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## God's People Struggle and Justice: An Exposition Review Amos 1: 1-15

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### Abstract

This article aimed to show God's justice in the midst of lives of His people. The method used is the historical and grammatical exposition of Amos 1: 1-15. The struggle of faith of God's people is never loose in sorrow, sadness, and cheering. In the book of Amos 1: 1-15 teaches us that the people's struggle is inseparable from God's justice. God gives protection to His people to pass through every issue or problem of life. God also does His justice both to good doers and condemnation to those who do evil. Thus every people should live what God promised and hold in hope in God.

**Keywords:** marginal; oppressed; condemn people; chosen people; old testament; minor prophet

## INTRODUCTION

The Book of Amos is an interesting and relevant book to be studied and lived.<sup>1</sup> However, in the history of Christianity, the book of Amos received less attention and besides this book emphasizes on the oppression of the poor. In this time, misuse of wealth is rarely criticized from a part of Indonesia Pentecostal and Charismatic churches services.<sup>2</sup> This lack of attention is understandable because some churches are in a state of competition for materialism carried out by persons within the church and a lack of concern for poverty, hunger, oppression, and social injustice in the world. On another aspect, the gap between poor people and rich people is increasing throughout the world. Injustice continues and oppression is increasing.

Amos was the first of the canonical prophets. The century he lived in was called the Golden Age of Israel, because it

produced four great prophets, Amos and Hosea in Israel, and Isaiah and Micah in Judah.<sup>3</sup> In connection with this book, the date of writing the Book of Amos is very important because it relates to an era or period in which wealth increased, national religion developed and everything was peaceful. But the wealth they have and grateful for are rooted on the loss or oppression of the poor. Since their religion ignores this, national religion is a hypocritical religion for God is a defender of oppressed people.<sup>4</sup> Mayers wrote the calendar of Amos in general, by a superscript which places his activities during the reigns of King Jeroboam II (786-746 BC) and king Uzziah (783-742 BC). Overall, the best is dating the life of Amos from somewhere around 725 BC or no later than 738 BC.<sup>5</sup>

In this article, the author has the goal of exploring the richness of the

<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *Handbook of the Prophets*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 377.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Robbins, The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol.33 (2004): 117-143, accessed: November 20, 2019, DOI: 10.1146/annurev.anthro.32.061002.09342; Daniel Sutoyo, Analisis Historis terhadap Teologi Gerakan Pentakostalisme, *Dunamis: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani*, Vol.2, No.2 (April 2018): 172, 193; accessed April 28, 2020. In this case see Susanne Rodemeier, Kajian Atas Gereja Pentakosta-Kharismatik di Jawa Indonesia: Sebuah Tantangan, *Jurnal Gema Teologika*, Vol.1 No.1 (April 2016): 31-54, accessed April 28, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> John Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 78-79, 69.

<sup>5</sup> Jacob Mayers, *The Layman's Bible Commentary*. (Richmond, Virginia & London: John Knox Press 1952), 98; James R. Linville, What does 'It' Mean? Interpretation at the Point of No Return in Amos 1-2, *Journal of Biblical Interpretation*, Vol.8 (2000): 402; accessed November 20, 2019, [https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/8/4/articlep400\\_4.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/8/4/articlep400_4.xml), DOI: 10.1163/156851\_500750118980; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 5, 79, 91.

meaning of the text in Amos 1: 1-15 about the struggle and justice presented by God through the prophet Amos for the restoration of the people of Israel, then reflected in the life of the church today.

## METHOD

This writing aims to find and understand the text of Amos 1:1-13 about the struggle and justice of God's people. This writing uses a literature writing approach. In this literature study, the writer uses the biblical approach, namely theology-based writing with the main analysis based on the Bible.<sup>6</sup> While the method used is Exposition, which grammatical and historical context interprets and expose out the meaning of the biblical text. Then the authors provide a theological descriptive analysis as conclusion of the results of the grammatical study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Amos 1:1

