

THE BOOK OF AMOS

Lesson 1, Introduction and Chapter 1

As is our custom in Torah Class, I will get us started on our study of the prophetic Book of Amos with an introduction to this most interesting and enlightening book of Scripture. After the introduction we will begin Chapter 1.

The setting for Amos is this: Amos was a Judean man who lived in the Kingdom of Judah but traveled from there to the Kingdom of Ephraim/Israel to make known the prophesy that God gave to him. This occurred during the time that King Jeroboam II was in power in Ephraim/Israel while simultaneously King Uzziah was in power in Judah. From a calendar perspective this would have been sometime in the mid-8th century B.C., likely between the dates of 786 and 746 B.C. So, at the latest, Amos's prophecies were completed at least 2 decades before Assyria rose up and conquered Ephraim/Israel, sending its people into exile. The Prophet Hosea was a contemporary of Amos, and very likely they were (at the least) aware of one another, and probably were personally acquainted (although nothing is recorded to positively confirm that likelihood). Isaiah and Jonah also prophesied within this timeframe so we see that prophecy was flourishing and being poured out at a very heightened pace, meaning that much was about to happen to Israel that Yehoveh wanted His people to know it was imminent, why it was occurring, why they should repent for their sins (that was the cause for the coming events), and to give them time to prepare in practical ways for their judgment of war and exile. This punishment was God directed and would not be delayed or called-off no matter how sorry or repentant the people of Ephraim/Israel might become in response to hearing of this horrific judgment for their unfaithfulness towards God.

King Jeroboam would be the final king of a particular dynasty of kings that had begun with Jehu in the mid-9th century B.C. Perhaps of largest significance for Amos's prophetic body of work was that Ephraim/Israel had become a thriving, wealthy kingdom. At the same time, more and more farmers sold their land to larger land owners and moved into the cities to find work. Greedy merchants bought up the food supply from these large farmers and sold them to the city dwellers at exorbitant prices, reaping nearly unconscionable profits for themselves while driving the poorer city dwellers further into poverty. This

disparity between rich and poor only heightened the tendency of all societies to elevate the status of the rich and diminish the status of the poor such that the rich oppressed the poor. Thus, of primary focus for Amos was the issue of social justice, and God's great displeasure at a few Israelites becoming wealthy on the backs of the helpless poor.

The result of this amazing wealth was a new class of people in Ephraim/Israel that greatly resembles what we see in the world today: a leisure class of elites. Personal pleasures, decadence, and indifference to the plight of the poor led to widespread immorality (especially of a sexual nature). Yet at the same time the religion of the Ephraim/Israelites was quite popular; the rich especially went to great extremes in their religious practices, and the poor did as much as they could even if it meant devaluation for their families. Truly it was the earliest example of a Prosperity Doctrine at work, and it demonstrates all the disastrous consequences it brings with it because it is antithetical to God's character and to His instructions to us. The core issue was that the religion that was currently being practiced by Ephraim/Israel had little resemblance to the biblical Hebrew faith as laid out in the Torah as given to Moses. It had degenerated into a perverted hybrid of Torah law, pagan rituals (involving pagan god systems), with manmade doctrines and traditions mixed in. The people of Ephraim/Israel, however, were blind to it, and dismissed God's oracles sent to them through His prophets...oracles that condemned their idolatry and unfaithfulness to Him... all the while insisting that they were in full allegiance to the God of Israel and to His commandments.

Please notice my continuing reference to Ephraim/Israel. Only rarely will we see Bible commentators and Bible teachers refer to the Northern Kingdom of the ancient Israelites in this way. It is perhaps helpful to remember that at this time in history Israel had, through civil war, become split into 2 independent and separately governed kingdoms. The sad reality is that only for a period of about 80 years, under the reigns of Kings David then Solomon, was Israel a united nation under a single king. Upon Solomon's death the united kingdom descended into chaos and then outright armed conflict as various power-hungry people vied for the throne. Shortly after the mid-point of the 10th century B.C., the result was a splitting of Israel into 2 kingdoms each ruled by its own king: the Kingdom of Judah to the south, and the Kingdom of Israel to the north. However, in reality

the northern kingdom was mostly known to the people as the Kingdom of Ephraim (and we find it stated as much in the Bible even though some versions obscure this by substituting the word "Israel" when in fact the Hebrew manuscripts say "Ephraim"). The reason for this name was that the tribe of Ephraim had become the largest and most powerful of the northern 10 Israelite tribes and so (as was common in that era) the territory and kingdom was named for them. I have added the word "Israel" to the kingdom's name in order to help you to better understand this dynamic and who it is, exactly, that the Bible (and I) are talking about. Thus, I will alternate calling the Northern Kingdom Israel, or Ephraim, or Ephraim/Israel to address this somewhat-confusing situation.

