

# TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY

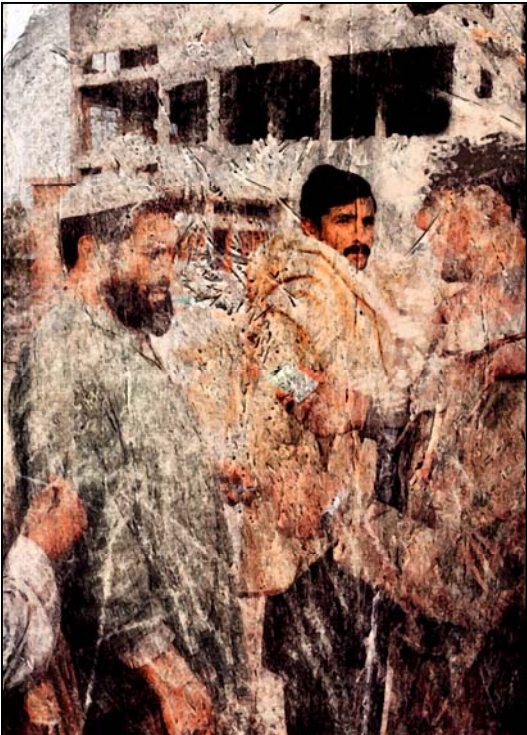


## Amos

I get the feeling that Amos would have been perfectly happy left to his sheep breeding and sycamore fruit tending. He lived well within Judah's territory, and though Judah had its problems, it would still be another 180 years before the fall of Jerusalem, well after his own lifetime. He could have lived a relatively peaceful life, enjoying his job and hanging out with his family.

In an encounter with Amaziah, the king pleasing priest of Bethel, Amos was accused of being a traitor for the words that he delivered from God. In his answer, Amos said that he was not a prophet, or even the son of a prophet... at least not until God redirected him. He differed from the "professional" prophets of the day in that he did not make his living telling people what they wanted to hear. He announced God's judgment not only on Judah, but also on the northern tribes of Israel, and six other surrounding nations.

Why do you think God called a farmer from Judah to be a prophet to Israel? \_\_\_\_\_



One of the most common themes that Amos spoke about was social justice. Oppression and exploitation would be punished. Pride and false security were also addressed, as well as meaningless worship rituals.

These same issues exist today. God cares about the same things now as He did then. What are some ways that you are confronting these problems? \_\_\_\_\_



*"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."*

*2 Corinthians 4:7*

### READ:

- Amos

### Chronology:

- 760-750 BC
- 30+ years **after** Elisha
- Around 30 years **before** Israel's exile
- 180 or so years **before** the fall of Jerusalem

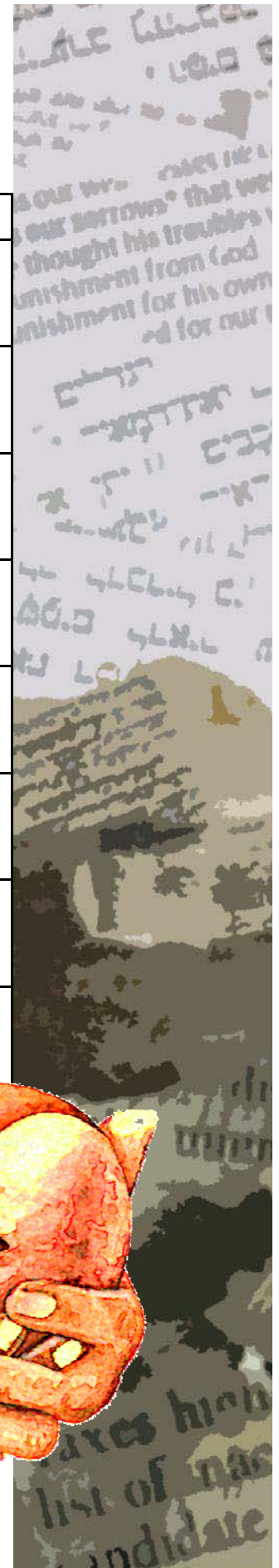
## Judgments on the Nations

Fill in the missing information in the table below. Find these locations on the map on page 5