Verse 1 starts with "Amos' sayings ..." (*dibre Amos*). Usually these expressions also occur in the early of wisdom

book (Prov. 22:17; 30: 1; 31:1), history books (I Kgs. 11:41; Neh 1:1), and the Prophecy books (Jer 1:1, etc.). The meaning of the name Amos itself is "carry" in the sense of "protect, save" in this case from God.<sup>7</sup> The editor added that Amos's work was a breeder from Tekoa who served in the days of the King Uzziah, the king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years after the earthquake struck Israel. Palestine is divided by a vast valley in the Jordan river-Dead Sea-Arabah Axis, and for this reason earthquakes often occur here (Num. 16:31; I Sam. 14:15; I Kgs 19:11). Andersen said, "if an earthquake happens, they always consider it to be an impact of God's anger to the world."<sup>8</sup>

The tension and period or leadership period at 1:1 gives a sign of the existence of this literary literature. Setting a date for Amos at first appears to be an easy task, but it is not. Superscription (1:1) provides three pieces of evidence. His ministry took place during the reign of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel and two years before the earthquake. In 1 Kings 14 that the reigns of

<sup>6</sup> Baker, Joy Don. "The Purpose, Process, and Methods of Writing a Literature Review." *AORN Journal* 103, no. 3 (2016): 265–69, April 28, 2019. DOI: 10.1016/j.aorn.2016.01.016.

<sup>7</sup> Shalom Paul, *AMOS*. (Mineapolis Fortress Press: 1995), 34; Jonathan A. Partlow, "Amos's Use of Rhetorical Entrapment as a Means for Climatic

Preaching in Amos 1:3-2:16," *Journal of Restoration Quarterly*, 49 (2007): 25-26.

<sup>8</sup> Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, 193, Archibald L. H. M. van Weiringen, *The Prophecies Against the Nations in Amos 1:2-3:15*, *Journal of Estudios Biblicos*. Vol.LXXI (2013): 8; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 91, 93.

Uzziah (Azaria) and Jeroboam overlapped for a rather long period of time. Hans Walter Wolff had set the date of Amos activities around 760 BC.<sup>9</sup>

According to the literal translation in this title there is said about the words of Amos ... what he sees (not: words regarding to what he sees). There are interpreters who argue that the two titles are combined here. Weren't Amos's words and visions originally collected in a separate text? (see introduction). Maybe there is one manuscript that contains "The words of Amos from Tekoa ..." and one more text which for example is titled "Amos's Vision, what he saw about Israel ..." But other interpreters remind us of Isaiah 2: 1 and Micah 1: 1 where there is also said about "words that are seen." Apparently the statements of the those two prophets are not a contradiction.<sup>10</sup> Message from God is sometimes received by hearing the voice that speaks to him and sometimes by seeing a vision. In both cases we can say about a statement that contain messages or words

that come from God and are intended for humans. The message or word of God is about Israel, which is the Bethel, Northern Kingdom Israel that occurs from the ten tribes. But ... before we are told about what was said about and to the Israelites, first we are offered some utterances about other nations (1: 3-2:3).<sup>11</sup>

### **Amos 1:2**

The first part of this verse is also occurred in Joel 3:16. Is this a famous line of poetry, quoted here and in Joel too? Or is it an expression that Amos invented and is often quoted by people? However, this line can be considered as a motto that gives nature to Amos's prophecy entirely. According to the Hebrew poetic both part of the sentence had the same meaning, "God roars from Zion - from Jerusalem He makes his voice heard." With these words, it was revealed that God would speak and act, that is, God who had revealed Himself to Israel in the past at Mount Sinai (cf. Exod. 19) and now "dwell" in Zion (= Jerusalem; cf. Ps. 132:13- 14). God's voice is sometimes

<sup>9</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 117; John Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, 3; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 93-94.

<sup>10</sup> Anselm C. Hagedorn; Andrew Mein, *Aspect of Amos: Exegesis and Interpretation*. (London: T and T Clark, 2012), 45; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and*

*Amos*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992). 336.

