

The Lord Roars at the Nations

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Well, let's grab our Bibles and go to Amos 1. Would you turn there? The Old Testament book of Amos. If you'll go to Matthew and go back about 1/4 of an inch, at least 2/8, about that far, you should find the book of Amos. We have had two installments and now we are on the third installment.

Amos makes an interesting statement and he refers in one way or another to this several times and that is the Lord roars. Sometimes he'll say the lion has roared but he's referring to God roaring in judgment and I told you earlier that the picture is of a male lion, the dominant male lion who is the guardian of the pride, and he has aroused himself, he has come to his feet and he is just about to pounce on his prey and he gives that roar that's meant to terrify and put in shock the one he's after. You remember the illustration I gave you of the male lion as he will protect the pride from a cackle of hyenas. He'll let them go for a while but if they get too aggressive and too much in the way, then he will take charge and roar and run down the matriarch of the hyena clan, chomp on her back or her neck severing the spine and killing her instantly. That's the picture the prophet wants you to get. God has reached his limit. God has been long-suffering and God has been patient but now he has aroused himself. Now, the point here is: once that lion stands up and he gives that attack roar, it's too late. No repentance allowed now. No negotiating now. No second chance now. The Lord roars.

Now, keep your finger or your Bible ribbon in Amos 1 and go to Genesis and our first point, I. is: God is just in his judgment of them. Well, I might ought to give you the title too, how about that? "God Roars Against the Nations." God roars against the nations and I. God is just in his judgment of them. Now, it's very very important that you get the context, I might should say the foundation stone of why God is just in his ruling over, holding accountable and holding all nations in judgment. You've got to understand who man is and who their Creator is and we get something of this, of course, in Genesis.

Genesis 1, look at verse 26. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image.'" Now, I'm convinced the "Our image" there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. "According to Our likeness." So God has created all the rest of creation and then God says, "I'm going to do something extra special, I'm going to create one that is exceedingly superior and greater and has more glory than all the rest of the created order combined. I'm going to create man and I'm going to create man in My image and in My likeness."

Brothers and sisters, you are not, mankind is not just the highest aspect or position of evolution. We were created by a Creator with uniqueness and specialness. We call it a sanctity. There is an aspect of who we are that means we are set apart as unique and special, made in God's image.

Now, let's continue on there. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" Now, so God said, "I have made man unique and special. He has a unique value and a unique dignity, so much so," and he says it repeatedly, "he's going to rule over all the rest of the created order." Man is the crown Prince of planet earth. He is to have dominion over the earth, over the fish, over the animals, over everything that is. And the presupposition is: if we are created by God and if we are special, if we are even so special as that we are made in the likeness of God and in the image of God, there is therefore a special accountability and a special responsibility to God, our Creator.

I just can't pass this without giving you a side note. It's not in the main line of what I'm saying but a side note. You and I live in a day when Satan is trying to twist and...well, he has always tried to do that but he seems to be making some chief inroads in trying to twist and turn upside down what God has is right side up. Instead of seeing mankind as unique and special and superior, made in the image of God, they want to tell us that we are just a higher form of creation so therefore there has got to be this dignity and respect for the frogs and the birds and the lions and all these other animals. Now, there is a place for treating the creation with due respect but nothing should ever even be uttered that somehow other forms of created life have the value of human life. In fact, we have the liberty, even the responsibility, to rule over and subdue. You're not somehow vulgar and you're not somehow beneath the dignity of man if you go out and you kill an animal and harvest it and eat it. You're just exercising your dominion. God meant for it to be that way. Now, if you go out and catch a fish and filet it and eat it, that's a part of our rule and dominion. Don't listen to these twisted upside down viewpoints of our life in the way God made things to be. But the point I want you to get in mind is: man is made in the image of God and therefore he has a special responsibility to God, an accountability to God, for who he is and what he does on the earth. Period. We are creatures and we have a Creator.

