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**C0909 – March 4, 2009 – Amos 1:3-2:3 – Principles Of Gentile
Judgment**

Today we want to deal with the difficulty of why these Gentile nations are judged in Amos 1:3-2:3, so open your Bibles there. We're at a breaking point, in that Amos has dealt with all the Gentile nations, now he's turning to the Jewish nations; there were two nations at the time, the northern and southern kingdom. He's primarily addressing the northern kingdom called Israel. But to address that nation he has to use a strategy of entrapment. The point of this strategy is to convict someone of their sin problem when they don't think they have a sin problem. These people are sometimes hard to reach. So we distill the principle of how to reach a person that's hard to reach tonight. When a person looks out and says "Life's great, what could be wrong with my life, look at all the great things that are happening, I've got money, I've got security," and you can see the problem but they can't, how do you get through. The northern kingdom of Israel was in that kind of a situation. They were having an economic boom, they had luxury homes, they had a new chariot in the driveway, their borders had been enlarged and there's no problem with having that stuff. The problem is when we're deceived into thinking this is what our hands have done, we did it all on our own steam. There's not an ounce of gratitude in that nation for what God had given them, it was all look at what we have generated out of our finite resources and yes, God is there. He's sort of a religious tack on to my life, but we've done all this. When an individual person or collective nation is caught in the deception that we are so great and we did it all and God is put off to the side, the only way to get people to wake up is for God's to use shock treatment. There simply is no other way I can see in the Scriptures to wake these people up. You have to apply voltage. Maybe you know someone in this situation. Maybe you have a son or daughter who is deceived and you talk to them and talk to them and talk to them 'til your blue in the face and they'll never come out and admit

they've got a sin problem. Well, this is the kind of technique you need to start thinking about. How can I break through to this person? How can I set them up? There's nothing wrong with setting someone up, God did it to Job, Nathan did it to David, and Amos did it to the northern kingdom. It's not manipulation, its shock treatment; sometimes the only way to get a person back to reality is send about 200,000 volts through their system. You can try to be nice to these people, stroke them and talk, talk, talk, but in the final analysis, they're deceived, and the nature of deception is you're not buying the fact you're deceived. So something has to be done. And that something is shock treatment. Someone has to set you up so you go "Blam!" right into a wall about 200 mph. Obviously many of us are uncomfortable with this but this is what must be done. To do this takes skill. The word in the Hebrew that refers to this is "wisdom," you have to have wisdom to do this because the last thing you want to happen is for the deceived person to slide out of your trap. Then you're back to square one, so wisdom devises a plan to nail him down so he can't budge, and that, in fact, is what Amos is trying to do. I've got to get them to the point that when I spring the trap they can't slip out. That's entrapment.

To do this most of the strategy is in the set-up, almost all your time is spent laying the trap making sure everything is done correctly so the person will get mesmerized, continue to track with you and follow the stream of thought to its logical conclusion. It's sort of like one of our modern TV shows where they only show you so much and by doing that they whet your appetite to see more and the TV producers are very shrewd because they know if they show you too much too early, you'll change the channel. So to keep your attention they show you bits and pieces and then the last 5 minutes they pull it all together in the climax. There's resolution and, of course, a few loose ends so you'll tune in next week. Now, isn't that what Amos does in chapter 1? He's addressing a deceived people and so to whet their appetite he goes into proclamations of doom after proclamation of doom on nation after nation after nation. He starts with Damascus, he turns to Gaza and finally Tyre, all non-relative kingdoms. These people are going down, Thus saith the Lord. Then he introduces three relative kingdoms; Edom, Ammon and Moab, they're going into military defeat. And by doing all that, they are lured into a false security. Just as the modern TV show does, he's brings them in close, he gives them a little bit here, a little bit there and the whole thing is building like a great crescendo until boom, he's going to lay one on them.

Let's review these oracles, we want to bring ourselves into the text tonight and make some observations.

