



WHAT THE  
BIBLE  
IS ABOUT



2021  
5  
SESSION  
TERM 4

The book of  
Amos

# Social issues Amos addresses

1. A shift in structures of land ownership and exploitation within the new structure
2. An increasing gap between the wealthy elite and the poor peasant class
3. Corruption of justice in the law courts
4. Covenantal disobedience with hypocritical religious ceremonies
5. Two terms, justice and righteousness, form the core of Amos' message:
  - Justice is essential to social well being (*mišpat*);
  - Righteousness as the satisfaction of claims upon conduct within relationships (*tsedeqah*).

# Unlocking the book of Amos

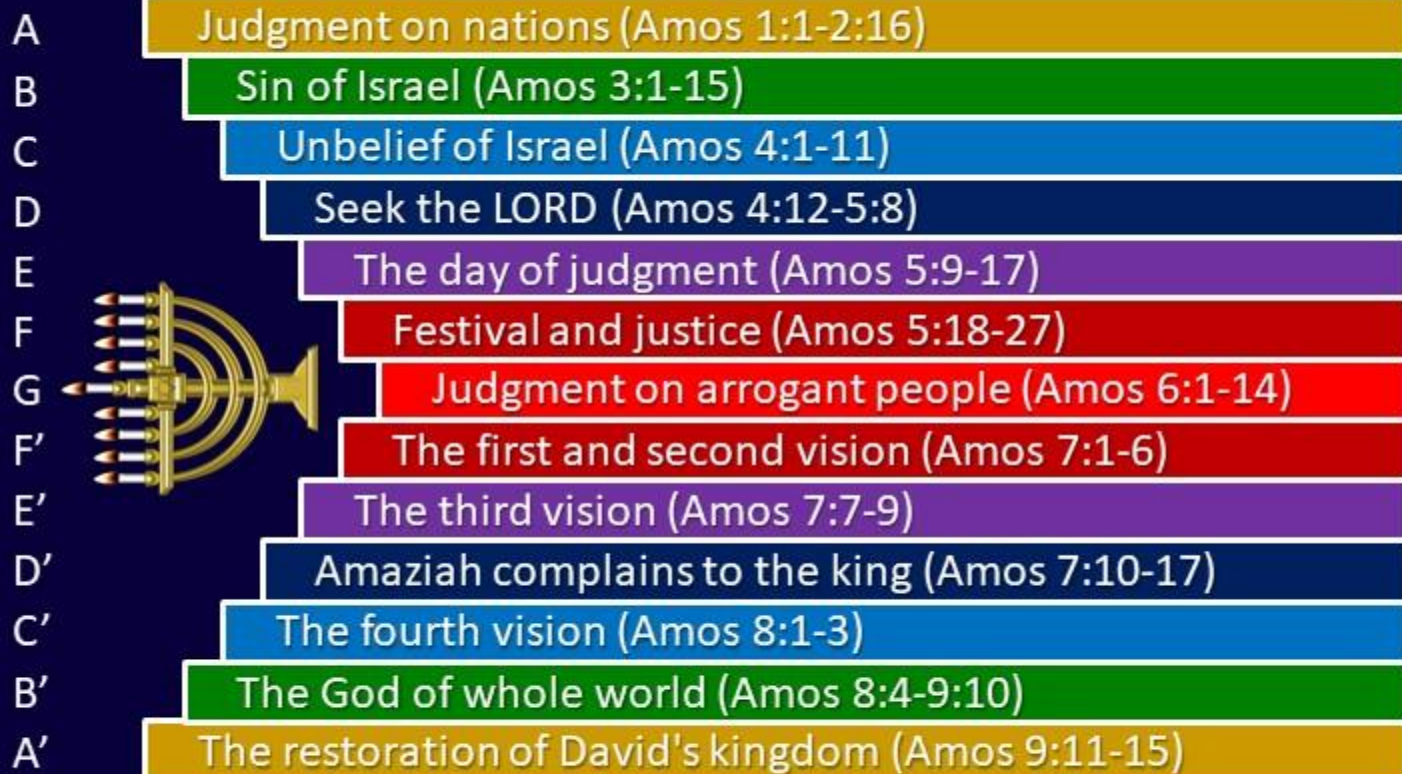
- Key to unlocking Amos is understanding the literary devices used, isolating each unit, figuring out what the point of that unit is and then put the pieces together.
- Amos consists of these main elements:
  - Eight speeches pronouncing judgment (following the covenant lawsuit format).
  - Three sermons that describe the reasons for the judgment and just how bad they were (laments and woe oracles).
  - Five visions to show how bad the judgment will be.
  - Promise of restoration in the future (promise oracle).

# Amos's Style

- Amos uses vivid poetry, which was easy to memorize:
- Amos uses a wide range of poetic elements:
  - It is comprised of balanced menorah patterns.
  - Balanced lines of three thought units per half-line.
  - (3+3); uneven rhythm, *qinah* (Amos 1:2);
  - (3+2); limping rhythm, lament (Amos 5:2);
  - X and X+1; number parallelism; a Jewish formula to stress completeness.

- Amos uses many different literary techniques:
  - rhetorical questions (Amos 3:3-8);
  - imperatives for rhetorical effect (Amos 3:9);
  - irony (Amos 4:4-5);
  - humor (Amos 5:19-20);
  - personification (Amos 5:2-3);
  - climactic tension (Amos 1:3-2:6);
  - hyperbole (Amos 5:21-23);
  - courtroom-type scene (Amos 4);
  - repetitious phrases, sermon-like exhortations, hymnic phrases (Amos 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6).

# The Literary Structure of Amos



A: Wither like plant.

B: Exodus.

C: Day of the LORD.

D: Hear this word.

E: Midst of the people.

F: Escaping from danger.

G: Judgement on arrogant people.

