

THE BOOK OF AMOS

Lesson 3, Chapters 1 and 2

Last time we met we paused our study of Amos chapter 1, and the oracles of judgement against several pagan/gentile nations, to investigate the biblical meaning of the word "love" (*ahab* or *ahav* in Hebrew). I cannot sufficiently stress the vital importance of properly understanding the biblical notion of "love" as it affects every aspect of our lives, including how we practice our faith and how we are to relate to God and to our fellow man. The conclusion that was reached is the result of much solid evidence from both within and without the Bible itself, and just as importantly, from within and without the Hebrew culture of the various Bible eras including the one that concerns Amos: the 8th century B.C. It turns out that the meaning of the term "love" needs to be understood within 2 different spheres depending on the context and the subject matter. One sphere concerns human emotion; the other concerns the political, legal, and tangible. Ancient written records of the societies and cultures that formed the many Middle Eastern nations neatly coincide with Hebrew records such that we find that there was no discernable difference among all these cultures and nations as to the common, well-understood, everyday use of the term "love" in their own peculiar literature and practices.

The bottom line is that more often than not, "love" is defined in the Bible and among these many societies as loyalty, allegiance, and faithfulness to a superior or to a covenant partner. Only occasionally in certain circumstances does "love" involve the emotional sphere; that is, romance or warm affections. Even in the matter of romance, and especially as it concerns the expected result of romance (which is marriage between a male and female), the emotional sphere is intended to overlap the political and tangible sphere, rather than to replace it. That is, whereby love of one's king only involves the emotional element of warm affections in the most minimal way (and in practice is a completely unnecessary element), marriage and romance rely heavily on that emotional element of warm affections, but also includes the equally strong element of faithfulness and loyalty to one's spouse or betrothed. In fact, the physical/tangible sphere of love as loyalty, allegiance and faithfulness in the biblical notion of marriage proportionately surpasses that of romance and warm affection between marriage partners.

Therefore, when we look at the 2 foundational commands that underpin all of God's laws, which are to love God with all our being and to love our neighbor (our fellow man) as ourselves, then the instruction is for us to show unwavering loyalty and faithfulness to God as our one and only divine superior and king, and to be as actively concerned to see to the well-being of our neighbor as we would normally be concerned for ourselves. Loyalty and faithfulness to God is, by definition, completely wrapped up in our obedience to Him; and obedience to Him is defined and codified by His natural and written laws and commands. Loyalty to our neighbor is, by definition, completely wrapped up in our tangible involvement in caring for our neighbor in practical ways...good deeds. Naturally, God wants this loyalty to come from our inmost desire to have an intimate spiritual relationship with Him (as opposed to coercion and the threat of harm to us for being disobedient), and He wants us to have a sincere inner desire to help our neighbor out of a sense of compassion. But, in no case are our emotions to be the primary source or driving force of our relationship with God and with our fellow man. Rather, as children of God and as His worshippers, and even more so as those who have been saved and delivered by the selfless act Messiah Yeshua on the cross, we have obligations to God and to our neighbor that are to be carried out regardless of how we feel.

Thus, while this is a general and fundamental understanding of the biblical use of the word "love", it also applies directly to Amos 1:9 and the oracle of judgment against Tzor, because they broke a covenant... that is, they didn't "love" their covenant partner. Let's move on to the next judgment oracle that concerns Edom. We'll begin by re-reading the remainder of Amos chapter 1.

RE-READ AMOS CHAPTER 1:11 – end

The nation of Edom had a long and well-established ethnic and familial tie with Israel. Whereas the CJB says that the ties were with Edom's "kinsmen", in fact what it literally says is "with his brother". The Hebrew word being translated is *ach*, and in its literal, technical sense it means "brother" while at the same time it can be used as an expression to mean a person's family relatives in general. Here it probably makes the most sense to see it as meaning "brother" because the founder of the nation of Edom was Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, the

founder of the nation of Israel. Going back even to the birth narrative of Esau and Jacob their relations were always strained. In fact, those strained relations literally began in the womb. Esau was later promised a "blessing" that he would always live by the sword.

