



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Amos 1:6 – 2:3

“God, the Nation and Adolf Eichmann”

TRANSCRIPT

Returning again to the first chapter of Amos’s prophecy, and we are reading for the Scripture reading verse 6 through chapter 2 in verse 3. Amos 1, verse 6 through Amos 2, verse 3. The prophet is giving a series of oracles that are addressed to the nations that are about the Northern Kingdom. And then of course, if you look ahead a little bit, you will notice that he will have one for the Northern Kingdom after one from Judah, the Southern Kingdom. But we’re reading from verse 6 after he has just given the oracle,

“Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they deported an entire population To deliver it up to Edom.”

Now, evidently when he says they deported an entire population, he means not everyone without exception but all classes of the society were involved: men, women, children, parents, et cetera.

“So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza, And it will consume her citadels. I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I

will even unleash My power upon Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish,
Says the Lord GOD.”

Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron are cities of the Philistines. In the ninth verse, he gives
an oracle against Tyre,

“Thus says the LORD, ‘For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not
revoke its punishment, Because they delivered up an entire population to Edom And did
not remember the covenant of brotherhood.’ [Or literally, brothers.] “So I will send fire
upon the wall of Tyre, And it will consume her citadels.”

Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not
revoke its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled
his compassions; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever. So I
will send fire upon Teman, And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah."

Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for
four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they ripped open the pregnant women of
Gilead In order to enlarge their borders. So I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah, And
it will consume her citadels Amid war cries on the day of battle, And a storm on the day
of tempest. Their king will go into exile, He and his princes together," says the LORD.”

Notice over and over again, thus says the Lord. Almost fore and aft, like you cite
verses, if you’re a navigator, and it’s obviously an attempt on the part of the Lord through
the prophet to lay special stress upon the fact that this is prophecy that comes from God
and represents his mind. Chapter 2 verse 1,

“Thus says the LORD, ‘For three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not
revoke its punishment, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime. So I

will send fire upon Moab, And it will consume the citadels of Kerioth; And Moab will die amid tumult, With war cries and the sound of a trumpet. I will also cut off the judge from her midst And slay all her princes with him,’ says the LORD.”

One final comment, a couple of weeks ago I referred to the expression which we have over and over here for three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its punishment, this is an expression that’s not to be taken literally as we would understand it today. It’s a numeric expression that’s designed to represent simply the fact that there have been numerous transgressions, but finally one is, as we would say, the last straw, and that’s the point of the this idiom.

May the Lord bless the reading of his word, and let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] The most celebrated trial of an individual in modern times came to an end December the 15th, 1961, with the words, [Hebrew indistinct] “The court sentences you to death.” The defendant was Lieutenant Colonel Adolph Eichmann. Remember the SS Nazi Chief of Gestapo’s Jewish Affairs sections. He sent to death a population almost equal to that of Chicago and Los Angeles. He was apprehended in Buenos Aires by Israeli’s agents. We all remember it who were in this country at that time, May 1960, kidnapped by them to Israel to stand trial. The trial took four months. It was on the front pages of our paper almost every day. One hundred and eleven witnesses were called in the trial. It has been called, in some of our encyclopedias, the most harrowing ever held.

The irony of the trial of Eichmann was particularly captured by the way in which he was brought before the jury. He was tried before the people whose family members he had exterminated in Europe. He was tried in a glass box. A seven-branched menorah was behind him -- the candlestick, the symbol of Israel. And so he was tried right in front of the symbol of that which he sought to bury by his crimes.

He used every legal means possible to escape. The trial took one hundred twenty-one sessions from April the 11th to December the 15th. His defense, reminiscent of the defense of the president of Austria just recently was this, “I did not will the murder of human beings. The mass slaughter was solely the responsibility of the political leaders. I was in the, ‘iron grip of orders,’ unquote. Eichmann, we who are were living and reading the papers twenty-five years ago, was a symbol of a man who probably practiced injustice about as significantly as anyone of the age. “He was the sort of man,” said Patrick O’Donovan in the *London Observer*, “who sent an urgent message across Europe, when he heard that a dozen Jews had obtained passports, who found a thousand here who had been overlooked, who ordered that mercy granted there to one should be cancelled, who campaigned and proselytized and intrigued in order to get his father. He arranged the movement of millions. A movement that he knew led only to death.