# Simplified structure of Amos

A

Introduction (1:1-2)

B

Oracles against the nations (1:3-2:16)

C

The prophet and his message Part 1 (3:1-15)

D

Warnings ignored (4:1-13)

E

The turning point (5:1-17)

D'

If God is against you... (5:21-6:14)

C'

The prophet and his message Part 2 (7:1-8:3)

B'

God has rejected you! (8:4-9:4)

A'

Conclusion (9:7-15)





# Underlying Hymn in Amos

A

Title (1:1)

B

Adonai's Day Hymn (1:2)

C

The prophet and his message Part 1 (3:1-4:12)

D

Adonai's Day Hymn (4:13)

E

The turning point (5:1-17)

D'

Adonai's Day Text (5:18-20)

C'

The prophet and his message Part 2 (5:21-9:4)

B'

Adonai's Day Hymn (9:5-6)

A'

Conclusion (9:7-15)



# The Hymn Genre I

## Amos 1:2

<sup>2</sup>And he said:

“The LORD roars from Zion,  
And utters His voice from Jerusalem;  
The pastures of the shepherds mourn,  
And the top of Carmel withers.”

## Amos 4:13

<sup>13</sup>For behold,  
He who forms mountains,  
And creates the wind,  
Who declares to man what his  
thought *is*,  
And makes the morning darkness,  
Who treads the high places of the  
earth—  
The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.

**Title** (1:1)

**Adonai's Day Hymn** (1:2)

**The prophet and his message  
Part 1** (3:1-4:12)

**Adonai's Day Hymn** (4:13)

**The turning point** (5:1-17)

**Adonai's Day Text** (5:18-20)

**The prophet and his message  
Part 2** (5:21-9:4)

**Adonai's Day Hymn** (9:5-6)

**Conclusion** (9:7-15)

# The Hymn Genre II

## Amos 5:8-9

<sup>8</sup> He made the Pleiades and Orion;  
He turns the shadow of death into morning  
And makes the day dark as night;  
He calls for the waters of the sea  
And pours them out on the face of the earth;  
The LORD *is* His name.  
<sup>9</sup> He rains ruin upon the strong,  
So that fury comes upon the fortress.

## Amos 9:5-6

<sup>5</sup> The Lord God of hosts,  
He who touches the earth and it melts,  
And all who dwell there mourn;  
All of it shall swell like the River,  
And subside like the River of Egypt.  
<sup>6</sup> He who builds His layers in the sky,  
And has founded His strata in the earth;  
Who calls for the waters of the sea,  
And pours them out on the face of the  
earth—  
The LORD *is* His name.

**Title** (1:1)

**Adonai's Day Hymn** (1:2)

**The prophet and his message  
Part 1** (3:1-4:12)

**Adonai's Day Hymn** (4:13)

**The turning point** (5:1-17)

**Adonai's Day Text** (5:18-20)

**The prophet and his message  
Part 2** (5:21-9:4)

**Adonai's Day Hymn** (9:5-6)

**Conclusion** (9:7-15)

# The Narrative Genre

## Amos 7:10-17 – Amaziah's Complaint

<sup>10</sup> Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. <sup>11</sup> For thus Amos has said:

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,  
And Israel shall surely be led  
away captive  
From their own land.'

<sup>12</sup> Then Amaziah said to Amos:

"Go, you seer!  
Flee to the land of Judah.  
There eat bread,  
And there prophesy.

<sup>13</sup> But never again prophesy at Bethel,  
For it is the king's sanctuary,  
And it is the royal residence."

<sup>14</sup> Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah:

"I was no prophet,  
Nor was I a son of a prophet,  
But I was a sheepbreeder  
And a tender of sycamore fruit.

<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock,  
And the LORD said to me,  
'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'

<sup>16</sup> Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD:  
You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,  
And do not spout against the house of Isaac.'

<sup>17</sup> "Therefore thus says the LORD:

'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;  
Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;  
Your land shall be divided by survey line;  
You shall die in a defiled land;  
And Israel shall surely be led away captive  
From his own land.'

# The Judgement Genre

## Amos 3:9-11 – Punishment of Israel's Sins

9 “Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,  
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:  
‘Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;  
See great tumults in her midst,  
And the oppressed within her.

10 For they do not know to do right,’  
Says the LORD,  
‘Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.’ ”

11 **Therefore** thus says the Lord GOD:

“An adversary *shall be* all around the land;  
He shall sap your strength from you,  
And your palaces shall be plundered.”

INTRODUCTION

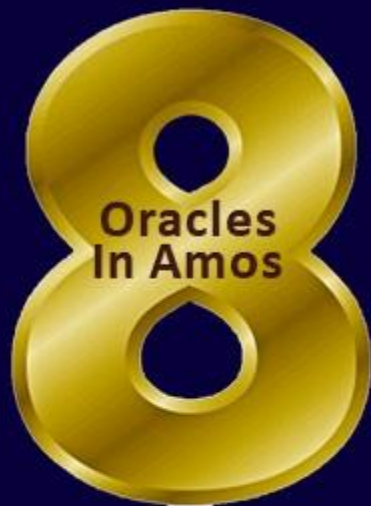
ACCUSATION

LINK

JUDGEMENT

## The Oracles

- Any human speech claiming to carry a divine message is technically an "oracle". Biblical oracles are typical of prophets, as divination by other means, e.g. astrology, are forbidden.
- **Laments and Woe Oracles** are messages that describe the reasons for a judgment and just how bad things will get.



- **Oracles against foreign nations:**
  - Damascus (Amos 1:3-5),
  - Philistia (1:6-8),
  - Tyre (1:9-10),
  - Edom (1:11-12),
  - Ammon (1:13-15), and
  - Moab (2:1-13).
- **Against the kingdom of Judah** (2:4-5),
- **Against the kingdom of Israel** (2:6-16).

- **Promise Oracles** promise restoration in the future.

## Parallelism

- Parallel structure is a typical form of Hebrew poetry, where a concept or phrase is repeated using different words. For example, Amos 2:6 illustrates synonymous parallelism,

*“They sold the innocent for silver,  
the needy for a pair of sandals.”*

- Amos 5:4-5 shows antithetic parallelism:

*For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel:  
“Seek Me and live;  
But do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal....*

- Amos 8:5 shows synthetic parallelism:

*When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain,  
And the Sabbath, that we may offer corn.*

## The x/x+1 formula (Number Parallelism)

- Biblical authors make frequent use of a literary technique that will give a number but then add one more as a form of emphasis. For example, Amos 1:3 reads,

*“Thus says the Lord:*

*‘For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,  
I will not turn away its punishment.’”*

- This formula can be applied for a variety of reasons:
  - It often indicates a list of some sort (e.g., Amos 1:3-2:5).
  - It is occasionally used to emphasize abundance or completeness.
  - It is sometimes used to mean “a few” - one or two of something.
  - Sometimes it is literal where the second number is being emphasized.



