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**C0904 – January 28, 2009 – Amos 1:6-8 – Judgment On Gaza**

If you open your Bibles to the book of Amos. Tonight we want to continue in the trap setting phase of chapters 1-2. Last week we looked at the first of seven nations that precedes and leads up to the eighth and final nation, Israel. The first nation we encountered was ancient Aramea, they were descendants of Shem and spoke the Aramaic language, it was situated in what is today Syria. This is to the NE of Israel across what is known as the Golan Heights. The central city was and still is Damascus. We read the historical accounts in the Books of the Kings of Hazael, the founder of the dynasty and his descendants, the various Ben-Hadad's who made incursions into Gilead. Gilead is Transjordan between just south of the Lake of Galilee down to the northern border of the Dead Sea. That area was inhabited by two and a half tribes, Gad, Reuben and half of Manasseh. And the Aramean kings made several military incursions down into this region and on one such occasion because their little depraved hearts had solidified in concrete they took the bodies of the dead, threw them on a solid stone slab and began to tromp them with ox drawn threshing sledges just for the fun of it. This was a violation of the Royal Grant of YHWH made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and an inhumane treatment of the human body made in the image of God. This was totally uncalled for and so God pronounced judgment. The judgment came at the hands of the Assyrian warlord, Tiglath-Pileser III who destroyed them but saved a remnant that was sent to Kir in the Mesopotamian flood plain of modern day Iraq. The Lord God is strong and He is sovereign over all the nations such that the raising and lowering of kingdoms is at the behest of His command. Today we move to Gaza in verse 6.

Amos 1:6, let's read to get the flow, **“Thus says the LORD, “For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they deported an entire population To deliver *it* up to**

**Edom. <sup>7</sup>“So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza And it will consume her citadels. <sup>8</sup>“I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish,” Says the Lord GOD.**

Now let's detail it out starting in v 6. Thus says the LORD, a phrase repeated in 1:3, 1:6, 1:9, 1:11, 1:13; 2:1, 2:4, 2:6. Now you'd think people would pay attention to this kind of thing. It's an expression that signals the doctrine of revelation. God speaks personally to these nations. If it read "Thus says the Lord, For three transgressions of Washington, DC and for four" maybe people would pay attention. But rather than take the wisdom from Scripture in policy making we go on making idiot policy. Well, here's the warning to Gaza, pay attention. "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four, that's the indictment of Gaza. They're indicted along with every other nation here for their transgressions according to the  $x/x+1$  formula. Here  $3/3+1$  or three...four, but there's not three or four, there's only two. The point isn't to give a count of their sins, the point is to say they'd filled up their sins; the iniquity of the Philistine was full. Gaza was the capital city of Philistia and stands by metonymy for Philistia. In other words, it's a part for the whole. Just as the Navy says "all hands on deck" they want the whole sailor up there and in the same way Gaza stands for the Philistine Kingdom, the whole kingdom is in trouble. The Philistine kingdom housed of course the Philistines, the ancient arch-enemy of Israel. The Philistines in the Table of Nations, Gen 10, descend from Noah's son Ham; Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. And all the nations of the earth can be traced back to these three men. They gave rise to 70 distinct nations outlined in the Table of Nations which over time have divided for various political, religious and economic reasons over the last 4,000 years. Well the Philistines were descended from Noah's youngest son Ham. So in the Table you have Ham, he gave birth to Mizraim, Mizraim is the ancient name for Egypt, and Mizraim gave birth to Casluhim from which came the Philistines (Gen 10:14). So last week the Arameans who wrote the language Aramaic, a Semitic people, this week the Philistines, a Hamitic people. Now you can see from the map that these Hamites settled along the SE edge of the Mediterranean Sea and they had control over the entrance into Egypt via the International Highway known later in the Latin as the Via Maris, or "way of the sea." This was all a coastal plain so they had a strategic location but being in the lowlands they

didn't have the military advantage over those to the east on the high ground. But they enjoyed making military incursions into the highlands in order to spread their empire. As a culture over time they amalgamated with the Canaanites who were a very indiscriminate people and so over time they adopted Canaanite religion and so forth and their pottery and temples reflect Canaanite culture. Their national god was Dagon, the fish-god. Being on the sea they were a seafaring people and so they worshipped fish. And they built a big temple for the fish-god in Gaza and up in Ashdod. They worshipped other gods as well but the chief was Dagon (2 Kgs 1:2; 1 Sam 31:10).