Another factor that plays an important role in our study of Amos is this: even though it would eventually be the nation of Assyria that would attack, conquer and exile the residents of the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim/Israel, during most of the time that Amos prophesied Assyria was a rather tame regional power and so of no threat to Israel. Tiglathpilsar III was king of Assyria during that era, and although like most Middle Eastern potentates he, from time-to-time, attempted territorial expansion to add to his hoped-for empire, not until the last part of the 8th century B.C. did he finally turn his ambitions to the west and the nations that resided there (with the Kingdom of Ephraim/Israel among them). This reality had much to do with Ephraim/Israel's increasing wealth as they were in a several-decades period of relative peace with their neighbors, and so didn't have to spend human capital and treasury money to fight expensive wars except when they sought to acquire more territory for itself (which they did). But this also leads us to the fact that Amos was silent about Assyria. Although he says that a foreign nation will decimate and exile Israel, he never says which nation it will be.

Amos, we are told in the first verse of his book, was a sheep breeder from Tekoa; a small town just a few miles south of Jerusalem in the Kingdom of Judah. Although some Bible versions will call him a shepherd, Amos was much more than someone who merely tended sheep in the fields. In Hebrew the word used is *noqed* and it denotes a knowledgeable person in charge of sheep breeding and therefore he was probably pretty well off. We're told in Amos chapter 7 that he also had to do with cultivating sycamore trees. However, this particular type of tree that at the time was called sycamore was actually a variety of fig tree. We know little else about him. We don't know his age, how long he might have lived,

whether he had a family, or when he had come to be a prophet. We only know that he did not go to any kind of prophet academy, nor was he trained by another prophet, and in fact claims only that God called him to this office. Something we ought to draw from this is that God's calling upon our lives for the purpose of ministry far surpasses any amount of prior experience, academic training or honors bestowed upon us by human institutions. Hopefully this is an encouragement to all of you. A recurring question asked of me is what school someone needs to attend, or what kind of degree is needed, to become a Pastor or a Bible teacher. And while by no means is it my intent to demean formal training in these areas, at the same time we find some of the greatest figures in Bible history had no training in the ministry vocation God assigned to them. Rather, whatever ability and understanding they needed was merely gifted to them by the Father, in the form of what we might call spiritual gifts. Among such great Bible stalwarts as these we find the original 12 disciples of Christ and even Yeshua Himself who had no formal religious training. At the other end of the spectrum, we find Paul who was highly trained at the best rabbinical academy in the Holy Land; but in reality he was the exception and not the rule.

So, at God's calling if Amos left his lucrative career as a sheep breeder and expert in fig growing, what did he do to making a living? In his era prophets were paid either by the local government or by donations from those he prophesied to. This is made clear by the words of Amos 7:12 where we read:

CJB Amos 7:12 *Amatzyah also said to 'Amos, "Go away, seer! Go back to the land of Y'hudah! Earn your living there; and prophesy there;*

Since Amos's prophetic calling was mostly about taking a message of doom to Ephraim/Israel in consequence of their terrible failings before God, then it isn't surprising that he is similar to Hosea in that his perspective on Israel's sins closely followed the Covenant of Moses. That is, whereby the specific crimes against God that Amos speaks of (by means of divine oracle) are those as listed in the Law of Moses, so are the punishments for those crimes listed. This is not a trivial issue. For Israel, ever since the Torah was given to them on Mt. Sinai, their civil law and morality code was to be only the Law of Moses. Thus, something was defined as a sin (a crime against their fellow man or against God) only when it violated a specific command (a law) found in that Covenant with Israel made

only weeks after their exodus from Egypt. Further, each crime (each sin) as specified and described by the Law of Moses also was accompanied by a specific consequence for disobedience (usually called a curse). This is important enough that I'll expound on this important principle for just a moment.