So, the first thing we want to observe is simply the transgressions or crimes these nations had committed and in the proclaimed judgments Amos mentions certain things. Obviously there are others and we've looked at many others. We've spent week after week going through the historic interaction of these nations and Israel. But can we gather anything just from observing the crimes Amos cites? Obviously there's significance in what the Holy Spirit specifically recorded here. So let's start observing in v 3 again. "Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions" and there's debate over how you translate that word, it can be translated "crimes," and that's how you want to think of it in these oracles. These nations had committed crimes of a specific category. "For three crimes of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*," - that's the indictment of the kingdom of Aram. Why? Here's the crime itself or the charges, "Because they threshed Gilead with *implements* of sharp iron." and verse 4 goes into the judgment itself, "I will send fire upon the house of Hazael And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad." A description of what? Military defeat. But notice the crime, "they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron," which means they took the dead bodies of the soldiers and ground them up under threshing sledges. All right, come down to Gaza, v 6, what was their crime? "they deported an entire population, To deliver it up to Edom." These were Israeli war captives. Verse 7 the judgment, "I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza And it will consume her citadels." Verse 9, the crime of Tyre, "they delivered up an entire population to Edom," Israeli war captives, "And did not remember *the* covenant of brotherhood." Obviously, the two are related. They had a contract with Israel but didn't honor the contract. The judgment in verse 10, "I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre And it will consume her citadels." Same formula, fire and consumption, descriptions of military defeat. Come down to verse 11, Edom, her crime or crimes. We're trying to see if there's a common element in all these crimes and judgments, so watch for that, "he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever." Anger, continual anger. The judgment, verse 12, "I will send fire upon Teman And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah." Verse 13, the crimes of the sons of Ammon, "they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their borders." A

common strategy of war in the ancient world - wipe out the pregnant women to destroy the population base and the life givers, which makes it easier to control that region or people. Pharaoh tried that tactic. And the judgment, verse 14, "I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah And it will consume her citadels Amid war cries on the day of battle, And a storm on the day of tempest." Chapter 2:1 rounds out their Gentile neighbors, "For three crimes of Moab and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime." And the judgment, 2:2, "I will send fire upon Moab And it will consume the citadels of Kerioth;" Over and over again the judgment is military defeat, military defeat.

What's the first and most obvious thing about all those crimes? What context do they occur in? They all occur in a war context. And thus, these are called the War Oracles. Each one of these subsets is a War Oracle. What's a second thing we can observe? If you look at the judgments, how are all these nations judged? By war, military conquest. Why? Why not just thrown them in the slammer for five years? What's the principle we're learning here about justice? It's a principle of divine justice. It's not a principle of American justice. To most American's justice is rehabilitation. Oh, you better not do that or we'll throw you in prison for x number of years and if you're a good little boy, if you show so much progress and you can pull one over on the probation committee, we'll let you loose early so you can leach off society some more, cause more havoc. That's not divine justice. Think what's behind the concept of rehabilitary justice? What's the belief about man behind that? If man can be rehabilitated by time + education then what have I very shrewdly avoided? My sin problem. I mean, my mommy dropped me on my head or something, that's why I stole that car, that's why I raped that girl. I'm just a victim. So the presupposition behind rehabilitation is that man is essentially good, we just have to find that goodness and we do that by education and giving time to think about what he's done and then he'll be restored to the goodness which is part and parcel of man. A denial of the doctrine of depravity. What you're reading here is not rehabilitary justice, there's nothing here about putting these nations behind bars for 10 years and giving them an education. One of the biblical examples of just how stupid rehabilitary justice is comes when Christ returns for the Millennial reign. And when He comes in who gets locked away? Satan and his demonic hordes. A thousand years and not once do they show up. Now what have those beings been doing for thousands of years? Stirring up strife, devouring people,

setting up ungodly empires. So God says, all right, if rehab works then I'll lock him away for a 1,000 years, the perfect rehabilitation program, right? Satan gets a thousand years to think of all the mistakes he's made. The end of the ten centuries comes, God releases him and what's the very first thing he does? Stir up strife, devour people and try to set up an ungodly kingdom. Did he learn a thing? Rehab doesn't work because rehab is a fleshly idea. Rehab would work if all we needed was a few more bits of information, but information isn't the problem, the problem is deep down in our hearts, and it's a sin problem and no matter how many hours you sit under Dr Psychiatrist it isn't going to root out sin. So the justice system in Scripture isn't rehabilitary, it's restitutionary; it's a measure for measure payback + interest. You steal five cars from Ford, you pay back five cars + the interest for the time it takes you to earn the money, that way society doesn't have to pay for your crime. And here God says, "You want to rip up pregnant women? Fine, I'll send an army to rip you up; it's a measure for measure retaliation. Now isn't that interesting that God's system of justice is wholly at odds with man's. Maybe there's something to that. It's what the Bible calls *lex talionis*, "the law of retaliation." You commit war crimes so I send war upon you. We'll just get rid of you, you're a cancer on society, you're a plague on My earth.