Notice in verse 8 some of the major cities in the Philistine Empire, Ashdod, lay to the north of Gaza, Ashkelon also lay to the north between Gaza and Ashdod and then Ekron, which was the farthest north and inland, it's the only inland city mentioned. There was a fifth city that rounded out the ancient Philistine pentapolis, the one missing here is Gath, so by this time we infer that Gath had been substantially defeated, OT texts describe Hazael, King of the Aramaic Kingdom who we met last week, defeating it (2 Kgs 12:17) as well as Uzziah, King of Judah (2 Chron 26:6-7). So Gath was basically wiped out by this time, all that was left were these four cities in this region. And desolation is determined for each of these cities. Gaza of course was the capital city of Philistia and was the center of slave-trafficking which appears to be the Charge at the end of verse 6.

Now who were the Philistine people? What's their history with the nation Israel? Then we'll move to the Charge in v 6. We already know they were Hamites and at some time after the Flood and the Tower of Babel they migrated to this area. What's the first thing you observe about that area? What significance does this area have in the biblical record? It's a part of the Promised Land. The borders of the Promised Real Estate extend from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates. Deut 20 gives the nation Israel's military procedures for dealing with such people. They had two procedures; the standard operating procedures (SOP) for those nations living inside the Promised Land and the SOP for those living outside the land. Two different sets of SOP. In verses 10-15 we have the SOP for those nations outside the land, let's read, "When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace." We call this the grace procedure. <sup>11</sup>"If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. <sup>12</sup>"However, if it does not make

peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.  
<sup>13</sup>“When the LORD your God gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword. <sup>14</sup>“Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourself; and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the LORD your God has given you. <sup>15</sup>“Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations nearby.” So the grace procedure applies to all nations outside the Promised Land. Now contrast the gracious procedure with the one in vv 16-18, “Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. <sup>17</sup>“But you shall utterly destroy them,” we call this the extermination procedure. Extermination of entire cultures. Why? Verse 18 gives the purpose clause, “so that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the LORD your God.” Now are the Philistines under the grace SOP or the extermination SOP? The extermination procedures. This is what the Bible calls Holy War. They were in Israeli territory. Who gave them the territory? God did? Does God have the right to do that? Of course He does, He created the planet. He owns the planet and He can give the inheritance rights to anyone He chooses. He chose Israel and the Philistines are in their territory. So they must be removed, and the SOP calls for Holy War. We’ll get into the moral dilemma’s this causes for the skeptics this Sunday. Why is Holy War in the Bible? We can’t deny it’s there. How do we handle it? But our point is here we are seven centuries after the Conquest of Joshua and you still have Philistines running around causing problems. What are they doing there? Let’s go back to Josh 13. Here we get a little report from the Lord about what was still left to conquer. Military raid after military raid but still there were areas of the Promised Land they hadn’t cleared out. Verse 1,

<sup>1</sup>Now Joshua was old *and* advanced in years when the LORD said to him, “You are old *and* advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed.” See the Conquest didn’t happen overnight, this went on for years, Joshua’s an old man. <sup>2</sup>“This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all *those of* the Geshurites;

<sup>3</sup>from the Shihor which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of Ekron to the north (it is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines: the Gazite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite; and the

Avvite.” There’s some of the Philistine cities Amos mentions, they’re still around 7 centuries later. Come down to the middle of verse 6, after He mentions all the land they still need to possess He says, “I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel; only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you.” So He gets to the Settlement of the land and they still haven’t taken it all, several regions are here unconquered, including the Philistines, but we’re going to go ahead and parcel it out. Over time the Lord will drive them out. But here we are 700 years later and they’re still a problem. So let’s look at some of the problems.

The Israeli-Philistine history is a long history of military conflict. They were Israel’s incessant enemies. In the time of the judges the famous story of Samson, who was of the tribe of Dan, whose inheritance was just north of the Philistines in this region. Samson got the hots for a Philistine woman and married her, then he got the hots for another Philistine woman named Delilah, and she was one of those women that just let her sin nature run wild and one of the weaknesses of the woman’s sin nature is to nag, nag, nag nag and men hate this, if there’s one thing I can’t stand to see a woman do it’s nag her husband and he’s sitting over there annoyed to death, get this woman away from me. Well that was Delilah, she kept nagging and nagging Samson to tell her the secret of his strength and finally the man got so fed up with it he just gave in and told her. Then she laid him over her lap and said, take a nap darling and ran her hands through his hair till he was asleep and had his hair shaved off. This was the source of his strength. And the Philistine men came in and ripped his eyeballs out. So they took him to Gaza and chained him to their Temple, the Temple of the fish-god Dagon. And in that story he prayed to the Lord to give him one last bout of strength to defeat his enemies and the Lord answered and he brought down the entire temple of Dagon, which crushed him and most of the political and religious leadership of the Philistines. But that didn’t stay the Philistines off, they kept making military incursions to the north into Samson’s tribe of Dan, and finally the Danites said, “The heck with it” and moved to the north to a place called Laish which they renamed Tel-Dan, which is as far north as you can go and still be in contact with the other Israeli tribes.