We have seen some of the same kind of thing in just the past year or so with the apprehension of another one of that same kind Joseph Mengele also in Latin America. Eichmann was hanged on May the 31st, 1962, and I think many, many citizens in the United States and all over the western world felt when he was hanged that it’s too bad that he could only be hanged.

Of course, when we think of things from the standpoint from the word of God, that’s only the beginning for sorrows for a man like Eichmann. Surprisingly there were many protests. Even Martin Buber, well-known Jewish philosopher, an Israeli, protested. Many protests came from Latin America which only reveal, it seems to me, the extent of the support of injustice in the societies of the nations of this earth.

Does the Lord really concern himself with pagan nations? Well, if you read the New Testament, you might lose that particular -- the answer to that particular question. You might think that in the present day he’s not so much concerned with the Pagan nations. Does this have relevance today, the things that Amos writes about the things, that Hosea writes about, the things that Isaiah writes about? Or do we live in the age of

the church in which we are concerned about different things, and we recognize that God is a god who is holy and righteous and just, and that somehow or other he will right those things. But is he really concerned with Pan Am 73, for example? Is he concerned with Iran, Libya, Syria, Bulgaria, Soviet Russia, and the United States of America? I don’t put this country with those countries because I think we are equally guilty. There are degrees of guilt, the Scriptures support that. And perhaps also we look at things from a partisan viewpoint. There’s no question that there is some truth to that.

Should a Christian really be concerned about things such as this? Well, it seems to me that if we read the prophecies of the Old Testament and ponder them. And if the god of the Scriptures that the prophets knew is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Christians fervently believe, there can only be one answer to that question. God is concerned with the pagan nations. In fact, he understands precisely everything that goes on in the pagan nations. He knows everything that goes on in this nation, which is by no means a Christian nation. He reads all of the contracts that are entered into. He knows, and he’s concerned. And therefore, the people of God must be concerned.

And Amos has a word for us, I think, in our day. This passage that we have read is part of a roll call of nations surrounding the northern kingdom. Striking thing about this, which I mentioned two weeks ago, is this: these nations Ammon, Gaza, Edom and so on, had no special revelation from the Lord. They had no Law of Moses. They didn’t have any Moses. And they had no genuine prophecy, and yet Amos says they’re under judgment. In other words, it’s possible for individuals to be responsible when they haven’t had the depth of special revelation that others have had. There is a sense in which it is true to say that human responsibility pertains to all of us in spite of the degree of special revelation to which we may have been exposed. Of course, as we shall see when we progress through the prophecy of Amos, those who have special revelation, who have special advantages therefore, have special responsibilities. But even at its

lowest level, Edom had no excuse and could not say, but we didn’t have prophets. We didn’t have the Law of Moses. We didn’t have special revelation. They were responsible.

To me, that’s one of the striking truths that comes from this section that we’re looking at, but now let’s look at it. We have already looked at one of Amos’s oracles. It was addressed to Damascus or Syria and now the oracle of Gaza follows in verses 6 through 8 of Amos chapter 1.

Now, remember, it’s been two weeks since I was here. So perhaps I’ll repeat just one or two points. There is a pattern in these oracles. You’ll notice they begin with the expression generally thus says the Lord, and generally, though not entirely in every case, they follow with thus says the Lord. In other words, there’s a messenger formula. Then there follows an indictment. Then a punishment is prescribed. And ordinarily the messenger formula follows again for emphasis.

Damascus was indicted for barbarity, as we shall see, other nations are indicted for pitiless slave trading, promise breaking, unnatural persistent hatred, atrocities against the helpless and atrocities against the dead. When you think of atrocities against the helpless, we’ve had a beautiful illustration, if you can call it beautiful, certainly an illustration that fits in this very past week when violent men begin to shoot helpless women and children. And you can be sure of this, God not only knows who did it, he not only knows who has suffered, but he has already mapped out a response, and it will come, and it will not be pleasant.

So there is the messenger formula, the indictment, the punishment, and a messenger formula to stress it. I said Damascus was indicted for barbarity, and now we come to Gaza. Listen to what he has to say with regard to Gaza. Verse 6,

“Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they deported an entire population To deliver it up to Edom.”

