



## Amos Chapters 1 – 4 by Christina & Jason McBratney

The Book of Amos is usually dated as being written mid 8th Century BC. In chapter 1v1 we see that Amos preached "2 years before" an earthquake. Archaeological findings unearthed at Hazor in northern Palestine show that an unusually strong earthquake occurred about 760 BC.

Amos was born in Judah but he prophesied in the neighbouring Kingdom of Israel. He preached in the time of King Jeroboam II. Tradition holds that Amos died a violent death at the hands of Jeroboam II, but no historical records have confirmed this claim. Israel was at its strongest during this period, but started its decline soon after. Jeroboam was succeeded by his son, who was murdered. Between here and the fall of the Kingdom, there were 6 Kings, only one of whom died safely in bed. Both Hosea and Amos preached against Jeroboam's Dynasty and predicted its fall. During Jeroboam II's reign, there was relative political, economic and military stability. However, in chapter 3v15 and 4v1 we see evidence of a widening gap between rich and poor.

Amos is the first book of the "Book of the Twelve" or Dodekapropheton. The Book of the Twelve contains the books from Hosea to Malachi, also known as the Minor Prophets. The writings cover the words of the prophets from before the exile and beyond. The collection was in existence by the 2nd century BC. The Dodekapropheton is thought to have been arranged chronologically. However, some feel that Joel was placed before Amos because of themes they share: Locusts, drought represented as fire, lamentation, the Day of the Lord etc. In addition, and are similar. Joel - "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake." Amos - "The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."

The prophets of Israel are concerned with ethics. Amos speaks out against social injustice and international terrorism. Israel is placed on the same footing as all of the other nations, despite being God's chosen people. This shows that He expects the same morality from everyone.

Amos was not just a prophet of doom; he also called the people to reform. When they failed and disaster became inescapable, he pointed to future restoration; which can be seen in 9v11-15. The plagues reported in chapter 4 are meant as chastisements that would lead to reparation. When the people failed to repent, they became destructive judgements. The final proof that repentance was unlikely to happen is seen in 7v10-13, where attempts are made to silence Amos.

The book is broken into 3 parts: 1. Superscription - 1v1, Motto - 1v2, Oracles against Nations - 1v3 - 2v16 2. An indictment of Israel, and visions of destruction. - 3-6 3. Vision of Salvation - 7-9 7v10-17 is a biographical passage, an event that happened in Amos' life, rather than merely a description of who he was. 4v13, 5v8-9, 9v5-6 are considered to be poems celebrating the power of Yahweh in creation and in history. They show that God has a claim on the whole world, not just Israel, as Creator, Owner and Judge.

The Exodus is also a major point of reference. It is referred to in 2v10, 3v1, 5v25 and 9v7. It highlights how Israel has turned their back on God despite all he has done for them.

Chapter 1v1 introduces Amos to us and sets the scene. Amos means "burden bearer" and his message of devastation and destruction would have been a mighty burden. Amos is from Tekoa, which is approximately 20 kilometres south of Jerusalem. As he was not from Jerusalem Amos had a clearer perspective on their wicked deeds. While the Israelites accepted their lifestyle as normal, the prophet recognized it as a perversion and an abomination to God.

Here we also learn of Amos' profession. In The King James Version he is described as being "among the herdsmen" others render it "shepherd." The Hebrew word is noqed, which indicates one who raises sheep and goats. In 2nd Kings 3v4 the King of Moab is described using the same word but it is translated as "sheepmaster" : "And Mesha King of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool." This could mean that Amos was quite well off, like the King of Moab, rather than a mere shepherd. In Amos 7v14 the word bowker is used which indicates large cattle. Amos may have farmed more than one kind of animal. Amos also tended fig trees, which we can see in the same verse, though some translations read "sycamore fruit."

Zechariah 14v5 makes reference to the earthquake mentioned here: "ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah."

We can tell from this verse that Amos had visions of the destruction to come; this is further confirmed by his being called a "seer" in 7v12. While "seer" and "prophet" are considered interchangeable in the early writings, it is most likely that he saw visions rather than spoke spontaneous prophecies. David, we see, was this kind of prophet, in 2nd Samuel 23v2 it reads: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and his word was in my tongue." Amos further

explains in chapter 7 verses 14 and 15 how he came to be a prophet. He informs us in this biographical passage that he was not part of a prophet group, also known as "sons of prophets" (see 2nd Kings 2v3,5,7,15 and 2nd Kings 5v22). These groups often lived together, as seen in 2nd Kings 6v1 : "And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us." Indeed, Amos did not seek to be a prophet but God instead chose him. 7v15: "And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." This is similar to how David was chosen to be a prophet of God; Psalm 78v70,71 - "He chose David also his servant and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance."