NATION	REFERENCE	OFFENSE	RESULT
Syria	1:3-5		
Philistia	1:6-8		
Phoenicia (Tyre)	1:9-10		
Edom	1:11-12		
Ammon	1:13-15		
Moab	2:1-3		
Judah	2:4-5		
Israel	2:6-16		

### Those who attack the helpless...

The Ammonites were descendants of Lot and lived east of the Jordan River, and north of Moab. Ripping open pregnant women was a common wartime atrocity used to control the population of an enemy. The practice is mentioned in Assyrian records as well. The Ammonites were apparently doing this to the pregnant women in neighboring Gilead. Amos mentions this practice to emphasize the degree of depravity the Ammonites had sunk to. In light of this, what do you think God's view is of abortion today?



## Cows of Bashan

The United States is by far the highest ranking single nation in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) as reported by multiple sources. How generous are we with what God has blessed us with? According to the 2010 Charities Aid Foundation Ranking, which ranked countries by the proportion of their individuals who had given time or money to those in need, Americans rated 5th, with 55% of their people involved in charitable contribution. And of the money donated to churches, how is that spent? According to the Generous Giving website, 85% of the money donated goes to the internal operations of the church; staff salaries, utilities, Sunday school materials, etc. Those may be good and necessary, but sometimes I wonder what Amos would have to say to us.

What do we learn about the reputation of Bashan's livestock from Deut. 32:14, Psalm 22:12, and Ezek. 39:18? \_\_\_\_\_

What is implied about the fertility of the region of Bashan from Jer. 50:19? \_\_\_\_\_

Who did Amos compare to the "cows of Bashan" in Amos 4:1,2? \_\_\_\_\_

How did these women behave? \_\_\_\_\_

Ouch! In a nation where every luxury imaginable is at our fingertips, and we spend an estimated \$60 billion a year on weight loss programs, Amos has my attention! I doubt that these ladies of luxury dirtied their fingers by directly oppressing the poor and needy, it was just the consequence of their self indulgent lifestyle. What are some ways our own extravagant lifestyle might be keeping our focus off of others, or even hurting them?

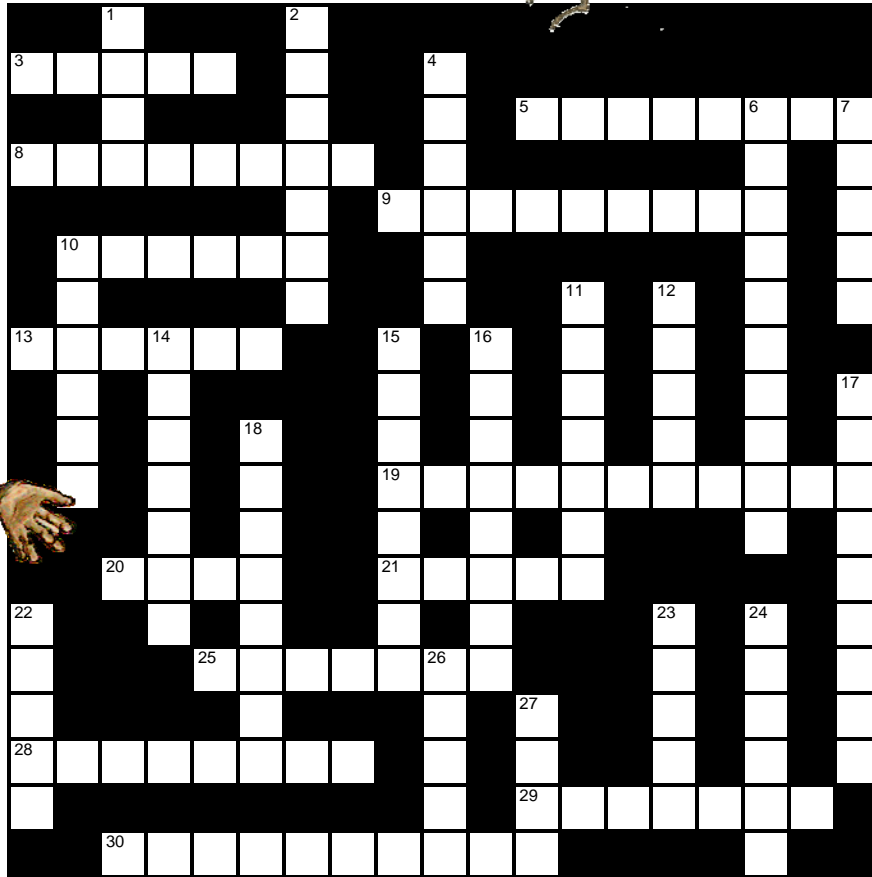
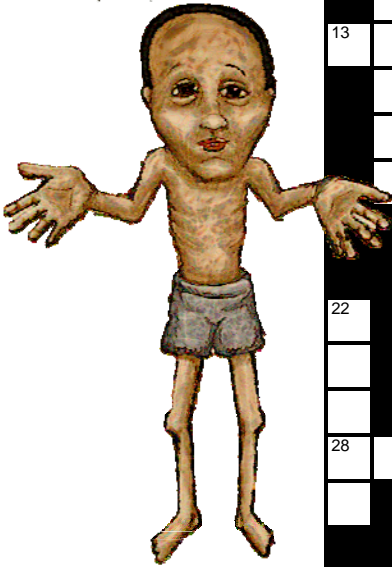
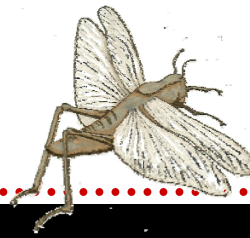
What was God's view of the religious practices of Israel in the sarcastic words of Amos 4:4-5? \_\_\_\_\_

