

## INTRODUCTION TO AMOS

This book in the Hebrew Bibles is called “Sepher Amos”, the Book of Amos; and, in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, the Prophecy of Amos. This is not the same person with the father of Isaiah, as some have ignorantly confounded them; for their names are wrote with different letters; besides, the father of Isaiah is thought to have been of the royal family, and a courtier; whereas this man was a country farmer and herdsman. His name signifies “burdened”: the Jews<sup>f1</sup> say he was so called, because burdened in his tongue, or had an impediment in his speech, and stammered; but rather because his prophecies were burdens to the people, such as they could not bear, being full of reproofs and threatenings; however, his prophecy in this respect agrees with his name. What time he lived may be learned from ([3000](#)Amos 1:1); by which it appears that he was, contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea; but whether he lived and prophesied so long as they did is not certain. The author of Seder Olam Zuta<sup>f2</sup> makes him to prophesy in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. R. Abraham Zacut<sup>f3</sup>, and R. David Ganz<sup>f4</sup>, place him later than Hosea, and prior to Isaiah; they say that Amos received the law from Hosea, and Isaiah from Amos. Mr. Whiston<sup>f5</sup> makes him to begin to prophesy in the year of the world 3231 A.M. or 773 B.C.; and Mr. Bedford<sup>f6</sup> earlier, in 802 B.C.; and, from some passages in his prophecy, he appears to be of the land of Judah; (see [3000](#)Amos 1:1 [3072](#)Amos 7:12); though he prophesied in the land of Israel, and against the ten tribes chiefly; the occasion of which was, Jeroboam had been very successful and victorious, and the people under him enjoyed great plenty and prosperity, and upon this grew wanton, luxurious, and very sinful; wherefore this prophet was sent to reprove them for their sins, to exhort them to repentance, and threaten them with captivity, in case of impenitence; and to comfort the truly godly with promises of the Messiah’s coming and kingdom. The authenticity of this book is not to be questioned, since many passages out of it were taken by following prophets, as the words in ([3002](#)Amos 1:2), by Joel, ([2986](#)Joel 3:16), and by Jeremiah, ([2450](#)Jeremiah 25:30); ([3000](#)Amos 4:9), by Haggai, ([3027](#)Haggai 2:17); ([3093](#)Amos 9:13), by Joel, ([2988](#)Joel 3:18); and others are quoted by the writers of the New Testament as divinely inspired, as ([3025](#)Amos 5:25-27 [3091](#)Amos 9:11), in ([4072](#)Acts 7:42,43 [3055](#)Amos 15:15,16); nor is there any room to doubt of his being the writer of this

book, as is manifest of his speaking of himself as the first person in it; though Hobbes<sup>f7</sup> says it does not appear. Some have thought that his language is rustic, suitable to his former character and employment; but certain it is there are masterly strokes and great beauties of eloquence in it; and which shows that it is more than human. According to some writers, he was often beat and buffeted by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel; and at last the son of the priest drove a nail into his temples, upon which he was carried alive into his own country, and there died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors at Tekoa<sup>f8</sup>.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 1

This chapter begins with the general title of the book, in which the author is described by name, and by his condition of life, and by his country, and the time of his prophecy fixed, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:1). He first foretells a drought in the land of Israel, in the most fruitful places, which would cause mourning among the shepherds, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:2); then the captivity of the Syrians, whose metropolis was Damascus, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:3-5). Next the destruction of the Philistines, whose principal cities were Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, and Ekron, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:6-8). After that the ruin of Tyre, with the reason of it, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:9,10); then the calamities that should come upon Edom, whose chief places were Teman and Bozrah, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:11,12); and lastly the desolations of the Ammonites, whose metropolis, Rabbah, should be destroyed, and their king and princes go into captivity, (~~<3000>~~Amos 1:13-15); and all this for the sins of each of these nations.

**Ver. 1.** *The words of Amos*, etc.] Not which he spoke of or for himself, but from the Lord; all the prophecies, visions, and revelations made unto him, are intended:

*who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa*; which was not in the tribe of Asher, as Kimchi; nor of Zebulun, as Pseudo-Epiphanius<sup>f9</sup>; but in the tribe of Judah, (~~<3400>~~2 Chronicles 11:5,6 ~~<3000>~~Jeremiah 6:1). It lay to the south, and was six miles from Bethlehem. Mr. Maundrell<sup>f10</sup> says it is nine miles distant, to the south of it; and, according to Jerom<sup>f11</sup>, it was twelve miles from Jerusalem; though he elsewhere<sup>f12</sup> says, Thecua, or Tekoa, is a village at this day, nine miles from Aelia or Jerusalem, of which place was Amos the prophet, and where his sepulchre is seen: either there is a mistake of the number, or of Aelia for Bethlehem; the former rather seems to be the case; according to Josephus<sup>f13</sup>, it was not far from the castle of Herodium. The Misnic doctors<sup>f14</sup> speak of it as famous for oil, where the best was to be had; near to it was a wilderness, called the wilderness of Tekoa; and Jerom<sup>f15</sup> says, that beyond it there was no village, nor so much as huts and cottages, but a large wilderness, which reached to the Red sea, and to the borders of the Persians, Ethiopians, and Indians, and was full of shepherds,

among whom Amos was; whether he was a master herdsman, or a servant of one, is not said. The word is used of the king of Moab, who is said to be a “sheepmaster”, (<sup><1100></sup>2 Kings 3:4); he traded in cattle, and got riches thereby; and so the Targum here renders it,