CJB Genesis 27:38-40 ***³⁸ 'Esav said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Father, bless me too!" 'Esav wept aloud, ³⁹ and Yitz'chak his father answered him: "Here! Your home will be of the richness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above. ⁴⁰ You will live by your sword, and you will serve your brother. But when you break loose, you will shake his yoke off your neck."***

Edom was located to the southwest of both Judah and Israel. The 2 major cities of Edom are mentioned in this judgment oracle: Teman and Bozrah. Bozrah was Edom's northernmost major city, while Teman was its southernmost. Therefore, the purpose behind mentioning these two cities located at the 2 extreme compass directions of Edom is to indicate inclusiveness. That is, *all* of Edom is guilty and will be punished.

Going far back into history, long after the time of Jacob, we find that Edom used violence to try to stop Israel from peacefully passing through it on their way from Egypt to Canaan. In a nutshell, this wrathful reaction of God towards Edom is the culmination of centuries of Edom's wrath and venom towards Israel, happening under various circumstances over those centuries. Whereas Edom, above all nations, should have shown compassion towards Israel, they instead continued on with a blood feud between Jacob and Esau that had begun when Jacob used dishonesty to secure a birthright that by tradition belonged to his brother Esau. Edom and Israel were nearly always enemies and at one-another's throats throughout the era of the Judges, the Kings, even extending into the time when Judah was exiled to Babylon.

The next oracle of destruction was upon Amon. The Ammonites lived in a very harsh land on the east side of the Jordan River. Since acquiring a better land would have been constantly in the minds of the leaders of the nation of Amon, then it is not surprising that they would mount regular military incursions into their neighbor's territory to try to take at least some of it in order to improve their own condition. It is the context of at least one of these incursions that God says

Amon ripped unborn children from their mothers' wombs. Many Bible academics have suggested that such a barbarous crime as this didn't actually happen; it was only hyperbole. But we find mention of it in too many places in the Bible, and in the records of other ancient Middle Eastern peoples, to blow it off as but a cultural exaggeration. One of a few examples of this is:

CJB 2 Kings 8:12 *Haza'el asked, "Why is my lord crying?" He answered, "Because I know the disasters you will bring on the people of Isra'el- you will set their fortresses on fire, you will kill their young men with the sword, you will dash their little ones to pieces and rip their pregnant women apart."*

The punishment that will be inflicted upon the nation of Amon is for their primary city (probably their capital) to be burned to the ground. The modern city of Amman, Jordan sits atop the former location of Rabbah. Once we get to the time of Alexander the Great and then into the time of the rise of the Roman Empire, the city was renamed to Philadelphia. Ironically, in Amos's day, the nation of Amon was under the control of Israel. So, whatever was the exact incident that this oracle pointed towards had to have been a matter of history. Very probably this isn't even about one particular incident, but rather something that the Ammonites had perpetrated upon Israel on a few occasions. We've now read of a few of these oracle judgments that involve fire. This is standard Torah language for what God will do to a nation's cities for their disobedience to His moral code, and in some cases for their direct assaults upon His chosen people. I'll remind you that in the Bible fire is usually used to do one of two things: either to purify or to destroy. God is here using fire to destroy. It is clear that the fire that will destroy Rabbah will not be supernatural as with Sodom and Gomorrah. Rather it will come as a result of battle; an enemy of Amon will be used to savage them on Yehoveh's behalf.

Now would be a good time to mention that phrases like "the day of combat", "the day of battle", and the "day of storms (or whirlwinds)" are all meant to be synonymous with the more well-known phrase "the day of the Lord". That is, what is occurring is at the Lord's doing; Yehoveh is intervening in the history of men. It is meant as divinely sourced judgment even if by all outward appearances it seems as though it is but another of the endless wars and atrocities that humans commit against other humans.

