

God Passes Judgment

Amos 2:4-8

SS Lesson for 06/07/2015

Devotional Scripture: Rom 2:1-8

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines how and why **God Passes Judgment**. The **study's aim** is to understand that God's judgments fit the sin and that, while they are in a sense punishment, they are meant to restore the sinning nation and individual to the place where they are honoring God. The **study's application** is to live godly lives and to do our part to influence our churches, our communities, and perhaps our nation toward godly living.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Amos 2;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. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The Gentile nations had rebelled against the "everlasting covenant" God made with them at the time of Noah (Gen. 9:5-17). But Judah's **sins** (*peša'*) were against the Mosaic Covenant. They had **rejected the Law of the LORD**. They had not observed the **decrees**, or stipulations, of His unique agreement with them. Instead of holding to His objective truth, they let themselves be **led astray by** the same **false gods** which had deceived many of **their ancestors**. The word for false god is *kāzāb*, "a lie or something deceptive." The idols were deceptive for they were unable to help the people. In Deuteronomy God constantly warned the Israelites not to follow false gods (Deut. 6:14; 7:16; 8:19; 11:16, 28; etc.). The punishment for this faithlessness would be the destruction of the nation, fulfilled in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar, after a lengthy siege, broke through Jerusalem's defenses, slaughtered the royal family, burned the temple, the palace, and all houses in the city, and deported almost the entire population to Babylon (2 Kings 25:1-12).

Having shown that the Lord is sovereign over the universe and holds all nations accountable for their rebellion against Him, Amos now addressed the Northern tribes of Israel. His message was that God would also judge them, because they had broken His covenant, despite His gracious acts on their behalf. Israel had violated the Mosaic Covenant in several ways, including social injustice (v. 6b), legal perversion (v. 7a), sexual sin (v. 7b), abuse of collateral (v. 8a), and idolatry (v. 8b). The first charge against the Israelites is that they callously sold into slavery the poor who could not pay their debts (cf. 2 Kings 4:1-7). Honest people (**the righteous**) who could be trusted to repay eventually, were sold **for the silver** they owed. The desperately poor (**the needy**) were enslaved because they could not pay back the insignificant sum they owed **for a pair of sandals** (cf. Amos 8:6). These sandals might refer to the custom of giving one's sandals as a kind of mortgage deed or title to confirm the legal transfer of land (cf. Ruth 4:7). The meaning would then be that the poor were being sold for either money or land. Such hardheartedness against Israel's *own* people, not against a foreign nation, was rebellion against God's covenant which called for generosity and openhandedness toward the poor (Deut. 15:7-11). Amos' second accusation against Israel was that legal procedures were being perverted to exploit **the poor**. Contrary to the covenant commands (Ex. 23:6; Deut. 16:19), the courts had gone into collusion with the creditors and were denying **justice to the oppressed**. This oppression was so terrible and painful it was like trampling **on their heads**. The third crime is that **father and son** were having sexual intercourse with **the same girl**, either a temple prostitute or a servant taken as a concubine (Ex. 21:7-9; Lev. 18:8, 15). By such promiscuity the men were showing their disregard for the Lord of the covenant and were profaning (i.e., treating as common) His **holy name**. God's "name" (Ex. 3:13-15) spoke of His character and His unique commitment to Israel. To flaunt His commandments openly was to mock His character and to disdain His special place in their lives. Fourth, God's Law placed restrictions on items which could be taken as collateral. Millstones were not to be taken since they were needed for grinding grain and thus were

