**THE LION ROARS**

**A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF AMOS**

**(THE PROPHECY AGAINST DAMASCUS AND GAZA)**

Main Idea: Sin is judged by God. The old axiom states “The wheels of justice turn slowly, but grind exceedingly fine.” That is never more true than the justice of God on both His people and their enemies.

Amos 1:3 – 5 Lesson 2

Introduction - Galatians 6:7 would have to be the theme of each of these eight judgments. **Gal 6:7**  Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. In these judgments God

announces what each of these nations have done and then the judgment they would experience as a result of their actions. Amos begins his first judgment with Damascus, the capital of Syria and then progresses in a circular motion on to Gaza, the representative city of the Philistines.

1. **THE JUDGMENT AGAINST DAMASCUS** vs. 3 - 5
2. The Sin of Damascus, vs. 3
   1. Damascus is the capital of Syria. It is northeast of Israel just beyond what we know as the Golan Heights. He describes their sin in verse three… “…**they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron**:”
   2. Remember who Gilead is... they are the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. They were on the east side of the Jordan River. They were in a sense cut off from the rest of Israel. They were very vulnerable to the attacks of Syria. While Jehu was the king of Israel, Hazael, king of Damascus, conquered the Gileadites and in a very cruel manner crushed them with crushing machines. **2Ki 13:7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing**.
   3. The theologian and historian Jerome recorded that this *threshing* was done with a kind of cart that had iron wheels with teeth in it. Normally these carts were used to crush the straw in the threshing floor after the grain had been beaten out of it.
   4. Whether these carts were run over the Israelites to kill them while yet alive or only after their death to mangle their bodies to show their hatred for these Israelites is not known. Nonetheless, it was a cruel, senseless practice by the Syrians of Damascus… They were treated like the straw on the ground!
   5. Consider that eleven million people were killed during the holocaust. When Hitler took the Jews and tortured them in the gas chambers and other horrible ways, what they did with their bodies was atrocious. They shaved their heads, put a registration tattoo on their left arms, used them for experimental medical treatments at great pain; their bathroom was a bucket. They would use their hair to stuff mattresses and would tan their hides after death to make lampshades etc.
   6. These Jews, under the tyranny of Damascus, were treated worse than animals as well.
3. The Sentence Against Damascus, vs. 4, 5
   1. Amos pronounces a three-fold sentence against Syria.
      1. First... their palaces would be destroyed by fire. Hazael and his son Ben Hadad grievously oppressed Israel and their personal palaces were to be destroyed by fire.
      2. Second, (vs. 5) the capital of Syria would be defeated. “*The breaking of the bars”* is a reference to the gates of their city being broken and consequently being invaded by their enemy.
      3. Then, third... the people of Syria would either be slain or carried into captivity. “*Cutting off”* is a reference to the people being slain. Both princes and the common people, high and low would be slaughtered.
   2. In other words, because of the cruel treatment of God’s people, Damascus would be conquered and taken into captivity.
   3. The Arabs used to say about Damascus: “*If there is a Garden of Eden on earth, it is Damascus, and if a heaven, Damascus is like it on earth.* Well... their garden was to become a pile of rubble.
   4. This prophecy of Amos’ was fulfilled when the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser conquered Damascus in the time of Ahaz and broke up the kingdom of Syria (2 Kings 16:9)
4. **THE JUDGMENT AGAINST GAZA (PHILISTIA)** vs. 6 – 8
5. The Sin of Gaza: Slavery 1:6
   1. Gaza was the southernmost city of the Philistines. It is one of the five capitals of the Philistines. It’s not that God was only judging Gaza. Gaza just represents all the cities and people the Philistines inhabited. This was the place where the great temple to their god Dagon was located. This troublesome nation had been a thorn in Israel’s side for hundreds of years. Joshua was unable to conquer the people of Philistia and in the days of the Judges, the Philistines constantly invaded Israel and dominated them. To this day there is a “*Gaza Strip*” between Egypt and Israel.
   2. Samson, after he had betrayed his strength, was “*brought down to Gaza,*” Judges 16:21. They offered a sacrifice to their god Dagon at Sampson’s capture.
   3. God stirred up the spirit of the Philistines against Israel for their sins. They were brought into captivity just as was God’s plan. But the Philistines took this a step further than God intended. They sold them to the Edomites, the arch enemy of Judah, as slaves.
   4. Now, the Edomites were the descendants of Esau and there was bad blood between Esau and Jacob or between Edom and Israel. So, if Edom ever had a chance to persecute or slaughter an Israeli, they gloried in it. They were the very worst people in the world for Israel to be sold to.
   5. This was the ultimate blow the Philistines could have inflicted upon Judah. It was like tossing a flock of sheep into a den of hungry wolves. God only knows the atrocities committed against these Israelites.
6. God’s Judgment is Handed out in vs. 7 – 8
   1. This was fulfilled in the times of Uzziah, under whom Amos prophesied; and very likely in a very short time after this prophecy, who went out and warred against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gaza, 2Ch 26:6; or else in the times of Hezekiah, who smote the Philistines unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, 2Ki 18:8;
   2. Again, can you quote Gal. 6:7 with me? “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

**Discuss:**

Damascus and Gaza reaped annihilation for their treatment of their Israelite captives. What would that say to us concerning times that we have the power in our hands to treat our enemies however we wish? Can you think of any Bible verses that deal specifically with this?

What are the laws of sowing and reaping as demonstrated in the actions of Damascus, Gaza and God?

Describe the depth that human beings will go when depraved hearts are allowed to freely exercise wrath unchecked.

Would this pertain only to lost men or can Christians be as ruthless? Any examples?