The mention in verse 15 of Amon's king and his princes being sent into exile means that the leadership of Amon will be also be removed thus suffering the worst punishment possible for a king: for he and his family to permanently lose their position and power.

It is more than interesting to notice that of the crimes listed against all these pagan nations (thus far) nothing is said about worshipping false gods and idolatry. Rather all these trespasses against God's laws are human against human. They all violate the principle of "love your neighbor" (more often than not referring to our dealings with our fellow man broadly and in general as opposed to a specific person located nearest to us). This is why we don't see these nations spoken of in terms of the chief god that they worshipped (that is, that nation's national or patron god), as we'll often find in the Bible. So, gods and their human priests are never the directly mentioned subjects of God's judgment; rather the subjects are nations and their political leaders, with their wrong actions having to do with people harming other people, and not with improper religious ritual. Let's move on to chapter 2.

READ AMOS CHAPTER 2 all

Chapter 2 opens with yet another oracle of judgment against yet another pagan nation: Moab. While I've discussed it at length over these first 3 lessons of Amos, I will reiterate that it is paramount that we take notice that God fully expects the nations (meaning non-Hebrew nations, gentiles) to also obey His laws and commands, because disobeying these laws is what is prompting God to react against them. It puts to shame the central, age-old, Church doctrine that God's laws and commands were only ever for Israel and no one else so the Church is exempt. The Book of Amos destroys that notion in detail. Paul does so as well by explaining in Romans 2 that the laws given to Israel in the Covenant of Moses are no different than the natural law, the knowledge of which is innate to all human beings without the need for it to be written down. The nations not having immediate access to the Torah is no excuse for gentiles to transgress...to go against... all that the Torah demands. This is because all the Torah really does is to flesh out in fuller detail what the natural law placed by God into all of mankind already communicates, and therefore how it ought to be acted-out.

Moab was a brother-nation of Amon, and also located in a hardscrabble area on the east side of the Jordan River. The crime God focuses on has to do with proper burial of a person; in this case the king of an enemy. That enemy was Edom. History and archeology show that Moab and Edom were enemies with Moab erecting a number fortifications on its border with Edom. We are told that instead of a proper and respectful burial, Moab "burned the bones" of the King of Edom. This is not an expression; it means that quite literally and with malicious intent, the King of Edom's bones were burned to ashes so that no burial was possible. What is the meaning of this atrocity and why is it considered so terrible? It is because the common belief of the ancient people of that day was that skeletal remains...bones...were needed for any hope of that person participating in resurrection. As was commonly believed not just among Israel, should a god decide to resurrect a person from the dead, the bones would be re-used as the structure upon which to construct new flesh and then to give this person new life. We find this notion front and center in the Book of Ezekiel.

CJB Ezekiel 37:1-5 With the hand of ADONAI upon me, ADONAI carried me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley, and it was full of bones. ² He had me pass by all around them- there were so many bones lying in the valley, and they were so dry! ³ He asked me, "Human being, can these bones live?" I answered, "Adonai ELOHIM! Only you know that!" ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones! Say to them, 'Dry bones! Hear what ADONAI has to say!' ⁵ To these bones Adonai ELOHIM says, 'I will make breath enter you, and you will live.

So, for a person's bones to be burnt to ashes means that person will remain eternally dead. Now, please hear me: this isn't necessarily true or is it actually what happens; rather this is what the people of that era believed was so. So, from God's perspective, the despicable act of burning a person's bones to ashes is all about bad intent and a spirit of evil. Since resurrection of the dead is an important feature of God's will for humans, then for one person to intentionally try to prevent the resurrection of another, is a grievous trespass. There is a famous story in the Book of Samuel about a group of Israel who tried to prevent just such a thing from happening to King Saul.

