

Title: The Judge and the Judged

Text: Amos 1:1-2:16

Date: July 12, 2026

Good morning, for your great benefit and blessing and joy, I would ask that you would turn your Bibles to the book of Amos 1. The book of Amos 1. It's right after Joel. Book of Amos 1, and we will read through the end of chapter 2. Book of Amos 1, and we will read through the end of chapter 2. Amos, a prophet of the Lord, records these words as he is carried along by the Holy Spirit.

"The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, the king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. And he said: 'The Lord roars from Zion and he utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.' 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. So I will send a fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad. 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.

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. So I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour her strongholds. 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. Thus says the Lord: 'For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brothers. So I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour her strongholds.'

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. So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah.' 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. 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; and their king shall go into exile, he and his princes together,' says the Lord. 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. So I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the strongholds of Kerioth, and Moab shall die amid uproar, and amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet; I will cut off the ruler from its midst, and will kill all its princes with him,' says the Lord.

Thus says the Lord: 'For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have rejected the law of the Lord, and they have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray, those after which their forefathers walked. So I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem.' Thus says the Lord: 'For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals- those who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted; a man and his father go into the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned; they lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined. Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars and who was as strong as the oaks; I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath.

Also it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you forty years into wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?' declares the Lord. But you made the Nazarites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.' 'Behold, I will press you down in your place, as a cart full of sheaves presses down. Flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not retain his strength, nor shall the mighty save his life; he who handles the bow shall not stand, and he who is swift of foot shall not save himself, nor shall he who rides the horse save his life; and he who is stout of heart among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day,' declares the Lord."

This is the word of God, and let's pray together to begin.

Father, we pray this for the preaching of your word, that whatever we do not know, you would teach us. Whatever we misunderstand, that you would explain to us. That whatever we lack, you would give us. Wherever we have fallen down, Lord, that you would bind us up, and that you would reveal the glory of your Son Jesus by the power of your Spirit.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Maybe it's just because I've been watching a lot of World Cup soccer recently. I don't know if you are doing the same. But after watching some of these games, I'm wondering, are there any reasons why people get fouls called on them? Are there rules to this game? I have no idea. I've played soccer and I'm not sure. Maybe you watched a sport before, maybe you're watching the World Cup at this point in time, and you've always wondered, why is that person getting a foul called on them? Why is that person getting kicked out of the game? Did they do anything wrong? Is there a standard by which they're being judged right now? It's a silly example.

It's the same question, the two probably most important questions we must ask of ourselves in our lives. Are we being judged by someone, by God? Are we going to be judged by God? And is there a standard by which that judgment will be reckoned? And what is it? Or are we, just like these soccer players, getting kicked out of the game and thrown out of the game for no reason or for an unknown reason? Or are we just at the whim of an unknown standard? Do we not know what will happen to us in the future and if we

are going to be judged or not? Well, the Lord, unlike referees perhaps, does not leave it a mystery in Amos 1 & 2. The Lord does not leave this a mystery in Amos 1 & 2, but rather he tells us, our main idea today, to recognize your sin and your inability to save yourself and to repent. To recognize our sin and our inability to save ourselves and repent. And to do this, he tells us, the voice of the judge, what the judge says, the sins of the judged, and the certainty of the judgment. The voice of the judge, the sins of the judged, the standard by which we will be judged, and the certainty of the judgment to come. Recognize your sin and your inability to save yourself and repent. That is what the Lord wants us to hear from this text today, and he's going to do it by showing us the voice of the judge, the sins of the judged, and the certainty of the judgment.

So first, the voice of the judge. We see here in the beginning, the first words of the book of Amos, *"The words of Amos."* And he introduces us to this new prophet and this new author of this new book. He says that he is *"among the herdsmen of Tekoa."* And in chapter 7-14, we hear that Amos is a herdsman, he's a shepherd, and that he deals with sycamore and fig trees, and he follows the flock, and that he is not a prophet by trade or a prophet's son. And so, what we have introduced to us immediately is that Amos is just an ordinary guy. He's a sheep herder. He's not a prophet's son. He's not a prophet by trade. He's never prophesied anything in his life. And yet the Lord uses his words to speak his word. We see that his word that he saw is concerning Israel in verse 1. This book is focused on the northern ten tribes, the northern kingdom of Israel.

