

Have You Heard the Gospel? Danger!  
Amos 1:11-2:3

January 22, 2006

SERMON NOTES

- A. Introduction – what are the advantages of having a godly heritage?
- B. Context
  - 1. today’s passage is part of ...
  - 2. it deals with the nations ...
- C. Edom (also called Seir) ..... Amos 1:11-12
  - 1. was descended from ... what was he like?
  - 2. Deuteronomy 2:4-5, 22: God had given to Edom ...
  - 3. God was judging Edom because ...
  - 4. did their heritage help them in the face of God’s judgement?
- D. Ammon ..... Amos 1:13-15
  - 1. along with Moab had descended from ... what was he like? (2 Peter 2:7-8)
  - 2. Deuteronomy 2:19, 21; God had given to Ammon ...
  - 3. God was judging Ammon because ...
  - 4. did their heritage help them in the face of God’s judgement?

- E. Moab ..... Amos 2:1-3
  - 1. God was not judging them
    - a. for their hiring (Number 22) of ...
    - b. for their ...
  - 2. but for their ...
  - 3. from Acts 17:30-31 we learn ...
  - 4. did their heritage help them in the face of God’s judgement?
- F. Conclusion
  - 1. (Canada’s original name and motto from Psalm 72:8) – A question to ponder about: “Does God still judge nations?” – consider Proverbs 14:34 ...
  - 2. What about having Christian parents, grandparents? – consider Luke 12:47-48 ...

A. Introduction – Heritage

1. When McCluskey married and started a family, he decided to invest one hour a day in prayer, because he wanted his kids to follow Christ. After a time, he expanded his prayers to include his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
  - a. his two daughters committed their lives to Christ, marrying men who went into full-time ministry.
  - b. his grandchildren were four girls and one boy. Each girl married a minister, and the boy became a pastor.
  - c. his first two great-grandchildren were boys, these two cousins choosing the same college, becoming roommates.
  - d. one cousin decided to go into the ministry, the other not. He undoubtedly felt some pressure to continue the family legacy, but he chose instead to pursue his interest in psychology. He earned his doctorate and eventually wrote books for parents that became best sellers. That man, James Dobson, through "Focus on the Family" speaks God's truth to millions each day.
  - e. George McCluskey left a godly heritage to his family -{2}.
2. One of my treasured possessions is an old piece of paper on which the family tree of my paternal grandmother is drawn out. Her maiden name was Lilian Allen. At the very root of this family tree is found one named Philip Allen, born circa 1580 with the comment on it, "John, great-grandson of this Philip, on enquiry at Stone Easton was told by a person who said he knew him that he was as upright a man as ever lived in the place." My great-grandfather, another John Allen, re-wrote as poems the collects, that is the opening prayers, found in the Book of Common prayer. My grandparents, godly people, had to suffer through bringing me up. I have since learned to be grateful for their heritage.
3. Yes, a godly heritage is a precious thing. Be thankful those of you who have Christian parents and resolve within yourselves that you will likewise leave such a heritage to your children. But, a godly heritage is not enough in itself to make one right with God: each generation must make its own decision and commitment that they will follow God. The three nations of which we have read today had a godly heritage, but, they

had early abandoned it to pursue their own desires.

4. A couple of years ago, General Omar Bradley said, "America today is running on the momentum of a Godly ancestry, and when that momentum runs down, God help America." <sup>{3}</sup>. This could as well be said of most western countries; be said of Canada.