The third thing we observe are the subjects of the crimes. Who are the crimes all against? They're all against human beings and what do we know about human beings from the early pages of Genesis? Human beings are made in the image of God. And each one of these forsakes and desecrates that image. A fourth thing we can observe is that each of the crimes are horrific in nature, these are terrible crimes of inhumanity. They ripped open pregnant women; they ground soldier's bodies to mincemeat. All unthinkable crimes, which lead to the logical question, "What could lead such people to such inhumane crimes?" The last thing we've observed is that all the crimes, save the last one, are against Jewish people. Notice the last one in chapter 2:1, the Moabites burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

Having made those observations we want to broach a question. Obviously from the oracles God is holding these nations responsible. The question is to what? These nations are not His covenant people, so as the crimes are listed, what standard is it they've violated so that He's going to judge?

Well, to answer this question we want to start with the issue of God's sovereignty over all nations under four points. The *first* point is that for God to be sovereign over the nations He has to be sovereign by nature, by which we mean sovereignty is a quality or attribute of God. When we talk about any (Q)uality of God we mean something God is independent of creation. He doesn't depend on the creation for the exercise of any of His qualities. Therefore, He was sovereign before the creation event and that sovereignty was exercised as He willed His own nature within the Trinity. Put another way, God didn't accrete to Himself any new attributes at the Creation event. God is independent of His creation and self-contained, self sufficient. We call that the aseity of God by which we simply mean, God is self-sustaining and complete in and of Himself, and He doesn't need you or me.

The *second* thing we say about the sovereignty of God is that it is first revealed outside of the Trinity at creation. Obviously His willing into existence the creation by the very word of His power is a demonstration of His sovereignty. God merely spoke the cosmos into existence, a demonstration of sheer power and absolute sovereignty. Therefore all nations by logical inference are under His absolute sovereignty, being products of His creative act.

A *third* thing we say about sovereignty is that it is revealed in the origin of the nations, Genesis chapter 10, the Table of Nations. Those nations didn't originate out of thin air. There were no nations, for all the earth was one people and one language and at the Tower of Babel, God caused a linguistic division such that now you have seventy tribes, families or nations, which is what we call Divine Institution #5: national or tribal diversity. God divided the one language and one people into seventy languages and seventy peoples. In other words, He placed boundaries between these nations and this caused them to scatter out and settle in various territories on earth which have given rise to all the nations, political borders, languages and so forth we have today. Divine Institution #5 says God set those boundaries and He did it for the good of the human race, so obviously attempts to build a one world government, a one world economy and a one world religion are attempts to undo the boundaries and build a modern Tower of Babel, a kingdom of man that exalts itself against the kingdom of God. But God obviously demonstrated His sovereignty when He caused this division and since

nations of Amos stem from that division, some of which can be found listed in the Gen 10 Table such as the Philistines, then God is sovereign over them.

The *fourth* thing we say is that the sovereignty of God over all nations is evidenced in Amos 1:3-2:3, that chapters worth of material obviously shows that the nations listed are under His sovereign rule. Every time it says, “For three transgressions of some nation and for four,” it’s saying God is sovereign, He rules and you’ve broken the rules.

