

*Book of Amos*  
(NASB)

*Chapter 2:4-16*

<sup>4</sup> Thus says the LORD, "For three **transgressions** of Judah and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they **rejected** the law of the LORD And have not **kept** His statutes; **their lies** also have **led them astray**, those after which their fathers walked.

<sup>5</sup> "So I will send fire upon Judah and it will **consume** the citadels of Jerusalem."

(Some additional background on "Amos" ... from Sunukjian)

- The word used for "shepherds" in 1:1 is not the usual Hebrew word rō' eh, but the rare word nōqēd, suggesting instead "sheep breeders." The only other Old Testament occurrence of nōqēd is in 2 Kings 3:4 where Mesha, king of Moab, is said to have engaged in sheep-breeding on such a scale that he was able to supply the king of Israel with 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 lambs.
- In Amos 7:14 the prophet further described himself as "a shepherd" and as one who "took care of sycamore-fig trees." This word for "shepherd," bōqēr, occurs only here in the Old Testament, and describes a "herdsman" or "cattle man."

Wiersbe > As his fellow Jews heard these denunciations of the Gentiles (last week's lesson), no doubt they applauded and wanted to hear more. But when Amos focused on Israel and Judah (his own land), that changed their attitude completely. The very idea of a Jewish prophet classifying God's chosen people with the Gentile "dogs"! "We know we aren't a perfect people," the people of Judah would argue, "but at least we worship the true and living God!"

**Transgressions** > Strong's > a revolt (national, moral or religious)

**Rejected** > Strong's > to spurn

**Kept** > (Strong's) to hedge about (as with thorns)

**Their lies** > (Barnes) So he smoothes it over to himself, "lying" to himself. "God's word must not be taken so precisely;" "God cannot have meant;" "the Author of nature would not have created us so, if He had meant;" and all the other excuses, by which he would evade owning to himself that he is directly rejecting the mind of God and trampling it under foot.

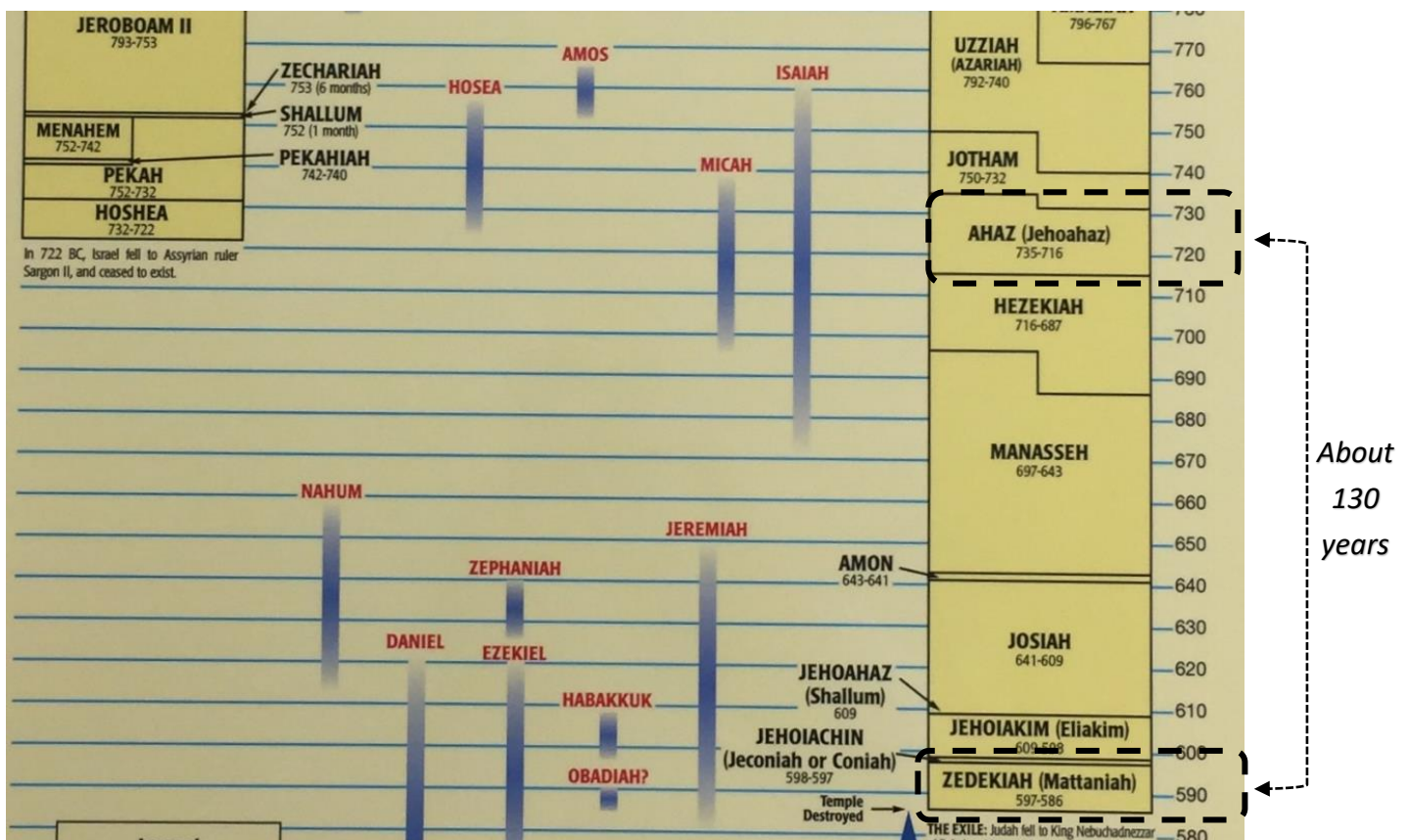
Wiersbe > Yes, the temple was filled with people bringing their sacrifices, but Judah was a nation given over to idolatry.