“who was lord or master of cattle;”

and Kimchi interprets it, he was a great man among the herdsmen; and so it was a piece of self-denial to leave his business, and go to prophesying; but rather he was a servant, and kept cattle for others, which best agrees with (<sup><3074></sup>Amos 7:14); and so is expressive of the grace of God in calling so mean a person to such a high office. The word used signifies to mark; and shepherds were so called from marking their sheep to distinguish them, which seems to be the work of servants; and, in the Arabic language, a kind of sheep deformed, and of short feet, are so called:

*which he saw concerning Israel*; or, against Israel<sup>f16</sup>, the ten tribes, to whom he was sent, and against whom he prophesied chiefly; for he says very little of Judah. Words are more properly said to be spoken or heard; but here they are said to be seen; which shows that not bare words are meant, but things, which the prophet had revealed to him in a visionary way, and he delivered; (see <sup><300></sup>Isaiah 2:1);

*in the days of Uzziah king of Judah*; who was also called Azariah, (<sup><1250></sup>2 Kings 15:1);

*and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel*; so he is called to distinguish him from Jeroboam the son of Nebat; this king was the grandson of Jehu; he was, as Jerom says, before Sardanapalus reigned over the Assyrians, and Procas Sylvius over the Latines:

*two years before the earthquake*; which was well known in those times, and fresh in memory. Zechariah speaks of it many years after, from whom we learn it was in the days of Uzziah, (<sup><3045></sup>Zechariah 14:5). The Jewish writers generally say that it was when Uzziah was smote with leprosy for invading the priest’s office; and was in the year in which he died, when Isaiah had a vision of the glory of the Lord, and the posts of the house moved, (<sup><300></sup>Isaiah 6:1,4); and with whom Josephus<sup>f17</sup> agrees; who also relates, that the temple being rent by the earthquake, the bright light of the sun shone upon the king’s face, and the leprosy immediately seized him; and, at a place before the city called Eroge, half part of a mountain towards the west was broken and rolled half a mile towards the eastern part, and

there stood, and stopped up the ways, and the king's gardens; but this cannot be true, as Theodoret observes; since, according to this account, Amos must begin to prophesy in the fiftieth year of Uzziah; for he reigned fifty two years, and he began his reign in the twenty seventh year of Jeroboam, (<sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 15:1); who reigned forty one years, (<sup><1243></sup>2 Kings 14:23); so that Uzziah and he were contemporary fourteen years only, and Jeroboam must have been dead thirty six years when it was the fiftieth of Uzziah; whereas they are here represented as contemporary when Amos began to prophesy, which was but two years before the earthquake; so that this earthquake must be in the former and not the latter part of Uzziah's reign, and consequently not when he was stricken with the leprosy.

**Ver. 2.** *And he said*, etc.] That is, the Prophet Amos, before described; he, being under divine inspiration, said as follows:

*the Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem*; not from Samaria, nor from Daniel and Bethel, but from Zion and Jerusalem, where the temple of the Lord stood; and out of the holy of holies in it, where was the seat of the divine Majesty; and his voice being compared to the roaring of a lion, denotes his wrath and vengeance; and is expressive of some terrible threatening prophecy he would send from hence, by one or other of his prophets; perhaps Amos may mean himself; and who, having been a shepherd or herdsman in the wilderness, had often heard the terrible roaring of the lion, to which he compares his prophecy concerning the judgments of God on nations. Some think reference is had to the earthquake, as Aben Ezra; and which might be attended with thunder and lightning, the voice of God:

*and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn*; that is, the huts or cottages they dwell in, erected for the more convenient care of their flocks; these, by a figure, are said to mourn, because exposed to the violent heat of the sun in this time of drought; or because forsaken by the shepherds; or it may design the shepherds themselves that dwelled in them, that should mourn because there was no pasture for their flocks, the grass being dried up, and withered away: and indeed it may be rendered, "the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn"<sup>>f18</sup>; being destroyed by the drought, as the cattle upon them are said to mourn and groan, (<sup><2018></sup>Joel 1:18);

*and the top of Carmel shall wither*; a fruitful mountain in the land of Israel; there were two of this name, one in the tribe of Judah, near which Nabal dwelt, (<sup><0250></sup>1 Samuel 25:2); another in the tribe of Asher, near to Ptolemais

or Aco; some think the former is meant, as being nearer Tekoa, and more known to Amos; others the latter, because Israel or the ten tribes are prophesied against; though Carmel may be taken for any and all fruitful places in the land; and the top or chief of it withering may signify the destruction of everything pleasant and useful. Some think Amos speaks figuratively in the language of a herdsman or shepherd, as artificers and mechanics do in their own way<sup>f19</sup>; and so by “shepherds” he means kings and princes; and, by their “habitations”, their kingdoms, cities, towns, and palaces; and, by “Carmel”, their wealth, riches, and precious things, which should all be destroyed; and to this agrees the Targum,

“the habitations of kings shall become desolate, and the strength of their fortresses shall be made a desert.”