Damascus is indicted because of the things that happen not on the battlefield like -
- Did I say Damascus? Gaza not because of the things that happen not on the battlefield
as Damascus was, but for the things that happened around the counters of the business
world. There was trading in people, the slave trade. The emporium and the headquarters
of slave trading was Gaza. You may have remembered that Sampson was taken to Gaza,
for that matter. That was the place where individuals traded in human lives. And so
Amos moves from the camp to the commercial activity around the counters.

And these men were trading Amos says in the whole population, the men, the
women, the husbands, the wives, the children, the infants, all of them. Men who’ve been
in business like to say business is a hard life. Well, it is a hard life. There’s no question
about that. I used to work at one time. So I know it’s a hard life, the business world, but
of course, there are principles that are to guide us in the business world that are reflected
in the word of God.

I can still remember as an insurance man that one of the things that we had to
wrestle with was the tendency to cut corners, because if we could cut corners we could
sell more insurance. And we had entered into in -- agreements with insurance companies
to follow certain ethical, which we regarded as ethical, insurance principles but there
were individuals cutting corners, and business was obtained by those who cut corners, no
question about it. It was well-known. It was not something we surmised was happening.
We knew it was happening. And so consequently, we were faced with ethical decisions
almost every day. Some of you businessmen, I know, have had the same experience. In
fact, I doubt that there is any businessman who had not faced that question.

Business is hard, but here is something that is very plainly contrary to the word of
God, trading in human lives roots in the Old Testament and among the nations inclusive
of Israel.

Now, the Lord doesn’t like that kind of thing, and so he pronounces a judgment upon the people of Gaza.

“So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza, And it will consume her citadels. I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish," Says the Lord GOD.”

That’s for emphasis. One of the striking things about this is most of you are familiar with the Old Testament, but you may remember that occasionally it is stated that God stirred up the hearts of certain individuals to commit what would be called crimes against the children of Israel. That raises an interesting question. If it’s true that God stirred up the hearts of the Philistines to be the instrument of judgment against Israel, the people of God, then is the Philistine empire responsible? Well, Scripture plainly says they’re responsible. That’s striking, isn’t it? That’s an interesting theological question, which we don’t have time to talk about now.

But let me assure you of this, that in the specific historical instance, it was clear that the Philistines went farther or -- further than the Lord God intended and exercised their own determination in the carrying out of their campaigns of violence against the nations about them. And to that extent at least they were guilty. We are responsible before the Lord God, and we are responsible even when Scripture says that he stirred up their hearts, because almost inevitably there is the expression of the human heart, a sinful heart, already condemned and, therefore, under divine judgment.

Now, the second oracle is an oracle against Tyre and here the analysis becomes more particular. Notice the reference to brother, which we have here. We have, for example, in verse 9,

“And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.” [And then in verse 11 with reference to Edom,] “Because he pursued his brother with the sword.”

Now, there is a different an additional element here. Notice in verse 9 and verse 10 the prophets says, “Thus says the Lord, "For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they delivered up an entire population to Edom And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.”

What is the prophet speaking about? Well, it’s not absolutely certain that he was speaking about the relationship between Hiram, the Phoenician king, and the children of Israel of the northern kingdom or, in fact, the kingdom of Israel before the division. But at any rate, it’s likely that the reference is to the fact that Hiram -- because he and Solomon particularly and even David got along very well and entered into trade agreements, ultimately the Phoenicians broke those agreements. And they broke those agreements by trading in human flesh again. So probably that’s the reference historically. They did not remember the covenant of brotherhood into which they entered. And because they did not, they come in under the judgment of God.

Now, you can see from this the additional element is the inviolability of the pledged word. When you give your word, you’re responsible to keep it. When you sign a contract, you’re responsible to keep it. God reads all the contracts into which we enter. He’s well-acquainted with all of them. You may read the big prints, skip over the small print. I was reading the sports column a couple of days ago speaking about contracts, and some football player or some sports writer said with reference to some of the contracts that are signed, that a certain person giveth in the big print and taketh away in the small print. Well, God reads all of the print. He reads the big print. He reads the small print. And when you sign it, he expects you to keep the contract, keep the pledge. That is a great deal to say to our heroes, doesn’t it?

Our heroes -- who play between the hundred yards and who sign contracts which don't really mean anything any more -- it's characteristic of our society. We do everything that we possibly can to avoid keeping a contract if it turns out it's not going to be favorable to us. Well, God reads the small print. And you know it pertains not simply to money and financial contracts. It pertains to the contract of marriage those vows into which you entered. You husbands. What did you say? And you wives. What did you say? God heard your married ceremony. He can call it up just as you call up anything on your computer, except better. He knows all of the commands by which to bring forward everything. And all of those little promises that you made are promises that you're held to. You are held to before the Lord God.

