

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The prophet goes on to declare the judgments of God against Moab, Amos 2:1-3; against Judah, Amos 2:4, Amos 2:5; and then against Israel, the particular object of his mission. He enumerates some of their sins, Amos 2:6-8, aggravated by God's distinguishing regard to Israel, Amos 2:9-12; and they are in consequence threatened with dreadful punishments, Amos 2:13-16. See 2 Kings 15:19; 2 Kings 17:6.

Verse 1

For three transgressions of Moab and for four - See an explanation of this form Amos 1:2. The land of the Moabites lay to the east of the Dead Sea. For the origin of this people, see Genesis 19:37.

He burned the bones on the king of Edom into lime - Possibly referring to some brutality; such as opening the grave of one of the Idumean kings, and calcining his bones. It is supposed by some to refer to the fact mentioned 2 Kings 3:26, when the kings of Judah, Israel, and Idumea, joined together to destroy Moab. The king of it, despairing to save his city, took seven hundred men, and made a desperate sortie on the quarter where the king of Edom was; and, though not successful, took prisoner the son of the king of Edom; and, on their return into the city, offered him as a burnt-offering upon the wall, so as to terrify the besieging armies, and cause them to raise the siege. Others understand the son that was sacrificed to be the king of Moab's own son.

Verse 2

The palaces of Kirioth - This was one of the principal cities of the Moabites.

Moab shall die with tumult - All these expressions seem to refer to this city's being taken by storm, which was followed by a total slaughter of its inhabitants.

Verse 3

I will cut off the judge - It shall be so destroyed, that it shall never more have any form of government. The judge here, שופט (shophet), may signify the chief magistrate. The chief magistrates of the Carthaginians were called suffetes; probably taken from the Hebrew Judges, שופטים (shophetim).

Verse 4

For three transgressions of Judah - We may take the three and four here to any latitude; for this people lived in continual hostility to their God, from the days of David to the time of Uzziah, under whom Amos prophesied. Their iniquities are summed up under three general heads:

- 1.They despised, or rejected the law of the Lord.
- 2.They kept not his statutes.
- 3.They followed lies, were idolaters, and followed false prophets rather than those sent by Jehovah.

Verse 5

I will send a fire upon Judah - This fire was the war made upon the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, which terminated with the sackage and burning of Jerusalem and its palace the temple.

Verses 6-8

For three transgressions of Israel, etc. - To be satisfied of the exceeding delinquency of this people, we have only to open the historical and prophetic books in any part; for the whole history of the Israelites is one tissue of transgression against God. Their crimes are enumerated under the following heads: -

- 1.Their judges were mercenary and corrupt. They took bribes to condemn the righteous; and even for articles of clothing, such as a pair of shoes, they condemned the poor man, and delivered him into the hands of his adversary.
- 2.They were unmerciful to the poor generally. They pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor; or, to put it on the head of the poor; or, they bruise the head of the poor against the dust of the earth. Howsoever the clause is understood, it shows them to have been general oppressors of the poor, showing them neither justice nor mercy.

3.They turn aside the way of the meek. They are peculiarly oppressive to the weak and afflicted.

4.They were licentious to the uttermost abomination; for in their idol feasts, where young women prostituted themselves publicly in honor of Astarte, the father and son entered into impure connections with the same female.

5.They were cruel in their oppressions of the poor; for the garments or beds which the poor had pledged they retained contrary to the law, Exodus 22:7-26, which required that such things should be restored before the setting of the sun.

6.They punished the people by unjust and oppressive fines, and served their tables with wine bought by such fines. Or it may be understood of their appropriating to themselves that wine which was allowed to criminals to mitigate their sufferings in the article of death; which was the excess of inhumanity and cruelty.

Verse 9

Yet destroyed I the Amorite - Here follow general heads of God's mercies to them, and the great things he had done for them.

1.Bringing them out of Egypt.

2.Miraculously sustaining them in the wilderness forty years.

3.Driving out the Canaanites before them, and giving them possession of the promised land.

4.Raising up prophets among them to declare the Divine will.

5.And forming the holy institution of the Nazarites among them, to show the spiritual nature of his holy religion, Amos 2:9-11.

Verse 12

But ye gave the Nazarites wine - This was expressly forbidden in the laws of their institution. See Numbers 6:1-3.

Prophecy not - They would not worship God, and they would not hear the voice of his prophets.

Verse 13

Behold, I am pressed under you - The marginal reading is better: "Behold, I will press your place, as a cart full of sheaves presseth." I will bring over you the wheel of destruction; and it shall grind your place - your city and temple, as the wheel of a cart laden with sheaves presses down the ground, gravel, and stones over which it rolls.

Verse 14

The flight shall perish from the swift - The swiftest shall not be able to save himself from a swifter destruction. None, by might, by counsel, or by fleetness, shall be able to escape from the impending ruin. In a word, God has so fully determined to avenge the quarrel of his broken covenant, that all attempts to escape from his judgments shall be useless.

Verse 15

Neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself - I believe all these sayings, Amos 2:13-16, are proverbs, to show the inutility of all attempts, even in the best circumstances, to escape the doom now decreed, because the cup of their iniquity was full.

Verse 16

Shall flee away naked - In some cases the alarm shall be in the night; and even the most heroic shall start from his bed, and through terror not wait to put on his clothes.