And so, if you remember in your biblical history here, that remember Israel is so sinful that they get split up into north and south. And there's the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. And this book is focused on the northern kingdom of Israel, even though as we saw today, and we're going to see today, that there's plenty to go around for everyone else in all the other nations as well. This happens *"in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel."* And that's just to tell us that Amos is a contemporary of Hosea, the prophet Hosea, who we already read through, and Jonah. But he is before guys like Isaiah, who became a prophet in the year that king Uzziah died, as we learned in Isaiah 6.

And finally, the final piece of information, contextual information, we're given in this first verse, is that it happens *"two years before the earthquake."* And we don't know what earthquake this is. We know that earthquakes are common in this part of the world because they sit on a fault line. But apparently, it was significant enough to say, to become a marker for time. It would be something like around Grace Chapel, us saying, well, it was two years before the flood happened downstairs. You know, something like that. It's some well-known event that the people would have understood. So, Amos is this ordinary guy used by God to be a vessel for his word to the northern ten tribes of Israel. We not only see the words of Amos, we also see the voice of God immediately introduced in verse 2, where it says, *"The Lord roars from Zion and he utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."* The first thing I want to point out to you is the continuation of God's voice from the previous two prophets that we just looked at.

If you remember, back in the beginning of Joel and at the end of Hosea, we talked about how there's significant passages in The Book of the Twelve, the minor prophets, that show us that God has purposely designed these books by the power of his Spirit to be together and to preach one message in one gospel of salvation and judgment. And we talked about how these characteristic passages have three characteristics, you could say. Three markers.

The first is that it is distinct in comparison to the book around them. So, in the book of Amos, if you notice in verse 2, you could rip verse 2 out of the book of Amos and it would make perfect sense still. Verse 2 does not add much to chapters 1 & 2, and if you notice when we were reading, there's a pattern of, *"Thus says the Lord"* in verse 3, and *"says the Lord"* at the end of address of a nation. Thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord. I'm hoping your Bible marks it off for you to show the pattern and structure of these sections, but notably verse 2 does not have this similar structure. So, it's distinct in Amos.

Next, it also has a quotation or allusion to Jeremiah, and it also does this in combination with the end of Joel 3:16. So, notice Joel 3:16, notice what it says there. *"The Lord roars from Zion, and he utters his voice from Jerusalem."* And look at what he says once again in verse 2 of Amos. *"The Lord roars from Zion and he utters his voice from Jerusalem."* I mean, unless that is mere coincidence, I don't think it is, that these books would be placed side by side together in The Book of the Twelve. Amos comes way before Joel. Joel comes way after Amos. They could be chronologically in place, but God designed it to emphasize, for some reason, this order for some particular purpose. And these verses, *"The Lord roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem,"* is a quotation of Jeremiah 25:30, which says, *"The Lord from the high place roars, and from his holy habitation utters his voice."*

And finally, these characteristic verses develop the themes of judgment and salvation. Of course, in Joel, we just were talking about the day of the Lord, this day of simultaneous salvation and judgment. And in Amos, the Lord's voice is significant, as we will see, as the means by which God delivers his acts of judgment. But all this is just to say, I just want to point this out to you, to show you, that we're noticing in real time God's beautiful design to his scriptures. He didn't just haphazardly throw them together, but he placed them where they are for a purpose, to show us beautiful things from his word. And I just want to go along with that as we go through these prophets. And if Amos is attached to Joel for a purpose, and Joel is attached to Hosea for a purpose, then as we go through Amos, we should once again remember everything we've brought along with us from Hosea and Joel, just as we would with any other book. The first and second chapter are important for the third.

