

Moab

- **Resentment**

The people of Moab were condemned for maintaining resentment. They held on to animosity when the cause of that animosity had ceased. Amos is not only concerned with sins against Israel. The sin of Moab was a sin against Edom – who themselves are mentioned in 1:11–12 as a sinful nation.

*‘This is what Yahweh has said:
“For three transgressions by Moab,
and especially for four, I will not reverse My decision.
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom
to ashes.”* 

 2:1

The Moabites went to the tomb of a dead king, a king of Edom whom they hated. They took out the dead king's body and publicly burned his bones to ashes.

- 1. **God hates vindictiveness about the past**

1. God hates vindictiveness about the past. There must have been many sins that were being committed in the land of Moab but the one that God hated the most was being vindictive and hateful about an enemy who no longer could do anything worth worrying about. The king of Edom – whoever he might have been – was dead. He could trouble the Moabites no longer. But so much did the Moabite leader hate even the memory of this Edomite king, he and his people felt they had to publicly express their hatred and scorn towards their dead enemy. God hated it.

- 2. **Vindictiveness about the past is generally useless**

2. Vindictiveness about the past is generally totally useless. What could be more useless than digging up a corpse and burning its bones? It could not do the king any harm!

- 3. **Hate poisons the hater**

3. Hate poisons the hater more than the hated. Although such vengefulness could not do any harm to the king of Edom, it did a lot of harm to the Moabites. Angry bitterness of this kind destroys our peace of mind, twists our judgement, and closes down the channels of God's blessing.

- 4. **Vindictiveness brings down God's anger**

4. Vindictiveness brings down God's anger. God was so angry with such persistent and longlasting hatred that He decided it was time to act. Soon the land of Moab would be destroyed. Kerioth – a prominent Moabite city – would be destroyed.

*“So I will send fire against Moab,
and it will consume the citadels of Kerioth.
Moab will die amidst great tumult,
amid war cries and the blast of a trumpet. 
I will destroy the nation's ruler,
and will kill all the nation's officials with him.”* Yahweh has spoken!’ 

 2:2

 2:3

• **Moab's fate**

Moab would cease to exist altogether. The king would soon die. The nation's officials would perish. God hated vindictiveness. We had best repudiate vengeance altogether.

• **Six nations – six sins**

Amos has now mentioned six countries and has denounced six sins: unjust violence, using people for profit, disregarding the claims of brotherhood, stifling compassion, despising the weak, maintaining everlasting resentment.

Judah

Now a seventh nation is addressed, but there comes a surprise. Amos has a word for Judah, part of the original 'holy nation' chosen by God.

*'This is what Yahweh has said:
"For three transgressions by Judah,
and especially for four, I will not reverse my
decision.
Because they have rejected the law of Yahweh, and
have not kept his statutes."'*

☞¹ 2:4

• **God's law – given to no other nation**

What makes God angry with Judah is their despising His written word. We notice here a contrast in the way God spoke to the nations and the way God speaks to Judah. The six nations condemned in 1:3–2:3 were never condemned for disobeying God's law. They were never given God's law. The law of God was given exclusively to Israel on one definite occasion on Mount Sinai. No other nation was given a revelation of God's will in that way.

• **Everyone is judged in terms of what they know**

The nations mentioned in 1:3–2:3 were condemned for sinning against conscience. They knew – without possessing God's law – that what they were doing was sin. But they did not have an additional revelation in written form. God never condemned them for breaking His law, since they did not possess His law. *'Everyone who has sinned without the law will also perish without the law; and everyone who has sinned, although he or she has the law, will be judged by the law.'* ☞¹ Every person is judged in terms of what they know.

☞¹ Romans 2:12

• **Judah's rejection of the 'law of Yahweh'**

But Judah had a written revelation of the will of God! They – unlike the surrounding nations – had *'rejected the law of Yahweh'* and had not *'kept his statutes'*. The law or (as the Hebrew word has it) 'Torah' of Yahweh is basically the written teaching we now have in our 'Pentateuch' – the first five books of our Bible. 'Rejecting the law' means idolatry and its social consequences, doing the kind of things we have mentioned in Amos 5: despising the courts ☞¹, trampling on the poor ☞², oppressing the righteous ☞³, taking bribes ☞⁴, rejecting the prophets' call to heed the law of Moses.

☞¹ 5:10, 15
☞² 5:11
☞³ 5:12
☞⁴ 5:12

Amos continues:

• **Lies**

*"Their lies have led them astray,
their lies after which their fathers walked."'* ☞¹

☞¹ 2:4

• *The consequences of the neglect of God's word*

'Their lies' refers to their self-deceit in failing to heed God's Word. It will refer also to heeding false prophecies – which tend to come in once the written revelation of God is neglected. It is a continuing problem among the people of God and is found today as much as it was to be found in Amos' day. Israel's ancestors tended always to neglect or misuse God's written Word – and so do we Christians today. We are still 'walking in the ways of our fathers'.

'Their lies have led them astray'. If we neglect God's written word it will lead us astray in our minds. We shall accept false teaching. It will lead us astray in our experience. We shall experience darkness and failure rather than life and illumination and the joy of God's presence. If we neglect God's written word, we shall be led astray in our behaviour. The church is ruined when it neglects God's written word.

God's says:

“So I will send fire upon Judah, and it will devour the strongholds of Jerusalem.” ¹

¹ 2:5

To neglect God's written revelation always brings ruination.

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