On another occasion the Philistines had moved north to Aphek, along here, and threatened the Ark of the Covenant which was held at Shiloh, over here. In response the armies of Israel went out to Ebenezer. Here they engaged in

military conflict and the Philistines crushed them and captured the Ark. This was one of the occasions when the Israelites tried to use the Ark like a magic charm and they paid the price. The Philistines took the Ark to Ashdod and put it in the temple of Dagon. And each morning they'd enter their temple and Dagon would be bowing down to the Ark, showing the supremacy of YHWH. Finally they started breaking out in hemorrhoids, which shows you God has a real sense of humor, and so their hineys' got to hurting so bad they sent the Ark to Gath, another Philistine city, and they got hiney problems too so they sent it to Ekron and finally after everyone had enough of that they said get this thing out of here and they returned it to Israel with a guilt offering. Some of the more humorous elements of the OT.

In the time of the last judge, Samuel, ~1050BC they continued to fight against Israel. The battles went back and forth as Israel won when they were obedient and lost when they were disobedient. Eventually Samuel's sons who were a bunch of spiritual idiots, had violated the Mosaic Law so many different ways in the courts, they accepted bribes, they perverted the law, all stuff we think is modern, the sin nature is the same yesterday as it is today, and it manifests itself in the same ways. And of course it got so bad that the people were fed up with the judges, and so the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Saul's kingly mission was to eliminate the Philistines. And though he and Jonathan won some crucial battles at Geba and Michmash, in the end the Bible says, "There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul" (1 Sam 14:52). That's 40 years of military conflict. Ultimately Saul was rejected by God as king and had David anointed as the next king.

While he was still king he went to battle with the Philistines in the valley between Azekah and Socoh. Because he was too chicken to go out and fight Goliath a little shepherd boy named David had to go out, and by trusting the Lord, kill the great Philistine giant. This battle was an overwhelming Israeli victory as they chased and cut down the Philistine soldiers. But Saul, whose mission it was to destroy the Philistines, who should have been out on that battlefield, was not the victor.

Later, while Saul was still king the Philistines tried to make incursions into the north to take control of the trade routes up here in the valley of Jezreel,

what you know as Armageddon, there was an important trade route that went through the valley, so they planned to cut through here, this would cut off Israel's lines of communication with the northern tribes as well as give them control of the trade route. So they gathered their forces at Aphek, headed north then turned across the Jezreel valley. Since they had superior speed via the chariot and speed is an important element in military warfare, so Saul tried to deter that but setting up his armies on Mt Gilboa. Well, things didn't go as Saul planned, he was injured by a Philistine arrow and then he committed suicide. The Philistines found his body, cut off his head and took the body to Beth-shean and hung it on the wall along with his two sons, and paraded his head around the city. Another one of those gruesome deaths in Scripture, specifically put on display on the pages of Scripture to warn of the wrath of God against negative volition.

So David was left and over the next few years David eventually gained control of the whole kingdom and Israel enjoyed a rise to power never seen before in Israel because he was a man of positive volition. To centralize his power he attacked Jerusalem, Jerusalem was walled but there was one weakness in the Gihon Spring which was just outside the wall, and at the time they had a well going down a deep shaft to the water, today it's known as Warren's Shaft, and we think that David sent his special forces up the shaft of the Gihon Spring and into the city where they took the Jebusites by surprise. Once he took Jerusalem he centralized his government in the city of Jerusalem which had never been under Israeli sovereignty before, another failure of the Conquest and Settlement. After centralizing power there he went down to the Valley of Rephaim to thwart any advance by the Philistines up this river called the Sorek. After repelling them and taking control of much of the coastal plain, the Philistines ceased to be a major threat though there were other incursions later on when the Kingdom went into decline. Alright, that's a little of the history. Why do we go through all that history? To bring home the point that the Philistines were a constant nuisance to Israel. These people were a constant thorn in Israel's side.