Next, we also see not only the continuation of God's voice, but the emphasis on God's voice. As we have seen, he says, thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord throughout the passage. The voice of the Lord is the main character of these two chapters. And not only is it the main character, but it has a particular character. He describes this voice in verse 2 as *"The Lord who roars from Zion."* And this anticipates what we see later in chapter 3:8, where Amos says, *"The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?"* He's characterizing the Lord's voice as this roaring lion who strikes fear into the hearts of those who hear him. The Lord's voice, Amos said, should cause hearers to

tremble in fear and bow down. The Lord's voice is also characterized as coming from Zion or from Jerusalem, the place where God's throne sits, the place of authority over God's people.

So, whenever we hear God's word, we should hear authority. We should respond with submission, with fearful, respectful, submissive, obedient hearts. And this authoritative, powerful voice demonstrates that authority and power in what it does. I mean, look at what he says in the rest of verse 2, *"the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."* Both of these places, the top of Carmel and the pastures of the shepherds, are known as fruitful, fertile places. Once again, thank you, Matt, for the Ag report today. It'd be like saying, if our ground is really fruitful and the corn is big and the beans are fat, I don't know, something like that, you know, those things, that God's voice decimates that into a desert. That's how powerful his voice is. He makes fertile places, deserts. His word is powerful. His word is a lion's roar. His word is authoritative. It is, it desolates. It's fearsome. It is great. And that voice all comes through what means, the first verse, *"The words of Amos."* God's authoritative, powerful, roaring voice through human words, through a shepherd boy who's not a prophet. Ordinary means, human hands, divine, authoritative word, reliably communicated.

I mean, we're seeing before our eyes in Amos, the doctrine of scripture just unfolding for us. Human hands, human words, reliably communicating the very voice of God, the very authority of God. This is exactly what 2 Peter says in 2 Peter 1:21, *"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* Or as 2 Timothy 3:16 says, *"All Scripture is breathed out by God."* Don't listen to what the world tells you, friends, that the Bible isn't reliable because it's just some old historical document or that human hands have really corrupted what the Bible is and we can't rely upon it as God's authoritative and powerful word. We see right here in Amos that no, God reliably, authoritatively roars through the words of a human. And we can reliably hear the words of God, the voice of God in this book.

Secondly, I also want to see how God uses ordinary people to deliver his extraordinary word. This is just one instance of God doing this over and over and over again in scripture, that ordinary people like shepherd boys become spokespeople for God and have the words of God on their lips. Friends, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians, *"Consider your own calling."* Are any of us super special people? Were we really impressive when God called us to himself? Does God call us to proclaim his excellencies because we're just the best at it? No! God uses ordinary people like you and I to deliver extraordinary truth through the power of simply our words, proclaiming his word.

If you ever played rock, paper, scissors with a child, or maybe you did this when you were a kid, they like to go outside of the three options. Usually it's like rock, paper, scissors, shoot. But they'll go, a bomb, or fire, a dragon. You're like, that beats rock, I guess. That's cool. But it's a similar thing when we enter into conversation with other people, and they challenge us to a game of rock, paper, scissors on the truth. We do come with supernatural atomic bomb power in that conversation to their little rock because we have, not because we're so awesome, not because we're so great, but because we have the very words of God. So be assured today that you and I, simple people, can be spokespeople and have been called to be spokespeople for God because we have the Spirit indwelling us and we have the word of God with us. And

don't be ashamed of that. That's why Paul says that he *"is not ashamed of the gospel"* in Romans 1:16. Why? *"It is the power of God unto salvation for those who believe."* Ordinary people, let's speak it. Let's speak it.

And finally, just briefly here, don't underestimate or undervalue the preaching of God's word in the church. God has chosen over and over again, and this is another instance of this, that he organizes his people around the proclamation of his word, of his voice. And he has done it over and over and over again, and he has ordained in the new covenant ordinary men to use an ordinary means called preaching to proclaim extraordinary truth to his people. Do not look at preaching as a nice conclusion to your week or as a nice beginning to the next. Do not look at preaching as something that you can dictate how it sounds, or how it happens, or when it happens, or what is best for you. Do not treat preaching as something optional for your Christian life or for the church. It is the power-filled, authoritative voice of God being proclaimed and spoken to you every single week for your joy in him, for your edification into Christ's likeness, for your maturity. God uses the foolishness of what we preach to save those who believe and to mature those who are his. And so, love preaching. See it and submit to it as God's very word in accordance with what it says in scripture.