After Mt. Sinai, upon which Moses received the Torah from God, the Law that was given there became Israel's rock-solid moral code; their constitution, if you would. Right and wrong, good and evil, was defined for them. Justice was defined for them. Righteousness, mercy, compassion, love, and so much more were also defined for them according to the law giver's (God's) viewpoint and standard. In other words, just as the various civil law codes of at least the developed Western nations, today, are meant to be objective listings of rights and wrongs, crimes and punishments, so is the Law of Moses meant as God's one and only objective written code of morality (right and wrong) for His elect. What does it mean for something to be "objective"? Objective means that a rule or a judgment or an outcome is not affected by emotions and opinions; nor does that rule, judgment or outcome change and vacillate situation by situation or case by case or according to the social status of the persons involved. On the other hand, the term "subjective" has the polar opposite meaning. To be subjective means that emotions and opinions are at the core of rules, judgments and outcomes. That is, to be subjective indeed means rules, judgments and outcomes DO change and vacillate and effectively follow little to no fixed or discernable pattern. And that the persons who make the decisions have the latitude to do so. Thus, a so-called "subjective" moral law code is by definition an oxymoron and a fantasy. How can a "code" also be subjective when rules, judgments and outcomes can, theoretically, change infinitely and never be applied in the same way twice? We see nowhere in the Bible, Old or New Testaments, that the Law of Moses...God's moral code for humanity...is legitimately applied subjectively. Rather it is applied uniformly, even handed...objectively...and God in fact warns against doing otherwise. In Amos (as in Hosea), we witness God being fully faithful to His own morality code as He judges Israel for their failure to follow it.

What Ephraim/Israel had unwittingly done was to effectively transform the Law of Moses and turn it from objective to subjective by adding and changing rules and laws as each religious leader came and went. By mixing ever-changing human desires and trends with evolving religious customs and traditions, and

then attempting to stitch the Law of Moses and these customs and traditions together to form a new fabric with which to clothe their religious cult in a phony, manmade religiosity that they preferred and enjoyed, Israel had essentially removed the needle from their moral compasses. About 1000 years later, beginning in the 4th century A.D., the newly formed gentile Christianity centered in Rome did the same. At the infamous and well-documented Councils of Nicaea and Laodicea, the only objective and divinely-given code of morality offered in Holy Scripture (the Law of Moses) was officially banned and abolished by Church leadership. In its place, new manmade doctrines and customs (at that time they were called canons) were installed. As a means to rationalize this action, over the centuries some branches of Christianity adopted the theological philosophy that the Holy Spirit had replaced the Law. Other branches decided that love and/or grace had replaced the Law. Or both. Now it was left up to local society or the Church or the individual Believer to define love, justice and morality. Even more, if the Holy Spirit wants you to know what sin is... what morals He wants you to display... He'll tell you...individually. And if He doesn't, then for you a behavior is not sin even though that same action might be sin for someone else. Sin became not only entirely subjective and evolutionary but also customized person-by-person. Morality was no longer measured against a universal standard. I repeat: this is exactly the same as Ephraim/Israel's crime against God; a crime God summarized as idolatry. Strong language? A general indictment of some of the core doctrines of modern Christianity? Yes. It is important for every serious seeker of Scriptural truth to realize that modern Christianity in general refuses to face our error and denounce these many centuries of anti-Scriptural religious customs and traditions foisted upon us by deceived Church authorities, and instead to put the Law of Moses back into its rightful place as our universal, divine, objective code of morality. This is precisely what Israel had done and Amos went to great lengths to explain this to them (even though it largely fell on deaf ears and he would even be told by Israel's leaders to stop prophesying because especially the *religious* leaders didn't like it).