essential to sustaining life (Deut. 24:6). The cloak of a poor man was not to be kept as a pledge overnight (Ex. 22:26-27; Deut. 24:10-13; also note Job 22:6); a widow's garment could not be **taken in pledge** at all (Deut. 24:17). Yet the people openly and flagrantly were lying **down** with the forbidden **garments**, going so far in their contempt for the Law as to spread them at the sacrificial feasts by **every altar** (cf. 1 Sam. 9:12-13). Fifth, Israel had rebelled against the most basic covenant stipulation of all—they were worshiping other gods (as Judah was doing, v. 4). The **wine** they had unjustly extracted from the poor **as fines** was being raised in honor to a heathen **god**.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Solomon was the last king of united Israel. When he died in about 930 BC, his son Rehoboam, his successor, refused a request to reduce the tax load, so the 10 northern tribes seceded. In so doing, they established a separate nation and retained the name Israel. The southern kingdom had only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Judah was the larger, so that became the kingdom's name. The first king of the northern nation was Jeroboam. He quickly realized that he would lose the allegiance of his people if they continued to go to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:26, 27). His remedy was to build two centers of worship to rival the temple in Jerusalem. One such was at Dan to the north; the other was at Bethel to the south, only 10 miles from Jerusalem itself. He made a golden calf for each place, and he encouraged idolatrous devotion to the calf-gods (12:28-30). He appointed unqualified people to be priests, and he established an alternative festival (12:31-33). These actions are shocking to us, but the people of Israel had become fascinated by idols. The time had come for emphatic warnings of judgment. God's first messenger to Israel for this purpose was Amos. Amos 1:1 identifies the time period as being during the concurrent reigns of King Uzziah in Judah and King Jeroboam II in Israel. Their reigns overlapped from about 790 to 753 BC, and it is usually suggested that Amos prophesied about 760 BC.

The book of Amos is third in the arrangement of the 12 Minor Prophets. The author identifies himself as a shepherd from Tekoa (Amos 1:1), which was about 10 miles south of Jerusalem. By one count, Amos mentions 38 cities or districts, so he was well informed about current events. God sent Amos from his home in Judah to prophesy in Israel. His purpose was to announce that judgment was coming not only on Israel but on surrounding nations. Amos began his ministry by proclaiming that "the Lord roars from Zion" (Amos 1:2). The roar of a lion may be heard up to five miles away. It announces to all that this is his territory! The order of the locations cited by Amos begins at the more distant points. The first cities or nations to receive his thundering condemnations were (or were in) Aram/Syria, Philistia, and Phoenicia. Amos was aware of the atrocities of Syria against Israelites who lived east of the Jordan River. Philistine cities and Tyre were accused of selling captured peoples to the Edomites, and this suggests a thriving slave trade (Amos 1:6-10). The formula "for three sins ... even for four" is used to indict each. This figure of speech is generally regarded to mean "sin after sin." The transgressing nations and cities had reached the limit, and God was ready to act. One specific sin is mentioned in each case, and fire was promised as judgment. Each indictment affirmed that God would not revoke the punishment. The overall context suggests that the crimes had been committed against Israel or Judah. The next three nations (Amos 1:7-2:3) had historical connections via Jacob or Lot. Edom was another name for Jacob's twin brother, Esau (Genesis 25:29, 30). Inhabitants of Ammon and Moab were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew (Genesis 13; 19:30-38). An examination of the listed transgressions leads to this conclusion: God expects all nations to maintain standards of decency in the treatment of others. The nations cited by Amos were being brutal for the sake of being brutal, not because defensive measures demanded it. The people of Israel may have been very enthusiastic about the first parts of Amos's sermon. He condemned nations on every side, and his credentials as a prophet of God were strengthened as he listed past crimes and the predicted punishments. These nations were going to receive what they deserved. Some Israelites may have been aware that God often works with the number seven to signify completeness. So after hearing a series of six "for three sins ... , even for four" (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1), they may have wondered which nation would be the seventh. Surprise! The seventh nation was Judah, where Amos lived. He was condemning his own nation! (Note: the Lesson Backgrounds for lessons 2-4 also apply to this lesson.)