**Ver. 3.** *Thus saith the Lord*, etc.] Lest it should be thought that the words that Amos spoke were his own, and he spake them of himself, this and the following prophecies are prefaced in this manner; and he begins with the nations near to the people of Israel and Judah, who had greatly afflicted them, and for that reason would be punished; which is foretold, to let Israel see that those judgments on them did not come by chance; and lest they should promise themselves impunity from the prosperity of these sinful nations; and to awaken them to a sense of their sin and danger, who might expect the visitation of God for their transgressions; as also to take off all offence at the prophet, who began not with them, but with their enemies:

*for three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof*; Damascus was an ancient city; it was in the times of Abraham, (<sup>-0150</sup>Genesis 15:2). It was the “metropolis” of Syria, (<sup>-2008</sup>Isaiah 7:8); and so Pliny calls it, “Damascus of Syria”<sup>f20</sup>. Of the situation of this place, and the delightfulness of it, (see Gill on <sup>-2425</sup>Jeremiah 49:25”); and of its founder, and the signification of its name, (see Gill on <sup>-4402</sup>Acts 9:2”); to which may be added, that though Justin<sup>f21</sup> says it had its name from Damascus, a king of it before Abraham and Israel, whom he also makes kings of it; and Josephus<sup>f22</sup> would have Uz the son of Aram the founder of it, to which Bochart<sup>f23</sup> agrees; yet the Arabic writers ascribe the building of it to others; for the Arabs have a tradition, as Schultens<sup>f24</sup> says, that there were Canaanites anciently in Syria; for they talk of Dimashc the son of Canaan, who built the famous city of Damascus, and so it should seem to be called after his name; and Abulpharagius<sup>f25</sup> says, that Murkus or Murphus, as others call him, king of Palestine, built

the city of Damascus twenty years before the birth of Abraham: from this place many things have their names, which continue with us to this day, as the “damask” rose, and the “damascene” plum, transplanted from the gardens that were about it, for which it was famous; and very probably the invention of the silk and linen called “damasks” owes its rise from hence. It is here put for the whole country of Syria, and the inhabitants of it, for whose numerous transgressions, signified by “three” and “four”, the Lord would not turn away his fury from them, justly raised by their sins; or the decree which he had passed in his own mind, and now made a declaration of, he would not revoke; or not inflict the punishment they had deserved, and he had threatened. The sense is, that he would not spare them, or have mercy on them, or defer the execution of punishment any longer; he would not forgive their transgressions. So the Targum,

“I will not pardon them.”

Deuteronomy Dieu refers it to the earthquake before mentioned, that God would not turn away that, but cause it to come, as he had foretold, for the transgressions of these, and other nations after spoken of; but rather it refers to Damascus; and so some render it, “I will not turn”, or “convert it”<sup>f26</sup>; to repentance, and so to my mercy; but leave it in its sins, and to my just judgments. Kimchi thinks that this respects four particular seasons, in which Damascus, or the Syrians, evilly treated and distressed the people of Israel; first in the times of Baasha; then in the times of Ahab; a third time in the days of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu; and the fourth in the times of Ahaz; and then they were punished for them all:

*because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron; that is,*

“the inhabitants of the land of Gilead,”

as the Targum; this country lay beyond Jordan, and was inhabited by the Reubenites and Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh; who were used in a very cruel manner, by Hazael king of Syria, as was foretold by Elisha, (<sup><1>2</sup>2 Kings 7:12); not literally, as in (<sup><1>2</sup>2 Samuel 12:31); but by him they were beat, oppressed, and crushed, as the grain of the threshingfloor; which used to be threshed out by means of a wooden instrument stuck with iron teeth, the top of which was filled with stones to press it down, and so drawn to and fro over the sheaves of corn, by which means it was beaten out, to which the allusion is here; (see Gill on <sup><1>1</sup>1 Corinthians 9:9”). This

was done by Hazael king of Syria, who is said to destroy the people, and make them “like the dust by threshing”, (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 10:32,33 <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 13:3,7).

**Ver. 4.** *But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael*, etc.] For so doing; into his family, his sons’ sons, one of whom perhaps was Rezin, that Tiglathpileser king of Assyria slew, as Aben Ezra observes. This denotes the judgments of God upon his posterity for his cruel usage of the Israelites; and designs an enemy that should come into his country, and war made in the midst of it, by which it should be depopulated; and this being by the permission and providence of God, and according to his will, is said to be sent by him:

*which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad*; a name frequently given to the kings of Syria; there was one of this name the immediate predecessor of Hazael, whose servant he was; and he left a son of the same name that succeeded him, (<sup><1110></sup>2 Kings 7:7,15 <sup><1214></sup>2 Kings 13:24); these may denote the royal palaces of the kings of Syria, which should not be spared in this time of desolation; though rather by them may be intended the temples, which he and Hazael are said by Josephus<sup>f27</sup> to build in the city of Damascus, whereby they greatly adorned it; and for these and other acts of beneficence they were deified by the Syrians, and worshipped as gods; and even to the times of Josephus, he says, their statues were carried in pomp every day in honour of them; and so, the house of Hazael, in the preceding clause, may signify a temple that was either built by him, or for the worship of him, since he was deified as well as Benhadad; and it may be observed, that as Adad was a common name of the kings of Syria; for, according to Nicholas of Damascus<sup>f28</sup>, ten kings that reigned in Damascus were all called Adad; so this is a name of the god they worshipped. Pliny speaks of a god worshipped by the Syrians, whose name must be Adad; since, according to him; the gem “adadunephros” had its name from him<sup>f29</sup>; and Macrobius<sup>f30</sup> is express for it, that the chief god of the Assyrians was called Adad, which signifies one; (see Gill on “<sup><2167></sup>Isaiah 66:17”).