<sup>11</sup> Archibald L. H. M. van Weiringen, *The Prophecies Against the Nations in Amos 1:2-3:15*: 8, John H. Hayes, *Amos's Oracle Against the Nations*, *Journal of Review and Expositor*, Vol.92, Issue 2, (1995): 156, accessed 20 November 2019, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/003463739509200203>, DOI: 10.1177/003463739509200203.

interpreted as a terrible thunderous sound (cf. Exod. 19:17-9), but that information is not needed here. Even more important is the use of the word *roar*, which immediately reminds us of the lion (cf. 3: 4). The lion roars when he goes out looking for prey (cf. Ps 104:20-22). Therefore, the lion's roar makes people surprised and afraid. That is the purpose of this verse: from His dwelling place God (God of hosts) made His voice as a lion preparing to attack its prey.<sup>12</sup>

God's coming and actions mean punishment. And the punishment afflicts everything, also the most fertile and beautiful region which is the pride of the land: *the pastures dry up and splendor the top of Mount Carmel which is famous with its good trees (Isa. 35:2).*<sup>13</sup> That is the nature of the message that must be delivered by Amos: God came (= will act) to punish and carry out the punishment; "then prepare to meet your God" (cf. 4:12). But ... to whom is this threat? When they heard the

next words, the Israelites were certainly relieved.<sup>14</sup>

### **Amos 1:3-5**

Word root *pesa'* which explains these sermons, is the central form in the vocabulary of Amos. In the plural nouns appear 10 times (Am. 1: 3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2: 1, 4, 6; 3:14; 5:12) and appear twice in the form of verbs (4:4) wants to refer to the wickedness of nations against other nations, nations against God (Am. 2:4), and the nation of Israel against one another (Am. 2:6).<sup>15</sup> The eight words against the nations begin the main part of the book, which climaxes with the word against Israel. Wolff points out the difference in literary form (the curse texts are only a list of names) and other differences from the form of the words of Amos.<sup>16</sup>

If a benefit is to be gained from the introduction of the origin of these words forms to the people of ancient Israel,

<sup>12</sup> Katherine M. Hayes, The Mourning Earth (Amos 1:2) and the God Who Is, *Journal of Word and World*, Vol.28, No.2 (2008): 142, 145; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 97, 126.

<sup>13</sup> James R. Linville, What does 'It' Mean? Interpretation at the Point of No Return in Amos 1-2: 421-424.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan A. Partlow, Amos's Use of Rhetorical Entrapment as a Means for Climatic Preaching in Amos 1:3-2:16: 27-28; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 338.

<sup>15</sup> Archibald L. H. M. van Weiringen, The Prophecies Against the Nations in Amos 1:2-3:15: 8; Shalom M. Paul, 45. The specific connotation here is the absence of moral-ethics, as arises throughout the form of *khatte* and *awon* analogies (such examples in Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18) so that the use of עָשָׂה should not be interpreted unilaterally in reference to the main entry of violations of agreement with Israel and Judah.

<sup>16</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 90; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 340.

Wolff's opinion that the words relate to "messenger messages" most justifies their form and function in the book of Amos. Wolff's hypothesis was the result of a study of speeches delivered by diplomatic messengers in the Ancient Near East, both biblically and non-biblically.<sup>17</sup>

The prophet Amos emphasized that he did not simply present his own opinion, but he spoke in the name of God, as a person who was sent and controlled by Him. Therefore, each couplet begins with the formula, "Thus saith the Lord" and ends with "the word of God." The contents of the message that he conveys are arranged according to a certain chart. Repeatedly many times: "...Because of three evil deeds...and because of four, I will not take it back." In Hebrew proverbs or in other expressions it is very popular to use two consecutive numbers like this (eg. Am. 4:8; Isa. 17:6; Mic. 5:4; 30:18). The point is roughly like this: it is not necessary or impossible to say the exact amount. Sometimes only a few are mentioned, not how important (eg. Isa. 17:6), but sometimes just the opposite is a lot (eg. Mic. 5:4). In his prophecy, Amos means

that a certain nation's crimes are numerous; cannot and do not need to be mentioned all (so then he usually mentions one particular crime as an example). So, because of the many sins of that particular nation, I will not take it back, that is, I (God) will not take back the punishment that comes to afflict, as described in the next section. The word translated "evil deeds" might be better translated as "disobedient deeds" (cf. Ps. 32:5; 65:4; 89:35; 107:17, etc.). "Lawlessness" is one of the strongest terms for sin in principle and disobedience to God and His authority.<sup>18</sup>

Verses 3-5 are about the Arameans, who lived northeast of Israel. Their country consists of a collection of city empires. To the south lies the city of Damascus, the most important central city of power (in the middle of the country lies the city of Hamath, to its north lies the city of Arpad). As an example of their crime it is stated that they, "have threshed Gilead with an iron threshing-sledges." Perhaps what is remembered here is the era described in 2 Kings 10:32-33 and 2 Kings 13:3. Moreover, Gilead suffered greatly from the Arameans deeds. About the cruelty of King Hazael can

<sup>17</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 135-148; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 342-343.