Now, while we are made in the image of God, our forefather Adam in the garden of Eden sinned and he brought sin into the human race and sin, we sometimes call it being fallen or a fallenness, has been passed on to his posterity. So all of mankind is infected and corrupted with the sin nature, with a fallenness. We are no longer standing as we ought to in the dignity and in the specialness and in the superiority we ought to be but yet that does not change that there still is the sanctity and the value because we're still made in the image of God. But now while man is fallen, the image of God is certainly marred in man

but it is not eradicated. From the days of Adam, fallen man has strived to violate and dull the God-given conscience within the heart, yet even in man's fallen condition, the witness in the heart is still loud and it's still clear.

If I might give an illustration from something that has been going on in our country in recent days, have you noticed there seems to be a lot of people in the streets and you're seeing them with an attitude of harshness, with rantings, with reviling, with railing, and there seems to be a consistency that there is no real desire to sit down, be rational and discuss and logically or reasonably discuss different opinions. No, they don't want that. They just want to rant and revile and rave, and actually a whole lot. Some of those who, I don't know, I guess there are the self-appointed elitist leaders of some of these groups are just vile and vulgar in their language. And it's just vile. It's just about as dirty and nasty... the way the costumes they put on, all of it. Now, here's my question and this was not only but significantly around the pro-abortion movement so when you see this ranting, reviling and railing and, by the way, if you want to see what the Bible says about the person who is known as just a reviler and a raver who won't talk to you logically and reasonably, the Bible calls that kind of man a fool. The Bible says he's a fool and he's only intent on revealing his own mind. And by the way – are you listening to your pastor this morning – it will take some godly, manly courage to stand up against these spoiled, rotten revilers but you'd think after a while they'd eventually have to quit and go and get a job and go to work. Well, that's another story altogether, is it not? I'm convinced what we see in these continual multiplied chanting and crying out and drowning out any and all opposing opinions, it's just their effort to smother the conscience. If you say it enough and you're loud enough and you are boisterous enough and you can't hear anybody else say anything to the contrary, then it helps to sear the conscience against what you're about. I mean, think about it: if there was no witness within themselves of what is right and wrong, then the truth and their guilt wouldn't be so loud and I do not believe they would be so adamant in their protest.

Romans 2:14-15, "For when the Gentiles do not have the Law, they do instinctively the things of the Law." Now, notice that, they didn't have the law. God gave the law to the Jews, not the Gentiles but they do instinctively the things of the law. "These, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them." Paul says writing to the Romans in a Gentile culture, he says, "Your forefathers and you yourselves were not given the law, that was given through Moses and to the Jews. But your forefathers," and anthropologists and archaeologists have proven this irrefutably, every people group who has ever been discovered in antiquity or in the modern age, has some sort of law code they live by that somewhat resembles the 10 Commandments. Every single one. You'll find they have laws against lying. They have laws against stealing. They have laws against cheating. They have laws about honoring authorities. It's amazing how close and though they have never heard of a Bible or the Jews or Moses or any written literature, a lot of these civilizations or a lot of these people groups they discover in the remote jungle areas of Papua New Guinea or in South America, it's amazing. Now, I'm not saying perfectly but they have a decently relative law standard by which they conduct themselves. So Paul says they do instinctively the

things of the law and prove God wrote it in their hearts. So when they say, "We're not responsible. We don't understand. We didn't know." Paul says, "God says that's a lie. Their conscience itself condemns them."

So when these groups march in the streets and they begin to tell us that they want justice and they want equality, that they are looking out for the disadvantaged, they are concerned about the vulnerable, they are concerned about those who can't speak for themselves, but the most disadvantaged and the most vulnerable and the most silenced in our culture is the unborn child. So how do you live with that kind of schizophrenia? "We think this group is disadvantaged, this group is vulnerable and not taken care of, this group is silenced and doesn't have a voice and we're here to march and rail and revile and we are going to be harsh and crude and vile and vulgar until we get justice for them," yet they have the capacity to categorically give enthusiastic blessing to the utter destruction of the most silenced, vulnerable and disadvantaged in our culture, the unborn child. I'm telling you what, they are self-condemned. They are self-condemned.