On one such occasion Amos 1:6 reports that they deported an entire population To deliver it up to Edom. That's the Charge. It's actually two charges not one, a) the deportation of a population and b) the deliverance of that population to Edom. We're not sure if this is recorded in the OT. One possibility is 2 Chron 21 so let's turn there. This is a passage, probably too

limited but it could be involved. It deals with the house of Jehoram, king of Judah. So he reigns in the south. Starting in verse 11 let's get an idea of Jehoram's reign. How did he fare? "...he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." So right off the bat we have a problem king in the south, he's in violation of the Sinaitic Covenant and we know that contract is a Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty, it followed that format where the Great Suzerain, in this case God, says do this, don't do that, do this and don't do that if you do this I'll bless you, if you do that I'll curse you. I want you to remember these kinds of things because God is going to judge Israel for violating this but then in the end the countries that judge Israel are going to be judged for doing it. You say, how can they be held responsible for something God caused them to do. We'll get into that. So there's interplay of sovereignty and human responsibility in these passages that gets back to the two covenants. Verse 12 continues, this time Elijah the prophet brings the king a letter, "Thus says the LORD God of your father David, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah, <sup>13</sup>but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot, and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you, <sup>14</sup>behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity; <sup>15</sup>and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day.' " Another one of those gory deaths in Scripture, the real bad guys always get this and it's to show you that justice wins over evil. Good will triumph and the enemies of God will suffer. So the outworking of the Sinaitic curses here and verse 16 explains how God is going to work it out. What's the instrument the Lord uses to punish Judah? "Then the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians; <sup>17</sup>and they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king's house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. <sup>18</sup>So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness." Alright, notice that phrase in v 16, "The Lord stirred up the spirit of the Philistines and these others. The Lord did that such that this military alliance becomes His instrument in judging Judah for violations of the Sinaitic Covenant but in the end God judges them for doing this. How can that be. Work on it and we'll resolve it later. for now,



a question that's raised here is what happened to his sons and wives in verse 17? What did the Philistines do with them? Did they sell them into slavery? One of the practices of the ancient world was when the economy was bad, the government needed money they would make these slave raids to boost the economy. Probably what we see here is too small to fulfill Amos but they are the elite, the king's family, high society. So we gather that these were some of the slaves they traded off to boost their economy. Now turn to Joel 3. We've already taught through the book of Joel. Joel wrote before Amos. He says in chapter 3, verse 4, "Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head. <sup>5</sup>"Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, <sup>6</sup>and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory," verse 6 is the key, this is obviously slave-trafficking. Verse 7, "behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head." And there's a reversal of fortune in the end. But notice verse 6, this is apparently what the Philistines did. They went on these war raids and captured an entire region of Jews, this was not just a few military captives, this was a whole region of Jews, they sold them to Edom, over here in this region of modern day Jordan. Running north and south through here was the King's Highway, another major trade route in the ancient world, and so as the Greeks passed through they sold them off to who knows where in the world, a whole population. This is the kind of activity these people were engaged in; slave-trafficking with God's chosen people. They were using them as an economic stimulus plan. Anytime the economy sunk, "Alright, let's plan another slave raid." Sort of like Obama now, he's got his slick deal in the Family Planning Act. And the Family Planning Act says we're going to take your Federal Income Tax dollars and we're going to funnel that to abortion clinics both here *and* abroad, this is global in scale by the way, and we're going to use your money to control world population growth, because the population is just too big, the economy can't support that many people, so to stimulate the economy we'll just knock people off, and the first one's to go will be the little innocent babies. And next who knows what it will be, we'll euthanize the old people because they're a strain on the economy. And it's the age old idea of genocide for the sake of the almighty dollar. Now when a people has become that corrupt what do you expect God is going to do? I mean He's patient but sooner or later your going to get it. You have greatly

underestimated the value of human life. You look upon human life as just a commodity, a material commodity. Where does this come from? Why do these people think this way. They think this way because of their carnal hearts. The carnal heart always denies the Creator-creature distinction and comes out with the Continuity of Being where everything is sort of on a scale but it's all just the same thing. Today we express the ancient idea which was very prevalent in Greek philosophy, today we express it in the Theory of Evolution, which states that man is just a glob of material thrown together out of cosmic chaos over billions of years. So why assign some special value to man. Man has no special value. And once you've bought into that philosophy of man then there is only one logical conclusion, man is a machine and may be bought and sold as a machine.