<sup>18</sup> John H. Hayes, Amos's Oracle Against the Nations: 157-158; Jeremy M. Hutton, Amos 1:3-2:8 and the International Economy of Iron Age II Israel, *Journal of Harvard Theological Review*, Vol.107, No.1 (2014): 84-85, accessed November 20, 2019, DOI: 10.1017/S0017816014000078.

be compared 2 Kings 8: 7-15. Such cruelty is reminded here, so that what is meant is that the Israelites who were defeated forced to lie on the ground and then dragged by the treshing-sledge on their backs. But maybe those words are just metaphor and what is meant that the Aramean kings had destroyed the Gilead region in such a way, like the iron treshing-sledges destroy ravens and grains of wheat (cf. Metaphor in 2 Ki. 13:7).<sup>19</sup>

The word translated with exiles is generally to follow western translations. But at least dealing with Israel from the Indonesia language point of view must also be considered: can it be said that the Israelites were exiled to Babylon, if Nebuchadnezzar took them to his country? Wouldn't it be better to say that they were taken captive? From the theological point of view, they are indeed "banished" by God to a foreign land.<sup>20</sup>

Can we recall here the year 732 BC, when the Assyrian kingdom defeated Aramean-Damascus? But let us be careful with this interpretation. Because Amos does not intend to give predictions about political

developments. Actually he does not want to point forward, but to the top: to the living God, who speaks and acts, in the midst of history, that is, God who with His law acted decisively, if according to His view has already full measure of crime that committed by a certain nation.<sup>21</sup> The conclusion of Wolff and the majority of modern scholars is that the words of the second group (Tire, Edom, Judah) are later additions that "inevitable" as he stated.<sup>22</sup>

### **Amos 1:6-8**

Almost with the same words as in verses 3-5, it is reported about God's punishment of the Philistines. The territory of the Philistines consisted of five royal kingdoms: on the coast from south to north lies the city of Gaza, Ashkelon, Asdod, and Ekron; on the edge of the mountains of Judah lies the city of Gath. The city of Gath is not mentioned here, presumably because the city of Gath at that time fell into the hands of king Uzziah of Judah? (2 Taw 26:6). Or has the city of Gath been destroyed long time ago (by Hazael, 2 Ki. 12:17) and has no role anymore? Gaza is

<sup>19</sup> B. J. Boland, *Tafsiran Amos*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2001), 15; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 342.

<sup>20</sup> James R. Linville, What does 'It' Mean? Interpretation at the Point of No Return in Amos 1-2: 423.

<sup>21</sup> Anselm C. Hagedorn; Andrew Mein, *Aspect of Amos: Exegesis and Interpretation*, 67; Archibald L. H. M. van Weiringen, The Prophecies Against the Nations in Amos 1:2-3:15: 14, Hayes placed the time in 745, see John H. Hayes, Amos's Oracle Against the Nations: 159; John Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, 183-187.

<sup>22</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 140.

considered the most important city here; in verse 6 Gaza can be replaced by “the Philistines” (as in verse 3 Damascus is called the Arameans). Gaza means initiating in words against the Philistines, like Damascus in a prophecy against the Arameans.<sup>23</sup>

The Philistines had always been Israel's enemy in the battle for Palestine. But not because of that they will be punished. There is a special crime which is stated here, namely “they have brought into the exile a whole nation, to be handed over to Edom.” Perhaps we must remember here, in the time of King Hazael of Aramean who attacked Israel from the northeast, so the Philistines seized the opportunity by invading Judah and Israel from the southwest. In Hebrew it says here about a “complete transportation.” Perhaps what is meant here is that the villagers or residents of an area in its entirety, regardless of age or sex. They may be transported captive via a large commercial road from Gaza to Petra (= interrupted) in Edom; from there onwards they were sold, mainly to the south