The *fifth* and last thing we will say is that Amos uses a rare name for God which reveals His sovereignty over the nations. These two names of God are rarely used in combination with one another and that name is Adonai YHWH. YHWH is the covenant name of God and shows the unique contract He has with Israel. Adonai, on the other hand is the name for “A Sovereign Lord or Master,” one who rules a domain or sphere. In all the other Books of the Twelve it’s used a total of five times (Obad. 1; Micah 1:2; Hab. 3:19; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 9:14), but in Amos it’s used 19 times, and therefore Amos stresses God’s sovereign rule over the nations.ⁱ

Now, if God is sovereign over the nations then what does that yield except that the nations are responsible to God? There’s no two ways about it. Either God is sovereign over all things and man is responsible or God is not sovereign over all things and man is not responsible. The responsibility of man depends on the sovereignty of God because if man is not the creation of God then he is not subject to God and thus all goes back to creation. You simply cannot avoid the creation event in your evangelism. As long as you put off the creation event you leave the person in a position where they can object, “I see no responsibility to God whatsoever since if He exists He is part and parcel of the universe and shrouded by the same mystery as you and I.” As long as they are working from the evolutionary frame of reference all that can be said about man is that I’m a victim. I’m a victim and product of time and chance, that’s all there is, man is material, composed of atoms and molecules and if that is the way you view man where do you get responsibility? To which of the molecules did you ever command, stand up, turn around, do a dance. Molecules are not sentient beings, they’re material, working according to the cause-effect determinism of so-called natural law. There’s no responsibility in that kind of a universe. And therefore you must present the Christian universe which starts with creation of man as a

sentient creature made in the image of God, both body and spirit, material and immaterial and therefore responsible. Then and only then do you get responsibility and the gospel makes sense.

So nations are held accountable. Scripturally this is true and logically this is true and therefore responsible choice can only be discussed *inside* the Christian frame of reference. But the question we have to face in Amos is what standards have these Gentile nations broken? On what basis are they being judged? And this is the debate among scholars in chapters 1-2. There have been four answers given to the question by scholars. We want to consider each of these and weigh the merits.

To do this let's review what we've observed in the text earlier tonight. The first observation we made is that these are War Oracles, they are war crimes and the judgments are restitutionary in nature, military defeat. Another observation is that they are all crimes against human beings made in the image of God. Each one highlights some desecrating act against humans made in God's image. The third thing we observed is that they are all atrocious acts, horrific crimes of inhumanity. The last thing we've observed is that all the crimes save the last one are against Jewish people. So let's see what the scholars have said and then we'll try to draw some conclusions.

There are four views. The *first* view is that all the nations cited in Amos 1-2 had been members of the Davidic Empire. Since David entered into covenants with many of these empires and these nations violated the terms of the covenant by committing war crimes that's why God judged them. This view is connected to the idea that in Amos, by the end of the book you have the Davidic Empire restored and all nations are subjected to Israel (Amos 9:11-15). So they are all breaches of contract. That's not going to hold water; it's too much of a stretch to make that work.

For the *second* view turn to Gen 9:5-7, this is the post-Flood mandate to Noah, it's the giving of the fourth Divine Institution of Human Government. Remember, before the Flood you have three Divine Institutions; Responsible Labor or Dominion, Marriage and Family, no Human Government. For 1600 years of the human race no Human Government, they were governed by conscience and perhaps angelic hosts. After the Flood a new Divine Institution of Human Government is given, the sword passes from angels to

man. Let's read, "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from *every* man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. ⁶"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. ⁷"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." The argument made here is that this Divine Institution is a treaty, a covenant between God and mankind, whereby god holds nations accountable to populate the earth and respect his image as it is revealed in all people. So the point would be that these nations have violated this covenant by wiping out populations and desecrating the image of God. There's no question they did that. They did commit war crimes against the image of God that decimated the population. But there is no evidence this is a covenant. If this is a covenant then where is the sign and where is the founding sacrifice. Since every biblical covenant has those elements but they're missing here then it's a no go.ⁱⁱ

The *third* view is that of J. Barton and he suggests that God is judging on the basis of a common morality shared across the ancient Near East regarding the conduct of war. He observes that all the crimes mentioned occurred in warfare and because they shared a common morality about how warfare should be carried out and this morality was broken, then God pronounced judgment. Now, he may be on to something, but that leaves us with the question, "How is it possible for all men to have a common morality?" Where did such a common morality come from? So let's explore a bit. What does the Scripture say that all men share in common? General revelation. We call it general because all men have it. And General revelation has two categories: first, creation and second, conscience. General revelation says that all men know God through creation and conscience. Not that all men know "a god" exists, but that "the God" exists, the personal Sovereign God who has the attributes of sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability and eternity, those are the characteristics of God, the Creator. All men know about Him through creation and through conscience because God makes Himself known to them, there are, technically, no atheists period. All people know God. The issue is not knowledge of God but what people do with that knowledge, they suppress it, that's Rom 1, that's Paul's argument, and so if you catch yourself trying to prove God's existence to someone you've already been had. Your job isn't to prove God exists, God's already done that and if He can't do that then I doubt seriously you're going to do it. Your job as an apologist for the Christian faith