Now the other view of man is that He's the special creation of the infinite personal God. He's created both body and spirit, together these composite the human soul, and make up a unique entity, the image of God. The totality of man's being, both body and spirit, is made in the image of God, not just the spirit as is so commonly taught, the body is important too, it is not the product of chance but is a finite representation of who and what God is. It's not to say God has a body, it's to say that if God were to project Himself down to a finite form what would He look like. He'd look like a man and we know that because the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, is the projection. And He came as a man, not a bird, not a zebra, not a fish. And therefore man is unique. And as Gen 9 tells us man has a unique value such that if one man murders another man there is no monetary fine for that. It's life for life. The murderer is to pay for the murdered with his own life. Why does the Bible do this? Because the value of human life is so great that no monetary figure can be placed on it. The only thing that can substitute is another human life, and so to remove those who destroy the image of God, to curb their appetite to destroy the image of God in the world, they are destroyed. Capital punishment may not be exacted perfectly, it may not be something we all love, but it is a safety valve for the human race. It destroys those who deliberately and maliciously destroy the image of God. It's a preservative of the human race that God has put into the fourth divine institution of human governments. So there is no monetary price you can put on man, there is no dollar value you can place on a human being. Man is unique and he is not to be bought and sold as a commodity. So God was pretty bent about this. Tome Constable says, "God has a low tolerance level for those who take away

freedom, human dignity whose purpose is material profit. “Such people should brace themselves for the destructive judgment of God.”<sup>1</sup>

So how does God judge them in verse 8? **“So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza**

**And it will consume her citadels. <sup>8</sup>“I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,**

**And him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish,” Says the Lord GOD.**

Military defeat of all the Philistine cities and Philistines. This is total extermination of a people. Now, it appears to be debated when this happened. Some point out that they were effectively defeated by the Assyrians and the remnant intermingled with other cultures and got lost. Others point to the time of the Maccabees about 150BC<sup>1</sup> perhaps referring to 1 Maccabees chapter 5:68, “And Judas turned aside to Azotus, to the land of the Philistines, and pulled down their altars, and burned the carved images of their gods, and took the spoil of their cities, and returned into the land of Judah.” Others place it later under Alexander Janaeus in 96BC. But everyone agrees that by this time the Philistines no longer existed.

This was so well-known in ancient history that at the time of Emperor Hadrian in AD135 when he finally crushed the Bar Kochba revolt, he was really bent because the Jews were so hard to defeat, but when he had crushed them and the remaining Jews scattered outside the land of Israel he came in and renamed the land of Israel, after their most hated enemies, the *Palestina*, which is the Latin for Philistines. Now how this comes down to our day to affect political movements is that the name Philistines was siezed by Arafat’s PLO regime and applied to the Arab refugees of the 1948 war living in Gaza Strip and the West Bank. They needed a historical precedent, a historical connection to the land in order to make their bid for a state so they revised history and claimed “We were here first because we’re the ancient Philistines,” the Arabic form of which is *Filastin*. But they’re not the

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<sup>1</sup>Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Am 1:7.

ancient Philistines, the ancient Philistines are completely wiped out and these people over there today in Gaza Strip complaining and shooting rockets at Israel, 10,000 rockets over the last 8 years we might add, 10,000 rockets, how would you like it if people in Kerrville were shooting rockets at Fredericksburg, Stonewall, Harper, Mason and Johnson City every week. These people are another thorn in Israel's side, but they have absolutely no ancient heritage in the land. They are Arabs plain and simple. Now what I find constantly, always in the Arab world is the double standard. Take the Arab refugees from 1848 and 67 wars. The Israeli's warned them in advance that they were about to be attacked, so a lot of them head out, mainly to the south and to the east, Egypt and Jordan, when they get to the border the Egyptians and the Jordanians stop them. Won't let them in, never let them in, they were there fellow Arabs and they wouldn't let them go an inch further. So from that day forward you have this refugee problem. Now, at the same time you have 13 Arab countries around north Africa and the Middle East and Jews live in them so when the seven Arab countries attack Israel do you think as a Jew living in one of those countries you're very well liked? So they went back to Israel, in other words, these are the Jewish refugees, they lost their homes, their businesses, everything they had to leave behind and they go to Israel. Does Israel receive them? Yes, they absorb the Jewish population. Did the Arab's do the same? No, they left them in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. And now all we hear is yak, yak, yak about the Palestinian refugee problem. Well number one they're not Palestinian's they're Arabs and number two, the Arabs created the problem to begin with. So, this is all propaganda. If you want the real story I'll give you some resources to stay on top of what's really going on and not the liberal propaganda. Obviously what's happening is a war between the Arabs and the Israeli's, they like to keep the so-called Palestinians couped up over there because it's a festering wound, it draws world sympathy and so forth. Israel is the bad guy. Now we usually mark out the wars as 1948 War of Independence, 1967 Six Day War, 1973 Yom Kippur and so forth, they don't do that, the Arab world perceives the whole thing from 1948 on a single war. It's always war to these people. They will never recognize the state of Israel. We just had another conflict in Gaza, the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) went in there to attack Hamas, the terrorist organization, they did not go in there to kill so-called Palestinians. They actually make a distinction between terrorist organizations and the common population. These guys, I've never seen a war run like this, it was amazing the lengths the IDF went to to avoid