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

We know very little about the man Amos, a farmer who became a prophet at God's command. He was a sheep-herder—perhaps more than a shepherd—possibly a breeder and owner of several flocks of sheep and goats. He lived near the town of Tekoa, which was located about five miles southeast of Bethlehem. He also described himself as one who tended sycamore trees. "Why was Amos obliged to tend the sycamore? Western Judah, the oasis of Jericho, and lower Galilee were the regions where sycamore figs grew most abundantly. The shepherds needed to bring their flocks to one of these regions in late summer, after the desert pastures had dried up. Since this was the time for piercing the sycamore fruit, landowners would exchange grazing rights for labor. A shepherd could watch his flock while sitting on the broad limbs of the sycamore, piercing its fruit" [Radmacher, ed., *The Nelson Study Bible*, Nelson). Amos ministered during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (Amos 1:1). His was a very short term of ministry, probably around 760 B.C. The only date given is two years before an earthquake that cannot be pinpointed precisely. To the casual observer, corruption and dishonesty of all kinds are ruling the day. It seems there is no one to correct the evil that is rampant in the world. God seems to sit silent as people ignore truth and justice. Does He even notice what is happening? Israel may well have wondered this, and so may we in our day. But God does see, and we may be sure that at the right time and in the right way, He will act. He has done so before, and He will again.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Judgment Upon Judah (Amos 2:4-5)

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

5 But I will send a fire upon Judah, And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

Judgment of transgressions (4)

Despising God's Word (2 Chron 36:14-17)

14 Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the Lord, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. 15 The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar.

Disobedience (Eph 2:1-3)

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Self-deception (1 John 1:8)

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Following false gods (Jer 16:19-20)

O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good. 20 Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods!"

Punishments from the judgment (5)

Send a fire (Jer 37:8-10)

8 Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.' 9 "This is what the Lord says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not! 10 Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

Devour the palaces (Jer 6:5-8)

5 So arise, let us attack at night and destroy her fortresses!" 6 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Cut down the trees and build siege ramps against Jerusalem. This city must be punished; it is filled with oppression. 7 As a well pours out its water, so she pours out her wickedness. Violence and destruction resound in her; her sickness and wounds are ever before me. 8 Take warning, O Jerusalem, or I will turn away from you and make your land desolate so no one can live in it."

Judgment Upon Israel (Amos 2:6-8)

6 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.

7 They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor, And pervert the way of the humble. A man and his father go in to the same girl, To defile My holy name.

8 They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge, And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

Judgment of transgressions (6-8)

Greed (Prov 1:18-19)

18 These men lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves!

19 Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.

Oppression (Ps 12:5)

5 "Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the Lord. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

Stumbling block (Luke 17:1-2)

1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.

Immorality (1 Cor 6:18)

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

Idolatry (Col 3:5-6)

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from David Guzik

A. Judgment on Moab and Judah.

1. (1-3) The word of the Lord against Moab.

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. 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. And I will cut off the judge from its midst, and slay all its princes with him, says the Lord.

a. Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime: Moab was a southern neighbor to Judah, and the last of the six judgments Amos pronounces against the Gentile nations in this section. God promises judgment against Moab because of their cruelty to Edom and her king.

i. We could say that Moab sinned against the past by desecrating the remains of an Edomite hero.

2. (4-5) The word of the Lord against Judah.

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. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed. But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

a. For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment: It hurts to see the same judgment formula applied against Judah - the people of God - as was applied against the previous six Gentile nations. It shows that Judah piled sin upon sin upon sin just like the other nations.

i. We find it easy - and comfortable - to expose and rebuke the sins of those who aren't the followers of God. That is what Amos did with the first six pronouncements of judgment, but just as Amos went on to look at sin among Gods people, we should do the same.

b. Because they have despised the law of the Lord: Judah's sin was that they despised and disobeyed the law of the Lord. This is a higher accountability than God required of any of the six Gentile nations previously mentioned in Amos. God blessed His people with His law and commandments, but He expected them to honor and obey His word.

c. Their lies lead them astray: Since the word of God brings us truth, when we despise and disobey Gods word we naturally embrace and follow lies. You can't reject the truth without grabbing hold of a lie.

d. I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem: Because Judah sinned like the other nations, they will be judged as the other nations, with fire against them and their palaces (Amos 1:4, 1:7, 1:10, 1:12, 1:14, 2:2).

i. The repeated use of fire to express judgment is continued in the New Testament. Without doubt, Amos meant material fire coming against material walls and palaces, but the Bible also uses fire in a spiritual way, to describe the purifying work of God in the believer. The Bible says that God will test the works of each believer with fire, to burn away what is unworthy (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). The Bible says believers will be tested by fire (1 Peter 1:6-7).

ii. When we think of Gods purifying fire, we should think the way Peter expressed in 1 Peter 4:17: For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. We should invite God to burn down whatever walls or palaces we build against Him, so His work can continue in us and through us without hindrance.