## Messenger Phrases

- A common messenger formula used by prophets and other messengers was "thus says ..." with the name of the source of the message (e.g. "thus says the LORD").

AMOS 5:4 KJV  
For thus says  
the LORD  
to the house of Israel:  
"Seek Me,  
and live."

## The formula of prophetic utterance

- The Tenakh uses a clear and recognizable style of prophetic address. Certain phrases introduce prophetic utterances.
- Different prophets tend to favour different formulas.
  - **Jeremiah** focuses on the “word”: “The word of the LORD came”, “Thus saith the LORD”, or “The word that came”.
  - **Ezekiel** refers to the prophet as “son of man” and uses the formula “the word of the LORD came...”
  - **Isaiah** addresses Jews as “Listen”, “Awake”, “Ho”, “Arise, shine”, “Behold”; but introduces prophecies to Gentiles as a series of “Burdens” or “Woes.”
  - **Minor prophets** use “The word of the LORD” or “Hear the word that the LORD hath spoken” or the like.
  - **Amos** uses “Thus says the LORD.”

“All things are numbers.” Pythagoras (c. 570–c. 490 BC)

“A number is the essence of all things, and the organization of the universe in all its definitions represents in general the harmonic system of numbers and their ratios.”

Aristotle (384–322 BC)



Max Tegmark

Our  
Mathematical  
Universe

My Quest  
for the Ultimate  
Nature of Reality

"Provocative...powerful...Dynamic, dramatic and accessible...  
Never less than thought-provoking about the greatest  
mysteries of our existence." —*The New York Times*

