

1. Amos opens with messages for three troublesome nations that had no blood ties with the Hebrew people. (Amos 1:3-10)
2. There is a Hebrew idiom found in the following verses - 1:3 up through chapter 2 and verse 6.
3. The idiom does not mean that four transgressions are added to the first three. It means that one additional transgression - the last straw - makes judgment inevitable.
4. With that final sin the boundary between God's mercy and His wrath is crossed. So - the fourth transgression of a nation was the one that tipped the scales.
5. Next - we see 3 other nations (Edom, Ammon, and Moab). These 3 nations had a genetic kinship to Israel. (Amos 1:11-2:3)
6. We can imagine that the people of Israel were even more delighted when Amos turned his prophetic message to Judah. (Amos 2:4-5)
7. But - Amos now turned to Israel (the Northern Kingdom). (Amos 2:6-16)
8. Now that Amos had the attention of the people (1:3-2:16) - he proceeded to deliver three messages of judgment, each of which begins with "Hear this word" (3:1; 4:1; 5:1).
9. By using this phrase, he reminded them that they weren't listening to a mere man making a speech; they were listening to a prophet declaring the Word of God.
10. The first message (Amos 3:1-15) was one of explanation - Amos clarified four divine calls and announced that Israel's judgment was certain.
11. His second message (4:1-13) focused on accusation - the prophet denounced Israel's sins.
12. The third message (5:1-6:14) was a lamentation - the prophet felt the anguish of his own nation's certain doom.
13. The basis for God's judgment was because of His relationship to Israel. Yahweh was Israel's God, and Israel was God's people, a relationship He shared with no other people. (Amos 3:1-2)
14. God had moved other people from one country to another, just as He had brought Israel from Egypt (9:7). However, He selected only Israel as His chosen people. (Exodus 19:3-6)
15. The "word" or revelation which Israel was to pay attention to was a word God had spoken. It was "against" or concerning the people of Israel.
16. Notice the phrase "the whole family." It refers to more than the ten northern tribes called Israel. The phrase designates all of the people God delivered out of Egypt into the promised land. (2:10)

17. The importance of the phrase is that it reminds the people of their origins, of God's past activity on their behalf, and of their relationship of dependence on God.
18. In verse 2 "You only" is in the emphatic position - it means "you alone, you and no one else." The verb translated "chosen/known" suggests an intimate relationship between God and His people.
19. God selected one family (Israel) from among all the families of the earth to be in a special relationship to Him.
20. Israel was about to learn that their special relationship carried with it special responsibility and accountability.
21. Israel's privileged relationship to God carried with it heavy responsibility to God. As seen in the book of Deuteronomy, living in relationship with God demanded loyalty and faithfulness.
22. If the people failed, judgment and punishment would come. God holds his people accountable for their sins.