(Egypt), by the Edomites who in the slave trade acted as intermediary traders.<sup>24</sup>

That is one example of the evil of the Philistines: they captured people (men and women, old and children), God's people, to make them into merchandise and sell them as slaves. Does God not punish such acts? Concerning slavery, in Israel there is still living memory of their own destiny as slaves who have been freed by God (Deut. 15:12-15). Therefore, in Deuteronomy 24:7 the death penalty was set in for “stealing a man, one of his brothers, from among the Israelites, then treating him as a slave and selling him.”<sup>25</sup>

In verses 7-8 the punishment of the Philistines is described in almost the same words as in verses 4-5 of the ferocity of war accompanied by destruction by fire, extermination of people and dignitaries. The meaning of “Gaza wall” is the wall fence that surrounds the city of Gaza. And these are not just political events or disasters of war, but it is God who acts in it. It was He who “stretched out His hand” against the Philistines, so that their

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy M. Hutton, Amos 1:3-2:8 and the International Economy of Iron Age II Israel:107; Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 157; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 106.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan A. Partlow, Amos's Use of Rhetorical Entrapment as a Means for Climatic Preaching in

Amos 1:3-2:16: 27; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 345.

<sup>25</sup> B. J. Boland, *Tafsiran Amos*, 16; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 106.



remnants perished. The use of the word “remnant” may have been influenced by the fact that the Philistines in Amos's time were no longer a great force, but here the intention was that the Philistines would be completely destroyed, from Gaza to Ekron, the people and their leaders.<sup>26</sup>

### **Amos 1:9-10**

Unlike the first of two words addressed to certain cities or territorial areas, the speech of Polesia (the Philistine cities) was represented solely by Tere, without additional references to Sidon. We can say that during the Etbaal (887-856), until the end of the 7th century, the city of Sidon was an integral part of the kingdom of Tere, which was originally only a colony, but henceforth was part of the territory of the empire of Tere.<sup>27</sup> What is said about Tere (or Tsur) is considered by most interpreters to be an addition not from Amos himself. Indeed, the accusation against Tere seems to be a repetition of what is said in verse 6 about the Philistines. Tere is a strong and

rich port city, located northwest of Israel (west of the city of Dan), in the area of Feniki. The words against Tere are the subject matter where the words are identical with the words against the Philistines.<sup>28</sup>

Could these Tere people be able to hand over slaves to the Edomites, who lived southeast of Israel-Judah? But in Joel 3:4-6, Tere (and Sidon) are mentioned together with the Philistines; there they were accused of selling residents of Judah and Jerusalem to Yawan (= inhabitants of the coastal land of Asia Minor). Are there verses from Amos and Joel based on historical events that we don't know anymore? In Ezekiel 27:13 also mentions the slave trade by Tere (notice that Eze. 26-28 is about Tere).<sup>29</sup>

The announcement of punishment only repeats the first sentence of a threat against the Philistine city. The notice of punishment for Tere (verse 10) is a famous chorus, without further information: God will “release fire into the walls of Tere (into the city of Tere), so that the castle will be

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<sup>26</sup> James R. Linville, What does 'It' Mean? Interpretation at the Point of No Return in Amos 1-2: 411-412; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 345-346.

<sup>27</sup> Shalom M. Paul, Amos, 59; Goran Eidevall, Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, 106-107.

<sup>28</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 158; Jonathan A. Partlow, “Amos's Use of Rhetorical Entrapment

as a Means for Climatic Preaching in Amos 1:3-2:16: 26; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 248.

<sup>29</sup> Jeremy M. Hutton, Amos 1:3-2:8 and the International Economy of Iron Age II Israel:102-104; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 348.

consumed.” Further explanation is not possible nor necessary.<sup>30</sup>

As a matter of specificity, this is only an additional saying that Tire, “does not remember the covenant of brotherhood.” This sentence is considered as a reinforcement of the sentence that preceded it, so that also in the case of Tire there were not two, but only one crime which was stated. Thus, it can be better said: they gave all the captives of a nation to Edom without remembering ... Is it here referred to the official treaty between Tire and Israel held shortly before Amos appeared as a prophet? Or is it a reminder of the good relations that have been common between Tire and Judah-Israel in the days of David and Solomon (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kgs. 5:18).<sup>31</sup>

