



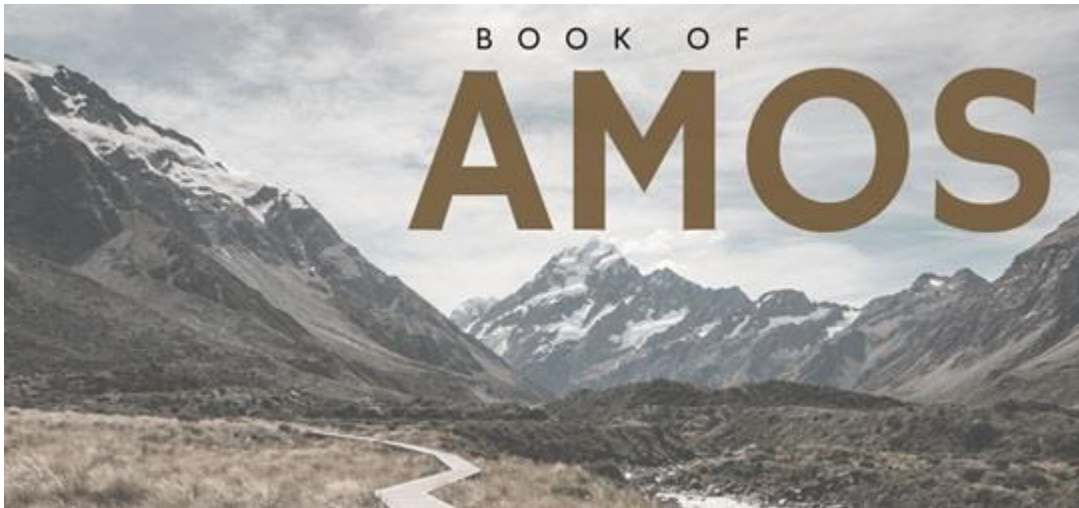
## **My Drift**

**Title: Bible – Books of Amos and Obadiah**

**Written By: Jerry D. Petersen**

**Date: 1 Aug 2024**

**Article Number: (465-2024-24)**



### **Summary**

The prophet Amos lived among a group of shepherds in Tekoa, a small town approximately ten miles south of Jerusalem. Amos made clear in his writings that he did not come from a family of prophets, nor did he even consider himself one. Rather, he was “a grower of sycamore figs” as well as a shepherd (Amos 7:14–15). Amos’s connection to the simple life of the people made its way into the center of his prophecies, as he showed a heart for the oppressed and the voiceless in the world.

Amos prophesied “two years before the earthquake” (Amos 1:1) just before the halfway point of the eighth century BC, during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel. Their reigns overlapped for fifteen years, from 767 BC to 753 BC.

Though he came from the southern kingdom of Judah, Amos delivered his prophecy against the northern kingdom of Israel and the surrounding nations, leading to some resistance from the prideful Israelites (Amos 7:12). Jeroboam’s reign had been quite profitable for the northern kingdom, at least in a material

sense. However, the moral decay that also occurred at that time counteracted any positives from the material growth.

Amos was fed up. While most of the prophets interspersed redemption and restoration in their prophecies against Israel and Judah, Amos devoted only the final five verses of his prophecy for such consolation. Prior to that, God's word through Amos was directed against the privileged people of Israel, a people who had no love for their neighbor, who took advantage of others, and who only looked out for their own concerns.

More than almost any other book of Scripture, the book of Amos holds God's people accountable for their ill-treatment of others. It repeatedly points out the failure of the people to fully embrace God's idea of justice. They were selling off needy people for goods, taking advantage of the helpless, oppressing the poor, and the men were using women immorally (Amos 2:6–8; 3:10; 4:1; 5:11–12; 8:4–6). Drunk on their own economic success and intent on strengthening their financial position, the people had lost the concept of caring for one another; Amos rebuked them because he saw in that lifestyle evidence that Israel had forgotten God.

With the people of Israel in the north enjoying an almost unparalleled time of success, God decided to call a quiet shepherd and farmer to travel from his home in the less sinful south and carry a message of judgment to the Israelites. The people in the north used Amos's status as a foreigner as an excuse to ignore his message of judgment for a multiplicity of sins.