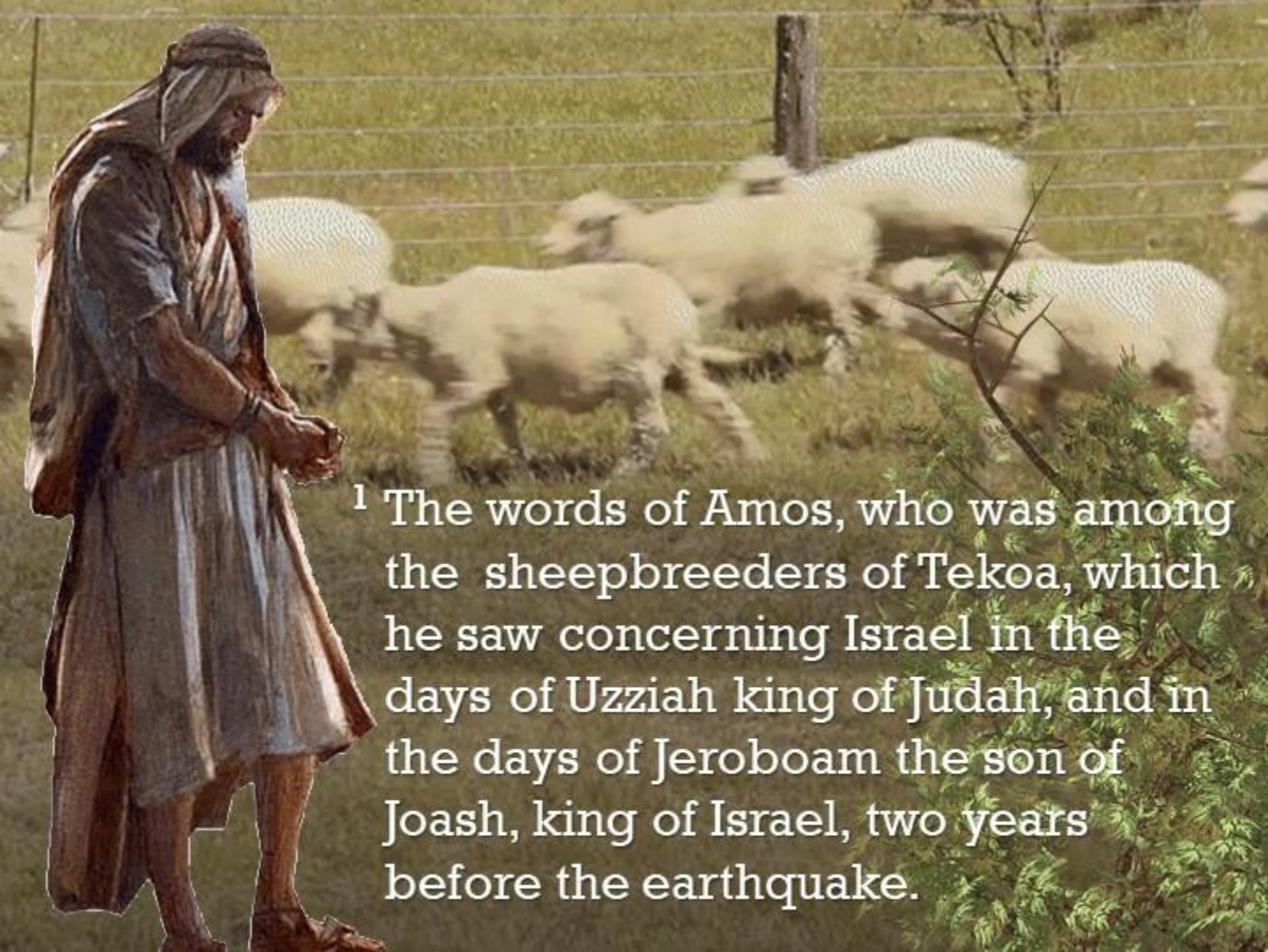
# The Spiritual Significance of Numbers

1. **One.** Unity, and commencement
2. **Two.** Difference
3. **Three.** Complete; divine **perfection**
4. **Four.** Creative works (3+1)
5. **Five.** Divine grace.
6. **Six.** The number of Man (7 minus 1)
7. **Seven.** Spiritual **perfection**
8. **Eight.** Resurrection, born again
9. **Nine.** Finality of judgment
10. **Ten.** Ordinal **perfection**
11. **Eleven.** Disorder, disorganization
12. **Twelve.** Governmental **perfection**;  
Kingdom of Heaven
13. **Thirteen.** Rebellion, revolution,  
apostasy, defection, disintegration
14. **Fourteen.** Spiritual perfection x 2
15. **Fifteen.** Grace x 3; acts of Grace
16. **Sixteen.** 8+8= Divine love/loving
17. **Seventeen.** Spirit and order (10+7)
18. **Eighteen.** 9+9= Bondage; possessed
19. **Nineteen.** 10+9 = Divine judgment
20. **Twenty.** 1 short of 21; waiting periods
21. **Twenty-one.** 3x7 = Divine perfection
22. **Twenty-two.** Disorder intensified
23. **Twenty-three.** Abundance
24. **Twenty-four.** 12x2 = More Perfect.

Part I

# Amos

Look around and see  
God's Judgment

A man with a beard, wearing a long, light-colored robe and a head covering, stands in the foreground on the left. He is looking down at his hands. In the background, a flock of sheep is grazing in a green field. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a fence visible in the distance.

<sup>1</sup> The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

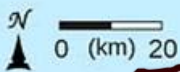




# 1. The **call** of **Amos**!

<sup>2</sup> And he said:

“The LORD roars from Zion,  
And utters His voice from Jerusalem;  
The pastures of the shepherds mourn,  
And the top of Carmel withers.”



Byblos  
Beirut  
Sidon

**TYRE**

**DAMASCUS**

Mediterranean  
Sea

**ISRAEL**

★ Samaria

○ Sara

○ Beit El

○ Jericho

○ Rabbath-Ammon

Ashdod

Ashkelon

★ Jerusalem

○ Lachish

○ Tekoa

○ Dibon

○ Hebron

○ Beersheba

**GAZA**

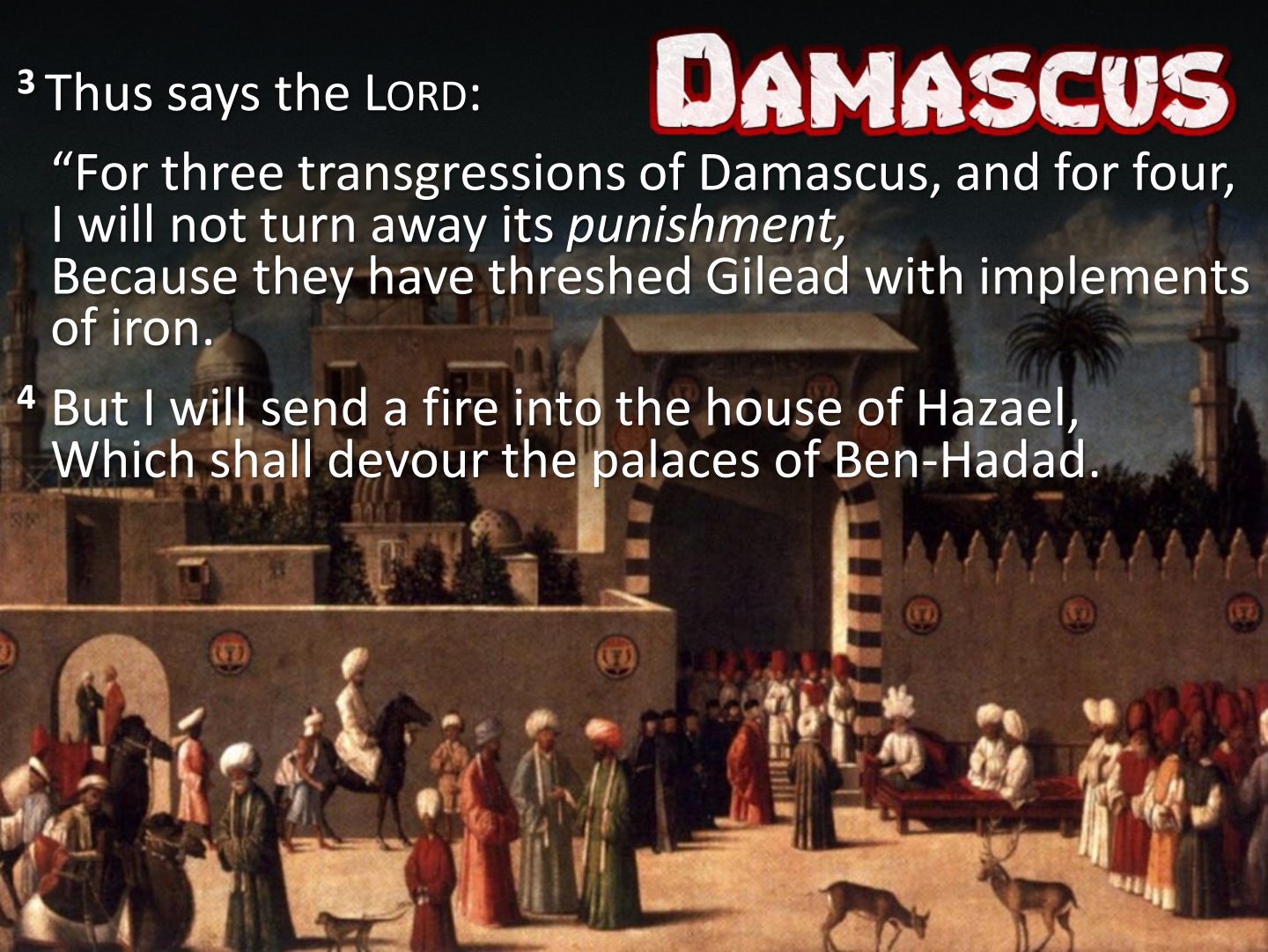


# DAMASCUS

<sup>3</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they have threshed Gilead with implements  
of iron.

<sup>4</sup> But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,  
Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.