However, we may consider these words out to be the most important part of this couplet. Because in ancient times, an agreement between the two parties was considered a sacred thing: the agreement was held in the presence of God (meaning God is witness and guarantor), so when the

agreement was made, they acknowledged that they would be punished by God, if it was not fulfilled. This is apparently the most important thing which is stated as the crime of Tire; the fact that they sold the Israelites as slaves proved that they, “Not remembering” (= not paying attention and not in accordance with) the fraternity agreement, that is, a covenant which considered sacred by God and favored by Him to make it possible to continue the association of life between nations.

### **Amos 1:11-12**

Remarks to Edom introduce the first of three countries that have ethnic similarities with the nation of Israel. Use of word *’üHîw* (his brother), perhaps refers to family relations because Edomite and Israel (Esau and Jacob) are often referred as brothers (Gen. 25:19, 27: 40-41; Num. 20:14; Deut .2: 4; 23: 8; Ob. 10,12). His crime was interpreted as “a crime against family ethics or culture.”<sup>32</sup>

The tension between the two countries reflects the dispute between Jacob and Esau in Genesis. Although Edom was

<sup>30</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 160; Jonathan A. Partlow, Amos’s Use of Rhetorical Entrapment as a Means for Climatic Preaching in Amos 1:3-2:16: 26, 28.

<sup>31</sup> B. J. Boland, *Tafsiran Amos*, 16; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 107; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and*

*Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 349.

<sup>32</sup> Shalom M. Paul, *Amos*, 63, Archibald L. H. M. van Weiringen, *The Prophecies Against the Nations in Amos 1:2-3:15*: 16; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 351.

conquered from the dominance of the power of Israel's first kings (1 Sam. 14:47; 12 Sam. 8:13; 2 Sam. 8:13, etc.), they rebelled at the end of Solomon's reign (1 Kgs. 11:21) and soon they gained independence during the time of Joram, king of Judah, in the middle of the 7th century (2 Ki. 8: 20-22), and from that time several scholars wrote events that occurred in the book of Amos. Sixty years later Amaziah defeated them in the valley of Asin, captured Sela, and united him with Judah (2 Ki. 14: 7)<sup>33</sup> Historical evidence shows solely on understanding "his brother" as an indicator of Israel's family relationship with Edom. The possibility of the word by some experts only added by the editor.<sup>34</sup> In this case there are two possibilities which refer to Jacob and Esau.<sup>35</sup>

By "he chases his brother with the sword," this verse 11 is intended that it has been done in the past (so in verse 11 the word "has" is added, as in 1:1, 3, 9 and 2:1, 4). Such an event is precisely with the

situation in 586 BC, so many interpreters consider this part to be an addition to the time when the final form of the book of Amos was determined (see Introduction and cf. 9:12). Other commentators have written that the time when Israel was suppressed by King Hazael of Aramaic, because at that time was estimated that various neighboring nations used the opportunity to take revenge against Israel. Edom was also accused of *sik rakhamiu* (he stifled his mercy) "oppressed his mercy," general interpretation of this expression is actually very difficult, so difficult to understand the real meaning. The meaning of *sikhat* (persecuting) is only an estimation and is not entirely related to human feelings:<sup>36</sup> more than that this word is also a parallel of nouns *rakhamatayim*. Maybe someone hopes that the word *rakhamatayim* represents a concrete noun rather than an abstract noun, "affection, mercy" (compassion, mercy). Although it has been suggested that the word has the meaning "ally."

<sup>33</sup> Shalom M. Paul, *Amos*, 63; John H. Hayes, *Amos's Oracle Against the Nations*: 159; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 107-108.

<sup>34</sup> Shalom M. Paul, *Amos*, 63, although the word "brother" has also been translated into political language, and diplomatic relations, as a treaty, which is also the same as the expression (*berit akhim*) in verse 9

<sup>35</sup> Esau was blessed that he would live by his sword (Gen. 27:40), and in Amos, Edom (Esau) pursued

and persecuted his brother Judah (Jacob) with a sword (this also appears in Jer 29:18). At that time Rebekah thought that Esau's anger (Edom) was only temporary, but in this case Esau's anger continued at all times; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 351.