However, while their outer lives gleamed with the rays of success, their inner lives sank into a pit of moral decay. Rather than seeking out opportunities to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly, they embraced their arrogance, idolatry, self-righteousness, and materialism. Amos communicated God's utter disdain for the hypocritical lives of His people (Amos 5:21–24). His prophecy concludes with only a brief glimpse of restoration, and even that is directed to Judah, rather than the northern kingdom of Israel (Amos 9:11–15).



## Outline

Amos 1-2: Accusations against the Nations and Israel

Amos 3-6: Exposing Israel's Hypocrisy and Injustice

Amos 7-9: Visions of the Day of the Lord

### Amos 1-2: Accusations against the Nations and Israel

The book of Amos opens with a series of short poems that accuse all of Israel's neighbors of violence and injustice, which seems odd because the book's opening line said that Amos spoke against Israel. As Amos names all these neighboring nations—Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah—you can look at a map and see that he's drawing a circle with Israel in the center, like a target in the crosshairs. When he does get to Israel, Amos unleashes a poetic accusation three times longer and more intense than any of the others. He accuses Israel's wealthy of ignoring the poor and allowing grave injustice, specifically by allowing them to be sold into debt slavery and then denying them legal representation. Is this, Amos asks, the same family that was denied justice and enslaved in Egypt, who God graciously rescued from oppression? The party's over, he says. God's done putting up with this.

### Example of Amos' Poetry

As with Job so with every Believer in Christ - Amos 9: 9

*God is supremely graciously good  
to all that He owns as His own  
among all the nations that He made  
for Israel, He will shake even His known*

*Behold the Lord commands in His voice  
to divide His precious from those of no account  
even the pebbles are God's own formation  
loving them so dearly like to His divine fount*

*Everyone who believes in Jehovah God  
is called precious in the Lord's own heart  
nothing shall separate His love from them  
specially joined uniquely in no small part*

*As with Job so with every believer in Christ  
for Satan is held in God's sovereign chain  
so it is equally for every believing child  
God's in total control so Satan has no gain*

*God's sieve is taken to shake about  
all that exists around the nations  
but all of God's pebbles are securely safe  
for He has a place within His holy station*

*(“For behold, I will command,  
and shake the house of Israel among all the nations  
as one shakes with a sieve,  
but no pebble shall fall to the earth.)*

### **Amos 3-6: Exposing Israel's Hypocrisy and Injustice**

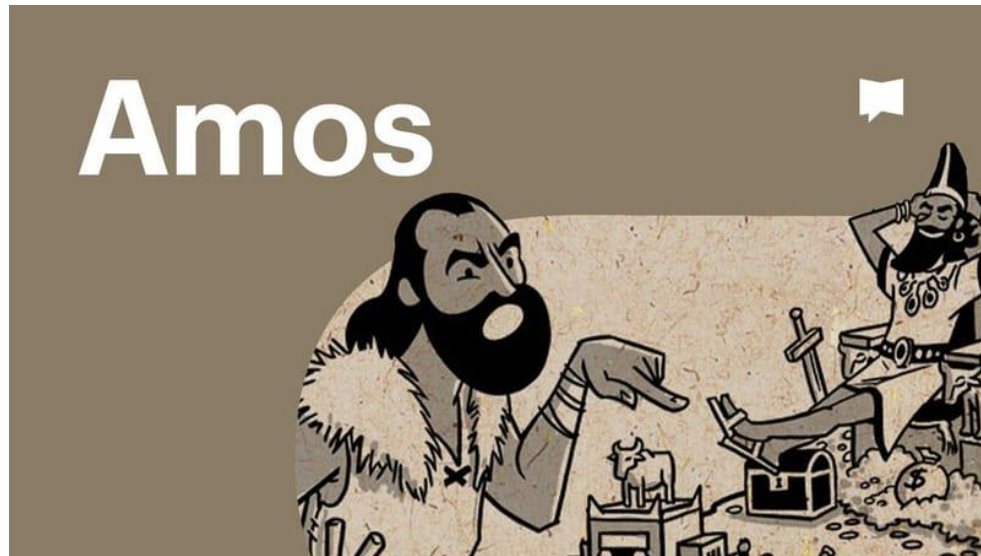
The opening to the next section explains why. God says, “I chose you Israel, from among all the families of the earth ...” when God called the family of Abraham to become God’s blessing to all nations. God continues the thought by saying, “... this is why I will punish you for all your sin.” Israel had a great calling that came with great responsibility, and so their sin and rebellion will bring great consequences.