is to assume he has that knowledge buried deep in his subconscious and to break down arguments that suppress the truth he knows. So we have the God of Creation and he made man in His image, man is a theomorph, if we weren't we couldn't know God. But God said, Gen 1:26-27, "Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness..." verse 27, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him;" So if you have God, and God is in the open box, man is in the box, he's a part of creation. You have the Creator-creature distinction. God has certain qualities (Q), man made in God's image has certain qualities (q), our qualities are finite analogs to His Qualities. There are similarities or else we couldn't know what we were talking about, but our qualities and His Qualities are not identical. God is sovereign, man has choice. Human choice is not the same thing as sovereignty, only God is sovereign, His sovereignty is infinite. That's what God uses to plan history; He controls whatsoever comes to pass. We know He does that, we're not privy to all the ways He pulls it off, but He does pull it off. History is His plan. Man is inside the plan and inside the plan we have choice, that's what makes man responsible. If we were outside the plan then there couldn't possibly be choice. So, we get presented with two options and we make a choice, it's as easy as that, but we can't get outside God's sovereign plan, that's not a choice you can make.

Second, the attribute of God's holiness and by that we're just referring to His righteousness and His justice. By righteous it is meant that His moral character is a flawlessly consistent law unto itself. He never acts contrary to His character. And His character is the standard throughout the cosmos for what is right and wrong. His character is the standard for right and wrong, not the majority vote, not somebody's opinion, but God's character. Now, if we are made in His image then there must be a finite quality in us. What is it? Our experience of conscience, moral judgment, revulsion over evil, and the need for law is something like His Quality of holiness. That is what's inside of us. That's a part of the image of God. Man is made in the image of God in both body and spirit. Look at Gen 2:7. For a long time theologians have tried to isolate the image of God to the human spirit or soul. You can't do that on any other basis than an arbitrary opinion. Remember, this is the sixth day of creation. What did God say he was going to do, "make man in His image," and here He's doing that, "Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Now there's only two components there, first the dust and

second the breath. Evidently out of the dust God made the human body and then He breathed the breath of life or lives, plural, into the man, that's the human spirit, and notice the final clause, when those two components were put together "man became a living being." That's the word for soul, in the Hebrew *nephesh*, what this is saying is that the soul isn't a third component, it's a resultant component. In other words, every time you put a human body together with a human spirit you get a human soul. The soul is a composite of material and immaterial. That's a formula for human life throughout Scripture. And that, as far as we can tell, is the image of God. Nobody disputes man has a body but what is disputed is the human spirit, one of the evidences that all men have a human spirit, whether they're regenerated or not, is the fact that they have these spiritual capacities. We've named four of them, the experience of conscience, moral judgment, revulsion over evil, and the need for law. Those are things that everyone has, and they flow out of the fact that we are made in God's image and it's those things that go on inside us because we all have a spirit made in God's image. That's why, even the non-Christian atheist who denies God, winds up doing these four things: having an experience of conscience, wanting moral judgment, having a revulsion over evil, and having a need for law. It's inescapable, absolutely inescapable. There's not a person who has ever lived on this planet that hasn't had those four experiences, but they're explainable only because man is made in God's image.

So, what have these Gentile nations done? They go into war and they go in with their conscience intact. But what must they have done to the conscience? Let's take the conscience. The conscience is a judge, it's like an internal judge that sits there and judges according to a standard and it says, that's right, that's wrong and it's flawlessly consistent to the standard. But the standard is received. You receive those from your society, your family, your school teachers and you build up this standard in your conscience and then the event comes and the conscience judges, you can't stop it, it just happens. Well, how did the standard get started, who first injected information into the standard? God did with Adam and Eve and He injected certain standards and He was going to inject some more standards so they would come to know good and evil on His terms and not man's terms, but they skipped that step and got the knowledge another way, and so you have a rival standard. Satan brought that in and when they bought into the lie (that those two standards lie on the same plane and I have to come in above them and decide for myself, absolutely by myself on my own terms of knowing), then in fact they had to violate the original standard they had in their conscience. The very first sin