CJB 1 Samuel 31:7-13 ***7 When the men of Isra'el who were on the other side of the valley and those who were on the far side of the Yarden saw that the men of Isra'el had fled and that Sha'ul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled; then the P'lishtim came and lived in them. 8 The following day, when the P'lishtim came to strip the dead, they found Sha'ul and his three sons lying dead on Mount Gilboa. 9 They cut off his head, stripped off his armor and sent these all over the territory of the P'lishtim to carry the news to the temples of their idols and to the people. 10 Then they put his armor in the temple for the 'ashtarot and fastened his body to the wall of Beit-Sh'an. 11 When the people living in Yavesh-Gil'ad heard what the P'lishtim had done to Sha'ul, 12 all their warriors set out, traveling all night. They took the body of Sha'ul and the bodies of his sons off the wall of Beit-Sh'an, returned to Yavesh and burned them there. 13 Then they took their bones, buried them under the tamarisk tree in Yavesh and fasted seven days.***

Men friendly to King Saul burned up his body (likely because he had been dismembered so thoroughly), but were careful to be sure that the fire was not so hot as to burn up his bones. After the flesh had been burned away, they rescued his bones and gave them a proper burial because in their cultural mindset the bones were the most important part of the body to be preserved. The same sort of procedure occurred well into New Testament times as we see that typical Jewish burial involved laying a corpse into a burial cave, allowing time and natural decay to occur until only the bones remained, and then transferring those bones to a burial box that would be put away indefinitely. This was intended to ensure the possibility of resurrection.

The result of Moab's actions was that God would fight fire with fire. Since they burned up the bones of an Edomite king, God would burn up Moab. Since you can't burn up land, then of course it would have to be manmade structures that were destroyed by fire; in this case, the city of Kerioth. Why Kerioth? Other Scriptures identify it as the center of worship of the Moabite god, Chemosh. In the Moabite Mesha Stone archeological find, we read: "Judgment has come upon Kerioth and Bozrah...upon all the towns of the land of Moab...". It further states: "I brought back from there (booty)...and dragged it before Chemosh at Kerioth...". In other words, we have evidence that the city of Kerioth was a cult worship

center to the god Chemosh and this had much to do with Yehoveh choosing Kerioth as representative of burning up Moab with fire.

Will this consuming of Kerioth with fire be a fire of supernatural origin? No. Once again it will be the action of an enemy military. When verse 2 ends with the words: "along with the sounds of the shofar" it is referring to the noise of the bugle-like rams' horns that were always used for the military leadership to signal instructions to their troops as they battled.

As with their brother-nation Amon, Moab will find their royalty and their leadership deported because of the injustice they have perpetrated upon their neighbors. Even though the term used to describe Moab's leadership is, in Hebrew, *Shaphat*, and is properly translated as "judge", in reality this term as used here more means the person who governs.

The relatively brief recitation of 6 oracles of judgment against the 6 gentile nations have concluded, and now begins the judgments against God's own people: first Judah, then Ephraim/Israel. The list of crimes against Judah and Israel are long and searing. Remembering that this prophecy of Amos would be read to the people of Ephraim/Israel, then one can easily imagine that they at first took some comfort in reading of their enemy Judah's denunciation. Even more, for Ephraim/Israel, Judah was nearly as "foreign" as the 6 foreign nations mentioned before it. Because the people of the ancient era put great stock in the mystery of numbers, it was significant to them that Judah was the 7th nation to be listed, and Israel would be the 8th. We also see that while at times God speaks separately of both crimes and judgments against Judah, then Ephraim/Israel, He will also speak of them together, as one people...**all** Israel.