J Vernon McGee > Judah had the law of God and despised it. They even had the temple which was in Jerusalem. Therefore, God now judged them according to the Law. Have you noticed that God did not judge any of these other nations on that basis whatsoever?

**Led them astray** > Strong's > to vacillate, i.e. reel or stray (literally or figuratively);

**Consume** > Strong' > to eat (literally or figuratively)

(Depending on the source of the information – the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar occurred approximately 130 years after King Ahaz. The fire, indeed, “consumed the citadels of Jerusalem.”



<sup>6</sup> Thus says the LORD, “For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because of ...

**A. Injustice** (Weirsbe)

- (1.) *They sell the righteous for money*
- (2.) *(They sell) the needy for a pair of sandals.*

- **Leviticus 25:39 (NIV)** > “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves.

(3.) *These who pant after the very dust of the earth on the head of the helpless*

- Barnes > Literally, "the panthers!" with indignation
- Bartlett > So that they might get rich quick and keep themselves in ever increasing luxury the rich "trampled on the heads of the poor". It could be said today that directors and shareholders of companies who get rich on the backs of ill-paid workers living in countries where there is little or no social or health care provision fall under the same condemnation.

(4.) *They also turn aside the way of the humble*

- **Proverbs 17:23** > *A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom to pervert the ways of justice.*

### **B. Immorality** (Weirsbe)

(5.) *A man and his father resort to the same girl in order to profane My holy name*

### **C. Idolatry** (Weirsbe)

(6.) *On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar*

- *Deuteronomy 24:12 (NIV)* > *If the neighbor is poor, do not go to sleep with their pledge in your possession*
- *J Vernon McGee* > "By every altar." God had given Israel only one altar, and that was in the temple in Jerusalem. This reveals that they had gone into idolatry and had a multitude of altars.