B. Judgment on Israel.

1. (6-8) The sins of Israel.

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. They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor, and pervert the way of the humble. A man and his father go in to the same girl, to defile My holy name. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge, and drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

- a. For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment: The pattern continues. Israel has piled sin upon sin upon sin, just as the previous seven nations.
- b. Because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals: Amos saw the injustice of rich against the poor, and how the rich took cruel advantage against the poor.
- c. A man and his father go in to the same girl: Amos saw the sexual immorality and perversion of his day, and how standards once accepted were now disregarded.
 - i. This probably speaks of father and son using the same ritual, idolatrous prostitute. They were licentious to the uttermost abomination; for in their idol feasts, where young women prostituted themselves publicly in honor of Astarte, the father and son entered into impure connections with the same female.
- d. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge: Amos saw the idolatry of his day, and how people worshipped idols even as they cruelly oppressed the poor. Exodus 22:26-27 commanded, If you ever take your neighbors garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious. The prophecy of Amos shows that God has heard the cry of the oppressed in Israel and will bring judgment against Israel.
- e. In combination, the whole picture is almost overwhelming. Amos pictures a man committing sexual immorality with a temple prostitute - the same girl his son visited the day before - keeping warm with a garment extorted from the poor, toasting his success with wine bought with money dishonestly gained.

2. (9-12) The goodness of God to Israel and how they despised it.

Yet it was I who 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. Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. 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. But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets saying, Do not prophesy!

- a. It was I who destroyed the Amorite before them: God reminds Israel of His past power and faithfulness to them. When they first came into the Promised Land, they were afraid of the mighty nations like the Amorites. Yet God conquered them. How could they reject and despise a God who has done so much for them?
 - i. This principle - a walk with God based in gratitude for what He did for us - is important for the Christian, and shows why the believer must continually hear the message of the cross. We must live our lives in proper gratitude for what the Lord has done for us.
- b. I raised up some of your sons as prophets: God reminds Israel of the great privilege they had in working together with God. Gratitude for this great honor should have kept them humble and obedient before the Lord, but they rejected and despised Him (commanded the prophets saying, Do not prophesy!).
- c. And some of your young men as Nazirites: The vow of a Nazirite was a special vow of dedication unto the Lord, and God gave the gift of this deeper opportunity to Israel. Instead of receiving this honor with gratitude and humility, the rejected and despised the Lord (you gave the Nazirites wine to drink).
 - i. The vow of the Nazirite is described in Numbers 6 and was used to express a special desire to draw close to God and to separate from the comforts and pleasures of this world. Under the Nazirite vow a

man would eat or drink nothing from the grape vine, would not cut his hair, and would not go near any dead carcass.

3. (13-16) Judgment to come upon Israel.

Behold, I am weighed down by you, as a cart full of sheaves is weighed down. Therefore flight shall perish from the swift, the strong shall not strengthen his power, nor shall the mighty deliver himself; he shall not stand who handles the bow, the swift of foot shall not escape, nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself. The most courageous men of might shall flee naked in that day, says the Lord.

a. I am weighed down by you: God regarded the people of Israel as a weary burden, not as a joy. It is the difference between the pleasure a parent feels in dealing with a obedient child and the drudgery a parent feels in dealing with a stubborn, rebellious child.

i. Any time justice is perverted - any time the rich receive preferential treatment, or the poor are oppressed - it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

ii. Any time people cheat and manipulate and make money off of others in questionable ways - even if it is legal - it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

iii. Any time people unfairly profit at the expense of the unfortunate, it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

iv. Now, it is to be understood, dear friends, before we proceed farther, that our text is but a figure, since God is not to be oppressed by man; all the sin that man can commit can never disturb the serenity of his perfections, nor cause so much as a wave upon the sea of his everlasting calm. He doth but speak to us after the manner of man . . . so the Lord says that under the load of human guilt he is pressed down, until he crieth out, because he can bear no longer the iniquity of those that offend against him. (Spurgeon)

b. Flight shall perish from the swift, the strong shall not strengthen his power: One way the judgment of God would express itself against Israel was that they would find themselves unable to succeed in ways they previously thought they were strong. Without the blessing of God, the swift isn't fast enough, the strong isn't strong enough, and the mighty isn't mighty enough to succeed. Israel was far too confident in their own ability, but God would bring them low.