Paul himself connects the power of God in scripture with the preaching of that word in the church in 2 Timothy 3 & 4, where he says *"All scripture is breathed out by God,"* and then he immediately says to Timothy, *"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead.... preach the word."* It's that powerful. That means we need to preach it and to hear it, because people are going to go off into other myths and we need to protect them from that. So, Amos, ordinary guy, who uses the voice of the judge himself to communicate to the people of God and the nations these words in this book. That is the voice of the judge.

Second, we have the sins of the judged. We need to hear what this judge, this powerful voice says. The section is organized by a few key phrases, the one that we've already recognized with, *"thus says the Lord,"* and *"says the Lord."* But this word from the Lord not only pronounces judgment, he also tells us why he's judging. He gives us the standard and the reason for why he judges, and he indicates that this is the case by beginning each section with the phrase, *"For three transgressions of,"* so-and-so, *"and for four, I will not revoke the punishment."* So, God judges people because of transgression, because of sin. And I don't want you to read this phrase and think that God is in the baseball or something and three strikes, you're out, but four, you're really pushing it. It's just a way of saying God judges sins, period, and these nations and these people, actually all people, are characterized by racking them up. That we are sinful people who don't just sin three, but we sin four. We don't just sin four times, we sin five. And God is bringing judgment on that. And in this section, we see the sins of the nations, and then we see the sins of the nation, namely Israel, the sins of the nations, and the sins of the nation.

So, first of all, God gives us the sins of the nations, namely Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. And what is abundantly clear from this is that God holds the nations even, Gentile nations who don't bear his name, he holds them accountable just as he does his own people. He might be asking, how? Why? He hasn't revealed his word to them. They don't have the scriptures. How can he hold them

accountable? By what standard is God judging them? Well, God tells us in his word that all human beings are accountable to him by virtue of being human beings made in the image of God. We see this first happen in Genesis 1:26, & 27, that he created man in his own image and likeness, making them distinct from the rest of creation. And as image bearers, human beings are accountable and responsible to God to spread his glory and his image all over the earth. But also connected to this identity as image bearers of God is that we are the crown jewel of creation, God's summit piece of creation. And we have an inherent value that is distinct from everything else in the world.

Every human being is equally made in the image of God and therefore has equal value before the eyes of God. And this value is first encroached upon in Genesis 4 when Cain murders his brother. And this value is then reaffirmed and protected in Genesis 9:5 & 6 where God tells Noah, *"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed,"* why, *"for God made man in his own image."* Human life, in other words, is so valuable just by virtue of being created by God that it must never be taken by another human. And this is ingrained into the very act of creation such that every single human being knows it to be true. This is what theologians call general revelation, that God has made known in his creation itself that he exists, that he is a judge, a holy judge, that has a moral standard, and that therefore the people who live on earth know simply by looking at what he has made that there is a God to whom they are accountable, and that things are wrong and right, like killing a human is wrong.

As Psalm 19:1-2 famously says, *"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day he pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge."* As Romans 1:20 says, which we read this morning, *"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."* So, because God has revealed himself in these ways in creation, all nations, no matter where you are, no matter who you are, no matter what you've heard from the Bible, ever if you've heard it at all, you are accountable to God and you have sinned against God and therefore you are without excuse before him. And the nations all seem to fail at this one point. They all fail at the creation, designation of; men are created in the image of God, and you cannot kill one another because you all have inherent value.

Because look at every single sin of every single nation. It all has to do with killing or taking captive people. Damascus, *"because they threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron."* Gaza, *"because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to Edom,"* presumably to death. Tyre, *"they delivered up a whole people to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brothers."* Edom, they are cast in the language of Esau, their father, who *"pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever."* The Ammonites, *"they ripped open pregnant women in Gilead."* Moab, *"he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom."* Overkill, don't you think? Judah, we'll get to that later. But God is holding every nation accountable of this same basic human understanding that murdering others is wrong, that is woven into the fabric of creation and that they are accountable to and therefore God holds them accountable to and judges them for it. The sin of the nations is the first sin of the judged here and that is an absolute disregard for human life.