Amos says that because of Judah's crimes their precious capital city and home to their all-important Temple (Jerusalem) will be destroyed. The ramifications for such a scenario would be devastating for Judah far beyond a matter of citizens being killed and buildings razed. Rather the destruction of the Temple, although not specifically highlighted, would have been at the forefront of every Judean resident's mind. No Temple means nowhere for the Levite priesthood to operate. Nowhere to sacrifice and atone for their sins. Nowhere to be purified from ritual impurity. Nowhere to present the required Firstfruits offerings, vow offerings, or

voluntary offerings of thanksgiving. Nowhere to come for the required pilgrimage festivals. Nowhere to have their firstborn dedicated to God. Nowhere for their sons to be circumcised. No one to teach them the law. They would be out of harmony with Yehoveh, with no way to remedy it. They would live in perpetual guilt from their sins, and uncleanness from their impurities. Their god would have no place to live and so wouldn't be present with them (from their perspective).

Judah's crimes against God can be summed up as we find it in verse 4:

CJB Amos 2:4 *...because they rejected ADONAI's Torah and haven't observed his laws...*

Most other English Bible versions read:

JPS Amos 2:4 *...because they have rejected the law of the LORD...*

Both of these traditional ways of translating the words of verse 4 miss the mark. While the CJB gets it right that it was their rejection of the Torah that was the trouble, the word **Adonai** (Lord) doesn't belong there. And in most English Bibles, neither the word "law" nor "Lord" is present in the Hebrew manuscripts. Rather what is rejected is specifically said (in Hebrew) to be the Torah, and that the author of the Torah is not "the Lord" it is Yehoveh. The inclusion of God's name is invariably left out in English translations. For the ancient Israelites, the inclusion of God's formal name had great meaning because then there was no ambivalence as to which god is being referred to. Gods had names, and so pronouncing a god's name was critical to that particular god's identity. Here, the sense is that it is the unthinkable reality of Judah's own national god Yehoveh turning on them leading the way to destruction of the one and only place where He is to be worshipped and sacrificed to: the Jerusalem Temple. I think it would hard to overstate the shock of such a chilling revelation to the Judean people.

I'll state the problem that God had with Israel in a slightly different way: it was **not** with no longer believing in Him (they certainly continued to do so); the problem was disobedience to the covenant He made with Moses and the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai. It was the same problem God had with those 6 gentile

nations. As with the crimes that Hosea proffered against Israel, so are the crimes enumerated by Amos contained within the Mosaic Covenant as terms of the covenant. The "lies" they are accused of consist of the incorrect teaching and application of the laws and regulations of the Torah. That is, it is the incorrect teaching by the Levite priests of the meaning and observing of those laws, coupled with an ever-growing list of manmade traditions and doctrines, which led to God saying: no more!

Israel found the Laws of Moses to be oppressive, so their civil and religious leaders began setting God's laws aside and making their own doctrines that served their own interests and in some cases pleased the people in general. And since it is the Law of Moses that provides the definition of God's moral code, then Israel found itself deep in immorality without being aware of it. The modern Christian Church, has, for the most part, done the same thing. Let me define the term "modern Christian Church". This is the Church, along with its doctrines and customs, as we know it today that is modeled after that which was created in the 4th century A.D. in Rome. A new version of church that was very different from what had existed in its original. The means by which the modern Christian Church rejected God's Torah is therefore different from the way Judah rejected it in that while Judah still pointed to the Law as valid but at the same time perverting and misapplying it, the new Church simply abolished God's laws and commands on grounds of it being too oppressive, legalistic, faulty, unfair, and unreasonable because no one can do them. Which type of rejection is worse? I'm not sure I'm equipped to render that judgment. What I am sure of is that the end result is the same. A whole lot of surprised people who were certain they were in good stead with God found out they weren't, after their spiritual and moral condition had reached a point of no return in God's eyes.

And, just like for the modern Christian Church, it was the forebearers of Judah's and Israel's religious and government leaders who were the first to walk in these errors. In other words, what Amos says is happening in Judah and Israel is nothing particularly new other than the inevitable consequences...the curses for their wrong behavior... have finally arrived. God no longer will be mercifully patient nor will He accept their repentance...no matter how sincere... in lieu of withholding His judgment.

