

# Amos 3:1-2

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/amos/amos-3/amos-31-2/>

*Amos reminds the Israelites of their special covenant relationship with the LORD, the violation of which requires special punishment.*

In this section the prophet reminded the Israelites of their special covenant relationship with the Suzerain God. He addressed the people directly, saying, *Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel*. The prophet used the verb “to hear” to invite Israel to pay close attention to the *word* or the revelation he was about to deliver to them because that *word* came from *the LORD*, Israel’s Suzerain or Ruler. That *word* concerned not one tribe or some of them, but *the entire family which the LORD brought up from the land of Egypt*. All those who were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt were called to *hear* God’s revelation.

The divine speech is then introduced in the first person, allowing Israel to hear God’s truth as though it were presented without mediation. The LORD said to Israel, *You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth*. The words *You only* are placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. It thus means “you alone” and nobody else. This is a restatement of an assertion God had made previously (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).

Israel was given an amazing and special privilege to be in a covenant relationship with the LORD. They were chosen by God because God loved them. As Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy:

“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers.”  
(Deuteronomy 7:7-8a)

This was an unconditional choice and is still in effect (Romans 11:26-36). But God promised great blessings if His chosen people would obey Him:

“‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”  
(Exodus 5:5-6)

This promise was that if Israel would obey Him, God would work through them to serve a priestly function, demonstrating to surrounding nations the immense benefit of a society based on love of neighbor and caring for others, rather than the strong exploiting the weak. This special covenant relationship carried special obligations. The people of God were responsible to obey the terms of the covenant to be blessed beyond measure. Failure to abide by these precepts would cause God’s judgment to fall on Israel. The covenant entered into on Mount Sinai was like a marriage covenant, and Israel said “I DO” (Exodus 19:8). God often pictures His covenant with

Israel as a marriage, as in Hosea and Ezekiel 16. God's covenant was clearly stated, and Israel agreed that if they violated the covenant there would be disciplinary consequences (many of which would likely be natural consequences.)

This is the case here in this chapter. The Israelites violated the terms of the covenant and their Suzerain (Ruler) God was about to judge them. As He said, *Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities*. The word translated *punished* is most often translated "number." It means to attend to, to visit, or to oversee. The idea is that God made a covenant, and He is not going to forget it, but will instead attend to it. It was agreed in the covenant that if Israel disobeyed God, by not loving one another and exploiting the poor and weak, they would get cursing rather than blessing. This makes sense, in that Israel then would just be like their neighbors, and would fail to serve the priestly function to which they were appointed. Therefore if God let it go, He would be endorsing evil. God will therefore attend to, enforce, and execute the covenant. The Israelites would be judged according to the agreement. In each instance of God's discipline, there is a consistent theme that He loves them and wants the best for them. Letting them descend into evil is certainly not in their best interest. The writer of Proverbs echoes this sentiment: "For whom the Lord loves He reproofs, even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:12).

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>1</sup> Hear this word which the Lord has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt:**

**<sup>2</sup> "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.**