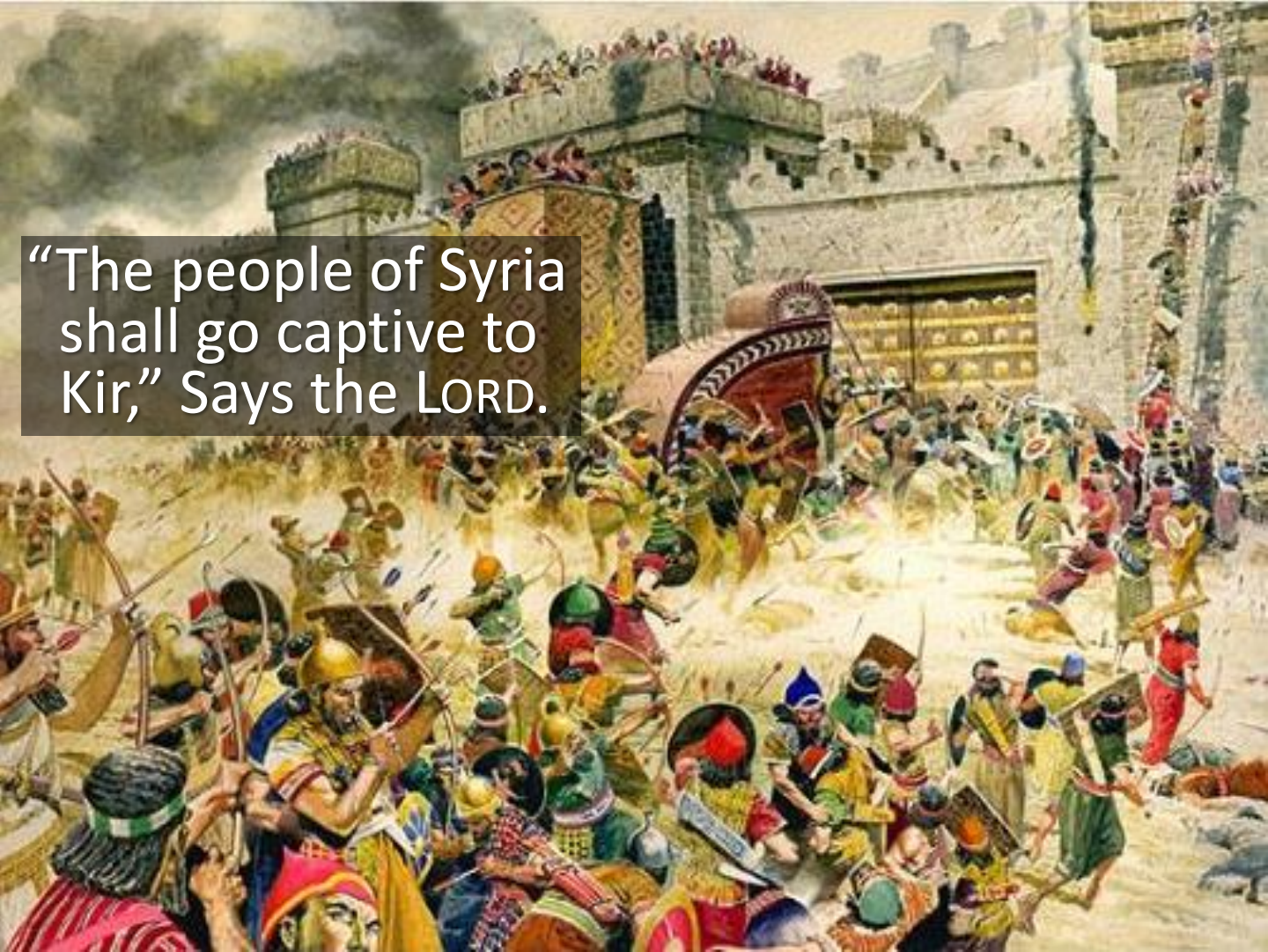
<sup>5</sup> I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,



<sup>5</sup> I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,  
And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven,  
And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden.



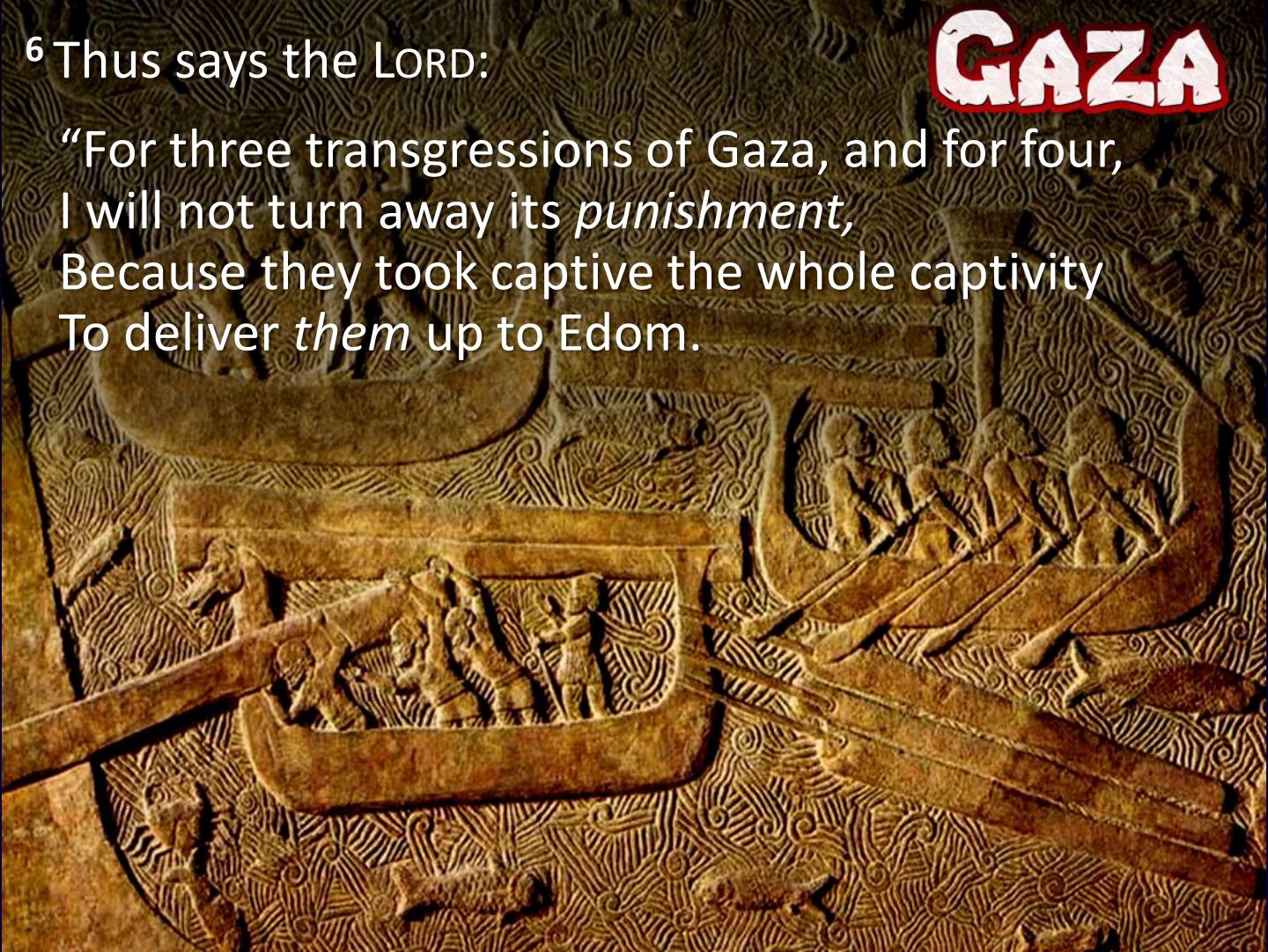
“The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,” Says the LORD.