The following section brings together lots of Amos’ poems, in which you’ll see a few key themes repeated. First of all, he’s constantly exposing the religious hypocrisy of Israel’s wealthy people and religious leaders. He describes how they faithfully attend the religious gatherings and give offerings to God, all while neglecting the poor and ignoring injustice.

Amos says that it’s all a sham and that God hates their worship because it’s totally disconnected from how they treat other people. God says that a real relationship with him will transform a person and how they treat others. Amos’ call to true worship is to “let justice flow like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream”. These two words are important to Amos. *Tsedaqah*, or “righteousness,” refers to a standard of right, equitable relationship between people no matter their social differences. And *mishpat*, or “justice,” refers to concrete actions you take to correct injustice and create righteousness. Both of these values are to permeate the life of God’s people like a rushing stream fills a dry riverbed.

The next theme explored is Amos’ repeated accusations of Israel’s idolatry, which is connected with the previous themes about worship and justice. Remember when the northern kingdom broke away from southern Judah and their king built two new temples to rival Solomon’s one in Jerusalem, placing a golden calf in each. Since then, Israel had only accumulated more idols,

representing the gods of sex, weather, and war. In the prophets' view, the worship of these gods always leads to injustice. These gods simply don't require the same degree of justice and righteousness as the God of Israel, and they were actually immoral themselves. The God of Israel, on the other hand, can say at one moment, "Seek me, that you may live" and later say, "Seek good, not evil, that you may live". True worship of the Creator God of Israel is synonymous with doing good and spreading generosity and justice.



The final theme in these chapters is that because Israel and its king have rejected Amos and other prophets, God will send the Day of the Lord, a great and terrible act of justice, on Israel. More specifically, he predicts that a powerful nation will come to conquer and destroy their cities and take them away into exile. We know that his prediction came true some 40 years later. The Assyrian empire swooped in and did exactly as Amos said they would.

### **Amos 7-9: Visions of the Day of the Lord**

The book closes with a series of visions Amos experienced, which are symbolic depictions of the coming Day of the Lord. He sees Israel devastated by a locust swarm and a scorching fire before being swallowed up like overripe fruit. In the final vision, Amos sees God violently striking at the pillars of Israel's great idol temple at Bethel, and the whole building comes crumbling down. It's an image of God's justice on the leaders and gods of Israel—their end has come.

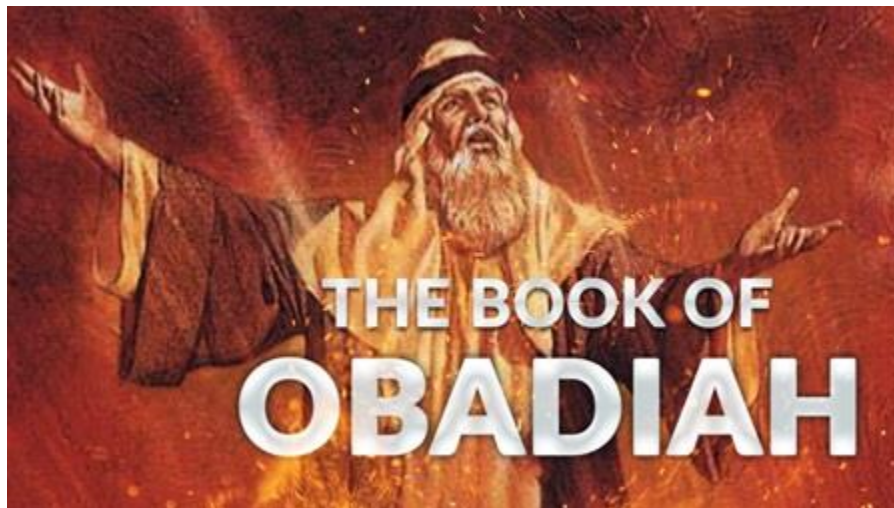
Yet the final paragraph suddenly offers up a glimmer of hope. Using the image of Israel as a destroyed building, God says that, out of the ruins, he will one day restore the house of David. In other words, God will bring a future messianic



king from David's line and rebuild the family of his people, which, surprisingly, includes the other nations. All of the devastation caused by Israel's sin and God's judgment will be reversed.