Romans 1:18-22, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Scholars are not sure exactly what that phrase means, "suppress the truth in unrighteousness," but I guarantee it includes that effort to loudly and boisterously crowd out, smother out your conscience so you don't have to deal with the righteousness of God he has even spoken to your heart about.

So on the one hand the law of God is in our hearts, it's in the hearts of those protesters and revilers as they go around crying out for the supposed vulnerable and disadvantaged, and they have a very interesting way of picking the selective way they will be outraged on some things and be completely silent or take the opposite position on other things. But anyway, their cry is, "We're out for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged," but in doing this, they judge themselves.

Romans 1:18-22 again, he reminds them in verse 19, "[for] that which is known about God is evident within them," within them, "for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." Here it is again, verse 21, "For even though they knew God," they didn't have the law or the prophets but they knew God because he made his law clear to them in their heart, "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise," look at us, we're the ones who are marching for the fairness and justice of all, "Professing to be wise, they become as fools."

Now, be careful because there is a real mixed bag here. I grow more and more concerned about this painting everybody with a broad brush. I'm just saying there is a considerable component of these liberal movements who fit this description almost perfectly. Now, all peoples of all tribal community or civilizations from all the world for all time are therefore without excuse before God. That includes all the nations that were in existence

in the day of Amos. They did not have the light and the truth that God had given Israel but they are still fully accountable to God because he placed some light and some truth within their hearts.

So now through Amos God roars in judgment against the six nations surrounding Israel. You see, Jesus is not only Lord of all, he is also Judge of all. John 5:22, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." All judgment over to the Son. Psalm 110:6, "He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country." Romans 3:9, "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews," who had the law and the prophets, "and [even the] Greeks," the Gentiles who did not, "are all under sin." Look, they are not innocent in ignorance, they are willful in evil.

Charles Martin, a great preacher from New York state, went to be a missionary in Africa. I don't even know if Dr. Martin is still alive, he'd be a senior adult man, but he said, "When I went to Africa, my goal was to go and find these poor ignorant souls that didn't know any better and teach them the law of God and the things of God and about the grace of God through Jesus Christ." And he said, "I got to Africa and I went to the remote tribal peoples and I began to watch them and study them and I thought these guys are not ignorant. They are monsters of iniquity. They know they are cheating and they cheat. They know they are lying to one another and they lie. They know they shouldn't take another man's wife and they take another man's wife. They know they should not kill to gain a material advantage from another man and they still kill and murder." He said, "These folks know what they are and they still do it. They are not innocent or ignorant. They are monsters of iniquity." Are you hearing me this morning? You've got to understand that. All of this notion we have today of all of these excusing of behaviors and activities.

I wasn't going to bring this up and I want to be careful, I want you to understand the balance of what I'm saying but I just happened to read in the paper this week that 71% of schoolchildren in Sheffield, Alabama are on the free lunch program. Now, my initial thought was, "You mean to tell me 71% of the families in Sheffield, Alabama who have children, cannot afford to give their child a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch?" Now, back when I was a boy, that meant you couldn't afford an automobile. Back when I was a child, that meant you didn't have a television, much less a laptop computer or a smartphone. Look, if they want to say, "We've deemed that people in this income bracket need a little help, let's all help them," that's fine. I'm fine with that but the notion is these kids are starving to death. I want to say, "Give me the names, addresses and phone numbers of their daddies."