**Ver. 5.** *I will break also the bar of Damascus*, etc.] Or bars, the singular for the plural, by which the gates of the city were barred; and, being broken, the gates would be easily opened, and way made for the enemy to pass into the city and spoil it; or it may signify the whole strength and all the fortifications of it. So the Targum,

“I will break the strength of Damascus:”



*and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven*; or, “of an idol”, as the Vulgate Latin version. It is thought to be some place where idols were worshipped by the Syrians; their gods were the gods of the valleys, which they denied the God of Israel to be, (<sup><1122></sup>1 Kings 20:23). Mr. Maundrell<sup>f31</sup> says, that near Damascus there is a plain still called the valley of Bocat, and which he thinks is the same with this Bicataven, as it is in the Hebrew text; and which lies between Libanus and Antilibanus, near to the city, of Heliopolis and the Septuagint and Arabic versions here call this valley the plain of On, which Theodoret interprets of an idol called On. Father Calmet<sup>f32</sup> takes it to be the same with Heliopolis, now called Balbec, or Baalbeck, the valley of Baal; where was a famous temple dedicated to the sun, the magnificent remains whereof are still at this day visible. Balbec is mentioned by the Arabians as the wonder of Syria; and one of their lexicographers says it is three days’ journey from Damascus, where are wonderful foundations, and magnificent vestiges of antiquity, and palaces with marble columns, such as in the whole world are nowhere else to be seen; and such of our European travellers as have visited it are so charmed with what they beheld there, that they are at a loss how to express their admiration. On the southwest of the town, which stands in a “delightful plain” on the west foot of Antilibanus, is a Heathen temple, with the remains of some other edifices, and, among the rest, of a magnificent palace<sup>f33</sup>: Some late travellers<sup>f34</sup> into these parts tell us, that

“upon a rising ground near the northeast extremity of this “plain”, and immediately under Antilibanus, is pleasantly situated the city of Balbec, between Tripoli of Syria, and Damascus, and about sixteen hours distant from each.---This plain of Bocat (they say) might by a little care be made one of the richest and most fertile spots in Syria; for it is more fertile than the celebrated vale of Damascus, and better watered than the rich plains of Esdraelon and Rama. In its present neglected state it produces grain, some good grapes, but very little wood.--It extends in length from Balbec almost to the sea; its direction is from northeast by north, to southwest by south; and its breadth from Libanus to Antilibanus is guessed to be in few places more than twelve miles, or less than six.”

It seems to be the same with Bicatlebanon, or the valley of Lebanon, (<sup><1117></sup>Joshua 11:17); and with that which Strabo<sup>f35</sup> calls the hollow plain; the breadth of which to the sea (he says) is twenty five miles, and the length from the sea to the midland is double that:

*and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden*; that is, the king from his pleasure house; or it may be understood of the name of some place in Syria, where the kings of it used sometimes to be, and had their palace there, called Betheden; and it seems there is still a place near Damascus, on Mount Libanus, called Eden, as the above traveller says; and Calmet<sup>f36</sup> takes it to be the same that is here spoken of:

*and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the Lord*; which last clause is added for the certainty of it, and accordingly it was punctually fulfilled; for in the times of Rezin, which was about fifty years after this prophecy of Amos, though Kimchi says but twenty five, Tiglathpileser king of Assyria came up against Damascus, took it, and carried the people captive to Kir, (<sup><1260></sup>2 Kings 16:9). The Targum and Vulgate Latin version call it Cyrene, which some understand of Cyrene in Egypt; (see <sup><4210></sup>Acts 2:10); but this cannot be, since it was in the hands of the king of Assyria; but rather Kir in Media is meant; (see <sup><2216></sup>Isaiah 22:6); which was under his dominion; and so Josephus says<sup>f37</sup>, that he carried captive the inhabitants of Damascus into Upper Media.

**Ver. 6.** *Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Gaza, etc.*] The chief city of the Philistines, and put for the whole country, and designs the inhabitants of it:

*and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof*; (see Gill on <sup><3008></sup>Amos 1:3”);

*because they carried away captive the whole captivity*; which cannot be understood of the captivity of the whole nation, either of Israel or Judah, who were never carried captive by the Philistines; but of their carrying away all the substance of the house of Jehoram king of Judah, and of all his sons and his wives, and left him not one son but the youngest, (<sup><4217></sup>2 Chronicles 21:17);

*to deliver [them] up to Edom*: or, “to shut them up in Edom”<sup>f38</sup>; which country also revolted from Jehoram, when he and the captains of his chariots going out against them, were corn passed in by them, (<sup><3008></sup>Amos 1:8-10). Some think this refers to the time when Sennacherib invaded Judea, and many of the Jews fled to Palestine for help, but instead of being sheltered were delivered up to the Edomites; but this was in the times of Hezekiah, after Amos had prophesied, and therefore cannot be referred to; and for the same reason this cannot be applied to the Edomites and

Philistines invading and smiting Judah, and carrying them captive, (<sup><487></sup>2 Chronicles 28:17,18).