Now, you might say well there are some promises that perhaps we shouldn't hold to. Well, perhaps that's true, if they were wrong. There are some particular types of contracts that maybe we shouldn't hold -- hold to. Remember Herod? Herod, one night at a rather drunken orgy, watched Salome dance. Was very pleased with her. Herod did marry the mother, but wanted to marry her mother. [I've] Forgotten on the spur of the moment whether the marriage was consummated. I think it was. And so because he was pleased Salome's dancing, he blurted out that he was so pleased that he would give her up to a half of the kingdom.

She rushed home to mama and said, What shall I ask for? And there was a fellow there who Herodias didn't like. He was one of these prophets like Amos. His name was John. We know him as John the Baptist. And so in a lovely little sentiment she said, I'd like John the Baptist head on a platter, sterling silver too. That's not in the Bible -- sterling silver. And so Herodias went back, and she let Herod know what mama wanted. And that was very displeasing to Herod he rather was attracted to John the Baptist. He liked to hear to him. He heard him gladly. But nevertheless I've given my word, and so because he's given his word, that's what he does.

Well, listen you know we’d have been much better to break his word than to do something contrary to the will of God. Much better to suffer whatever punishment there might have been for making a pledge he could not keep than one that’s far worse.

There’s a story of a little girl in Sunday school who was posed with this question. Quite a question to be posed to a little girl, but the Sunday school teacher said, What would you have said to Herodias when she asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter? If you were Herod, what would you have said? And the little girl said, well I think I would have answered something like this, the head of John the Baptist is in the other half of the kingdom. [Laughter] Very smart. Perhaps the best answer would be, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have made that promise.

But at any rate pledges are to be kept and, consequently, when you sign a contract, you should keep the contract. When you say as a Christian you’re going to do something, you should do it. I speak to myself. I’m afraid that from time to time I would come under the judgment of God for saying I’m going to do something and I don’t do it. But you can see that God hears all of our promises. He reads all of the fine print. He knows all of the contracts into which we’ve entered, and he expects that we keep them.

And so with reference to Tyre, it’s not surprising that we read and, “So I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre And it will consume her citadels” because she didn’t remember the covenant of brotherhood, the friendship trade agreements that took place between the Phoenicians and the children of Israel.

And now the oracle against Edom. Edom has already been mentioned a couple of times in the preceding context, but now they are singled out themselves. “Thus says the LORD, For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever.”

When you think of Edom, you should think of Esau. The descendants of Esau lie within this kingdom. They already have been implicated above twice but now we have

the fourth transgression for them, the one that breaks the camel’s back, the last straw, he pursued his brother with a sword, unnatural, persistent hatred. And in one of the Psalms, Psalm 137, Edom rejoices over the capture of Jerusalem. If you don’t think that the year 1986 is just a long extension of what is found in the word of God, you’re not familiar with the word of God. What we’re reading about in the near east is simply the prolongation of the struggle that has gone on between Ishmael and Isaac between Jacob and Esau and down to the present day. Eighty million people wanting to exterminate Israel, to not even give them a place upon which to live.

And don’t misunderstand. I’m not trying to say that the Nation Israel in its present form is a righteous nation. In fact, the United States of America is not a righteous nation. But when it comes to the implacable hatred of Edom against Israel then we’re talking about something that is even worse than that which you might imagine unnatural persistent hatred of heart, poisoned by bitterness and inflaming bile, represented today in the conflicts of the east with Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Israel on the other side, and the seeds of it all set forth in the word of God.

And my own personal opinion. This is my own personal opinion you could go out in good faith with Believer’s Chapel and not hold to it yourself, but my personal opinion, the reason for all of this is the fact of divine election. God has put his hand upon the children of Israel and said they shall be my people. And they alone are his among the nations. In the third chapter, he will say that, “you only have I known among all the families and nations of the earth.” And there is a persistent rebellion against the work of God in his divine work of election, sovereign grace, and salvation, and all of the other blessing that go along with the word of God.