Verse 2 as we have seen links to Joel 3v16. The Lord roars from Jerusalem because it is where his house, the temple was. It is his chosen city.

Verses 3 - Chapter 2v5 are the oracles against the nations. God is "roaring" from Jerusalem and the nations he condemns - Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab and Judah - surround his seat. The nations warnings are issued in an anti-clockwise direction. The judgments are only a couple of verses; Israel's punishment however spans a few chapters. The judgements have been likened to an eagle, circling its prey before diving in.

Before each nation's fate is revealed we read "for three transgressions...and for four." This is apparently a common method used in wisdom texts such as Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Such phrasing suggests a continuing series; it is used more often of bad actions than good e.g. Proverbs 6v16-19, 30v21-23. It could mean literally seven sins, a series of sins or a very bad one - when someone is very happy they could be described as "thrice happy" this does not mean that they are happy three times it means they are very happy. Therefore, the repetition of the phrase is open to interpretation. It does nevertheless; point out that whatever they did it was very wicked.

Syria is first mentioned, Damascus being a Syrian city. Their crime appears to be that they drove studded threshing sledges over their victims. Denise Herr describes a threshing sledge as - "a wooden platform about a metre wide and two metres long. The underside is studded with sharp stones. A man would have stood on the sledge as domestic animals pulled it over piles of grain, the stones cutting the straw into shorter pieces and separating the grain from the chaff." This possibly occurred in the same battle mentioned in 2 Kings 10v32-34. The punishment of the Syrians is outlined in verses 4 and 5. Aven in verse 5 may mean

wickedness and it is thought to be a place where the Syrians worshipped their idols. In the margin, you will see it is also called Bikath-Aven, which means "valley of vanity." The people of Syria are to be taken away as slaves. This was fulfilled and we can read about it in 2 Kings 16v9 - "For the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." Rezin was the Syrian king at the time.

Philistia, the Land of the Philistines, is next; its punishments are laid out in verses 6-8. Four Philistine cities are mentioned: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron. The Philistines had taken people as prisoner and then sold them as slaves. Fire is to destroy their cities; the people of the cities are also to be utterly destroyed. The verse (8) reads - "I will slaughter the people of Ashdod and destroy the king of Ashkelon. Then I will turn to attack Ekron, and the few Philistines still left will be killed. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!" Ekron fell to Assyria during the reign of Sennacherib, some fifty years after Amos; while Gaza and Ashkelon were captured by Tiglath-Pileser III. Ashdod's fate, at the hand of Uzziah of Judah, is recorded in 2nd Chronicles 26v6 - "And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines."

Tyre had broken a Treaty that they had with Israel and sold entire Israelite villages into captivity. Their destruction happened in 586-573 BC when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar attacked the mainland of Tyre, and in 333-332 BC when Alexander the Great conquered the island of Tyre.

In verses 11 and 12, we look at Edom. Edom is the nation descended from Esau; this is why they are referred to as pursuing their brother. The Edomites were holding onto the ancient grudge between the two nations founders. The hatred of Edom was first seen when Esau, as he swore to murder his brother Jacob - Gen. 27v41. It was later displayed when the Edomites refused Israel passage as they came out of Egypt - Num. 20v14-21. Obadiah's book also condemns the Edomites for their deeds. Edom was destroyed by the Assyrians around 736 BC, and had become a virtual desert by the fifth century B.C. Malachi 1v2-4 talks of the wasteland that Edom became and how it would never be restored: "I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever."