was a violation of conscience. Some people try to say the conscience is a result of the Fall. No it's not. They already had a standard. Now it's a battle of standards, who's standard are you going to submit to, God's standard or Satan's standard. Who's the authority. Well, they learned real fast who the authority was but now sin was in the game and that tends to distort. And they passed on standards to their children and so forth. Everyone's basically getting these two lines in the pre-Flood world, and people are going one way or the other way till the whole thing is a mess. You've got eight people working on God's standard; the other two billion are over here on Satan's standard, their making a real mess of things. So what happened? Here are these people, living in God's world, they know about him, they've got this standard and their conscience is working; that's right, that's wrong, that's right, that's wrong and I violate it. Oops, what happened? You violate the conscience now what happens: it's easier to violate it next time, but the conscience continues, that's right, violate that one, okay, and it gets even easier, this goes on and on. Every time you violate the conscience you know what you're doing? Searing the conscience, it's like your putting a hot iron to it and that kills the sensitivity of the conscience and you do this over and over repetitively and eventually what happens - you kill the conscience. Here's a girl, and listen to these words, because this is better than I could ever say it, this is what's going on, "Sometimes, when it is all quiet inside and outside, when no sound is irritating or breaking the silence, when everything is motionless, the maltreated, oppressed, but still so strong and fast beating heart whispers: Give me life. Give me yourself back. The ears listen and tend to act like they didn't hear." Now, that's a profoundly sad position to be in. She wasn't able to destroy her conscience, her conscience kept going when everything else stopped, it went on judging but she didn't listen to the judgment. That's the nightmare of this. So I think Barton has a point. These nations, collectively, have seared their consciences to the point they did all kinds of gross stuff. We've just read some pretty gross acts. These guys come in and take pregnant women, slit their abdomen, rip the baby out, mom's lying there bleeding to death, bash the little baby against a rock, mom has to watch it all, can't do a thing about it. What kind of a state does your conscience have to be in to do that? God only lets that go on so long until He says, all right, that's it, I've given you every opportunity, you've spurned it, you're a cancer on My earth and I'm excising you from it.

The *fourth* and final view is that of Keil and Delitzsch. They say they are a breach of the Abrahamic Covenant in Gen 12:3. This covenant follows the Royal Grant Treaty format of the ancient world. God guaranteed the promises on the basis of His own character. And thus what we're seeing is an outworking of the curses upon those nations who cursed Israel. "And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse." In other

words, God promised to protect Israel from extermination and anyone who tried to exterminate her would fall under His curse. The only difficulty with this view is the last Gentile nation, Moab, they're crime was burning the king of Edom to lime." What does that have to do with Israel? To this Keil and Delitzsch say, "As Amos in the case of all the other nations has mentioned only crimes that were committed against the covenant nation, the one with which the Moabites are charged must have been in some way associated with either Israel or Judah, that is to say, it must have been committed upon a king of Edom, who was a vassal of Judah, and therefore not very long after this war, since the Edomites shook off their dependence upon Judah in less than ten years from that time (2 Kings 8:20)."ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, for Moab to attack one of Judah's vassal's was to attack Judah indirectly and breach Gen 12:3. Which shows this contract and it's outworkings in history are more complex than a direct political or military relationship with Israel. This contract can be breached even by indirect proceedings or wars that affect Israel in a negative way.

I think this is the best answer from an overall perspective of Amos, God is sovereign over all the nations but He was in a covenant relationship only with Israel. But I also think there are elements of the third answer, the breach of conscience, there was a common morality in the conscience of these nations injected with pre-Flood knowledge and they seared that and therefore became a damned society. So, it's not an exclusive answer one way or another, it was their seared consciences which were involved in committing crimes against Israel that led to their judgment. And next time we will move into very different reasons why Judah and Israel are judged, they're the covenant nation and they are held to a different set of standards.

ⁱ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 1:1429.

ⁱⁱ Biblical Studies Press. (2006; 2006). *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*. Biblical Studies Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (2002). *Commentary on the Old Testament*. (10:169). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

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