

Amos 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:

Analysis

After pronouncing judgment on Damascus, Amos turns to Gaza: "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." The formula "for three... and for four" indicates overflowing, complete sin. Gaza, a Philistine city, engaged in human trafficking—capturing entire populations and selling them to Edom (another enemy of Israel). This crime against humanity provoked divine judgment. The phrase "I will not turn away the punishment" (lo' ashivenu) means God's decree is irrevocable. This teaches several truths:

1. God holds all nations accountable for crimes against humanity
2. human trafficking particularly provokes His wrath
3. participating in others' oppression makes one guilty
4. God's patience has limits—sin reaches fullness and judgment falls.

Historical Context

The Philistines, ancient Israel's coastal neighbors, frequently raided Israelite territory, capturing people for slave trade. Selling captives to Edom compounded the crime—Edom should have shown kinship loyalty (they descended from Esau, Jacob's brother) but instead participated in enslaving their relatives. This betrayal

earned particular condemnation. Amos's judgment oracles follow a pattern: six surrounding nations first, then Israel and Judah—demonstrating God's impartial justice before focusing on His own people's greater accountability.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God's fierce opposition to human trafficking inform Christian anti-trafficking efforts?
2. What does it mean to participate in others' oppression, and how might we unknowingly do so?
3. How does God's impartial judgment of all nations challenge nationalistic presumption?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל	צָר	פְּשָׁעֵי	שְׁלֹשָׁה	עַל	יְהוָה	אָמַר	כֹּה
H5921	H6865	H6588	H7969	H5921	H3068	H559	H3541
	of	transgressions	For three		the LORD	Thus saith	

עַל	אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ	לֹא	אַרְבָּעָה
H5921	H7725	H3808	H702
	I will not turn away		and for four

לְאֶדּוֹם	שְׁלֵמָה	גָּל וְ	הַסִּגְיָה
H123	H8003	H1546	H5462
to Edom	the whole	captivity	the punishment thereof because they delivered up

אֲחִימ:	בְּרִית	זָכַר וְ	וְלֹא
H251	H1285	H2142	H3808
not the brotherly	covenant	and remembered	

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 5:11 (Parallel theme): And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.

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