Next we move onto Ammon, their crime is a gruesome one. They cut open pregnant women. Due to the next line - "that they might enlarge their border" some say that the pregnant women are actually just hills. This seems like a weak crime though and it was first suggested by the Medieval Rabbi Kimchi. The Hebrew word for pregnant women is harim and the word for hills, harchib. However, if you look at 2nd Kings 8v12,15v16 we can see that this explanation, although nicer is more than likely false. Therefore, the crime is that, in their fervour for more land, they slaughtered without mercy. Also by destroying future generations it would ensure that in the future no one would return to reclaim the land. Nebuchadnezzar's army came and destroyed the kingdom of Ammon, although it still existed it was of little importance and by the time of the Romans had disappeared. Ammon, like the Moabites who we look at next were the descendants of Lot and his two daughters. This can be seen in Gen 19v37,38.

Now into chapter two we look at the Moabites. It seems here that their crime is desecration of the dead. One scholar I read however claims that the King of Edom was burned alive. Most scholars agree however that the King was already dead and it was the lack of respect shown him that caused their punishment. It seems that in ancient times it was believed that burning someone's bones into dust would prevent them from being able to be resurrected thereby wishing for him or her eternal death. It is also an insult to God because, in their eyes, their action took the choice of raising the person up from the dead out of the hand of God and placed it in their own; a transgression which denied God the ultimate right to impart eternal life or death. The bones being burnt to lime is interesting. Lime is calcium oxide, which was used to make whitewash, mortar, and plaster. To get lime you can either burn limestone or burn bones. One scholar's theory is that the Moabites not only burnt the bones of the dead king, they also used the lime they extracted to decorate their buildings. The Moabites are to die in fierce battle and their leaders with them. This was fulfilled at the same time as the prophecy against the children of Ammon by Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Judah being one half of the original Israel that came out of Egypt was still under God's law. However, Amos says that they "have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked." The erring here is following idols, as their fathers before them did. After all God has done for them in the past, all he asked was that they obeyed his law and kept his commandments. The contempt shown towards his loving kindness is to be punished. Even God's own chosen city - Jerusalem was not going to escape. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Judah and the temple, and the palaces of the king and his nobles in Jerusalem; were burnt with fire when it was taken by the Chaldean army, about two hundred years after this prophecy.

Chapter 2v6 Here begins the long condemnation of Israel. King Jeroboam had set up golden calves in Dan and Bethel. We can read this in 1st Kings 12v27-33 : "If this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto... Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam... Whereupon he took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship...And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month...and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves which he had made...which he had devised in his own heart."

Where we read "they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes" this could mean that they would literally sell people as slaves for trivial debts or a small price; or as some think, the word shoe here should read "bribe." The word for shoe - n'lym some scholars say should be - n'lm. If this were the case, the line would read: "because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for the sake of a bribe." Put this way it hints towards corrupt judges and lawmakers or even that people would give false testimonies for those that paid them.

Verse 7 - Where we read: "That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor" this could be interpreted as meaning the people were so greedy; they wanted even the dust from a poor person's head. Others render it: "They trample helpless people into the dust."

In regards to the maid mentioned in the latter half of the verse, the Israelites were probably just doing what they saw around them; rather than what they knew was right, for a Hittite law stated: "If father and son sleep with (the same) slave girl or harlot, there shall be no punishment." Because the preceding parts of the tirade against Israel is concerning the oppression of others, it seems more likely that the maid is a servant rather than a wife sleeping with both men. Some commentators think that the maid is a temple prostitute but there is practically no evidence for this. The Hebrew word is na'arah and is translated as damsels in Genesis 24v61 and 1 Sam 25v42 and maidens in Exodus 2v5 and Proverbs 9v3. In each of these verses, the maiden or damsel is a servant. Some people take the servant to

mean a concubine bought by the father either for himself or his son. (See Exodus 21v8,9). Nevertheless, the punishment for sleeping with your father's wife or your son's wife is death for all parties as outlined in Leviticus 20v11,12. It can be assumed then that this law applies for any woman not just a wife.

Verse 8 highlights more wickedness. Here we see that people are laying clothes at the altars of their false gods. This was a Gentile custom where they would sleep in the temples in order to be given good dreams by their gods, which they would interpret in the morning. It is generally agreed that the clothes are ones that should have been returned to debtors. Exodus 22v26 outlines this custom: "If you take your neighbour's coat as a pledge of repayment, you must return it by nightfall." A discovery of an ostrakon, or pottery, in 1960 on the Mediterranean coast and dated at around 639-609BC is an official letter of protest which shows a farm labourer petitioned his local government for the return of his cloak, confiscated probably for failure to repay a loan. The wine of the condemned could be wine bought with money stolen or, a more interesting theory is that it is the wine usually given to those condemned to die to cheer them up. It would seem that they would not even let a dying man have one last pleasure. They are drinking and worshipping in the temples of their false gods. In Proverbs 31v4-7 we read: "It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes' strong drink: Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." The judgement of the people has been skewed, and not just by alcohol, though that would certainly play a part.