<sup>6</sup> Thus says the LORD:

**GAZA**

“For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they took captive the whole captivity  
To deliver *them* up to Edom.



7 But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza,  
Which shall devour its palaces.



Excavation of ancient houses at Tel Es-Sakan (Gaza) in 2000.



<sup>8</sup> I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,  
And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;  
I will turn My hand against Ekron,  
And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,”  
Says the Lord God.



**GAZA**

Philistine Ashdod

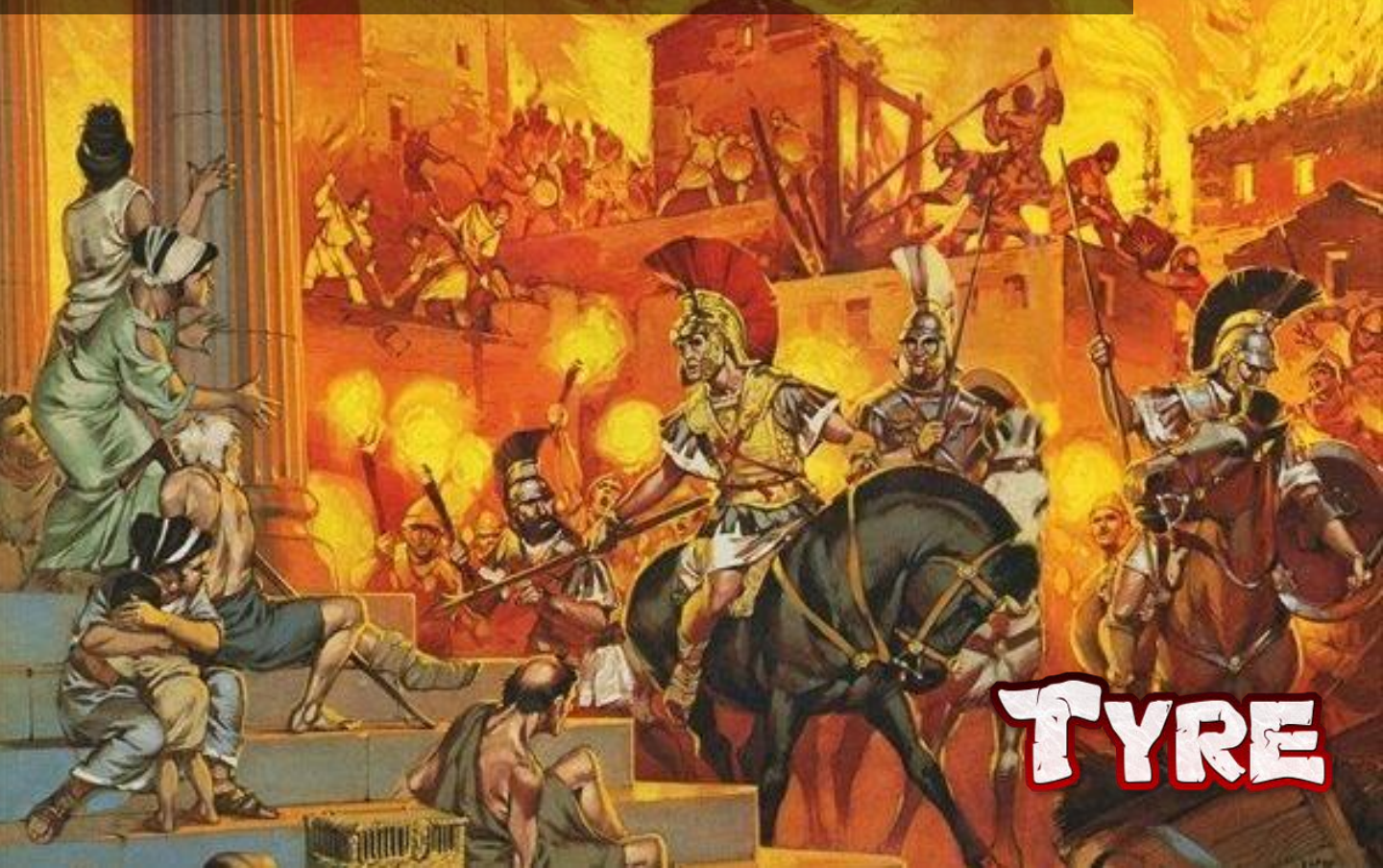
# TYRE

An aerial view of the ancient city of Tyre, showing its extensive walls and harbor. The city is built on a rocky island, surrounded by the sea. The walls are made of brown stone and feature many towers. The harbor is filled with ships, and the city is densely packed with buildings. In the background, there are green hills and a blue sky.