(7.) *In the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.*

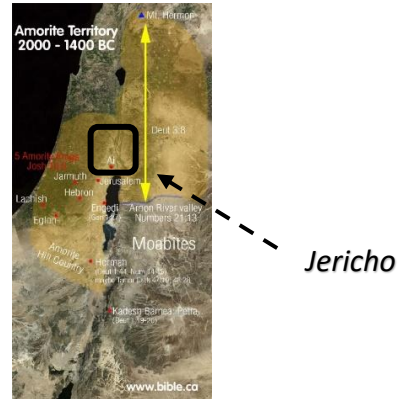
Sunukjian > The Northern Kingdom, to whom Amos' message was directed, was at the zenith of its power. Aram had not recovered from her defeat in 802 B.C. by Assyria under Adad-Nirari III (811-783 B.C. ). Assyria, however, had been unable to press her advantage further. A succession of inept rulers and the troublesome Urartians to her north kept Assyria preoccupied until the accession of Tiglath-Pileser III in 745 B.C. Given a free hand, Jeroboam II was able to extend his borders northward into Aramean territory and to reclaim Israel's lands in Transjordan (cf. 2 Kings 14:23-29; Amos 6:13).

<sup>9</sup> ***Yet it was I** who destroyed the Amorite before them, though his height was like the height of cedars and he was strong as the oaks; I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below.* <sup>10</sup> *It was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and I led you in the wilderness forty years that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.*

**Yet it was I** > Barnes > Yet - (and I) I (emphatic)

J Vernon McGee > God had said to Abraham way back yonder, “I cannot put you in the land right now because the Amorite is in the land, and his iniquity is not yet full. I am going to give him an opportunity to turn to Me, to turn from these gross sins that he is committing.” (Genesis 15)

**Rehab,**  
(in the lineage of the Lord Jesus)  
was an Amorite



<sup>11</sup> “Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets and some of your young men to be **Nazirites**. Is this not so, O sons of Israel?” declares the LORD. <sup>12</sup> “But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and you commanded the prophets saying, ‘You shall not prophesy!’”

**Law of the Nazirites** > Let’s look at **Numbers 6**

<sup>13</sup> “Behold, I am **weighted down** beneath you as a wagon is weighted down when filled with sheaves.

**Weighted down** > Strong’s > to pack ... be pressed

There are two opposite interpretations to the words used here:

- Some commentators translate it > “You are weighing me down!”
  - Barlett > If God is a burden to the people, they are a burden to Him. He is weary of putting up with them. For although God is patient, He is also holy, and will not endure man's sin forever. God compares Himself to a cart, groaning and creaking because it is overloaded with corn. Since He is overloaded with the sin of the people, God will not restrain His wrath any longer. Judgment is inevitable.
- Others translate it completely different ... for example ... the NIV says > *Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.*
  - Weirsbe > Israel would be crushed by their own sins just as a loaded cart crushes whatever it rolls over. Judgment is coming, and nobody will be able to escape.

*<sup>14</sup> "Flight will perish from the swift,  
And the stalwart will not strengthen his power,  
Nor the mighty man save his life.*

*<sup>15</sup> "He who grasps the bow will not stand his ground,  
The swift of foot will not escape,  
Nor will he who rides the horse save his life.*

*<sup>16</sup> "Even the bravest among the warriors will flee naked in that day,"  
Declares the LORD.*

The earthquake took place in 760 BC ... therefore, Amos prophesied in 762 BC. The captivity of the Northern tribes occurred in 722 BC (under 40 years later) ... therefore, the majority of the folks hearing his proclamations physically experienced them.

Barnes > Israel relied, against God, on his own strength. "Have we not," they said, "taken to us horns by our own strength?" (Amos 6:13). Amos tells them then, that every means of strength, resistance, flight, swiftness of foot, of horse, place of refuge, should fail them. Three times he repeats, as a sort of dirge, "he shall not deliver himself."

Bartlett > Pusey (cited by Tatford, 1974) shows how Amos prophecy was fulfilled over a period of time by the invasions of Assyrian emperors Tilgath-Pileser (c 745 - 727 BC) and Sargon II (c 722-705 BC); the Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar (c 634 - 562 BC) and much later by Alexander the Great (c 356–323 BC).