

• *The sins of the nations against conscience*

Amos continues to look at the nations surrounding Israel, nations that the roaring lion is about to devour.

These sins that God denounces are all sins against humanity. And they are sins against conscience. Amos does not quote the Mosaic law until he begins to speak to Judah. He expects the pagan nations to know that these things are sins because they have a conscience. A sense of obligation to fellow human-beings is written into our very human nature.

The Edomites

• *Stifling compassion*

The Edomites are condemned for stifling compassion. They had a persistently murderous spirit.

This is what Yahweh has said:

“For three transgressions by Edom, and especially for four, I will not reverse My decision.

Because he pursued his brother with the sword, and he destroyed those to whom he should have shown mercy.

His anger raged perpetually, and his rage persisted always.” ¹

¹ 1:11

Again Edom’s sin was also a sin against brotherliness, but there were some other aspects to the matter.

1. *God looks for mercy in the human race*

1. **God looks for mercy in the human race.** It is part of human wickedness that men and women without God become unmerciful. ¹ The Medes had no mercy. ² Babylon had no mercy. ‘You did not show mercy to my people’ said God to Babylon. ³ Especially God looks for us to show mercy to those to whom we are neighbours or have some kind of brotherly relationship.

¹ Romans 1:31
² Isaiah 13:18
³ Isaiah 47:6

• *Hostility against Israel despite sharing Abraham as their ancestor*

Amos refers, it seems, to Edom’s hostility to Israel. Edom pursued his brother Israel with the sword. Time and time again in Edom’s history they showed bitterness and hostility towards Israel. Yet there was a special relationship between Edom and Israel. They were both descendants of Abraham.

2. *God hates anger that does not finish before the end of the day*

2. **God hates anger that does not finish before the end of the day.** ‘His anger raged perpetually’, says Amos. One can understand how many centuries ago, Esau should have been violently angry with Jacob. ¹ But Esau recovered from his anger. ² Now centuries later the Edomites are still violently angry with the Israelites. Their anger was everlasting.

¹ Genesis 27:41
² Genesis 33:4

But God says *‘Let not the sun go down upon your wrath...’*. Notice that it does not say *‘Let not the sun come up upon your wrath...’*. There are people who are angry when they go to bed at night but have forgotten their anger by the morning. Well, that’s better than anger going on for ever. But actually Scripture says, *‘Let not the sun go down upon your wrath...’*. It means: recover from your anger before you go to sleep. Close the dispute with a sweet word of friendship before you go to bed that night – if the other person allows it.

But judgement without mercy will be shown to the person who is not merciful. God says:

*“So I will send fire against Teman,
and it will consume the citadels of Bozrah.”* ^{☒1}

Edom will face God’s judgement. The fire of His punishment will fall upon the Edomite cities, Teman and Bozrah.

What made God angry with the Ammonites was their despising the weak. They are condemned for savage treatment of pregnant women.

*‘This is what Yahweh has said:
“For three transgressions by the people of Ammon, and especially for four, I will not reverse my decision.
Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead,
in order to enlarge their territory.”* ^{☒1}

The soldiers sent out by the Ammonite leaders were guilty of the most awful war crimes. They murdered pregnant women in the most terrible way. God has special mercy towards those who are in any way weak or needy. The orphan, the poor, the pregnant woman, the foreigner – God has special tenderness towards all of these people.

The reason why God gets so angry when people treat other people with such violence is because the human race is sacred! Men and women are made in the image of God! You cannot treat people as things, or as machines, or as statistics, or in the same way that you might treat an animal. There is something about the human race that makes it entirely different from any other section of God’s creation. Only the human race is created in the image of God.

The cause of Ammon’s violence towards another nation was that it was eager to enlarge its territory. This was a longstanding sin of Ammon. You get it as far back as the days of Jephthah when they invented some story to wage war on Israel even at that time. ^{☒1} Amos 1:13–14 refers to something later but it is still the same old territorial ambition that is showing itself. People get greedy for power, greedy for increased territory. *‘Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are a person’s eyes’*. ^{☒2} Like ancient Babylon, many empires have been greedy for increase of territory and power. *‘He is as greedy as the grave’*. ^{☒3}

The Ammonites

- *Despised the weak*

- *War crimes*

- *The human race is sacred – made in God’s image*

- *Territorial ambition – an expression of greed*

^{☒1} 1:12

^{☒1} 1:13

^{☒1} see Judges 11:13–14
^{☒2} Proverbs 27:20
^{☒3} Habakkuk 2:5

It is not only politicians and national leaders. Power and wealth tend to make you greedy for more power, more wealth. You never get to the point where you say ‘I have enough’.

But God hates it and will judge it.

“So I will send fire against the wall of Rabbah, and it will consume its citadels.

There will be shouting on the day of battle, and a tempest in the day of the windstorm. ☒¹

Their king will go into exile, he and his princes together.” Yahweh has spoken! ☒²

☒¹ 1:14

☒² 1:15

• **Certain judgement**

Rabbah was an Ammonite town. God says He will destroy it. In some kind of military conflict, victory will be given to Ammon’s enemies. The king of the nation will be removed, he and his fellow statesmen together. God has determined it will happen. His word shall – says Amos – certainly come to pass.

• **Edom and Ammon both wiped out**

Of course all of these predictions came to pass. None of the nations that Amos mentions exists today – although Israel exists today! God wiped out of existence Edom and Ammon. A nation that gets too ambitious will be humbled in due course. Anyone who speaks of an empire upon which the sun will never set, will find the sun setting quite rapidly!

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