At any rate, in this particular instance it’s clear that Edom has pursued his brother with the sword. He didn’t want the children of Israel to even enter into the land. He persistently fought them. He persistently has been unhappy over the way in which God has dealt with them and even down to 1986. If you don’t think that God is in control of

this history, just reflect upon the long shadow of the Old Testament animosities down to the present day. "So he will send fire upon Teman And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah."

Now, the infliction of the penalty, in one sense, occurred when the Maccabees in the year 150 destroyed the kingdom. The fifth of the oracles, the fourth that we're looking at today, is that against the sons of Ammon in verse 13 through verse 15. And the prophet writes, "Thus says the LORD, For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their borders."

Third area of human relations, helplessness ought to engender compassion on the part of the people who are subservient and submissive to the word of God. Compassion for the helpless, but in Ammon's case ambition led to brutality. Stealing of jobs by conniving at the unjust dismissal of another is the manifestation of the same kind of attitude today. Anyone who know anything about corporate life in America knows that Ammonite ambition is very alive and well. Do you know that it even persists in Christian organizations? I have a good friend -- he's a president of an institution now. How he got to president is a very interesting thing. He got to be president, actually by being submissive.

I remember some years ago he was teaching in a theological -- or rather a theological school not a theological seminary. It was a Bible college. He's a very effective teacher. There was some mutual friends in the institution. And in the course of the conversation with him, he was an old friend, I just asked him about some of the individuals of whom I knew but whom I did not know personally. And I asked about one particular person, and I said how is he getting along? And he said, well, he's getting along pretty well. He said, but he wants my job. And in the Christian institution, one man seeking to get the job of another person. Don't think it cannot occur. It does. And if it occurs in Christian institutions, and it does, you can be sure it occurs out in the world.

So we read that Ammon in the desire to enlarge their borders ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead after they had attacked them. When you look at the business world today, you know from past history -- I don’t know much about it today, obviously I’m pretty well insulated from it except from the comments of friends, but I can remember back in past history. I remember reading a lengthy article in the *Wall Street Journal* ten or fifteen years ago about John D Rockefeller. The Rockefeller’s will probably sue me for what I’m going to say now, but I’m going to say it anyway and plead Amos as a defense. [Laughter] This long article in *The Wall Street Journal* went on to detail how John D. Rockefeller got to be the wealthy man that he became and how he put together the Standard Oil Companies, which finally had to be disbanded by the antitrust department of our government. Mr. Rockefeller had a foolproof way of enlarging the business. It was something like this. If you went into a town and you looked at the corner that was the most profitable corner for a gasoline station, you approached the individual and offered to buy it.

Now, of course, you didn’t offer to pay what it’s worth. You offered about half of what it was worth and then when the individual wouldn’t accept your offer, then you would warn him. If you don’t take my offer, I’m going to put a station across the street over here and we’ll run you out of business. And so when the individual said, I won’t sell, the company put up a filling station across the way, and they sold gas at less than its cost and pretty soon they had the whole corner. And later on, John D. Rockefeller -- I was growing up as a teenager. I remember him because he had pictures of him in the newspaper giving out new dimes to people all over the country. So whenever he met somebody, he would be giving out new dimes.

Now, I don’t want to blame John D. I don’t know whether it was his idea. The article seems to suggest that it really had its source about there, but at any rate the principles pertain to our society today. And when we read the word of God and read the prophets, you can see that God knows all of these little things that are happening in our

society. They say Amos is the prophet of social justice. I can believe that. Certainly, he was concerned. And we should be concerned because of that. We are representatives of the Lord God. We are representatives of Yahweh. We are representatives of the Triune God, the God who dealt with Amos and Josea and Isaiah is the same God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whom we worship through the Lord Jesus. And therefore, it’s inconceivable that Christians should not live according to the principles of justice and righteousness set out in the word of God. Sometimes in order to stand for justice, it requires us to make unpopular stands. Stands that are unpopular with our friends, but we still must do it. Our allegiance is to the Lord God. I think evangelicals need to remember that. We, in Believers Chapel, need to remember that. We need to reflect upon it because God has all the infinite ways at the disposal of an infinite God to right wrongs.

When Nazi Germany did what it did, God had his way of executing justice and so on down through the years.