killing civilians; things never before seen in the history of warfare. One of the things they do is they make telephone calls into Gaza, "Hey, we're striking your area at 4pm. You better clear out." Then they send the air raid and when they're flying over the target they check the roof, sometimes Hamas put civilians up on the roof because they know the IDF will not destroy the target if a civilian is there. Think of the restraint here. So in this war the IDF would see the civilian on the roof and they'd fire a weak missile just to glance the side of the house, that would scare the guy off and then they would hit the target. What military has ever gone to such lengths to avoid civilians? And yet what do you here and see on the news reports. Oh Israel is barbaric, they're killing women and children and you see all these body bags, bloody children, women with their heads gashed open, 98% of it's propaganda. They've literally got video of dead bodies going across the airwaves and then on the same video you see one of the guys who was supposedly dead walking by the camera. Or another one I saw was a still shot of all these body bags and one of the bags you see the guy getting up, it's all a farce. And the world thinks Israel is the aggressor, I saw it on CNN? Look, they've been shooting missiles for years into southern Israel, 10,000 of them. What would America do if Mexico had sent 10,000 missiles into south Texas? These people are crazy. But even crazier than them are the Islamic extremists. You talk about crazy, I was reading a news report of one of the young ladies whose father was a Hamas terrorist, he had like 16 children, that's another tactic, women are trained to believe that their whole purpose in life is to have Muslim babies. The tactic here is simply to populate the region so fast that eventually they just overrun the land of Israel. So one of these girls whose whole family was virtually killed, but she wasn't because she wasn't in the building, she said her father trained them to prefer to die with him than to live, she said, my little sister, 4 years old, if you'd asked her do you want to die with daddy or live she would have said I want to die with daddy. It's terrible the indoctrination. And the boys, I've seen videos of 2 year old boys, 2 years old on Palestinian TV, and they give out rewards to little boys who come up with some creative terrorist things. So they have this little boy, 2 years old, he's all in military garb, he's working his way through a forest on his belly, military style, he's got his assault rifle in his hands, he works his way through the brush, it's amazing what they're doing to these young minds, it's terrible, you can't even imagine. Hamas is a terrible terrorist organization that not only has conflict with Israel. Hamas itself terrorizes the Palestinians. They rule Gaza with an iron fist. You can't even play music at your wedding or Hamas

will come in with their armored trucks and come out with the assault rifles and kill people. I watched them beat the groom to death the very hour he was married. Who knows what they did to the wife, I don't even want to think about that. These sheik's and so forth who project Allah's teaching out of the mosques, I've heard them say, "We want death as much as Israel wants life." Now I know no other way to explain that than demonism. Nobody in their right mind would rather blow themselves up than live. It's crazy. I see no other explanation. The Middle East is covered with demonic influence and the attempt to wipe Israel off the map. It's the age old war against Israel who gave birth to our Messiah. What is going on over there is not natural.

Okay, that's enough, I just wanted to get you familiar with this territory, let you see what was going on and why God was so harsh against the Philistines, they had a long history of military atrocities against Israel and eventually they were into people-trafficking to save their economy.

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To start tonight we want to review the doctrine of God. God's character is on display in the book of Amos. Two of the themes are His righteousness and justice, very closely associated with one another and the way you see them expressed is in the stifling amount of judgment we find. So we want to review our doctrine of God. Why is God judging these nations so intensely? Why do we find God acting this way in history? The first thing we do is draw God in the open box, we do that to show God is infinite, He's not confined by us, all His attributes we discuss are infinite. You can divide His attributes up several ways, the way I like to do it just to help, and you don't have to do this but I just think it shows some points of interest, some of these are what we call communicable and that just means they're easier to understand. And they're easier to get a hold of because we have things more like these, they're