What in heaven's name are parents doing? But, you see, here's what we're dealing with, we're dealing with a communistic philosophy that if everybody's not the same, then we've got to give entitlements to those who are not like the rest of them. And in every culture and every civilization where that seems wise but they do that, it ends up hurting more people. You have a few elite communists who are wealthy and everybody else is not middle-class, they are all poor. That's where that ends up at. It's this notion, this scheming

notion, "if everybody is excused, everybody,"... look, you find a child that's really hungry, there is not a man in this church that wouldn't empty your billfold to take care of them, amen? But I'm telling you if they have a mama and a daddy who is able to work, they can feed them lunch. Not that it's wrong for us to help with lunch, that's not what I'm saying. People have got to be responsible. Do you know why? Can I give you a foundational reason why? Because they are creatures made in the image of God and a creature made in the image of God would do everything humanly possible to see that their babies are taken care of because we're not like animals who might abandon their babies over some fear or over some threat. We are human beings made in the image of God.

Now, I'm not saying these folks in Sheffield are bad or the folks in Muscle Shoals are bad. I'm not saying that at all. Understand what I'm saying: I'm saying the notion is absurd. You know, I keep hearing on the radio that 5 out of 9, that's not correct but this high percentage of children in America go to bed hungry every night. Then we need to find some daddies and do something about it. But everybody is excused. Everybody is an exception. Here's my point: nobody is accountable. Well, I'm going to say something: that false and dangerous and even damning philosophy may float in the Western world today, it may float in the United States of America, but it does not float with Almighty God. He holds his creatures fully responsible and accountable. As Paul told the Gentile church in Rome, "They are without excuse."

Now, if you belong to this church and we find out your babies aren't being fed, the first thing I'm going to ask the daddy is, "Tell me the three jobs you presently hold because if one can't get it done, then you get a second one. If a second one can't do it, you get a third one. You deliver pizzas until three in the morning if you have to but you're going to feed your babies. You're going to make them, you're going to feed them." Now, we will gladly feed them if you can't, amen? But this thing of nobody is responsible. Now, you'll go out of here saying, "Boy, Jeff gets onto poor people, doesn't he?" No, that's not what I'm doing. I'm giving you examples, illustrations and we're going to give dozens of them of an excusing, blame-shifting culture that's radically, it's so radically contradictory. God said, "I made you in My image and I expect a lot out of you."

Now, that's the foundation stone down to Amos. So Amos begins, go back to Amos 1, Amos begins his prophecy and he's going to begin with calling forth, I should say announcing forth the roaring judgment of God on these non-Jewish, these Gentile nations that surround the nation of Israel. He's going to call out the judgment against Aram who is to their northeast, Philistia down to the southwest, Phoenicia to the north, Edom to the southeast, Ammon to the east, and then Moab down to the southeast. Now, again, these are people who did not have the prophets, they did not have the written law given through Moses, they did not have the witness of the temple or the ceremonial law that the Jews had, but they did have God's law written in their hearts. They may have had no special revelation, special meaning the law and the prophets, but that does not remove their moral obligation and their moral responsibility. God holds them accountable and judgment time has come. The Lord comes in roaring judgment.

Now, one of the things you'll find as we go through here and this is going to be two parts, is that as God announces his judgments against these non-Jewish nations around the nation of Israel, he does not judge them pertaining to how they responded to God because they were not introduced to Yahweh or Jehovah, the name of the personal covenant keeping God, that only Israel understood him that way. But God does show that he judges them in relation to their dealings with their fellow man, or maybe their fellow man in surrounding nations other than their nation. And God shows that they are guilty and violating that law that was written in their hearts and what he reveals here is the law written in our hearts is fleshed out in human relationships; that all people have the law of God in their hearts that particularly pertains to how we treat, welcome, deal with, have intercourse with one another. So that's the basis of this judgment. They know they are not to cheat and steal and lie and deal inhumanely and cruelly with other peoples, but all of them had done this.

So let's just get maybe through the first one here and we go to II. and we'll start outlining these but II, not only first of all is God just from a foundational and truth perspective in judging them, but secondly, what are their crimes that God brings against them in his judgment. What crimes did they have? Well, A. in our outline: they violated the sanctity of human life. They violated the sanctity of human life. They begin to view humans, at least the ones they chose, as less than human; as less than something or someone made in the image of God; as less than someone made in the likeness of God. They begin to deal with human life like it was just a property or an item or a thing. So here we will begin to see a brazen cruelty against those that they took captive and a complete and callous disregard for decent humane treatment and compassion.