Before we go on with that, let's quickly enumerate for us the sins of the nation, the sins of the nation of Israel. The Lord then turns and addresses the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel and notice the identical terms that he uses. He doesn't change tone, he hasn't changed anything. The nation of Israel is treated just like one of the nations. *"For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment... Thus says the Lord."* Whether Jew or Greek, God is saying, both are liable to judgment because of sin. And the first sin that the people of Judah are guilty of is they have rejected the law of the Lord *"and have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked."* In the words of Paul in Romans 1, *"they exchange God's word for a lie."* Instead of going after what God has revealed, they have gone after lies.

While the nations only knew what was known to them in creation, God had specially given revelation of himself in his word to the people of Israel. And yet they still messed it up. And they still disobeyed. And those who have received God's revealed will have a choice to accept and follow God's true and perfect word or to be led astray by lies. And in fact, this is the first decision that ever had to be made, was it not, in the garden? Accept and follow God's word, Adam, or believe in the devil's lie? And so, it is for every single human being. We have all chosen in our lives to be led astray by the lies of the world instead of being led and filled with the word of God.

The next sins are expressed in the judgment against Israel, which shows in particular how the people disobeyed the word of God. And all of these sins that he gives to Israel are examples of how they specifically broke the commands of the Lord and the law. He says, first of all, that they likewise disregarded human life. *"They sold the righteous for silver, they sold the needy for a pair of sandals- they trampled the head of the poor, they turned aside the way of the afflicted."* This is in direct violation of Leviticus 19:7, Leviticus 19:18, sorry, which says, *"you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."* They're breaking the law just with not loving their neighbor. Or Leviticus 25:39 specifically says, *"If your brother becomes poor and he sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave."* So even if your brother has to serve you as a part of his occupation, you're not to sell him into slavery. And they're directly disobeying the words of the Lord.

They likewise have issues with sexual immorality. Look at verse 7, where he says, *"a man and his father go into the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned."* He's listing one of the worst offences you could possibly think of sexually. And he's saying, you've done that and profaned my name in doing it. You have not followed my design for what I wanted for you, that I laid out for you in Exodus 20:14, that *"You shall not commit adultery."* Or in two whole chapters of Leviticus, Leviticus 18, and Leviticus 20, that gives copious amounts of laws for sexual relations. They also were idolatrous in verse 8, and *"they lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledged, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined."* These are likely referring to idolatrous practices done to other gods. But notice that they do this not merely besides other altars. Verse 8, they do it *"in the house of their God."* They do it in the temple. They're worshipping other gods. That's direct violation of Exodus 20:3-5. *"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on earth beneath."*

And finally, they have the sin of godlessness. They have completely forgotten the Lord and what he's done for them. And it shows in their actions. In verses 9-11, the Lord says, *"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them.... It was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you for forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. And it was I who raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not indeed so?"* Have you forgotten? They're living godless lives. They go about their days, and they just completely forget God and everything that he has done for them. This is in direct violation of Deuteronomy 8:2. *"And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what is in your heart."*

And what is the result of that? Verse 11 of that chapter, *"Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his statutes."* If they just have a mindlessness towards God all the time, then they're just going to disobey everything that he has commanded them. And it shows, verse 12, they make the Nazarites break their vow by drinking alcohol. And they command the prophets that he has given them to prophesy, no, don't speak to me. I don't want to hear the words of God. Who is God? I've forgotten him. The authoritative and powerful voice of the judge has enumerated for the nations and for Israel their offenses against his holy character and revealed in his creation and his word. These sins are the reason that God gives them judgment, that he sends, as he says, a fire upon each and every one of these people.