i. We can escape this judgment by realizing now that even our strength is nothing without the Lord. Paul communicated this idea in 1 Corinthians 10:12: Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. We can become more vulnerable in our perceived strengths than in our acknowledged weaknesses.

(Adapted from URL:<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/view.cgi?book=am&chapter=002>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

As descendants of Jacob, the people of Israel and Judah were the special covenant people of God. But this resulted in an attitude problem—the attitude that they deserved the blessings that they enjoyed because of who they were. God worked through these people to bring the Messiah into the world at just the right time, but moral failures and social injustices along the way were not ignored. The guilty got what they deserved. But what does any person deserve? Commercial and politicians today use the word deserve to sell goods or to secure votes. But every person is a sinner, and what everyone deserves in that regard is far different from what can be received through an obedient trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Christians are the people of the new covenant. By the grace of God, we don't get what we deserve! May our attitudes and actions always be that of humility in light of this fact.

Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Even now I remember the discipline applied to me in my childhood years. I learned early on that when Dad tapped his belt buckle, it was time for me to do as I had been told. But I did not fully understand the importance of wholehearted obedience until I became a parent. That is when I realized how much obedience is the name of the family game. We are members of a family, the family of God. He is our Father. How He desires us to obey is listed, explained, and discussed from Genesis through Revelation. It is a shame He has had to tell us over and over exactly what we are supposed to do. If we do not follow our Father's commands, how can we not expect His judgment to fall upon us? Throughout the first two chapters of Amos, the prophet cited God over and over proclaiming the justice to be brought upon the lands that "despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments" (2:4).

Amos 2:4-5 not only relate the discipline that was to come but also reveal that the Lord had given the nation of Judah, His children, more than one offer to follow Him in service and peace. In the same way, He has offered us multiple opportunities to heed His commands. Many times we forget the Lord's promises because we are so caught up in selfish desires. We seek wealth, public recognition, entitlement, the latest gadgets, and on and on. In our distraction, we forget that discipline comes to all—even (or especially) believers (cf. Heb. 12:5-11).

Alexander Pope, an eighteenth-century English poet, gave the best definition of the need for justice: "Injustice, swift, erect, and unconfined, sweeps the wide earth, and tramples o'er mankind" ("The Iliad of Homer"). Such a vision is rampant in our world today as many are being misused by others. Sadly, many of those who perpetrate injustice are people who say they believe in God. Ironically, their belief is not displayed in their actions, for they do today as was done in the past. In fact, Amos could be describing our world as well as our nation. What he described is what our newspapers, magazines, and televisions report daily. Many take advantage of the meek, practice fornication, curse the Lord in every other word of conversation, worship the false god of self, and celebrate while intoxicated. Where are the Lord's children? We must teach our children what our Father taught us: "And be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). We must set the example of love and worship. We must help them understand that God keeps His promises of blessing and also His promises of justice against injustice. Notice the two j words: "justice" and "judgment." Both relate to upholding that which is right and that which is fair. How can we profess belief in God and not practice these two principles? I never thought of myself as being an abomination, but when I was accepted by the Lord and understood the mission of the believer, I realized I had been just that. The believer is to follow moral principles that are pleasing to the Lord—to walk in His way.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Failure to obey God's declared will is an expression of hatred toward His commands and ultimately toward Him (Amos 2:4)
2. Sin is not just a mistake that can be easily excused; it is an evil that is deserving of divine punishment (vs. 5)
3. Justice is demanded of all those who claim to follow the God of justice (vs. 6)
4. Focusing only on ourselves will lead us to abuse others and dishonor God (vs. 7)
5. The wicked find acceptance only from the gods they create, not from the God who created them (vs. 8)