## B. Context

1. the three pronouncements of judgement we read today
  - a. are part of such pronouncements against 8 nations
  - b. last week we looked three judgements pronounced against wholly heathen, pagan nations
    - (A) Syria (or, Aram) and its capital, Damascus
    - (B) Philistia and one of its principal cities, Gaza
    - (C) and Phoenicia and one of its principal cities, Tyre
    - (D) and we saw the hopeless state of those who have never heard the truth; of man without the gospel, the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection which brings salvation to mankind; to those who will receive it
  - c. and now we come to these three judgements against
    - (A) Edom (Seir or Teman) and its "capital", Bozrah
    - (B) Ammon and its "capital", Rabbah
    - (C) and Moab and its "capital", Kerioth
2. this prophet of God, this Amos, through whom these messages were delivered, was but a shepherd in a poor part of the nation of Judah, and, here he was being sent to the rich, affluent northern kingdom of Israel with a warning:
  - a. and when the king and false priests heard the judgements against the neighbouring Syria, Philistia and Phoenicia, they were quite ready to listen
  - b. so when Amos continued to speak judgements against Edom, Ammon and Moab, there would be an approving cry, "Give it to them, Amos! It's what they deserve!"
  - c. yet behind the message to these nations there is one to us

## C. Edom or Seir

### 1. is referred to as Israel's brother

- a. for the people of this nation were descendants, in part, of Esau the brother of Jacob (whose other name was Israel)
- b. now, you will remember Esau: he was a twin with Jacob, but the older twin, and he was bargained out of his birth-right and tricked out of his blessing by younger Jacob
  - (A) yet if you had been choosing friends, you would have much preferred, I suspect, Esau over Jacob; he was the sort of person with whom you could spend a very pleasant evening and would cook you up a steak on the Barby which was really delicious
  - (B) yes, he could get angry when he was tricked, but and when Jacob returned from his flight, Esau welcomed him with open arms with old differences forgotten
- c. and Esau was, as Isaac's son, and Abraham's grandson, a recipient of the blessing of God upon those men; of Esau God instructed Moses with these words, "... You will pass through the territory of your brothers the sons of Esau who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful; do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, even *as little as a footstep* because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession." (Deut 2:4-5, NAS) and in fact, as verse 22 of that chapter tells us, it was God who defeated the Horites who possessed that land so that Esau had it.
- d. yes, Edom had a godly heritage, Abraham the father of the faithful as an ancestor

### 2. But Esau made disastrous marriages, marrying Hittite women first, which distressed his parents greatly, and later he married into the family of Seir, an important man in that part of the country. The listing of the family members of Esau and of Seir from which we find out about this marriage is to be found in Genesis 36. And with these marriages, as had happened so often with men and women who profess Christ and then married unbelievers, any religious feelings which he may have had were abandoned, and his descendants became bitter enemies of the children of Israel

- a. as Amos states "*Because he (Edom) pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked,*" (Am 1:11 NIV)
- b. this may refer to the war we mentioned last week where they sold the Jewish captives as slaves through

Philistia and Phoenicia, or, it may just as well be descriptive of the antagonistic activities the committed against the Jews

c. but they were bitter, irreconcilable enemies and in their hatred they knew and showed no mercy

3. so, despite their godly heritage, their origin as part of the family of Abraham, because they had not acted on that knowledge, God would send His judgement upon them. Have you heard the gospel and done nothing? ... danger!

#### D. Ammon

1. now Ben-ammi (from whom descended the people of Ammon) and Moab were half-brothers,

a. so we need only tell of their shared heritage once

b. descendants of Lot, in a story that we need not repeat here

(A) but suffice it to say, Lot had stayed too long in Sodom

(B) his wife couldn't resist turning back, and was changed into a pillar of salt there near the Dead Sea

(C) and his daughters had absorbed too much of the culture of Sodom as became evident in their actions and in the two sons that they had

c. yet, these two nations, Ammon and Moab were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew, described in 2 Peter 2:7-8 (NAS): "... righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day with *their* lawless deeds)"

d. and these two nations adopted gods of their own making, Chemosh and Milcom (or Molech) in preference to Yahweh

2. Yet Ammon, though not part of the covenant nation of Israel, had received blessing from God, as Moses as also instructed by God, "And when you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not harass them nor provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession." (Deuteronomy 2:19; NAS) and verse 21 tells us that it was the LORD who defeated the mighty people who lived there to give that land to Ammon