**Ver. 7.** *But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza*, etc.] An enemy that shall pull down and destroy the walls of it: this was fulfilled in the times of Uzziah, under whom Amos prophesied; and very likely in a very short time after this prophecy, who went out and warred against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gaza, (<sup><486></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6); or else in the times of Hezekiah, who smote the Philistines unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, (<sup><488></sup>2 Kings 18:8); or however in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, (<sup><250></sup>Jeremiah 25:20); as also in the times of Alexander the great, who, after he had taken Tyre, besieged Gaza, and after two months' siege took it, as Diodorus Siculus relates<sup>f39</sup>; the wall being undermined and thrown down, he entered in at the ruins of it, as Curtius<sup>f40</sup> says; in the times of the Maccabees the suburbs of it were burnt by Jonathan, and the place taken:

“61 From whence he went to Gaza, but they of Gaza shut him out; wherefore he laid siege unto it, and burned the suburbs thereof with fire, and spoiled them. 62 Afterward, when they of Gaza made supplication unto Jonathan, he made peace with them, and took the sons of their chief men for hostages, and sent them to Jerusalem, and passed through the country unto Damascus.” (1 Maccabees 11)

*which shall devour the palaces thereof*; the palaces of the governor, and of other great men in it; (the governor of it, when Alexander took it, was Batis;) and the stately towers of it, of which there were many. This city was about fifteen miles south of Askelon, and about four or five north of the river Bezor, and at a small distance from the Mediterranean. It was situated on an eminence, surrounded with the most beautiful and fertile valleys, watered by the above mentioned river, and a number of other springs; and at a further distance encompassed on the inland side with hills, all planted with variety of fine fruit trees. The city itself was strong, both by its situation, and by the stout “walls” and stately “bowers” that surrounded it, and built after the Philistine manner<sup>f41</sup> Arrian also says<sup>f42</sup>, it was a great city built on high ground, and encompassed with a strong wall, and was distant from the sea at least two and a half miles; (see Gill on “<sup><483></sup>Acts 8:26”).

**Ver. 8.** *I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod*, etc.] The same with Azotus, (<sup><480></sup>Acts 8:40); another principal city of the Philistines: this

perhaps was fulfilled when Tartan was sent against it by Sargon king of Assyria, and took it, (<sup><230></sup>Isaiah 20:1); or however in the times of the Maccabees, when Jonathan took it, and burnt it, and the cities round about it; and took their spoils, and burnt the temple of Dagon, and those that fled to it; and what with those that were burnt, and those that fell by the sword, there perished about eight thousand,

“84 But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire. 85 Thus there were burned and slain with the sword well nigh eight thousand men.” (1 Maccabees 10)

this was so strong a place, that, according to Herodotus<sup>f43</sup>, it held out a siege of twenty nine years, under Psammitichus king of Egypt. It was, according to Diodorus Siculus<sup>f44</sup>, thirty four miles, from Gaza before mentioned; and it was about eight or nine from Ashkelon, and fourteen or fifteen from Ekron after mentioned:

*and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon*; another of the five lordships of the Philistines, whose king or governor should be cut off, with the inhabitants of it; this was done by Nebuchadnezzar, (<sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 47:5-7). This place was about fifteen miles from Gaza, Mr. Sandys<sup>f45</sup> says ten, but it was eight or nine miles from Ashdod; and, as Josephus<sup>f46</sup> says, was sixty five miles from Jerusalem. It was the birth place of Herod the great, who from thence is called an Ashkelonite; but the king or governor of it was cut off before his time. It was governed by kings formerly. Justin<sup>f47</sup> makes mention of a king of Ashkelon; according to the Samaritan interpreter, (<sup><011></sup>Genesis 20:1); it is the same with Gerar, which had a king in the times of Abraham; hence a sceptre is here ascribed to it:

*and I will turn mine hand against Ekron*: to destroy that; another of the chief cities of the Philistines. It was about ten miles from Gath; four of the five lordships are here mentioned, but not Gath, which was the fifth; (see <sup><017></sup>1 Samuel 6:17,18); because, as Kimchi says, it was in the hands of Judah. All these places were inhabited by Heathens, and guilty of gross idolatry, which must be one of the transgressions for which they were punished. Gaza was a place much given to idolatry, as it was even in later times; when other neighbouring cities embraced the Christian religion, the inhabitants of it were violent persecutors; hence that saying of Gregory Nazianzen<sup>f48</sup>,

“who knows not the madness of the inhabitants of Gaza?”

here stood the temple of the god Marnas<sup>f49</sup>, which with the Syrians signified the lord of men: at Ashdod or Azotus stood the temple of Dagon, where he was worshipped, (~~1~~1 Samuel 5:2);