I took you on this short detour because Old Testament prophesy remains entirely relevant and applicable to modern day Believers (gentile and Jew) and to the way we are to properly practice our faith and offer our worship just as it was for ancient Israel. When we pretend that it no longer applies, and instead has

morphed into something else due to an erroneous doctrine that the advent of Jesus erased all that God had established before the Cross, we set ourselves on the road to deception and ruin...even if unintentional. It would take a few years from the time of Amos's warnings for the Heavenly shoe to finally fall, but fall it did and the catastrophic consequences have plagued Israel for millennia, and not merely centuries. Amos, therefore, was not actually a man of theological innovation; rather he was a man of theological reform. What Amos said was not new or reworked; it was a reiteration of already-established ancient truths as given in God's Torah.

The biblical scholar Klaus Koch made an astute observation in his work on the Biblical Prophets. It is that God's warning to Ephraim/Israel through Amos and other prophets highlights the unmistakable relationship between Yehoveh's revealed code of morality and world history... especially as it concerned Israel. He called the biblical prophets "moral futurists" and pointed out the biblical principle that moral behavior has a direct connection to, and a direct effect upon, what happens within any given society. When those of us in our modern world... and I point a finger directly at America and especially the Western Church and Synagogue... observe the chaos and confusion and fears and anxieties that have a death-grip upon us as a collection of societies, it is impossible to ignore as the root cause of this devastating effect the feverish attempt by many in both the secular and religious spheres to completely re-write and re-define morality to better agree with the preferences of our societies. God cannot be compartmentalized and set-apart from our everyday lives and decisions as a recent American President openly suggested we do. We cannot believe and behave immorally and according to our own standards 6 days and 23 hours per week, but then for 1 hour on a weekend worship Him in a Church or Synagogue as an antidote or immunization against the biblically ordained consequences for our unfaithfulness and disobedience to His moral code. God's defined morality is not only a code for righteousness, it is the foundation upon which He created everything. Our Universe only operates properly as it was designed when God's human creatures obey His rules.

Another strong theme that we'll encounter in Amos's book is this: Yehoveh is sovereign over all the earth and not only over the Land of Israel. Yehoveh is the God of all nations and the first few chapters of the book demonstrate this at

length. Just as He is the God of all the Heavenly Hosts in the spiritual realm, He is also God over all His creation and creatures in the physical realm...and not just some. This is a notion that modern Believers, of course, have no trouble understanding and accepting since it is fundamental to our faith. So, it is hard to communicate to you what a novel thought this was for the 8th century B.C. Pagans and Israelites alike shared the belief that there were many gods for many purposes. Even the heathens did not deny the existence of Yehoveh God of Israel. Ancient Israel would claim monotheism but the mindset was that this meant Yehoveh was God ONLY over Israel and nowhere else and over no other people, and was sovereign over no other geography than Israel because each nation or people group had their own separate god and set of gods of nature. The term "monotheism" to a Christian means that there is only 1 god in existence. Ancient Israel claimed "monotheism", which from their perspective meant that Yehoveh was Israel's only god. Yet, in practice even that was a sham because Israel had much earlier adopted some of their neighbors' gods into their worship practices and in the doing relegated Yehoveh into the job of their own perfunctory National God that each nation was thought to have.

Because Israel had become so intertwined with the affairs of the gods and god systems of their neighbors, they forgot that Yehoveh was not a typical god and more envisioned Him as they did the various Ba'als. The gods of the regions' various god systems demanded sacrifice mostly for the sake of being served to satisfy their own narcissism. Those gods could care less about the morality or ethical behavior of their worshippers. But the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob brooked no compromise when it came to the requirement of His chosen to obey His ordained and written down ethical and moral standards. Amos claims that God's sovereignty extends beyond governing people and nations and also includes events. Things on earth happen (or don't happen) because Yehoveh wills it.

Another thing to watch for is how Amos explains that just because God chooses a nation or an individual as set-apart for Him, this doesn't automatically include divine protection or security. God's protection of His people was directly linked to their obedience to Him. And that obedience was directly linked to the terms contained in the Law of Moses (the Covenant). In reality the one factor that separated Israel from even the Philistines was that Covenant made between

Israel and Yehoveh on Mt. Sinai. He made a Covenant with Israel and no one else. And, let me assure you, the so-called New Covenant that the Church believes broke the pattern of God making covenant only with Israel, and so it was made for gentile Christians (the Church) is an erroneous belief that in no way comports with Scripture.