### 3. and Ammon's wickedness was great

- a. we will not read again that terrible verse of their atrocity against the people of Gilead in the Trans-Jordan, but they committed two transgressions at the same time
  - (A) in murdering defenceless women
  - (B) and slaughtering their unborn babies
  - (C) all this being so that they could enlarge their territory by a few square miles, all for political aggrandizement, so that their king could rule a few more acres of land
- b. so their king and princes are going to go into exile – the prophet Jeremiah (49:3) repeats this warning over a century later, and which appears to have been fulfilled about five years after Nebuchadnezzar razed Jerusalem

4. so, despite their descent from godly Lot, Ammon is not spared, for they had not acted on the knowledge they had; on account of their transgressions, God is sending His judgement. Have you heard the gospel and done nothing? ... danger!

### E. Moab

1. now Moab inherited, along with Ammon, the heritage from their common ancestor, Lot, Abraham's nephew, which we have already described and resided in a land adjacent to that of their brother, Ammon
2. it is interesting to note that they are not reprimanded for their treatment of the covenant people of God, the Jews
  - a. God could have condemned them for their hiring that money-loving prophet, Bala'am the son of Be'or, to curse Israel as it was entering the promised land – which curse God turned instead into a blessing
  - b. and because, throughout their history they frequently warred against and sometimes, as in the period of the Judges, ruled over the Jews, God could have condemned them for all these wars; yet it was not for these that God is bringing judgment upon them
  - c. but rather that at one point in their history – in a detail that I do not believe is to be discovered elsewhere in the Bible – the bones of the king of Edom were dug up (that is what the words used here imply) and burnt in an act of derision and sacrilege against the Edomites.

- d. now, you might wonder, with God declaring judgement against Edom, why He should bother about such an act against the king of Edom
3. well, God's concept of justice is much larger than ours, and this people, Moab knew about God and His statutes even though they were not part of His covenant people. And this was an abhorrent act on their part against a brother nation and its king. God is judging this nation, a nation which knew of the truth, by a stricter standard.
- a. this same principle is to be found in Paul's address to the Greeks in Athens after he saw all the idols there
- b. concerning the fact that they didn't know the "Unknown God" to which they raised an altar, Paul says: "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Ac 17:30-31; NAS)
- c. so now that Christ has died for man's sin – that is the nub of the gospel – for those who have heard this message there is danger, until they obey in repentance and faith.
4. so, despite their descent from godly Lot, Moab is not spared but rather God judges this people by a higher standard for they knew the truth and had not acted upon it. Have you heard the gospel and done nothing? ... danger!

## F. Conclusion

1. Now, the first lesson that we can take from this passage is, to me, very clear. These were not God's covenant people, though they could look back to Abraham one way or another as their forbear, but God exercised judgement upon them as nations, and particularly so because they knew the truth, but they had turned away from it as nations as their actions made evident. Let's bring this a little closer home: at one time our country was called the Dominion of Canada and its motto was taken from Psalm 72:8 (AV): "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." But, we have abandoned all that, and God will judge this nation more stringently because it has known the truth unless individually its people repent and turn to God. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov 14:34 AV)

2. The other lesson is just as important: a godly heritage, having a Christian family, is a tremendous and wonderful advantage: but it doesn't deliver anyone from God's punishment which rests on every unbeliever, on every person who refuses to accept Jesus Christ as his or her own personal Saviour.
  - a. indeed, from Christ's own words concerning punishment, "... that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many *lashes*, but the one who did not know it and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but a few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." (Luke 12:47-48 NAS) describes the increased judgement danger to those who know the truth
  - b. so, if you have heard the gospel and have not responded by turning to Christ in sorrow for your sin and accepting His gift of eternal life, you remain in great danger!
  - c. can you truly enter this morning into the singing of our closing hymn, "My Hope is in the Lord"?



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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. Adapted from article by Loyal J. Martin, Newton, Kansas, in Leadership, Vol. 16, no. 4, June 2, 2004; source: A Dose of Inspiration – Kerux illustrations #26692
3. Rev. Brett Blair’s Illustrations – Kerux illustrations #19480