And if we have seen nothing else from this equal judgment of both the nations and Israel, we have seen that God is impartial. As we read in Romans 2:11, *"there is no partiality with God."* The standard is the standard. There is not one person or kind of people that gets special treatment. The standard of righteousness that God has set and revealed through his word is the standard of righteousness that does not change. And God has revealed that righteousness in his law so that we might know the standard that we're going to be judged by. That we might measure up to what he says a righteous person is and does, that who can stand before him. And since God is impartial and has revealed the standard of his impartial judgment, we should not assume that this is just a historical story and that we'll be treated any different. We should assume that, actually, God has revealed the standard.

Where do I measure up? Do I – have I committed these sins? Am I guilty of the same sins of the judged? Do I belong in the category of the judged? Do we value human life as image bearers created by God? Or do we show whether in word, desire, or deed that we treat others' lives as less valuable than ours? Do we have a disregard for human life? Have we ever had a disregard for human life? Friends, the world will tell you to support things like abortion, the murder of innocent lives while they're still in the womb because they're not valuable. The world will tell you to support assisted suicide, especially for the elderly who are supposedly not contributing enough to society. These kinds of abhorrent actions is exactly what Amos is referring to, the kind of disregard for image bearers that Amos is referring to. And make no mistake about it, to believe in and to support such abhorrent views and ideologies is absolutely inconsistent with biblical Christianity.

You cannot be a consistent Christian and be a supporter of murdering babies or murdering the elderly because we believe that all life is created in the image of God. Are we impartial like God? Or do we show that people are of lesser value because of their money or their lack thereof, their station in life, the amount of kids they have, whether or not they have a family? Do we communicate to the poor that they are lesser, or do we have compassion on them? We cannot treat others as more important than others because if we do so, we are acting inconsistently with the claim that all life is equally valuable for God.

More than even this, Edom shows, notice that Edom shows that murder and his murder and his disregard for human life is connected with anger. *"His anger tore perpetually,"* he says in verse 11. He kept his wrath forever as our Lord says in Matthew 5. You have heard it said, *"you shall not murder.... But I say that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."* Are we ever angry? Do we ever get frustrated? That's a nice word that we like to use for anger. We are just as liable to the judgment of fire that God describes here. Sexual immorality. Do we lust in our heart after other image bearers treating them as sexual objects instead of as coheirs with us in the grace of life? Idolatry. Friends, there's literal idolatry in the world. There are mosques in Dayton. There's Roman Catholic churches all over the place. Idolatry is real. Do we ever serve other gods like legitimately? Do we ever serve other gods, treat those things as okay, approve of those who do them? Have we ever coveted anything, wanting something that was not ours, sinning for something that we wanted to get or sinning because we did not get it? Paul calls that idolatry as well.

Ephesians 5:5, *"The one who is covetous, that is an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."* How about godlessness? Do we ever forget God? Have we ever found ourselves at the end of a week or end of two-week period thinking, well, I kind of forgot that I was supposed to be thinking on the things of the Lord. I haven't prayed at all the last two weeks. Does life ever take up our head space more than the Lord? Do we ever use the issues of life as excuses for not remembering the Lord and living as those who are always living before his eyes? Friends, let us remember that disobedience to God is not just doing what God prohibits, but also not doing what God commands. And the point in hearing all of this and kind of laying this out is hopefully by the end of this you realize, I am at least one of those things. I have done at least one of those things.

And therefore, there is hopefully, we can all attest, that there is no one in this room and there is no one on earth who can ever say that they can be excused from the judgment of God. That we don't deserve the judgment of God. That we aren't lined up right next to the nations where he can say, for three transgressions of Colby and for four I will not revoke my punishment. And you can insert your name into that and say, yes, I recognize my sin. I recognize I do not live up to the righteous standard of God. I recognize that I am worthy of condemnation. And then Amos wants to do us one better. And he turns to the certainty of the judgment and our complete inability to save ourselves. You might be thinking, yeah, I recognize that I am worthy of judgment, but you know what, maybe I can just climb the ladder. Maybe I can just do enough good things and maybe it will outweigh the scales. And I will be righteous before God. I will be able to avoid the punishment.