When a Pastor or Bible teacher wants to point to the place in the Bible where we are told of this New Covenant, they invariably point to Jeremiah 31. Let's take a moment to see what it actually says.

CJB Jeremiah 31:30-33 ³⁰ *"Here, the days are coming," says ADONAI, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah. ³¹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them," says ADONAI. ³² "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says ADONAI: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³³ No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, 'Know ADONAI'; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more."*

Who did God say He would make this "new covenant" with? Did He say: "with the gentile Church"? No. He said: "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah". Pretty definitive. Christ indeed made a way for gentiles to be made part of the covenant people... to be grafted into it as Paul says. Certainly, nowhere does the Bible say the covenant spoken of by Jeremiah was taken away from Israel and handed over to the gentile Church.

Because Israel vowed to obey the terms of the Covenant of Mt. Sinai but were unfaithful to those terms, (the Covenant was the cord that bound them together with God) then God reserved the right to exterminate them entirely. This was the unheeded message of doom that Amos delivered to Ephraim/Israel. Israel had been threatened with harsh punishments by earlier Prophets; but Amos was the first to warn of their possible extinction. This threat included the idea that God would at His own discretion administer His attribute of justice upon His own

people even when His inclination and more usual behavior was instead to override that with administering His attribute of mercy. So, the concept is that Yehoveh had finally reached a conclusion that no amount of intercession on behalf of His people would suffice because their sins were too blatantly rebellious. Not even a sudden radical change in the behavior of His people would hold off judgment. A line had been crossed and there was no retreating from it. Even so, Israel didn't believe the prophetic messages. They truly thought that because God had centuries earlier delivered them from Egypt, and joined in Covenant with them, that while some level of His discipline might occur for disobedience, a judgment as severe as what Amos prophesied was unthinkable. It was sort of Israel's theological equivalent of the once-saved-always-saved doctrine that has become prevalent in Evangelical Christianity. Both beliefs center around a manmade principle that is anything but biblical, and both are dangerous because they bring on an unwarranted complacency. Deliverance from oppression and sin has always been conditional on our faithfulness to God and to His Covenant.

Open your Bibles to Amos chapter 1.

READ AMOS CHAPTER 1 all

Verse 1 gives us more detail about the author of this book (Amos) than do other books of prophecy give about their authors. He was part of the sheep breeding profession (not a shepherd), he lived in Tekoa (a 3 or 4 hours walk from Jerusalem), and he gives us the era in which he received God's oracles and presented them to various folks in Ephraim/Israel. He even goes so far as to better pinpoint that time as "2 years before the earthquake" that seems to have occurred during Uzziah, the King of Judah's reign. This is probably the earthquake mentioned in Zechariah 14:5.

CJB Zechariah 14:1-5 *Look, a day is coming for ADONAI when your plunder, [Yerushalayim], will be divided right there within you. ² "For I will gather all the nations against Yerushalayim for war. The city will be taken, the houses will be rifled, the women will be raped, and half the city will go into exile; but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city." ³ Then ADONAI will go out and fight against those nations, fighting as on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies to the east of Yerushalayim; and the*

Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, to make a huge valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ⁵ You will flee to the valley in the mountains, for the valley in the mountains will reach to Atzel. You will flee, just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of 'Uziah king of Y'hudah. Then ADONAI my God will come to you with all the holy ones.

I should not bypass this passage without mentioning that Bible prophecies tend to happen, and then happen again at a later time... sometimes more than once. God, through Zechariah, highlights this point by likening the earthquake and the reasons for it to the one that happened in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Clearly the earthquake was of such magnitude and consequence that it was remembered long afterward and need only be referred to as "the earthquake" for people to know which of the many earthquakes that shook Israel rather regularly that Amos was talking about. It also needs to be reiterated that although Amos was a resident of the Kingdom of Judah, his prophetic message was aimed at and given to the people of the Kingdom of Israel.

Verse 2 is essentially the preamble to all that will follow, and it is given in the form of poetry. It amounts to the announcement of God's judgment over the Kingdom of Ephraim. Since everything about the Amos prophecy is directly related to violations of the Covenant of Moses, then it would be most appropriate to speak of verse 2 employing the more ancient term of "curse" when speaking of the punishment Israel was soon going to receive. I'll remind you that the Covenant of Moses (aka the Law of Moses) consisted of blessings and curses. Blessings for obedience; curses for disobedience.