The final oracle is an oracle against Moab, and here the sixth of the principles is set forth and it has to do with vengeance. “Thus says the LORD, For three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.” The day that Moab opened the Edomite tomb, that day sealed the death warrant of that nation. The day that that nation exhumed the bones of the king of Edom burned them to lime, they were destroying themselves. It’s a magnificent lesson. Notice the judgment that follows, “So I will send fire upon Moab And it will consume the citadels of Kerioth; And Moab will die.” In other words, by taking the bones out and burning them to lime, they have wrought their own death. God has the most ironic ways to carry out his judgment, and so he does. Ancient Semitic beliefs are bound up in this, of course, and they’re not important for what we’re talking about. It’s just sufficient to remember that vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

Now, that’s something for us who are Christians today to remember, too. It’s entirely possible for us to be so disappointed by the way that we have been treated or by the things that have fallen out for us. When we have an opportunity to execute a little bit of personal vengeance. Those are the things that are to be forgotten. I read -- in fact, I reread just yesterday a little footnote in a book, a very fine book, in which the author of the book made this statement. When I gave this material in the Keswick Bible readings, I used here the words, I don’t know that the Christian church could have a greater than that we should let the cleansing blood of Christ into our memories. That’s a marvelous statement. To let the cleansing blood of Christ into our memories is very difficult, but it means that those resentments, those feelings that we have been mistreated, those ideas that we have been wronged are to be washed away by the blood of Christ, and vengeance -- if there is need of vengeance, left for the Lord God in heaven. That’s very practical Christian teaching for us today.

Let me close for our time is up. Earthly relationships have heavenly dimensions. Actions directed toward men provoke reaction from God. Six times God says, thus saith the Lord. He’s the sovereign judge of the universe. He watches the whole career of human sin. Yes, he knew all of Adolph Eichmann’s sins. He knew all of his thoughts. He knew all of the ways by which ultimately there would be judgment. The worse is yet to come for those who enter into eternity apart from the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One can see a thread that follows through which is very, I think very clear. There is, first of all, unbelief, unbelief issues and rebellion against God and rebellion against God issues in the specific immoralities that are found in our society.

People like to say to us, sin is desiring to be autonomous. Sin is selfishness. Sin is immorality. No, no. No, fundamentally sin is unbelief. Unbelief, that is unbelief in the revelation of God and unbelief in the revelation of God leads to rebellion. That rebellion may manifest itself in different ways. It may manifest itself in selfishness, self-pleasing, the desire to be autonomous. These are manifestations of fundamental unwillingness to

rest one’s being for time and eternity upon the word of God and ultimately as in the case of Cain and Abel, it issues in acts of immorality.

Just keep -- let us keep this in our minds, unbelief leading to rebellion, issuing an immorality. That’s the history of human society, and the problem is the relationship to the word of God. The Lord doesn’t forget sin except as it is laid on Jesus Christ, and he doesn’t forget any of your sins or any of mine except as they are sins that have been laid upon Christ born by him through whom we have the forgiveness of sins.

If you’re here today and you’ve never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Scriptures say you’re guilty. The Scriptures say if your heart could be made public, we would all see the iniquity that lies within it. We would know your unbelief. We would know the rebellion of your heart. We would know the immoralities that have issued, and you would be shunned to be what Scripture says that every one of us is, a sinner, lost, guilty, under divine condemnation for time and for eternity. Oh, how perilous is your situation.

Come to Christ. There is forgiveness of sins through the saving blood that was shed on Calvary’s cross. Flee to him. Trust in him. By God’s grace, commit your life to him. We invite you as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus to acknowledge your sin to God. Trust in Christ. Receive as a free gift eternal life. God works won’t save you. Baptism won’t save you. Sitting at the Lord’s Table won’t save you. Being a good citizen won’t save you. Culture, education, they won’t save you. Only Christ can save. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. So come to Christ. Believe in him. Acknowledge your sin. Rest upon him for the cleansing that God alone can give. Let us stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks and praise for the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through whom there is forgiveness of sins. Lord, as we read Amos, we

recognize our heart in the hearts of the citizens of all of these nations, hardly of sins that we have not been guilty of. Deliver us, Lord, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And for those of us who are Christians and who have persisted in some of these things that are so displeasing to Thee, Lord, by Thy grace give us the desire and the ability to please Thee in our daily lives. Deliver us from contract breaking, vengeance, jealousies, resentments, and all of the things that so often are stumbling blocks to the life of fellowship with Thee.

If there, Lord, is someone here who has not believed in Christ, we pray that at this very moment they may confess their condition before Thee and express to Thee by grace their trust in Christ. Go with us as we part.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.