How did James address this topic in James 2:14-18? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you see the role of the church being in issues of poverty, hunger, oppression...? \_\_\_\_\_



# PUZZLE PAGE



## Clues

### Across

- 3 rejected the law of the Lord (5)
- 5 God gave empty ones (8)
- 8 capital city of Aram (8)
- 9 the fortress consumed because of God's wrath on Judah (9)
- 10 the altars of this town will be destroyed (6)
- 13 none will do this (6)
- 19 cities of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron (11)
- 20 God's wrath was on them because of the captives they sold to Edom (4)
- 21 Israel would be sent into this (5)
- 25 devoured fig and olive trees (7)
- 28 day of the Lord will be this (8)
- 29 perhaps God will have mercy on them (7)
- 30 he saw the future of Israel two years before this event (10)

### Down

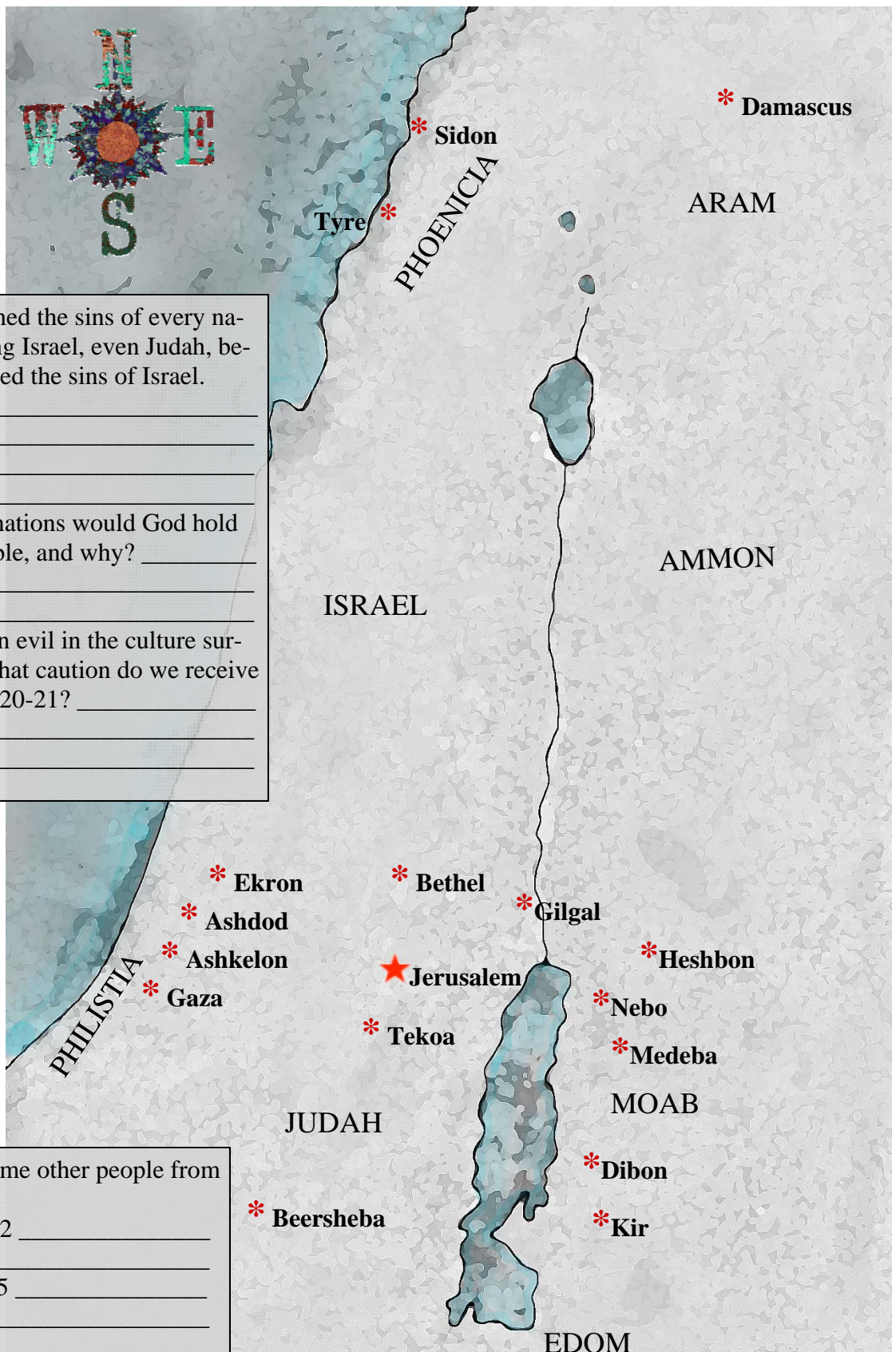
- 1 pursued his brother with a sword (4)

- 2 God would bring the exiles back to do this (7)
- 4 first to go into exile because they didn't do this (6)
- 6 woe to those who are this (10)
- 7 he bred these (5)
- 10 fertile area known for their healthy livestock (6)
- 11 the poor are deprived of this (7)
- 12 the Israelites loved to \_\_\_\_\_ and brag about thier religious practices (5)
- 14 priest at Bethel (7)
- 15 commanded not to prophesy (8)
- 16 Judah was chosen of all the \_\_\_\_\_ on earth (8)
- 17 the house of Jacob will not be totally \_\_\_\_\_ (9)
- 18 he took care of this kind of fig tree (8)
- 22 God abhors it (5)
- 23 would be taken away by hooks (5)
- 24 there would be a \_\_\_\_\_ of hearing the words of God (6)
- 26 where he was from (5)
- 27 guilty of slave trafficking (4)





# Map



Amos condemned the sins of every nation surrounding Israel, even Judah, before he addressed the sins of Israel. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the nations would God hold most accountable, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