In verses 9-11 God points out what he has done for the Israelites in the past. The Amorites were a powerful nation, hence their description as being mighty trees. In addition, the Amorites and some of the other Canaanites were tall people as confirmed by some recent archaeological finds. When they were destroyed they were destroyed utterly, i.e. - roots and all. God drove out the Amorites and the other Canaanite nations so that the Israelites could have their own land. It is then pointed out that they have had prophets to guide them in the way they should live and to warn them of the things to come. Their advice went unheeded and we see in verse 12 that the people tried to silence the Nazarites an order of men dedicated to God. The vow of a Nazarite involved these three things, 1- abstinence from wine and strong drink, 2 - refraining from cutting the hair off the head during the whole period of the continuance of the vow, and 3 - the avoidance of contact with the dead. We can see that either through force or persuasion some Nazarites broke their vows.

In verse 13, it seems to be saying that God is being weighed down by their many sins; that his patience is wearing thin. It is almost as if he is saying their latest acts of disobedience are the straw that broke the camel's back.

Verses 14-16 cover the fear that will fill the hearts of the Israelites when God exacts his judgement. The soldiers will fail to flee, the horsemen will not be able to save themselves and the bowmen will be useless. Their courage will fail them because God, who has always been behind their victories, is against them now.

In chapter 3, we again find God reminding the Israelites of the Exodus. Verse 2, which ties together with Exodus 19v5 points out the special relationship between God and Israel. He explains that it is because of this special relationship that they must be punished severely for their disobedience. Luke 12v48 says: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Next follows a series of questions, in verses 3-6. If someone were to ask you these questions your answer would be "no." In verse 8 with the question: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear?" our answer suddenly changes to something like - only the very stupid. This is exactly the answer intended, and is designed to make the Israelites realise their error. Israel has heard the roaring lion i.e. the warnings of the prophets (as seen in verse 7) but were too stupid or stubborn to take heed.

Verse 3 can also be taken as a representation of God's relationship with Israel, which we looked at just before. Verse 6 indicates that nothing happens without it being God's will, which is also made mention of in Lamentations 2v8. Although this is God's will, He is not merciless; he would not just without warning send an army to wipe out his chosen people. They had had plenty of time to heed the warnings of the prophets. Amos says in verse 8 that he cannot keep from proclaiming the message.

In verse 9, the heathen nations surrounding Israel are invited to look upon its wicked deeds. They will hear of the sins of Israel and God's punishment to befall them. One commentary said that the nations were being called to sit in judgement of Israel's deeds but there is no need for that, God has already judged them and found them unworthy. The New Living Translation reads: "Announce this to the leaders of Philistia and Egypt: 'Take your seats now on the hills around Samaria, and witness the scandalous spectacle of all Israel's crimes. My people have



forgotten what it means to do right,' says the Lord. 'Their fortresses are filled with wealth taken by theft and violence.'" Samaria was the capital of the Israelite kingdom.

From verse 11 to the end of the chapter, we read of how Israel will be invaded by a foreign power. This foreign power is Assyria, led by king Sargon II, and we can read about it in 2nd Kings 17. Verses 5 -7 reads: "Then the King of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria...For it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God...and had feared other gods." The children of Israel are to be too weak against this powerful army, Amos 3v11 tells us. It also implies that everything that they put their confidence in, their idols, fortresses and riches will be taken down by the Assyrians. Verse 12 seems to have two main interpretations; of which is correct, I am unsure. One is that all that will be left of the city will be some tattered furniture, and the evidence of their self-obsessed, materialistic, lives. Another is that, after everyone has been carried away into slavery, all that will remain are the sick and weak that live in their beds.

The biggest abomination to Yahweh, the altars to the false gods, were to be destroyed also. Jeroboam sealed the fate of his nation when he erected the golden calves. The horns of the altar are to be cut off and will fall to the ground. People would flee to the altars and hold onto the horns of them for refuge. We can see an instance of this happening with one of Yahweh's altars in 1st Kings 1v50, 51 : "And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword;" and again in 1st Kings 2v28 : "And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold of the horns of the altar." The cutting off of the horns would show that their false gods could give them no refuge. The destruction of the idolatrous altars was also foretold by Hosea who said in chapter 8 verses 5 and 6: "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces."