Verse 6 moves on to the judgment and crimes of Ephraim/Israel. The first crime listed is that they sell the upright for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. In Hebrew it is that they sell the *tzaddik* for silver and the *ebyon* for a pair of *na'al*. *Tzaddik* is best translated as righteous, *ebyon* as poor, and *na'al* as sandals. The idea of this statement is not to say that poor people are automatically also righteous (in the sense of righteous before God). Rather the way the term is used here it means righteous in the sense of being not guilty of breaking any kind of societal law...they were honest people. They weren't criminals. So, the accusation is that innocent people were being sold into slavery for no other reason than profit, as opposed to them being sold into bond servitude to pay off a debt they had defaulted on or perhaps as a means to pay someone reparations for a crime they had committed. God despises the first scenario (human slave trafficking), but accepted as proper justice the second (justly administered bond servitude).

What is the meaning of being sold for a pair of sandals? Is this to be taken literally? Of course not. It's like the American expression of "I bought that car for peanuts". Peanuts was not the medium of exchange; the term peanuts simply indicated a ridiculously low price that was probably unfair to the seller. Likewise, being sold for a pair of sandals was a common expression in that era that carried the same meaning. The Jewish Tanakh scholar Shalom M. Paul translates verses 6 and 7 this way, which I think better brings across into modern English the intent of the original Hebrew:

"Because they have sold for silver the innocent, and the needy for hidden gain. They who trample the heads of the poor into the dust of the ground, and thrust the humble off the road. A man and his father cohabit with the same young woman, thereby profaning My holy name."

What is being talked about here is social injustice. Unscrupulous behavior by those wealthy few who already have so much. The poor who, especially in Bible times but still to this day, are often victimized by being defenseless against unfair and unjust treatment. As Shalom M. Paul concludes: **"In sum, the indictment boils down to.... the lack of pity and (instead) contempt for human dignity"**. While I agree with that conclusion to a point, my personal take is that this particular accusation is of a blatant example of breaking one of the two

foundational underpinnings of God's Torah, contained in both Natural Law and the Law of Moses, which is to love your neighbor as yourself. Using this case example of what amounts to not loving your neighbor, it better illustrates what we discussed earlier about the use of the Hebrew term *ahav*, which translates to love. That is, the indictment is not about the lack of having warm affections for your fellows. Rather, it is that we have a God-defined moral obligation to practically and tangibly do good deeds of mercy and charity for others, regardless of how we might "feel in our hearts". That is, our actions are NOT to be emotion-driven, but rather we are duty-bound to perform them. Thus, we have as much obligation to see to the well-being of others as we naturally do (by human instinct) to see to the well-being of ourselves. This is the correct understanding of "love your neighbor as yourself".

Verse 7 expands upon the indictment against Ephraim/Israel that began in verse 6. The words about trampling the heads of the poor into the ground are yet another expression meant to make a point. It means to say that the poor are treated as though they were dirt; worthless. Fit only to be used for the pleasure and profit of the upper class. The words about the poor being forced from the road is both literal and an expression. It is meant to indicate that the upper classes stand in the way of progress... or probably more the intent of the author is to highlight the poor being denied justice in the courts of law; they prevent the needy from bettering their situation. Without doubt there were also regular instances of the aristocrat class literally forcing the lower classes off the highways so that they could pass unimpeded.

The matter about father and son sharing the same young woman is all about violating God's sexual purity laws. I want to take the remainder of our time together today to go to God's moral law code to see exactly what He ordains about sexual morality; first, the laws themselves, then second the consequences for breaking those laws. Do not ever think that somehow or another the advent of Jesus has changed any of this; this applies to every human being on earth. First, the laws of sexual purity.