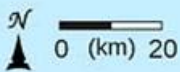
<sup>9</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,  
And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.

<sup>10</sup> But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre,  
Which shall devour its palaces.”



**TYRE**



Byblos  
Beirut  
Sidon

Damascus

Mediterranean  
Sea

★ Samaria  
**ISRAEL**

**AMMON**

Ashdod  
Ashkelon

★ Jerusalem  
Lachish

Beit El  
Jericho

Hebron

**MOAB**

**EDOM**

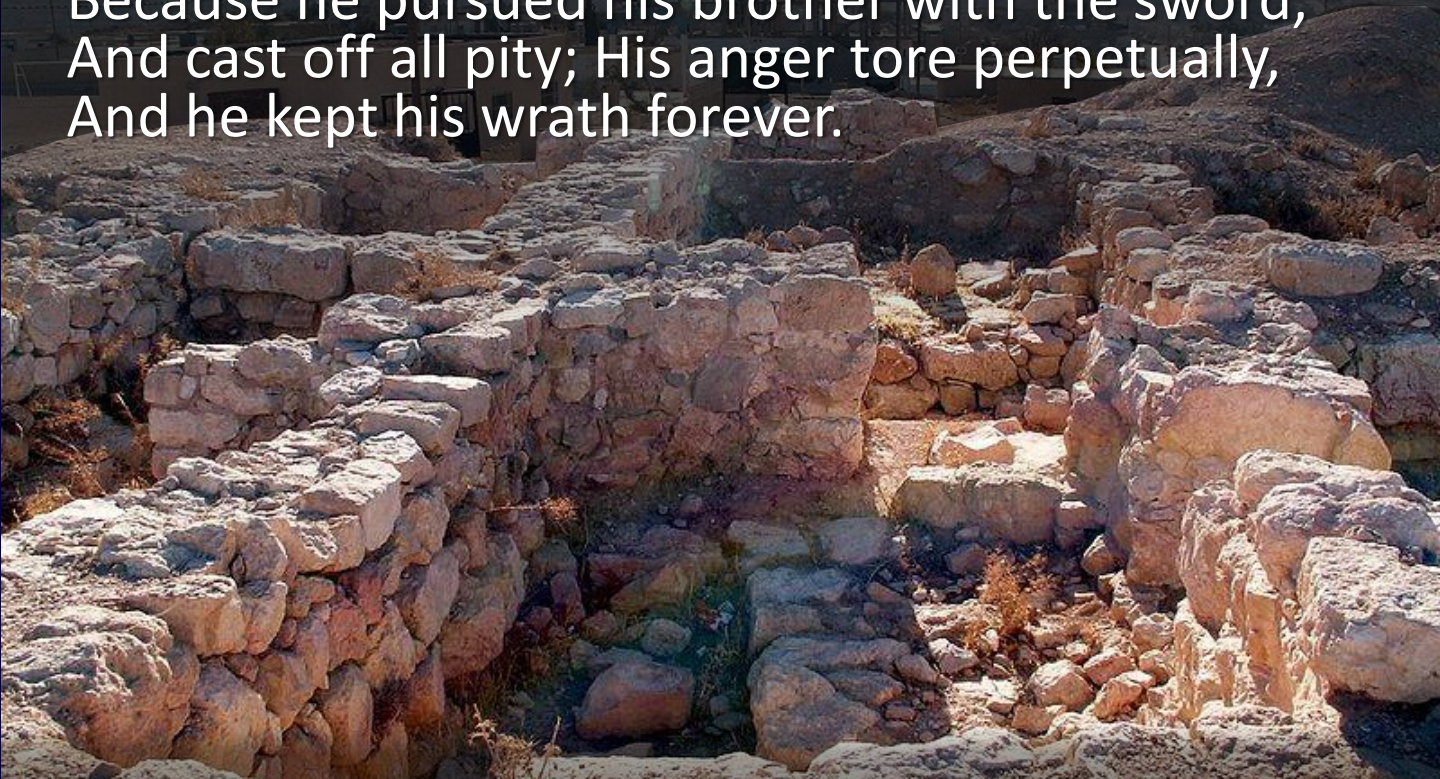
Beersheba



<sup>11</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of Edom,  
and for four, I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because he pursued his brother with the sword,  
And cast off all pity; His anger tore perpetually,  
And he kept his wrath forever.

# EDOM



Ruins at Bozra (modern-day Bouseira in Jordan), the capital of Edom

<sup>12</sup>But I will send a fire upon Teman,  
Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.”

**EDOM**



‘The Edge of Doom’ by Samuel Coleman, 1838.

13 Thus says the LORD:

**AMMON**

“For three transgressions of the people of Ammon,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they ripped open the women with child in  
Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory.

<sup>14</sup>But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,  
And it shall devour its palaces,  
Amid shouting in the day of battle,  
And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.

<sup>15</sup>Their king shall go into captivity,  
He and his princes together,”  
Says the LORD.



**AMMON**

Rabbah Citadel in Ammon, Jordan





WHAT THE  
BIBLE  
IS ABOUT

AMOS

Chapter 2

# MOAB

2 Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom  
to lime.



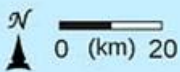
The Plain of Moab is on a high plateau.

# MOAB

2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,  
And it shall devour the palaces of  
Kerioth; Moab shall die with tumult,  
With shouting *and* trumpet sound.

3 And I will cut off the judge from its midst,  
And slay all its princes with him,"  
Says the LORD.

The ruins of Ar, Moab.



Mediterranean  
Sea

**ISRAEL**

**JUDAH**

Byblos  
Beirut  
Sidon

Damascus

★ Samaria

○ Beit El

○ Jericho

○ Rabbath-Ammon

○ Ashdod

★ Jerusalem

○ Lachish

○ Tekoa

○ Dibon

○ Ashkelon

○ Beersheba

4 Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of Judah,  
and for four, I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they have despised the law of the LORD,  
And have not kept His commandments.

# JUDAH



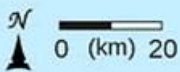
“Jerusalem Falls’ by James Tissot.