The houses mentioned in verse 15 of chapter 3 appear to be the houses of the rich. However, it was not just the rich that would be punished, the poor would also, nevertheless it is the homes of the wealthy that are mentioned here. It would seem that rich families of the time had winter and summer homes. In Judges 3v20 we read of Eglon, the King of Moab, sitting in a "summer parlour." These lavish homes were to be destroyed along with the great houses and

the houses of ivory. Archaeologists, in excavations in Samaria and Assyria, have found many ivory carvings that once decorated these houses.

Chapter 4 talks of the kine or "cows" of Bashan. These are not actual cows; rather it is a metaphorical term for the voluptuous rich women of Samaria; or as the New Living Translation so bluntly puts it the "fat cows of Samaria." It is prophesied that these rich women who live the good life at the expense of the poor and needy and lounge around drinking wine; will be taken away with hooks along with their posterity, or descendants. This was a practise of the Assyrians. Carvings depicting slaves being led away with hooks through their lips have been found in the Middle East. Isaiah also prophesied that this would happen and it can be found in 2nd Kings 19v28 and Isaiah 37v29. Not only were these people literally taken away with hooks; they are also taken out of their home, like a fish is taken out of water, also with a hook.

The next two verses are rather sarcastic, the people are told to keep on doing what they are doing, even to do it more. The New Living Translation says: "Go ahead and offer your sacrifices at Bethel and Gilgal. Keep on disobeying - your sins are mounting up! Offer sacrifices each morning and bring your tithes every three days! Present your bread made with yeast as an offering of thanksgiving. Then give your extra voluntary offering so you can brag about it everywhere! This is the kind of thing you Israelites love to do." This just highlights the futility of their actions. In thinking they are pleasing one god they are angering the only one that counts.

God tells them, in verses 6-11 of all the things he has done to them, as chastisements, in a hope that they would repent from their wickedness; but each plague concludes with "yet have ye not returned to unto me." Verses 6-8 speak of a famine due to lack of rain - the cleanness of teeth meaning there was no food to dirty them. God withholding the rain can be seen in 1st Kings 17v1 : "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" and 1st Kings 18v5. This did not change the hearts of the Israelites. Verse 9 speaks of mildew and palmerworm destroying the vegetation. Palmerworms damage fruit trees by feeding on their leaves; they are known to appear suddenly and in large numbers. Joel also mentions this insect plague in chapter 1v4. Mildew contaminates corn and various other vegetables and fruits. They cannot be eaten and must be destroyed. Blasting could mean a hot wind that withered the buds and shoots. In other translations it is rendered "blight" which refers to diseases which wither young plants. This did not turn the Israelites to

repentance either. Verse 10 seems to be alluding to the plague recorded in Numbers 16:46-49 : "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah." The plague is "after the manner of Egypt" as it is like the Passover where the firstborn Egyptians died. The stink of the camp is presumably the smell of the dead bodies. The word "camp" implies a military situation where soldiers had travelled away from their towns. However, during the time in the wilderness the Israelites would have been dwelling in camps rather than fixed cities. In battle, they had lost many young men and horses, which would have left the people vulnerable to attack. Still they did not turn back to God. In verse 11, we have the final plague. It appears that houses were destroyed with fire from heaven, as with Sodom and Gomorrah and that while some people died others were plucked out of the burning. This image of a firebrand is a good one it is something totally useless - except to continue burning - unless it is worked on to change it and cut away the "bad" and leave wood from which something can be made. The people spared from the fire were probably ones that God hoped would change and make themselves into good followers. But as we see, this did not make them repent.

The chapter concludes with Yahweh telling the people to "prepare to meet [their] God." Due to them having hundreds of years worth of warnings and chances God has no choice, the Israelites must face up to the one they have angered. The final verse is praise to the mighty Lord who has just finished speaking. It ties nicely with chapter 5 verse 8.

We have seen throughout the chapters how God's hand is in all things and how he has controlled both nature and history for the sake of Israel. He also controls armies and Israel does not get a second chance in the wake of the Assyrian army.