We begin with Aram, the country off to the northeast. Look at it there beginning in verse 3, Amos 1:3, "Thus says the LORD, 'For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron.'" Now, each time he calls out a roaring judgment against one of these nations, he's going to do it this way: for three transgressions and for four. And what's happening when the prophet says "for three transgressions and four" means, God has been watching very grievous sins and transgressions you've been committing over and over. It doesn't mean literally three but he says God has been watching these and God has been long-suffering and God has been patient but finally the cup of wrath is pouring over. You have built up and built up and built up your guilt before God and now he's going to act against you. And the prophet is going to reveal the specific sin, kind of the straw that has broken the camel's back and going to unleash God's judgment against you.

So he says here in verse 3, the last part, "[you] threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron." Now, they may have done this literally or it could be more of a figurative phrase. We don't know for sure but nevertheless, threshing, a threshing sled was a heavy wooden implement they would pull behind oxen and it had iron or flint stone sharp barbs sticking out of the bottom of it and they would pull it over mounds of wheat and the weight and the crushing of those sharp instruments would separate off the chaff or the husks from the grain and that's the way they could collect the grain. So you can only imagine what it would be like to be forced to lay on the ground and someone pull a threshing sled over

your body. The point is this is the most brutal torture, this is the most unbelievable thing. Now look, they were not trying to interrogate someone who was intent on destroying their people that they might protect their people. That's not this. This was merely to show their domination, merely to show the level of their disdain and their cruelty toward these people. So what's the point here? The point is they violated the sanctity of human life; that human life to them, at least the ones they designated, is not worth even considering decent treatment. We'll just drag a threshing sled over them and just rip them and tear them and crush them to pieces.

Now, you can't see this without wondering about our own abortion industry in the United States of America where it is now proven that Planned Parenthood harvests for profit the body parts of unborn babies. Even bartering them off to the highest bidder. Even talking about how to get the unborn child through the birth canal alive because then the organs will be preserved and they can get better money for them. This is brazen cruelty. This is harsh rejection of the sanctity of human life. Every one of those babies was made in the image of God. Every one of those babies was created in the likeness of God. Now, if it's an unborn rabbit, not too worried about it. If it's an unborn pig, not too worried about it. If it's an unborn chimpanzee, gorilla or orangutan, not too worried about it. Don't like it, ought to be stopped but not too worried. But I'm telling you – listen to me – God is provoked.

He said, "For three transgressions, then for four, when I saw you getting to the calloused evil and cruelty of running the threshing sled over human beings," he said, "I want you to know something, I got up like a lion about to pounce on his prey." Violating the sanctity of human life.

The Bible says that they would take these ones or rather, verse 4, he amplifies the intensity, "So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad. I will also break the gate bar of Damascus," that means I'm going to tear down your fortress, "And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, And him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir,' Says the LORD." Now, I believe the fire here is the fire of war. He's going to bring an adversary against them to destroy them, but in bringing that adversary, God will be enacting against them the roaring judgment that he says they deserve for violating the sanctity of human life, treating a person like a thing.

Not only just Aram, but also Philistia or the Philistines, they are off to the southwest. And he begins with verse 6, look at it there, "Thus says the LORD, 'For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its punishment.'" The same thing again, you've been building up, building up. I've been long-suffering and you've been building up and now you've done something, now you've reached to a degradation, you have dropped to a low level that is causing my wrath to come against you.

The last part of verse 6, "Because they deported an entire population To deliver it up to Edom." They would bring these captives to Edom, probably the center of the slave trade of the day. So here we have strictly for financial profit and without regard for human

compassion or decency, the marching of their captors, men, women, pregnant women, babies and all, over to the city of Edom so that they might sell them to the highest bidder. I mean, after all, money talks. Slavery brought in good money. It's best to turn a blind eye to the inhumanity and brazenly cruel herding of these people to market and treating them as a thing, as a property.