Their lies lead them astray,  
*Lies* which their fathers followed.

<sup>5</sup> But I will send a fire upon Judah,  
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.”

**JUDAH**





Mediterranean  
Sea

# ISRAEL

Byblos  
Beirut  
Sidon

Damascus

★ Samaria

○ Sara

○ Beit El

○ Rabbath-Ammon

○ Jericho

○ Ashdod

★ Jerusalem

○ Lachish

○ Tekoa

○ Ashkelon

○ Dibon

○ Hebron

○ Beersheba

<sup>6</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“For three transgressions of Israel,  
and for four, I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they sell the righteous for silver,  
And the poor for a pair of sandals.

<sup>7</sup> They pant after the dust of the earth *which is* on the  
head of the poor, and pervert the way of the humble.

# ISRAEL





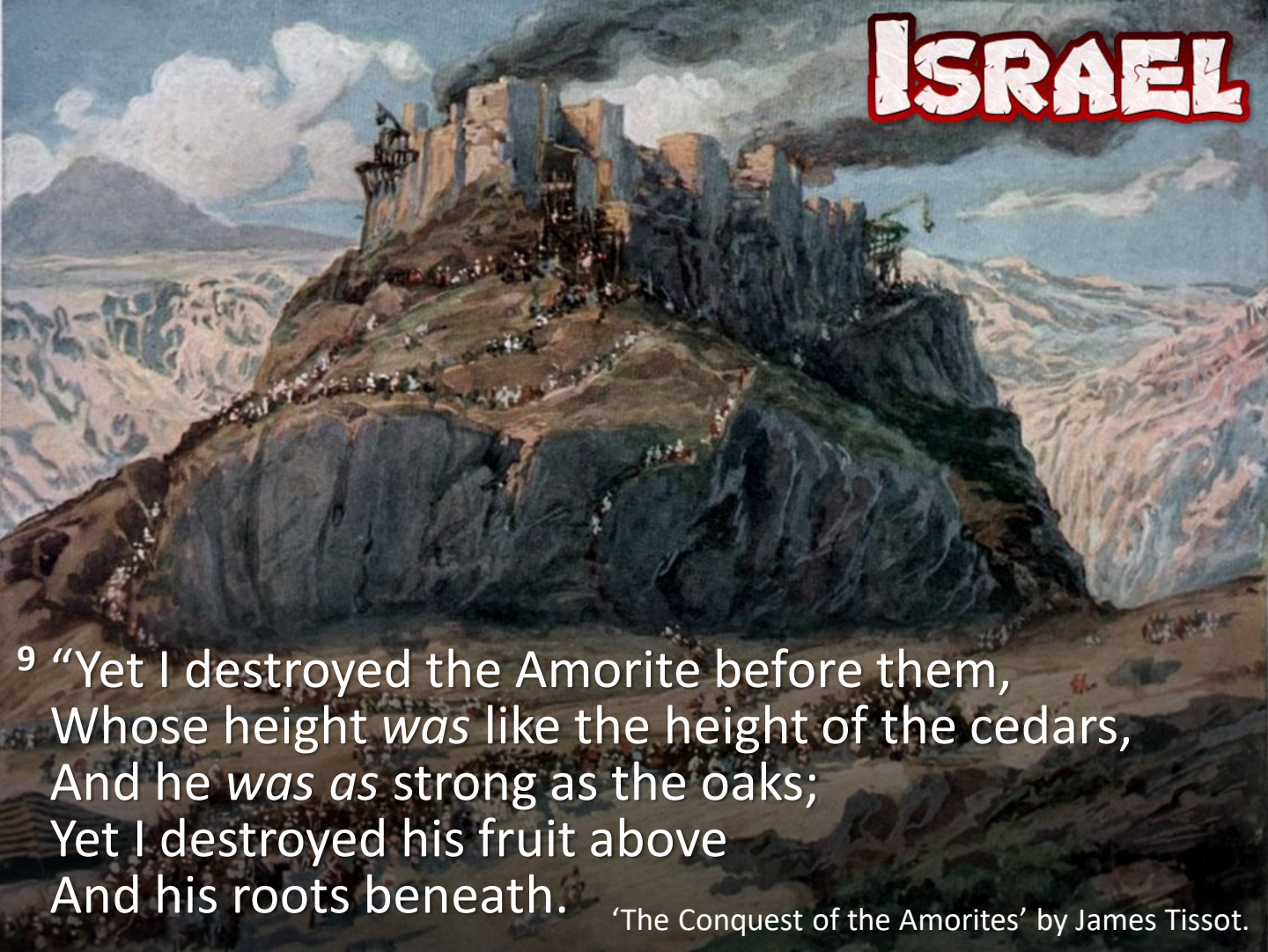


# ISRAEL

A man and his father go in to the *same* girl,  
To defile My holy name.

<sup>8</sup> They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in  
pledge, and drink the wine of the condemned *in* the  
house of their god.

# ISRAEL



<sup>9</sup> “Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them,  
Whose height *was* like the height of the cedars,  
And he *was as* strong as the oaks;  
Yet I destroyed his fruit above  
And his roots beneath.

‘The Conquest of the Amorites’ by James Tissot.

**10** Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt,  
And led you forty years through the wilderness,  
To possess the land of the Amorite.

**11** I raised up some of your sons as prophets,  
And some of your young men as Nazirites.  
*Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"*

Says the LORD.

**ISRAEL**

A large crowd of people, likely the Israelites, is gathered in a desert landscape. The scene is set against a backdrop of rolling hills and a cloudy sky. The people are dressed in traditional, simple clothing, and some are sitting on the ground. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant gathering or event in a vast, open wilderness.

**12** “But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,  
And commanded the prophets saying,  
‘Do not prophesy!’

**ISRAEL**



**13** “Behold, I am weighed down by you,  
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.

14 Therefore flight shall perish from the swift,  
The strong shall not strengthen his power,  
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;

15 He shall not stand who handles the bow,  
The swift of foot shall not escape,  
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.

16 The most courageous men of might  
Shall flee naked in that day,"  
Says the LORD.

**ISRAEL**



Part 2

# Amos

Look within and  
see the Corruption