

Amos 1:6-8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/amos/amos-1/amos-16-8/>

The LORD pronounces judgment on the inhabitants of Gaza because they deported an entire population of Israel to Edom.

Amos's next prophetic indictment fell on Philistia. The prophet initially used *Gaza* as a synonym for the city-states of Philistia, probably because *Gaza* was one of the most prominent Philistine cities at that time. But other Philistine cities such as Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron would also be judged by God (v. 8). The only major Philistine city not listed here is Gath. The reason might be because Gath was already captured by Hazael of Aram in 815 BC (2 Kgs. 12:17), and by Uzziah of Judah in 760 BC (2 Chron. 26:6; cf. Amos 6:2). These Philistine cities were located along the coast of what is the modern state of Israel.

Through Amos, the LORD said, *For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its punishment.* The reason for Gaza's punishment is clear: *They deported an entire population to deliver it up to Edom.* The *population* spoken of here is likely a *population* from Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. This event seems to have occurred during the reign of King Jeroham. According to the chronicler, "The Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who ordered the Ethiopians; and they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king's house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons" (2 Chron. 21:16–17). Amos went beyond that which is mentioned in 2 Chronicles to indicate that the Philistines *deported an entire population to deliver it to Edom.* This suggests that the Philistines did more than they were supposed to do and captured many other people besides the ruling family. *Edom* is the land founded by Esau, and bordered Israel to the east and was south of Moab (Genesis 25:30; 32:3).

For this reason, the LORD said He would *send fire upon the wall of Gaza*, which would *consume her citadels*. This means that the LORD would destroy the fortresses or palaces of *Gaza*. Besides *Gaza*, three major Philistine cities would fall under judgment. God said He would *also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon*, and would *even unleash His power upon Ekron*. The expression "one who holds the scepter" is a figurative way of talking about someone who occupies a royal position. Each of these Philistine city states would fall to a conqueror.

The place called *Ashdod* was a city located midway between Joppa and *Gaza*, about three miles from the coast. It is identified with modern Tel Ashdod, 15 km north of *Ashkelon* and approximately 4 km inland from the Mediterranean Sea. The city called *Ashkelon* was a large seaport located on the Mediterranean coast 20 km north of *Gaza* and 50 km south of Tel Aviv (Judges 1:18). Finally, *Ekron* was the most northerly of the major cities of Philistia. During Israel's conquest of the Promised Land, *Ekron* was not taken by

Joshua (Jos 13:3). When the land was divided among the 12 tribes, *Ekron* was given first to Judah and then to Dan (Jos 15:11, 45, 46; 19:43). It was eventually taken by Judah (Jgs 1:18), but subsequently fell back to the Philistines.

God's judgment on the Philistines would result in complete destruction. God stated that even *the remnant of the Philistines* would *perish*. There would be no more Philistine land or culture. This prophecy was partially fulfilled during the time of the Assyrian Empire—Gaza fell to Assyria in 734 BC; *Ashdod*, in 711 BC; *Ashkelon* and *Ekron*, in 701 BC. But the prophecy was completely fulfilled later during the Maccabean period (168–134 BC). It surely came to pass because the *Lord GOD* had said so.

In spite of the Philistines becoming extinct, the Roman Emperor Hadrian named the land of Israel "Philistia" or "Palestine" to reflect his extreme dislike of the Jews. It is believed he chose the name because of the longstanding struggle between Israel and the Philistines, as a means of conveying a name most odious to the Jews.

Biblical Text

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.**

⁷ **"So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza
And it will consume her citadels.**

⁸ **"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.**