Hidden within the words of this verse is an important Israelite cultural understanding. The choice of the word "roars" is meant to conjure up the image of a lion. Hosea does the same:

CJB Hosea 5:14 For to Efrayim I will be like a lion, and like a young lion to the house of Y'hudah- I will tear them up and go away; I will carry them off, and no one will rescue.

Whereas in the Book of Hosea, Hosea goes on to describe what a lion does to its prey as an illustration of what God can do to a nation, Amos simply uses the word "roars" to make the same point. Lions are vicious, powerful creatures that strike fear in all who encounter them; only the foolish ignore a roaring a lion. Then next saying that God "thunders" from Jerusalem makes 2 quick points. First, to thunder is a standard biblical metaphorical way of describing how God speaks. Thunder comes from above, and so do God's words. It is sudden and startling, and it creates the overwhelming effect of a nearly paralyzing fear that happens with audible speech that comes from the God of Israel.

CJB Exodus 20:15-16 ***¹⁵ All the people experienced the thunder, the lightning, the sound of the shofar, and the mountain smoking. When the people saw it, they trembled. Standing at a distance, ¹⁶ they said to Moshe, "You, speak with us; and we will listen. But don't let God speak with us, or we will die."***

Further it is said that this word from God (as given to Amos) comes from the location of Jerusalem. This is because Jerusalem is God's earthly home (actually it is in the Temple located there). So, from Amos's viewpoint, God's prophetic revelations coming from the Jerusalem Temple mean that this is God's only earthly abode and thus even though Ephraim/Israel has established numerous places of worship that claim to be holy sites for Yehoveh, they are all (by definition) illegitimate. This oracle is meant for Israel, even though a Judean prophet is bringing it to them. This point is again made in Amos 9:3.

CJB Amos 9:3 ***³ If they hide themselves on the top of the Karmel, I will search them out and capture them there; If they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will order the serpent to bite them there.***

Mt. Carmel lies within the Kingdom of Ephraim/Israel so the idea is that the Lord's roaring and thundering has a reach all the way from Jerusalem in Judah to the north in Carmel.

The mention of shepherd's pastures "mourning" is a poetic way of saying the needed grass for the sheep will wither away from drought, all the way up into the lush and forested mountain slopes of Carmel. This literary structure is called a merism that behaves like bookends. So, the idea is the grasslands, the mountain

heights, and everywhere in between. All inclusive. All of the territory of Ephraim will be equally affected so there will be no place to take the livestock to feed them; livestock that is so central to their economy and food supply. This is but another side to the promised judgment that is approaching.

Verse 3 shifts gears and marks the beginning of 8 individual oracles of judgment against various nations that surround Israel. In other words, these are oracles specifically against certain foreign nations. In one form or another virtually all prophetic books include judgments against foreign nations, even if it is only a very general reference such as just referring to "nations" in general, as opposed to what we find in Amos whereby certain nations are called out by name. The key word in each of these 8 oracles is, in Hebrew, *pesha*, which is invariably translated into English as "transgressions". What is key is to understand what that term meant within the context of that era. First, just as love and hate are usually political terms in the Bible that have to do with allegiance (or the lack of allegiance) to a king or a lord, so is the term *pesha* (transgressions) couched in the language of the political sphere. It means to revolt or to throw-off the authority of a government. It means to intentionally and treacherously break allegiance with someone above you. So, in this section of Amos who is being transgressed against? Some Bible scholars think it is referring to mistreatment of Israel by these foreign nations. That is, it is about treaties and agreements that these nations had with Israel, but then broke them and instead harmed or attacked Israel in some way. However, there is no record of some of these nations having such treaties or attacking Israel. The only other option is that these are transgressions against the God of Israel. This, then, is what I was referring to in our introduction whereby Amos put forth the notion that Yehoveh is sovereign not only over Israel but over the other nations as well, even if they don't recognize it. Therefore, this universal God over all nations will not tolerate severe unrighteousness no matter who the transgressor might be. And what is it that are they transgressing? What is the measure of their transgression? They are transgressing God's morality code.

We'll continue with Amos chapter 1 next time.