This final paragraph is really important. It's the only sign of hope on the other side of judgment and helps us see how this book explores the relationship between God's justice and mercy. While God must confront and judge evil among Israel and the nations, his long-term purposes are for restoration and creating a new family.

Through Amos' words, we can still hear the call to learn from Israel's hypocrisy and the disastrous consequences of their sins. It's a call to embrace the true worship of God that should always lead to justice, righteousness, and loving our neighbor. That's what the book of Amos is all about.



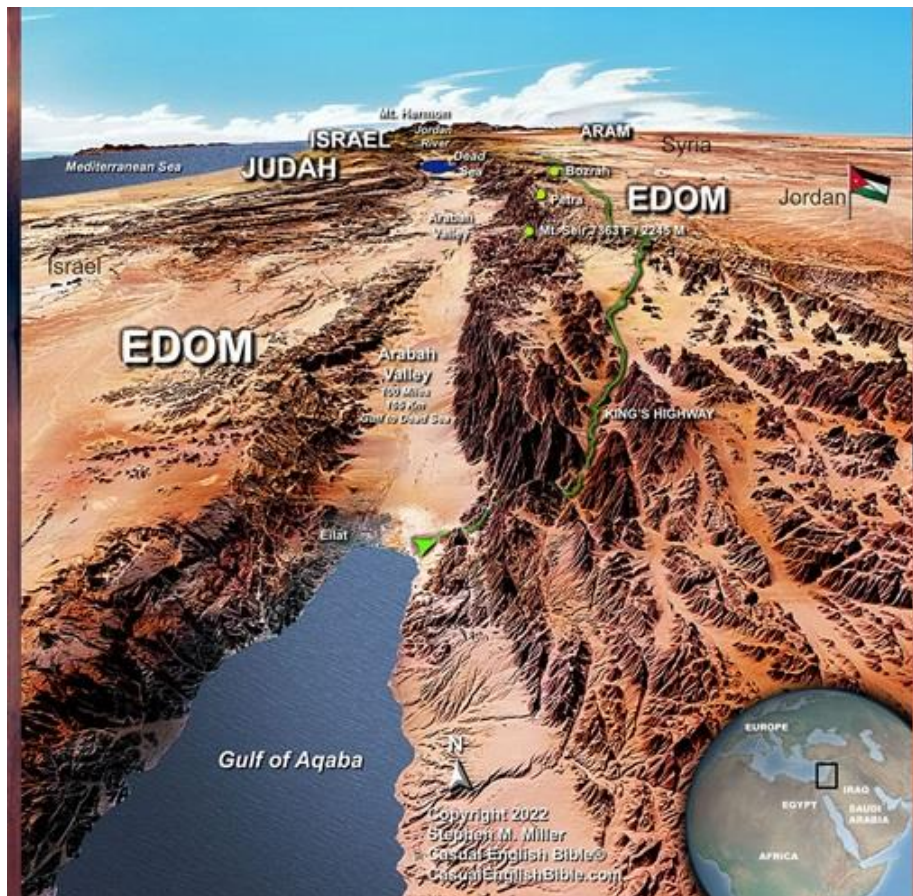
## **Outline**

- I. Title and Introduction (1:1)**
- II. Judgment on Edom (1:2) -- (1:14)**
  - A. Edom's Destruction Announced (1:2) -- (1:7)**
    - The humbling of her pride (1:2) -- (1:4)
    - The completeness of her destruction (1:5) -- (1:7)
  - B. Edom's Destruction Reaffirmed (1:8) -- (1:14)**
    - Her shame and destruction (1:8) -- (1:10)
    - Her crimes against Israel (1:11) -- (1:14)
- III. The Day of the Lord (1:15) -- (1:21)**
  - A. Judgment on the Nations but Deliverance for Zion (1:15) -- (1:18)**
  - B. The Lord's Kingdom Established (1:19) -- (1:21)**

## Summary

The events described in Obadiah take place in Israel and Edom, a nation neighboring Israel to the south of the Dead Sea.