less abstract. Then you have incommunicable and these are more difficult to understand because less like characteristics we have, they're conceptual background is more foreign to us. In the communicable zone God is sovereign, God controls whatsoever comes to pass, He's in control of the cosmos, total control of all things. You have to be a little careful with this, it doesn't do away with human choice or responsibility but make no mistake about it God is sovereign. Second God is righteous and just, we'll come back to those in a minute, these relate to the standard of God's holiness, they relate to law, ethics and values. Then we have love, God gives of Himself. He's not selfish in this sense, we need Him and He gives of Himself. Omniscience, God has all knowledge, both actual and possible, He's known all things always, He never picked up a new piece of data. He's always had all the data. The first five are communicable, we can kind of see how these relate to our experience of choice, conscience, love and knowledge. Now we want to move to the incommunicable, these are more difficult to get a hold of. God is omnipresent, God doesn't go places, God is places, before there were places God was there. So He's there before time, He's at every point in time all the time and He's outside of time, God is not parted out sort of like a cosmic ooze, He's wholly here and wholly there. We can only faintly see a parallel to this in our human imagination, the ability to mentally transport ourselves to another place or another time, that's a powerful tool that gives us some of an idea what it must be like to be omnipresent. Omnipotent, God is all powerful, carefully qualify this one, God can do anything compatible with His character. That's an important qualification because if you don't qualify it that way then you'll wipe out immutability, if immutability says God's character never changes but God can do anything then God can change His character and that would violate immutability, so you have to qualify these, if you get too elementary in these definitions you'll quickly find yourself in trouble. Immutability, we've covered that, and lastly eternal. God is the root and ground of existence. There's no talk of beginning and ending for God. Put a way a child can understand it, "God doesn't have a birthday." That's something to think about and that's something a kid can get a hold of.

Now we want to come back to His righteousness and justice, these are the two we see most prominently in Amos, though there are others of course, god's on every page of the Bible. I challenge you to go and read any chapter of the Bible and see what you can find. There's always something there, and these will give you new thoughts about the attributes and how they can be

used in your life. Exciting new applications of the attributes of God. They're not theoretical, they're full of application for daily life.

Man, because he's made in God's image, has a counterpart at each point to God's attributes. His counterpart to God's holiness is conscience, man has a sense of justice embedded inside him. The debate is where that comes from.

When man rebels against God's holiness or standard then what happens to the conscience? It's seared, if you've ever had surgery or you've been burned sometimes a third degree burn will kill the nerve endings that give you that sensitivity to touch. The same thing happens to the conscience when we violate God's holiness, in this case it's not fire that does it but sin, sin has negative consequences for the conscience and that's why it's so important, Paul stresses, not to go against your conscience. Lok, he said, if you can't do it in faith don't do it because there's a negative return. This is one of my fundamental voting principles. If you can't vote for the guy or gal in faith then don't vote for them. If you do you sear the conscience and what that means in the long run is further and further compromise of truths. Really what happens is it leads to relativism in your own life. We tend to specialize around election time in justifying the greater good, but the minute you say "greater good" you've already compromised by relativizing the quality of goodness. And the more you do this the more the conscience is hardened and the more you'll compromise. This has happened immensely with the so-called conservative block of the 70's. When the conservative block wouldn't even consider a woman for office now in the 2008 election it's not a problem at all, in fact it's a bonus. That would never have happened in the 70's. What happened? Searing of the conscience. It erodes truth, it erodes faith because faith needs truth to operate. Now we can't trust God, we've got to get this person in office because it's up to us, a very wrong view of reality and a very naïve view of what's at stake. Never says Paul do something against your conscience because once you start down that path it's difficult to get back. And the end of the line is judgment. That's what we're seeing in these nations, these people have compromised justice, compromised holiness to the point their consciences are seared. And for a society that has collectively seared itself against the absolute standard of God, there's no turning back. The society must be removed from existence.



- Why? Breaking of the Royal Grant. Show differences between Royal Grant and Suzerainty Vassal Treaty. This dynamic in history that you will see in these passages time and time again, God stirs up a nation to go against Israel for her disobedience to the Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty and then God's retribution on the very nation He stirred up because of their infringement on the terms of the Royal Grant. You say, how can that be? How can God hold a nation responsible for attacking Israel when He stirred them up to attack Israel?