“But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire.” (1 Maccabees 10:84)

Near Ashkelon, as Diodorus Siculus<sup>f50</sup> relates, was a large and deep lake, full of fishes; and by it was a temple of a famous goddess, called by the Syrians Derceto, who had a woman’s face, but the rest of her body in the form of a fish; being, as the fable goes, changed into one upon her casting herself into the above lake on a certain occasion; hence the Syrians abstained from fishes, and worshipped them as gods. Herodotus<sup>f51</sup> calls this city a city of Syria, and speaks of a temple dedicated to Urania Venus; and in the Talmud<sup>f52</sup> mention is made of the temple of Zeripha, or of a molten image at Ashkelon; and, besides idolatry, this place seems to have been famous for witchcraft; for it is said<sup>f53</sup> that Simeon ben Shetach hung on one day at Ashkelon fourscore women for being witches; and, at Ekron, Baalzebub or the god of the fly was worshipped:

*and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God;* all the other towns and cities belonging to them, besides those mentioned; which very likely had its accomplishment in the times of the Maccabees, when they fell into the hands of the Jews.

**Ver. 9.** *Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Tyrus,* etc.] Or Tyre, a very ancient city in Palestine; of which (see Gill on “~~230~~ Isaiah 23:1”);

*and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof;* (see Gill on “~~300~~ Amos 1:3”);

*because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom:* such of the Israelites that fell into their hands, or fled to them for shelter, they delivered up to the Edomites, their implacable adversaries, or sold them to them, as they did to the Grecians, (~~200~~ Joel 3:6);

*and remembered not the brotherly covenant;* either the covenant and agreement that should be among brethren, as the Jews and Edomites were

which the Tyrians should have remembered, and persuaded them to live peaceably; and not have delivered the one into the hands of the other, to be used in a cruel manner as slaves: or else the covenant made between Hiram king of Tyre, and David king of Israel, and which was renewed between Hiram and Solomon, on account of which they called each other brethren, (~~1051~~ 2 Samuel 5:11 ~~1001~~ 1 Kings 5:1,12 ~~1093~~ 1 Kings 9:13). The Phoenicians, of whom, the Tyrians were the principal, are noted for being faithless and treacherous<sup>f54</sup>. “Punica fides”<sup>f55</sup> was the same as “French faith” now; the perfidy of Hannibal is well known<sup>f56</sup>. Cicero<sup>f57</sup> says the Carthaginians, which were a colony of the Tyrians, were a deceitful and lying people; and Virgil<sup>f58</sup> calls the Tyrians themselves “Tyrios bilingues”, “double tongued Tyrians”, which, Servius interprets deceitful, as referring more to the mind than to the tongue; and observes from Livy the perfidy of the Phoenicians in general, that they have nothing true nor sacred among them; no fear of God, no regard to an oath, nor any religion; and which are the three or four transgressions for which they are said here they should be punished; for, besides their ill usage of the Jews, their idolatry no doubt came into the account: the god that was worshipped at Tyre was Hercules, by whom was meant the sun, as Macrobius<sup>f59</sup> observes; and as there were several Heathen gods of this name, he whom the Tyrians worshipped is the fourth of the name with Cicero<sup>f60</sup>; the same is the Melicarthus of Sanchoniatho<sup>f61</sup>, which signifies the king of the city, by which Bochart<sup>f62</sup> thinks Tyre is intended. To be a priest of Hercules was the second honour to that of king, as Justin<sup>f63</sup> observes; and so careful were the Tyrians of this deity, that they used to chain him, that he might not depart from them; (see ~~2108~~ Jeremiah 10:4); and a most magnificent temple they had in honour of him, and which, they pretended, was exceeding ancient, as old as the city itself, the antiquity of which they speak extravagantly of Herodotus<sup>f64</sup> says he saw this temple, and which was greatly ornamented, and particularly had two pillars, one of gold, and another of emerald; and inquiring of the priests, they told; him it was built when their city was, ten thousand three hundred years before that time; but according to their own historians<sup>f65</sup>, Hiram, who lived in the days of Solomon, built the temple of Hercules, as well as that of Astarte; for though she is called the goddess of the Sidonians, she was also worshipped by the Tyrians; as he also ornamented the temple of Jupiter Olympius, and annexed it to the city, which deity also it seems had worship paid it in this place.

**Ver. 10.** *But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus,* etc.] An enemy to

destroy the walls of it: this was done either by Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians, in the times of Eulaeus king of the Tyrians, of whose expedition against it Josephus<sup>f66</sup> makes mention: or by Nebuchadnezzar, who took it after thirteen years' siege of it, in the time of Ithobalus<sup>f67</sup>: or by Alexander, by whom it was taken, as Curtius<sup>f68</sup> relates, after it had been besieged seven months:

*which shall devour the palaces thereof*; of the governor, the great men and merchants in it. Alexander ordered all to be slain but those that fled to the temples, and fire to be put to the houses; which made it a most desolate place, as the above historian has recorded.