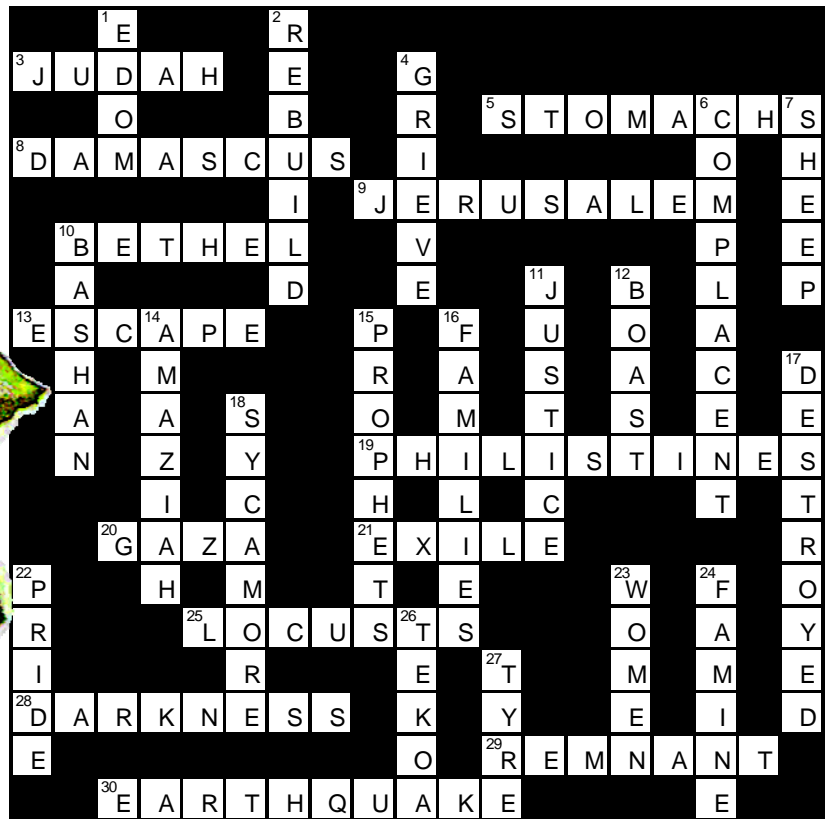
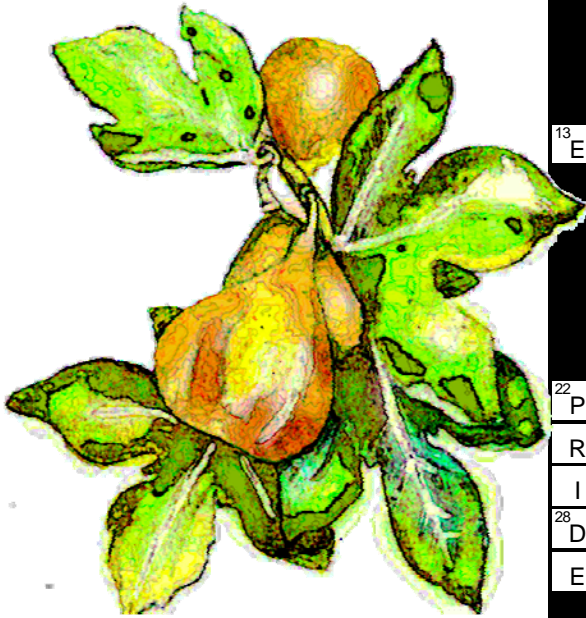
As we condemn evil in the culture surrounding us, what caution do we receive from 2 Peter 2:20-21? \_\_\_\_\_

Who were some other people from Tekoa?

2 Samuel 14:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Nehemiah 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

*Puzzle answers:*



## Sources:

### COWS OF BASHAN p. 3

For GDP ranking:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html>

To see the **2010 Charities Aid Foundation Ranking:**

<http://charitieshouse.blogspot.com/2010/01/comparison-of-countries-charitable.html>

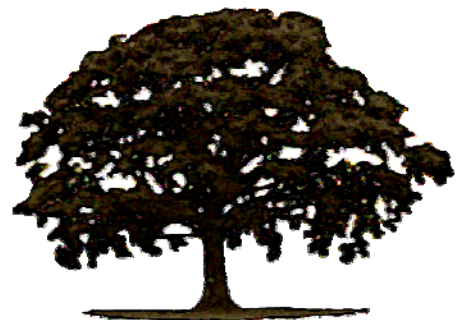
For interesting statistics on church giving:

<http://www.generousgiving.org/stats#>

### Some other interesting resources:

This is a site where you can compare your income with that of the rest of the world's: <http://www.globalrichlist.com>

**Eternal Threads** establishes sustainable methods of helping women and their families, who live in poverty to increase their income enabling them to educate their children, buy nutritious food and medicine and other basic necessities. Increased livelihood will also help mitigate the risk of trafficking and exploitation that women and children in extreme poverty face. Find out more at <http://www.eternalthreads.com>



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