CJB Leviticus 18:1-24 *ADONAI said to Moshe, ² "Speak to the people of Isra'el; tell them, 'I am ADONAI your God. ³ You are not to engage in the activities found in the land of Egypt, where you used to live; and you are not to engage in the*

activities found in the land of Kena'an, where I am bringing you; nor are you to live by their laws. ⁴ You are to obey my rulings and laws and live accordingly; I am ADONAI your God. ⁵ You are to observe my laws and rulings; if a person does them, he will have life through them; I am ADONAI. ⁶ "None of you is to approach anyone who is a close relative in order to have sexual relations; I am ADONAI. ⁷ You are not to have sexual relations with your father, and you are not to have sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother- do not have sexual relations with her. ⁸ You are not to have sexual relations with your father's wife; that is your father's prerogative. ⁹ You are not to have sexual relations with your sister, the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere. Do not have sexual relations with them. ¹⁰ You are not to have sexual relations with your son's daughter or with your daughter's daughter. Do not have sexual relations with them, because their sexual disgrace will be your own. ¹¹ You are not to have sexual relations with your father's wife's daughter, born to your father, because she is your sister; do not have sexual relations with her. ¹² You are not to have sexual relations with your father's sister, because she is your father's close relative. ¹³ You are not to have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. ¹⁴ You are not to disgrace your father's brother by having sexual relations with his wife, because she is your aunt. ¹⁵ You are not to have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law, because she is your son's wife. Do not have sexual relations with her. ¹⁶ You are not to have sexual relations with your brother's wife, because this is your brother's prerogative. ¹⁷ "You are not to have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter, nor are you to have sexual relations with her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are close relatives of hers, and it would be shameful. ¹⁸ You are not to take a woman to be a rival with her sister and have sexual relations with her while her sister is still alive. ¹⁹ You are not to approach a woman in order to have sexual relations with her when she is unclean from her time of niddah. ²⁰ You are not to go to bed with your neighbor's wife and thus become unclean with her. ²¹ "You are not to let any of your children be sacrificed to Molekh, thereby profaning the name of your God; I am ADONAI. ²² "You are not to go to bed with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination. ²³ "You are not to have sexual relations with any kind of animal and thus become unclean with it; nor is any woman to present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; it is perversion. ²⁴ "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of

these things, because all the nations which I am expelling ahead of you are defiled with them.

Now the penalties for breaking these laws of sexual purity:

CJB Leviticus 20: 10-23 ¹⁰ *"If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, that is, with the wife of a fellow countryman, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death. ¹¹ The man who goes to bed with his father's wife has disgraced his father sexually, and both of them must be put to death; their blood is on them. ¹² If a man goes to bed with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death; they have committed a perversion, and their blood is on them. ¹³ If a man goes to bed with a man as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they must be put to death; their blood is on them. ¹⁴ If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is depravity; they are to be put to death by fire, both he and they, so that there will not be depravity among you. ¹⁵ If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you are to kill the animal. ¹⁶ If a woman approaches an animal and has sexual relations with it, you are to kill the woman and the animal; their blood will be on them. ¹⁷ If a man takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and has sexual relations with her, and she consents, it is a shameful thing; they are to be cut off publicly- he has had sexual relations with his sister, and he will bear the consequences of their wrongdoing. ¹⁸ If a man goes to bed with a woman in her menstrual period and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her blood, and she has exposed the source of her blood; both of them are to be cut off from their people. ¹⁹ You are not to have sexual relations with your mother's sister or your father's sister; a person who does this has had sexual relations with his close relative; they will bear the consequences of their wrongdoing. ²⁰ If a man goes to bed with his uncle's wife, he has disgraced his uncle sexually; they will bear the consequences of their sin and die childless. ²¹ If a man takes his brother's wife, it is uncleanness; he has disgraced his brother sexually; they will be childless. ²² "You are to observe all my regulations and rulings and act on them, so that the land to which I am bringing you will not vomit you out. ²³ Do not live by the regulations of the nation which I am expelling ahead of you; because they did all these things, which is why I detested them.*

Ponder over the next few days how this all compares to the ways that modern Western society, and even some branches of the modern Christian Church, now defines sexual morality. We'll continue with Amos chapter 2 next time.