**Ver. 11.** *Thus saith the Lord for three transgressions of Edom*, etc.] Or the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, whose name was Edom, so called from the red pottage he sold his birthright for to his brother Jacob:

*and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof*; (see Gill on "~~3008~~ Amos 1:3"). Among these three or four transgressions, not only what follows is included, but their idolatry; for that the Edomites had their idols is certain, though what they were cannot be said; (see ~~4254~~ 2 Chronicles 25:14);

*because he did pursue his brother with the sword*: not Esau his brother Jacob; for though he purposed in his heart to slay him, which obliged him to flee; and frightened him, upon his return, by meeting him with four hundred men; yet he never pursued him with the sword; but his posterity, the Edomites, not only would not suffer the Israelites their brethren to pass by their borders, but came out against them with a large army, (~~0408~~ Numbers 20:18-20); and in the times of Ahaz they came against Judah with the sword, and smote them, and carried away captives, (~~4287~~ 2 Chronicles 28:17); and were at the taking and destruction of Jerusalem, and assisted and encouraged in it, (~~4907~~ Psalm 137:7 ~~3011~~ Obadiah 1:11-14); though to these latter instances the prophet could have no respect, because they were after his time:

*and did cast off all pity*; bowels of compassion, natural affection, such as ought to be between brethren, even all humanity: or "corrupted", or "destroyed all pity"<sup>f69</sup>; showed none, but extinguished all sparks of it, as their behaviour to the Israelites showed, when upon their borders in the wilderness:

*and his anger did tear perpetually*; it was deeply rooted in them; it began in their first father Esau, on account of the blessing and birthright Jacob got from him; and it descended from father to son in all generations, and was vented in a most cruel manner, like the ravening of a lion, or any other beast of prey:

*and kept his wrath for ever*; reserved it in their breasts till they had an opportunity of showing it, as Esau their father proposed to do, (<sup><024></sup>Genesis 27:41).

**Ver. 12.** *But I will send a fire upon Teman*, etc.] A principal city of Edom or Idumea, so called from Teman a grandson of Esau, (<sup><031></sup>Genesis 36:11). Jerom<sup>f70</sup> says there was in his time a village called Theman, five miles distant from the city Petra, and had a Roman garrison; and so says Eusebius<sup>f71</sup>; who places it in Arabia Petraea; it is put for the whole country; it signifies the south. So the Targum renders it,

“a fire in the south.”

The “fire” signifies an enemy that should be sent into it, and destroy it: this was Nebuchadnezzar, who, as Josephus<sup>f72</sup> says, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem led his army into Coelesyria, and took it; and fought against the Ammonites and Moabites, and very probably at the same time against the Edomites:

*which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah*; another famous city of the Edomites; there was one of this name in Moab; either there were two cities so called, one in Edom, and another in Moab; or rather this city lay, as Jarchi says, between Edom and Moab; and so sometimes is placed to one, and sometimes to another, its it might belong to the one and to the other, according to the event of war. It is the same with Bezer in the wilderness, appointed a Levitical city, and a city of refuge, by Joshua, (<sup><018></sup>Joshua 20:8); and belonged to the tribe of Reuben; but being on the borders of that tribe, and of Moab and Edom, it is ascribed to each, as they at different times made themselves masters of it. It is the same with Bostra, which Ptolemy<sup>f73</sup> places in Arabia Petraea; and being on the confines of Arabia Deserts, and surrounded on all sides with wild deserts, it is commonly spoken of as situated in a wilderness, Jerom<sup>f74</sup> speaks of it as a city of Arabia in the desert, to the south, looking to Damascus; and, according to the Persian<sup>f75</sup> geographer, it is four days’ journey southward from Damascus; and Eusebius places it at the distance of twenty four miles from



Adraa or Edrei. The destruction of this place is prophesied of by Jeremiah, (~~<1483>~~1 Kings 48:24 ~~<1493>~~1 Kings 49:13); and perhaps these prophecies were accomplished when Nebuchadnezzar made war with the Ammonites and Edomites, as before observed; or however in the times of the Maccabees, when Judas Maccabeus took this city, put all the males to the sword, plundered it, and then set fire to it, which literally fulfilled this prophecy,

“Hereupon Judas and his host turned suddenly by the way of the wilderness unto Bosora; and when he had won the city, he slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned the city with fire,” (1 Maccabees 5:28)

It was afterwards rebuilt, and became a considerable city; in the time of the above Persian geographer<sup>f76</sup>, it had a very strong castle belonging to it, a gate twenty cubits high, and one of the largest basins or pools of water in all the east. In the fourth century there were bishops of this place, which assisted in the councils of Nice, Antioch, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, as Reland<sup>f77</sup> observes; though he thinks that Bostra is not to be confounded with the Bezer of Reuben, or with the Bozra of Moab and Edom; though they seem to be all one and the same place.