- I don't think you have to be a hardcore Calvinist to get the sensation of sovereignty there. No matter how you slice it you have a tremendous statement in this verse about sovereignty over the crucifixion. Somehow these people were simply carrying out what God predestined to occur. And whatever you do with this, however you model God's sovereignty it can't do away with personal responsibility, look at all those of v 27 who of their own volition were involved in the crucifixion, yet v 28 God's hand and purpose predestined the event. Divine sovereignty is not fatalism. The tendency is to slip into fatalism but the Bible never permits that, the Bible always protects the Creator-creature distinction so that what the Creator does, His cause-effect *upon* the created order is never in conflict with what the creature does, cause-effect *within* the created order. Cause effect upon the created order is not identical to cause-effect within the created order. Peter and John didn't have a problem with divine sovereignty and human responsibility, they saw no contradiction. So when faced with this opposition from the Council they went back, back to the basic issue, the issue of the essence of God, that God is Creator, that God is sovereign, and that's a tremendous comfort, that things are not ultimately in my hands, He's in control.

- How can these nations be held responsible if God predetermined their actions? Or put another way, if God is sovereign how can nations be held responsible? The tendency of ancient and modern man is to go into some kind of fatalism, some kind of impersonal determinism. *Que sera sera*, whatever will be will be, there's nothing you can do about it, that's the pagan slogan of how the universe operates. We're all just at the mercy of the impersonal universe. There's nothing you can do about it. Paganism always falls into this trap. But that's not what this is. The reason paganism is trapped is because it operates on only one plane of reality, everything is thought of in terms of the Continuity of Being and surely if you have sovereignty and responsibility

operating on the same level then you have a contradiction. But in the Bible you don't have one level, you have two levels, the Creator level and the creature level and sovereignty operates on the Creator level and responsibility on the creature level so there's no contradiction. Sovereignty is a Creator quality and responsibility is a creature quality. One is eternal the other is temporal, one is infinite the other is finite, one is unlimited the other is limited. They both function simultaneously but on different levels. And that's what you have here, on the Creator level the Jews are His chosen people and if you touch them you're going to cross of Christ was a part of the eternal plan of God. Thus, one of the titles of Jesus in the Book of Revelation is the lamb that was crucified before the foundation of the world. God can say that because the cross was a part of His plan. But on the creature level responsibility for the cross of Christ rests with these Jews. From Peter's perspective, no problem, Creator plan, creature responsibility. For another look at this in Luke turn to Luke 22:22, here we are in the little upper room incident with Judas. Now, don't think of Judas as a guy with horns on. When this came out that he would betray the Christ it shocked the apostles. They'd been with Judas for years and they didn't detect this. So, this is one of those reasons you can't judge whether a person is really a believer by his works. If you could then obviously Judas would have passed the test with flying colors. But you would have been wrong. Not many of you would have thought Lot was a believer. Didn't have any visible fruit. But Peter says he was a believer. So again, you can't tell from looking at their works. The issue is not works but faith, has a person exercised faith in Jesus Christ or not. And what we see here is another sovereignty/freedom passage related to Judas. "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" Do you see both sovereignty and responsibility in that verse? The Son of man must be crucified; it has been determined from eternity that I die; it has been ordained from eternity that Judas be the one, Judas had been picked out for all eternity as the Christ betrayer, as the man who would cause the murder of Jesus Christ and yet Jesus doesn't say therefore Judas is excused because he was chosen to turn Me over to the authorities. He says it was predetermined that he do this, but woe to him. What Jesus is saying is that it is predestined that I die by an individual person and I know who he is and that person has been picked out, but it's going to be by an act that is responsible and he's going to be held responsible for it. So there is Judas' negative volition, that is the means of the death of Jesus Christ, and that's why Christ very carefully in verse 22 says, yes, I will

die, but woe, cursing be to the one who does this. Now this is a horrible and very serious thing to realize. Visualize yourself in Judas Iscariot's position; you have just written off the Son of God; you have sent Him to the cross. You did it by an act of your own choice; no one forced you to work that way. You freely chose to betray Christ but that free choice itself was sovereignly determined. Now the philosopher who is a skeptic will argue, "You cannot sovereignly predestine a free choice." They will argue that I just contradicted myself, to which I will respond, I have not by the definitions of sovereignty and choice in Scripture, within the Scriptural system of thought where you have the Creator-creature distinction I am totally consistent when I make that statement. His problem is that he's presupposing everything's operating on the same level in which case, yes you do have a contradiction. So, if you say that there is a contradiction between sovereignty and freedom it is because you have tried to get these together on the same plane and you've done it to satisfy your autonomous apostate thinking, rejection of the Creator-creature distinction. So, that's how this works, Scripturally.

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<sup>i</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Am 1:6.

[Back To The Top](#)

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