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament with a mere 21 verses, and at first glance, it doesn't look very promising. It's a series of divine judgment poems set against the ancient people of Edom, a nation neighboring Israel on the other side of the Dead Sea. However, there's way more going on in this little book than you might think.



### Obadiah Dooms a Nation (Edom) to Die

First of all, here is the back story. The people of Edom are unique because they shared a common ancestry with the Israelites. They both belonged to the family of Abraham. Abraham's son Isaac and his wife Rebekah had two sons called Jacob and Esau. These brothers who, to say the least, had a tense relationship. The brothers later received the names "Israel" and "Edom," which eventually became the names of their families who replayed the same difficult relationship of their ancestors. Israel and Edom had enormous tensions throughout the centuries despite their ancient family ties.

**That family bond, however, was betrayed and shattered during the tragic events of Jerusalem's fall to Babylon. When Israel was invaded and conquered, the people of Edom apparently took advantage by plundering Israelite cities, capturing and even killing their captives.**

### **Unity and Theme**

**There is no compelling reason to doubt the unity of this brief prophecy. Its theme is that Edom, proud over her own security, has gloated over Israel's devastation by foreign powers. However, Edom's participation in that disaster will bring on God's wrath. She herself will be destroyed, but Mount Zion and Israel will be delivered, and God's kingdom will triumph.**

**Edom's hostile activities have spanned the centuries of Israel's existence. Since the Edomites are related to the Israelites, their hostility is all the more reprehensible. Edom is fully responsible for her failure to assist Israel and for her open aggression. The fact that God rejected Esau in no way exonerates the Edomites. Edom, smug in its mountain strongholds, will be dislodged and sacked. But Israel will prosper because God is with her.**

**The book of Obadiah has been placed right after Joel and Amos to expand upon these very promises about the hope of God's Kingdom over all the nations. God will restore his Kingdom over the new Jerusalem and repopulate it with a faithful remnant. From there, God's Kingdom will expand to include all the territory and nations surrounding Israel.**

**The little book of Obadiah contributes to the larger portrait of God's justice and faithfulness that we find in the prophets. The ancient pride and betrayal of the people of Edom became an example of the human condition and the ways in which people betray and hurt each other and God's good world. There's still hope, however, as Edom's downfall points to the day when God will deal with the evil in our world and bring his Kingdom of peace over all nations.**

**That's what the book of Obadiah is all about.**

### **The most popular Bible verses from Obadiah**

**Obadiah 1:1**

**The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Sovereign LORD says about Edom – We have heard a message from the LORD: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, "Rise, let us go against her for battle"**



**Obadiah 1:2**

**"See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised."**

**Obadiah 1:3**

**The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, "Who can bring me down to the ground?"**

**Obadiah 1:4**

**Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD."**

**Obadiah 1:5**

**"If thieves came to you, if robbers in the night – oh, what a disaster awaits you! – would they not steal only as much as they wanted? If grape pickers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes?"**

**Obadiah 1:6**

**But how Esau will be ransacked, his hidden treasures pillaged!**

**Obadiah 1:7**

**All your allies will force you to the border; your friends will deceive and overpower you; those who eat your bread will set a trap for you, but you will not detect it.**

**Obadiah 1:8**

**"In that day," declares the LORD, "will I not destroy the wise in Edom, people of understanding in the mountains of Esau?"**

**Obadiah 1:9**

**Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified, and everyone in Esau's mountains will be cut down in the slaughter.**

**Obadiah 1:10**

**Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever.**

**Obadiah 1:11**

**On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.**

**Obadiah 1:12**

**You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble.**

**Obadiah 1:13**

**You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor gloat over them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster.**

**Obadiah 1:14**

**You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.**

**Obadiah 1:15**

**"The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head."**

**Obadiah 1:16**

**Just as you drank on my holy hill, so all the nations will drink continually; they will drink and drink and be as if they had never been.**

**Obadiah 1:17**

**But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance.**

**Obadiah 1:18**

**The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau." The LORD has spoken."**

**Obadiah 1:19**

**People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead.**

**Obadiah 1:20**

**This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land as far as Zarephath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev.**

**Obadiah 1:21**

**Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the LORD's.**

**[Bigdrifter44@gmail.com](mailto:Bigdrifter44@gmail.com)**

**[Bigdrifter.com](http://Bigdrifter.com)**