain laws which were to be obeyed, laws which when disobeyed had consequences.  
 All humanity still remains under the law. All of humanity remains under the Law of God. Morality itself, to not lie, cheat, steal, kill, murder, etc. All of them require our obedience because they are all from God to all men. They all reflect the image of God Himself, the perfect, holy, and moral God who has created the world. Because all of humanity reflects the image of God, we bear the responsibility of using our freedom responsibly by following after God.  
 Unfortunately we know that humanity rarely follows suit. We see that in these prophecies. Though these other nations are pagan, it still doesn’t negate the fact that they are to be responsible morally. This is the same with our nation, and every other nation. All nations, all peoples, all societies, are called to be moral by implication that societies, peoples, and nations are made up of individuals who are called to such responsibility of their freedom to follow the law.  
 Yet, as mentioned, humanity rarely follows suit, which is where our responsibility is even more relevant, in that even if the societies, the nations, the peoples, fail to follow the moral law, we cannot. We must rise above all of these things in the world, and be holy, be different, from them. Though the world follows it’s own moral compass, we must reflect the light of the world who is Jesus by seeking to follow and obey Jesus.  
 In this way our responsibility to the world is tied into our responsibility to Christ. Our responsibility with our freedom is to be faithful to that which God has given to govern the world. Thankfully, God does not govern the physical world alone, but all of the world and all of us. Thus, God being Lord of all is literally that. He is Lord of all, the Law giver of all things, the one who shows us how to live and by what standard to live by.  
 As Christians in a dark world full of sorrow and regret, we need to make sure we are not like the world, not like the nations we have seen. These nations rejected the moral law, but we cannot. The nations judged perished because of their negligence, but we can be sure that those who seek God, those who seek Him in all things of life, will not experience such judgment, but will experience the great and total love of God forevermore.  
 So this leads us back to our responsibility. We are free with our wills insofar as God has allowed us to be free. Let us not waste our freedom pursuing that which is against the Law of God. Instead, let’s begin to glorify God today by seeking to be the prophets of the generations. By seeking the moral standard for the nations individually and corporately. By seeking the Law that God has given us, not to be placed on our backs as slaves, but to placed in our hands to know, to cherish, and to seek as His Sons and Daughters.  
 What of the punishment for those who break the Law? We know that the nations will have their punishments. They will have their judgments cast against them just as these old testament nations did. God will deal the same with modern nations as He has dealt with nations in the past. If they remain unrepentant and unfaithful, then the end result is judgment.  
 Yet for those who are in Christ, when sin abounds, and when we fail, we have an advocate in Jesus Christ. His blood cleanses us of all sins past, present, and future, and by Him, though we sin, we can live and with our freedom seek out His justice, mercy, love, grace, righteousness, and morality.  
 All of these things are our responsibility. To learn from the past, to not make the same mistakes in the future. To look at these nations and what they were judged for, and seek to not fall under the same trap. Some will say that it doesn’t matter, but that is a betrayal of our responsibility, for we are to seek reconciliation of these societies with our God, though if they refuse reconciliation judgment will come, let it not come without us pleading with the nations to turn toward God.  
 Finally, there is one last thing to consider with our responsibility, and that is how we are responsible in morality toward all people. Let me explain this a little better. There is a reality that we are especially called to love one another of the faith. This is true beyond any doubt. We are a responsibility toward one another in love that is distinct from our responsibility to those who are outside the world.  
 But what we cannot do is assume that this means we are not to love others outside the Church or be immoral toward them. The reason I bring this up is because of something some of you might of noticed about the prophecies we have seen, and that is that every one of them focuses on a foreign nation and its evil toward Israel and Judah the people of God. All of them…except one.  
 The final prophecy we looked at doesn’t involve Israel or Judah in any capacity. Moab is the one I am talking about. While Moab and Israel/Judah never were great friends, the reality is that the prophecy above is focused on an event which has nothing to do with the people of God. We notice, they killed the king of Edom. Edom is not part of the people of God, they are not Israel or Judah, and yet Moab is still judged for it regardless.  
 This realization shows us that everyone is under the Lordship of God, and it also reminds us that we are all responsible in our morality under every circumstance. God will not only judge nations for their immorality toward Christians, He will judge nations for their immorality, their irresponsibility, toward any person or people group.  