<sup>36</sup> Shalom Paul, *Amos*, 64; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 351.

The word *rakhamiw* is related to the same word in Judges 5:30 is also evidenced in allied languages.<sup>37</sup> The accusation against Edom is also destroying the female population. In the pie, the word *sikhat*, “oppressive”, refers to the destruction of humanity (Ge. 6:17; 9:15; Num. 32:15; 1 Sam. 26:15; 2 Sam. 1:14). The choice of these two unique expressions creates a literary relationship between the crimes committed by Edom and Ammon; two countries that use swords to kill women. Furthermore, Amon was charged only with “splitting the belly of pregnant women” (v. 13). The Hebrew word for “mercy” is closely related to the word for “womb” (cf. The Arabic word “womb” which next to “mercy” also means “womb”).<sup>38</sup> In this case Amos wants to say that Edom has oppressed or persecuted both men and women through their brutal attacks.<sup>39</sup>

Tire (verses 9-10) is blamed for violating brotherly relations in a figurative sense. But Edom was guilty against his brothers. In the meantime, he had suppressing his mercy, because he had “held back his anger forever.” Isn't that the most serious sin? Because, is it not mercy first about the siblings, children of his mother?

The punishment for Edom is given again in the familiar phrase: God “will release fire into Teman (very possibly not a city, but the northeastern part of Edom), so that the castle of Bozra (the capital of Edom) is consumed.”

### **Amos 1:13-15**

The next part of the prophecy is about the Ammonites (verses 13-15). According to Gen. 19:36-38, they are descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew. The Ammonites lived east of the Jordan River, south of Gilead. From the story of Jephthah (a Gileadites), it turns out that the Ammonites had a dispute with the Israelites fighting over this blood (Jud. 11). The Ammonites were considered as a very cruel nation by the people of Judah. Perhaps Amos here is reminded of events that took place in the time of Hazael; while Hazael attacked the Gilead region from the north, the Ammonites tried to “expand their own territory” by seizing the southern part of Gilead. As an example of their savagery, specifically stated here their animalistic actions towards the population, that is, against women (destroying the population and venting their lusts “they cut open the

<sup>37</sup> In the Mesa Inscription the word also appears and in Ugarit, רַחֲמַיִי appears as a synonym (compare רַחֲמַיִי רַחֲמַיִי) which means “a young woman”.

<sup>38</sup> B. J. Boland, *Tafsiran Amos*, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Shalom M. Paul, *Amos*, 65.

belly of pregnant women in Gilead” (cf. 2 Ki. 8:12; 15:16; Hos. 14: 1).<sup>40</sup>

But at the appointed time of God, the Ammonite will receive their punishment. God's punishment will be like the ferocity of war that will strike them as “a whirlwind at a cyclone” (cf. Jer. 30:23). By raising “cheers during battle” the enemy will storm the city of Raba and burn it (the city of Raba is located in the Amman area). Then those who are responsible for the wickedness of the old war, namely their king, together with their princes ... will go as outcasts.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, those who have satisfied their passions as attackers in a “total war,” they themselves will be sunk in due time by war malignancy. It is not only fate that caused by historical development, but it is the word of God that manifested in this way; it is the punishment of God that was carried out on of Ammonite.

## CONCLUSION

The appearance of the prophet Amos in a situation of society that was so full of poverty, oppression, frustration, persecution and social injustice at that time,

wanted to show that God never sat down and stayed silent to see all these things. Amos is one of the "below" or "marginalized people" who are poor, used by God to show that God cares deeply and cares about the problems facing by His people. In the situation of our lives today, church leaders as representatives of the church and every God's people in Indonesia are called to sound the voice of repentance, be a witness, and uphold the word of God as voiced and carried out by the prophet Amos, namely how to fight for justice and mutual help between the poor and rich.

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<sup>40</sup> John H. Hayes, Amos's Oracle Against the Nations: 160-161; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 354-355.

<sup>41</sup> B. J. Boland, *Tafsiran Amos*, 18; Goran Eidevall, *Amos: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 108-109; Thomas Edward McComiskey (Ed), *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary, Volume 1 Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, 355-356.

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