

The Slave Traders: Amos 1:6-8 Explained

Amos 1:6-8

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom: 7 But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: 8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

INTRODUCTION

Let me ask you a question. What is a human life worth? Can you put a price tag on it? Imagine walking into an auction. People are bidding. "\$500. \$1,000. \$5,000." Then you realize. They aren't bidding on horses. They aren't bidding on land.

They're bidding on a little girl. They are bidding on human beings. Families are standing there crying. Husbands are separated from wives. Children are ripped from their parents. And every time the hammer falls, another family disappears.

A little girl is sold as a slave. Can you imagine standing there watching that happen? God could. Because that's exactly the kind of evil Amos is talking about.

I. GOD SAW THE CRIME

Amos 1:6

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom:

Let's begin by understanding what happened. Who is Gaza? Gaza wasn't one man. It was one of the five major cities of the Philistines, the long-time enemies of Israel. During battles and raids, the Philistines didn't simply defeat armies. They captured people.

Notice the words, "**they carried away captive the whole captivity.**" That means entire groups of people were taken away.

Imagine soldiers marching into your neighborhood. They knock down every door. They don't just arrest soldiers. They take fathers. They take mothers. They take grandparents. They take little children. By sunset your entire neighborhood is gone. Homes sit empty. Children's toys are still lying in the yard. Meals are still sitting on tables. But the people are gone. That's the picture Amos paints.

Then notice the end of the verse. "**To deliver them up to Edom.**" Who is Edom? Genesis tells us, Esau is Edom. Jacob and Esau were brothers. That means the descendants of Esau were receiving the descendants of Jacob. Instead of helping their relatives... they accepted them as slaves. Imagine your own cousins being sold into slavery... and your family becoming the buyers.

What a tragedy. God saw every frightened child. Every crying mother. Every terrified father. Nothing escaped His eyes. **People are not merchandise.** But this world today treats people as merchandise.

II. GOD VALUES PEOPLE

Imagine walking into a warehouse. Boxes are stacked everywhere. Every box has a shipping label. Destination. Weight. Contents. Now imagine one crate begins crying. You open it. Inside is a little boy. Another crate contains a young mother. Another contains an elderly man. That's the horror of Amos 1.

Human beings became shipments. Families became cargo. People became something to transport from one nation to another. God never intended people to be treated that way. From the very beginning, man was created in the image of God. Every person you meet bears God's image. Every child. Every adult. Every elderly person. Every rich person. Every poor person.

When people forget that, terrible things happen. History is filled with examples. Whenever one group stops seeing another group as human, cruelty always follows. The problem begins when people stop seeing people... as people. **People are not merchandise.**

Imagine a little boy drawing a picture for his dad. To everyone else... it's just a piece of paper. Crayons. Stick figures. Messy lines. Somebody else might throw it in the trash. But not his father. Why? Because it came from someone he loves. The value isn't in the paper. The value is in the person.

That's how God looks at people. This world measures people by money. By success. By education. By beauty. By popularity. Some of you might look at others and judge their importance by those things. Well, God doesn't. God sees every person as someone He created.

That's why the Bible says man was made in the image of God. Every person... every color... every nationality... every child... every elderly person... every disabled person... every poor person... every rich person... has value because God made them. It's not all those other things.

That's why what Gaza did was so evil. They didn't just capture people. They treated God's image bearers, HUMANS, like cargo. They forgot the value of people. God never did.

For example, in today's world, people value their pets, especially their dumb dogs as more valuable than a human. They will choose a dog over a human. This is complete and utter sickness. Jesus values humans far above animals.

Mark 5:8-13

For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. 9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. 10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

Humans shouldn't be treated as livestock. Humans shouldn't be placed below dogs. Jesus chose to save one man over 2,000 swine. God values people. This world doesn't. And this world is designed to continue to lower the value of a person's life.

Murder. Taking someone's life no longer leads to the death penalty or life for life. Many people do several years in prison and they are out again. We can clearly see the way a human life is becoming of less value in this world. But not to God. God changes not. People will almost certainly choose money over a human life.

Would you murder your wife for 1 million dollars? People answer yes. Will you kill your Dad for 10 million dollars? People answer yes. Selfishness is taking over this world.