 Personally this always makes me think of the United States on one count, and Europe on the second. The first is how the United States treated the treaties it made with the early Americans. If you know the history of it, you would know that America treated their treaties as litter. Though we made treaties we would break them constantly to expand our borders, dispossessing entire populations. Is this an example of Amon? Moab? Edom?  
 The second makes me think of Europe relationship with the world. When Europeans would colonize all these places in the world, taking over lands for their own benefit, their own profit, their own desires. Again, we wonder, have these nations been like Amon? Moab? Edom?  
 If this is the case, then obviously we, Christians especially, need to be moral to all people, and we need to learn from these mistakes. Yes, we show a specific and particular love to our brothers and sisters of the faith, but that does not excuse us from being inhuman to humans. Instead, let’s be strong in the faith, trusting the great Lord and giver of life to continue the good work of bringing us further into His sovereignty and teaching each of us to be responsible.  
 So that is the call for all of us. Recognize our responsibility as humans created in the image of God, and seek the morality, ethics, the lifestyle, that our God has laid before us and strive for nothing less! For through Christ we partake of all of these things, and if we begin now we will experience a greater weight of the glory of God even while here, on this bent and crooked world. So though ti is bent and crooked, we can seek a straight and narrow way through faithfulness to Christ, seeking responsibility with the life and freedom we have been given. Seek this, for it is a great and worthy treasure to glorify God with our lives.

3. The Gospel: All of this reminds us of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is through the Gospel we are given life. It is through the Gospel we are able to live according to the Word of God, to live responsibly free lives according to the morality God has given to us, and to reflect the Light of Jesus Christ on the world around us, both corporately and individually. Though the nations may break the moral law of God, we can live by it, glorifying God with our lives.  
 The Gospel begins with our origins. God created all things by the power of His Word. He is the first Cause of all things. He is the only one without a cause, because He has no beginning, for He always was and always is and always will be. All of the cosmos, however, does have a beginning and because of that a cause which is God. Last of all the cosmos to be created was humanity whom God made in His image. Because God is a God of love, reason, knows, can be known, has personhood, and shows chesed, we can as well. It is here we find dignity, worth, and sanctity to all human life.  
 But like God we are able to choose. We could either choose to follow God in obedience and into life, or choose to follow sin in disobedience and death. We chose the latter and have continued to do so ever since. Because of this our relationships with God, ourselves, each other, and the world are broken. We continue to accrue a greater moral guilt before our God every day, and because of that we are worthy of condemnation and judgment.  
 God did not leave us in our sorrow without hope forever. Instead He sent His Light, and gave us His Word in our darkness, and that is Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again in time space history and flesh. It is by Him we are justified before our Holy and righteous God. It is through His blood we are cleansed from our sin. It is in His victory that we find our own victory in life and over death.  
 All that is required of us is obedience in two things. The first is repentance from sin. We are to turn away from sin and turn to God. We are to live lifestyles that are congruent with the Scriptures, with Christ as revealed by the Scriptures, and in step with the Holy Spirit, in love. We are to seek to live for the glory of God above all, and in this way we bear witness to the power of God in us for our salvation by how we live.  
 The second is faith in Christ. We are to recognize our total dependence upon the Son of God for our salvation. It is not what we are able to do which saves us from our sins, it is what Christ has done. It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone, we are saved.  
 For those who remain in disobedience there is only condemnation. None can stand before God with their deeds in hand, for even their best deeds are as filthy rags before our holy and righteous God. Therefore, to stand before God without any atonement for sin is to stand in judgment for the moral guilt which of sin which we all have apart from Christ.  
 For those who are obedient, however, there is no longer condemnation. Instead they receive the love reserved for the Son of God. They enter into the joy of knowing God as their Father in heaven. They are able to have victory over sin in this life, and victory over death in the next. Not because of what they do, but because of what Christ has done. In the end they become coheirs of an eternal kingdom of peace with their God.  
 In all of these things we give praise to God for the Gospel revealed to us through the Scriptures. We give thanks for God’s righteousness, His justice, His mercy, His grace. We are reminded of all these things when we read over the prophets, and are encouraged to know that our God is not silent, but continues to speak to us today through His Word, reminding us of our responsibility to follow after Him. So do so, in grace and peace, glorifying God in all you do according to His will.