**Ver. 13.** *Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of the children of Ammon*, etc.] These are the descendants of Benammi, a son of Lots, by one of his daughters, (~~<0198>~~Genesis 19:38); are distinguished from the Ammonites, (~~<4301>~~2 Chronicles 20:1); were near neighbours of the Jews, but great enemies to them, though akin:

*and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof*; (see Gill on “~~<3003>~~Amos 1:3”). Among these transgressions, for which God would punish these people, are to be reckoned, not only their ill treatment of the Gileadites after mentioned, but other sins, which are all included in this number, and particularly their idolatry; for idolaters they were, though the children of Lot; and originally might have had better instruction, from which they departed. Moloch or Milcom, which signifies a king, was the abomination or idol of the Ammonites, (~~<1105>~~1 Kings 11:5,7). The image of this idol, according to the Jews, had seven chapels, and he was within them; and his face was the face of a calf or ox; and his hands were stretched out as a man stretches out his hands to receive anything of his friend; and they set it on fire within, for it was hollow; and everyone according to his offering went into these chapels; he that offered a fowl went into the first chapel; he that offered a sheep, into the second chapel; if

a lamb, into the third; a calf, into the fourth; a bullock, into the fifth; an ox, into the sixth; but he that offered his son, they brought him into the seventh; and they put, the child before Moloch, and kindled a fire in the inside of him, until his hands were like fire; and then they took the child, and put him within its arms; and beat upon tabrets or drums, that the cry of the child might not be heard by the father<sup>f78</sup>. Benjamin of Tudela<sup>f79</sup> reports, that in his time, at Gibal, the border of the children of Ammon, a day's journey from Tripoli, was found the remains of a temple of the children of Ammon; and an idol of theirs sitting upon a throne; and it was made of stone, and covered with gold; and there were two women sitting, one on its right hand, and the other on its left; and before it an altar, on which they used to sacrifice and burn incense to it, as in the times of the children of Ammon. Chemosh also was worshipped by the Ammonites, (<sup><47124></sup>Judges 11:24); which was also the god of the Moabites; of which (see Gill on <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:7");

*because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border*; this Hazael king of Syria did, according to Elisha's prophecy; and very likely the children of Ammon might join with him, inasmuch as they bordered on the countries which he smote, (<sup><1182></sup>2 Kings 8:12 <sup><1202></sup>10:32,33). This was an instance of shocking cruelty and inhumanity, to destroy at once the innocent and the impotent, though frequently done by enemies, (<sup><1256></sup>2 Kings 15:16 <sup><2836></sup>Hosea 13:16). The reason of it was not only that they might possess their land, but keep it when they had got it; there being no heir to claim it, or molest them in the possession of it; (see <sup><2401></sup>Jeremiah 49:1); though some read the words, "because they divided, or cleaved the mountain of Gilead"<sup>f80</sup>; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi, though they mention the other sense: this they did to get into the land of Gilead, as Hannibal cut through the Alps; or rather to remove the borders of it, and lay it even with their own, and so enlarge theirs; which, as Kimchi says, was a very great iniquity, being one of the curses written in the law, (<sup><4577></sup>Deuteronomy 27:17); thus one sin leads on to another. Some by "mountains" understand towers or fortified cities as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; such as were built on mountains, which sense is approved by Gussenius<sup>f81</sup>.

**Ver. 14.** *But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah*, etc.] Which was the metropolis of the children of Ammon, and their royal city, (<sup><1026></sup>2 Samuel 12:26). This is to be understood of an enemy that should destroy it, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar; or of war being kindled and raised in their

country; this place being put for the whole; (see Gill on “<sup><240D></sup>Jeremiah 49:2”);

*and it shall devour the palaces thereof*; the palaces of the king, and his nobles:

*with shouting in the day of battle*; with the noise of soldiers when they make their onset, or have gained the victory; (see <sup><240D></sup>Jeremiah 49:2);

*with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind*; denoting that this judgment should come suddenly, and at an unawares, with great force, irresistibly; and a tempest added to fire, if literally taken, must spread the desolation more abundantly, and make it more terrible.

**Ver. 15.** *And their king shall go into captivity*, etc.] Not only the common people that are left of the sword shall be carried captive, but their king also. This was, Baalis their last king, who was accessory to the murder of Gedaliah, (<sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 40:14); whom the king of Babylon had set over the remnant of the Jews left in Judea; which might provoke him to send Nebuzaradan his general against him, who put his country to fire and sword, destroyed his chief city Rabbah, and carried him and his nobles into captivity. Some understand this of Milchom, or Moloch, the god of the children of Ammon, who should be so far from saving them, that he himself should be taken and carried off; it being usual with the conquerors to carry away with them the gods of the nations they conquered; (see <sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 48:7 <sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 49:3). So Ptolemy Euergetes king of Egypt, having conquered Callinicus king of Syria, carried captive into Egypt the gods he then took, (<sup><2710B></sup>Daniel 11:8); and it was usual with the Romans to carry the gods of the nations captive which they conquered, and to carry them in their triumphs as such; so Marcellus was blamed for rendering the city of Rome envied and hated by other nations, because not men only, but the gods also, were carried in pomp as captives: and of Paulus Aemylius it is said, that the first day of his triumph was scarce sufficient for the passing along of the captive statues, pictures, and colosses, which were drawn on two hundred and fifty chariots<sup>f82</sup>:

*he and his princes together, saith the Lord*: which is repeated, and especially the last words added, for the confirmation of it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, “their priests and their princes”, as in (<sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 49:3). This was fulfilled five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, as Josephus<sup>f83</sup> relates.