Do you know why murder is so evil? Because it destroys someone made in God's image. Why is kidnapping so evil? Because you're stealing someone made in God's image. Why is human trafficking so evil? Because you're selling someone made in God's image. Why is abuse so evil? Because you're harming someone made in God's image. Why transgenderism is so evil? Because you're destroying what God created. He made you good. Everything comes back to Genesis 1.

III. THE WORLD STILL PUTS PRICE TAGS ON PEOPLE

Don't think Amos is ancient history. This still happens today. Not always with chains. Not always with slave markets. But people are still treated like merchandise. Think about abortion. How many babies have been aborted because someone decided that child was an inconvenience?

Sometimes money is part of the decision. Sometimes career. Sometimes lifestyle. Sometimes fear. Whatever the reason, a human life is treated as disposable. God doesn't see a disposable baby. He sees a child He created.

Think about human trafficking. Millions of people around the world are still bought and sold. Think about the pornography industry. People become products. Think about drug dealers. They know drugs destroy lives. Yet they keep selling. Why? Because people become profit instead of neighbors. Think about scammers who target elderly widows. They don't see a grandmother. They see a bank account.

Whenever people stop seeing people as people, evil follows. That's exactly what happened in Amos. Now, did God standby and do nothing here? Let's see what happens.

IV. GOD DOESN'T OVERLOOK EVIL

Amos 1:7-8

But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: 8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

God finally speaks here. He says, "BUT I." I love those words. Man forgot. God didn't. Man ignored. God didn't. Man profited from trading slaves. God judged. Imagine that little girl from the introduction. Everyone forgot her. The merchants forgot. The soldiers forgot. The buyers forgot. But God never forgot. He knew her name. He saw every tear. He heard every cry. He watched every injustice. That's our God.

Imagine the leaders of Gaza who are doing these evil things. Their walls are high. Their armies are strong. Their cities are wealthy. They probably thought, "No one can stop us." Then God speaks. "I will. I wills STOP you."

Many times, people who are doing evil, think they are invincible. But, they don't realize they are the weakest because God is watching and will bring judgment. The most evil people are the weakest people because they don't have God with them. When you want to sin, you are at your weakest.

Notice how specific God is when He prophesies the future. Gaza. Ashdod. Ashkelon. Ekron. God names city after city. No one escapes His judgment. Sometimes people think evil has won. Sometimes wicked people seem untouchable. Sometimes justice never comes in this life. But Amos reminds us of something important. God keeps perfect records.

No tear is forgotten. No crime disappears. No injustice escapes His attention.

Imagine a courtroom where every piece of evidence is preserved forever. Every witness tells the truth. Every lie is exposed. Every secret is revealed. That's God's courtroom. He never forgets. He never overlooks evil. He never judges unfairly.

CONCLUSION

How do you see people? Do you see customers? Employees? Neighbors? Political opponents? Strangers? Or do you see souls created in the image of God?

The Philistines looked at people and saw something to move, trade, and profit from. God looked at those same people and saw fathers. Mothers. Children. Families.

Remember the marketplace we talked about at the beginning. Imagine hearing that little girl crying as she's carried away. The crowd walks away. The merchants count their money. The soldiers celebrate.

But one Person never looked away. God. He saw every tear. Every cry. Every terrified child. Every broken family. And He said, "I will not turn away the punishment thereof."

If you want to take advantage of people and treat them as your very own merchandise, God is watching. For example, people use children around here for money. Mom's will get their children labeled as disabled when there's absolutely nothing wrong with them so they will get more money from the government.

Mom's will stop their daughters from getting married so they don't lose their Section 8 money or their disability money. They then take the money and go buy more alcohol and marijuana. Trading their children for money. And they get mad at me for speaking the truth. I don't care. get mad. God sees. Humans are used as merchandise. They don't care about those children. They care about the money. They care about themselves. Wickedness. And God knows.

The God who created people will always value people. So never measure a person's worth by what they own. Never measure a person's worth by what they can do for you. Never measure a person's worth by their position in life. Every person you meet has been created by God. Treat them that way.

People are not merchandise. How do you look at people? Do you look at someone and judge them to see if you can profit from them? That's wickedness. If you do that, it's time to change.

Let's pray.