If I might just add a note here about the United States of America. Nothing can excuse the evils of the slave trade of early America. Nothing can excuse that. Could it be that perhaps the only reason we are not judged more severely today is because there were some who stood in the gap and there were some who stood against it? As a matter of fact, the record will show that Bible believing Christians began to stand and decry the evils of human slavery. So while it was outlawed, we all understand that there are still too many places where hate and discrimination reigns in human hearts. While nothing excuses the sin of our forefathers and the evils of slavery, we are very grateful that God saw to raise some up who would stand against it and eventually have it overthrown. But let's be careful and balanced and, again, this is a place just as a point of application that I'm bringing the next viewpoints out so that you can understand, you can't just ever just mark something with a broad brush. The evils of inhumane treatment are not completely and necessarily because you are one color and not another color.

For example, Henry Louis Gates, he's a black literary critic and historian, he's considered a public intellectual, and he said, "It is likely that that were more African-Americans who had African-American slaves in the state of South Carolina before the Civil War than there were white skinned people who had African-American slaves in the state of South Carolina." He's a black man saying this. Now overwhelmingly so it was white people who had black skinned people as slaves but there were a good number of black skinned people who had black skinned people as slaves. In New York City before the Civil War, we sometimes say, "Well, it's all of those wicked white Southerners." There were many wicked white Southerners but in the city of New York, there was a strong bigoted racist community that supported slavery. In New York. You don't hear much talk about that, do you? Do you know why they supported it? They made a fortune off of the cotton that was picked in the south and sold in the markets in New York City.

So it's just not as simple. While there were many who participated in the evils of slavery in the south, that was just as much wickedness in the hearts of some in the north. Not excusing our forefathers in the south mind you, but it's just not as simple as north, south. It's just not as simple as white or black. For example, Alveda King, she is the niece of Martin Luther King, she even voted for Donald Trump, interesting. She said that the reason there is a metal detector on the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, the church known as the mother church of the civil rights movement, is not because of threats from white people. She said a black man walked in the church and shot another black man one day and that's why we have a metal detector. Alveda King said, these are her words, "Hate does not come in one color."

You see, it would be easy for us to just wrap them all up, "Well, you find this color of people and they're all bad and you find this region of people and they're all bad." No, God

judges all because honestly from the perspective of a holy God, we are all bad. But let that not be an excuse or an attempt to blame-shift that the people of a region or of a system or of a country like these in Philistia, the Philistines, who were so brutal in their inhumane treatment of their fellow man. If you in your hate or lust, you find yourself viewing other human beings as a thing or a property to fulfill your pleasure, your profit and your lust, I'm telling you, God's word says that is something that stirs the roaring wrath of God. Do you know why? Because you're not just an evolved rabbit. You didn't come from the primordial slime and a one-celled something eons ago. You are a special unique creation of God. You are one made in the image of God. You were made in the likeness of God and you ought to conduct yourself better than that. And God says when a people does that, I will bring my roaring judgment.

Now, I know what you're thinking, you're thinking, "What does that spell for America?" I'm not sure. I do know this: God takes care of his remnant. Are you hearing me? God takes care of his remnant. He always takes care of his remnant. 2. We've seen that our Lord shows amazing grace and long-suffering toward a people if at least there is a righteous standard somewhere in there asking forgiveness and seeking God's grace. May we be part of the remnant. May we be in God's grace a righteous standard. As your pastor, I'm telling you, don't you back up 1/4 of an inch on God's truth in the public square. Now, you don't be a ranter and you don't be a reviler and you don't have an ugly tone but do not back up on the truth of the word of God. Give God a reason to have mercy toward our country. And in all of it, are we not the most humbled? Because we'd be worst than the worst ranting, vulgar, reviler if the grace of God had not changed our hearts. Can I get a big amen there? Amen. We would be.

Boy, I love you and I appreciate you. The book of Amos. Powerful stuff.