But look what he says in 13-16. Look at verse 14. *“Flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not retain his strength, nor shall the mighty save his life; he who handles the bow shall not stand, and he who is swift of foot shall not save himself, nor shall he who rides the horse save his life; and he who is stout of heart among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day.”* You think you're swift? You're not going to outrun the fire and judgment of God. You think you're strong enough? Amos says you aren't strong enough to withstand it either. What about might? Are you mighty? You're not mighty enough to save your own life. Skilled in weapons of warfare? They're useless against God. Stout of heart? Amos says you're going to run away naked and ashamed, scared, and pitiful.

It is coming, friends. And it is coming for all sinners. And the judgment of God is not partial. And there is no way that we can save ourselves. It doesn't matter who you are, what skills you have, how many good deeds you think you've done. It doesn't matter. You will not outrun it. We will never outsmart him. We are never going to outdo him. We are going to experience the wrath of God justly for how we've eternally sinned against the eternal God. So how will we ever escape? Is there a way of escape? Amos actually doesn't give us one right here. He doesn't give us one for the whole book. So, let's close our Bibles and pray and let's go. No.

But a similar author who does a similar thing does give us the answer right now. In Romans 1 & 2, Paul does the same thing that Amos does. He says, Gentiles, you all are toast. General Revelation got you and you're toast. In chapter 2 & 3 he says, Israelites, you guys are no better. You might be even worse. Why? Because you have the words of God and you disobeyed. You had the oracles of God in your hand and yet you still messed it up. And then he says in Romans 3, *“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”* *“There is none righteous, no, not one.”* But then Paul offers the solution. Romans 3:19-26, he says, *“Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law only comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and Prophets bear witness to it- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an atoning sacrifice by his blood, to be received by faith.”* God, that righteousness to be made right before God, to be in right relationship with him, to be considered not sinful, but to be able to enter into his presence, that was not just revealed in the law, friends, to condemn us.

But God made it available by another means, by a man named Christ Jesus who fulfilled the law, who obeyed every word of it so that by faith, mere faith in him, his account might be credited to us and that we might not endure wrath before God because he endured it for us on the cross in our place as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And by faith alone, in Christ alone, repentance and belief in him, we can be made righteous, and we no longer have to be considered one of the judged in Amos 1 & 2, but one of the redeemed in Romans 3. What a beautiful gift. And it's only by faith alone, by God's sheer grace.

And more than this, you might be sitting here today being convicted because I just sinned in that way this week. I just committed sexual immorality this week. I just disregarded human life this week. I just was godless this week. By faith in Christ, you not only are freed from the penalty of sin, but guess what? You're also freed from its power over your life. And now you are made a slave to righteousness instead of a slave to sin. And now by the power of the spirit and union with Christ, *"it's no longer you who live, but Christ who lives through you."* And though we might wage war against our flesh even now, we are guaranteed long-term conformity into Christ-likeness day after day by God's sheer grace and through faith. What a gift. What a gospel. What good news in light of the voice of the judge and the certainty of the judgment and the reality of our sin.

So, friends, after hearing the voice of the judge, after hearing your sins enumerated and the standard by which you are to be judged, see the certainty of judgment. Recognize your inability to save yourself and repent of your sin and believe in Jesus because he is our only hope. Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace freely bestowed on all who believe, all who marvel to see his face will in this moment his grace receive. Amen.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank you that you are both the just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus. Father, we thank you that though you are a perfect righteous judge, that though you have showed us our horrible offense against you by nature and by choice, Lord, that though you have declared that judgment is the right and fitting payment for us and our sin, that you sent your son Jesus Christ to pay for us. And Lord, that though we be sinful and faithless, you remain faithful to those whom you have chosen and called to yourself and who believe in your son Jesus. Father, grant us this week more faith. Lord, grant us each day a gripping reality of our sin, but a joyful acceptance of Jesus Christ by faith. Help us this week to live godly, righteous lives by faith in your son. Help us this week to never forget and to always remember you, our Lord, and our salvation.

We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

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