

Tim Thomassen - Hosea

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Now we have a symposium of sorts. For the next few sessions There will be three sections of this with a 15 minute intermission between these prophets, and the first one will be the prophet Amos, and to give us the thoughts on this topic, we have brother Tim Thomason from Albuquerque. We're very glad to have him with us and fellowship with him again.

And so we'll run him just a little behind. We'll turn it over to brother Tim.

Basically, the book of Amos could be divided into four main sections. Chapters one, verse one through the second chapter. The third verse include the introduction and a declaration of the judgment which will affect the surrounding nations.

Chapters two, verse four through the end of the sixth, chapter zero in on Judah and Israel's sentence. Then chapter seven through the tenth verse of chapter nine have to do with the visions of Israel's impending doom, and then finally, in the last five verses of the Book of Amos, the prophet points to a restored Israel.

Amos was born and brought up a simple peasant earning his bread by the tending of cattle. Chapter one, verse one tells us that Amos was among the shepherds of Tekoa. The simple expression Amos of Tekoa was a sufficient identification of the prophet while the memory of his ministry was still fresh in men's minds.

Tecoa is today the site of ruins on a hill nearly 3,000ft above sea level, about 12 miles south of Jerusalem. On three sides, limestone hills rise above it, but to the east there is a view of the Dead Sea with the mountains of Moab beyond. At the time it was a desolate rock bound region, affording but scanty pasturage for flocks of sheep and goats.

Verse one also tells us of the time setting for Amos prophecy. It says in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. So immediately we're alerted to the fact that this occurred during the time of the divided kingdom. Amos ministry took place in the north, even though his home was in the two tribes southern kingdom of Judah. In Amos day, Israel was much the more important of the two kingdoms.

The contemporary reigns of the two monarchs marked by a period of great prosperity for both kingdoms, covered a good part of the first half of the 8th century BC.

Although outwardly a laboring peasant, inwardly Amos burned with zeal for the laws and ways of God. Judah and Israel had relapsed into almost complete idolatry, and Amos was one of the few far sighted men who realized that the consequence could not fail to be nothing less than Utter disaster.

As you recall, under the terms of the Mosaic covenant, Israel was guaranteed security and prosperity all the time that they adhered to the covenant and loyalty to God. However, failure to do this apostasy from the true faith, the going after false gods, would conversely bring invasion, adversity and disaster. Israel in general, in the days of Amos, seems not to have believed that disaster would come. They were prosperous, and they had been for a long time. Even though their own histories told them of past times, when the penalty of the broken covenant had been exacted from their forefathers, they still did not believe that it would happen to them.

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They worshiped false gods, they were prosperous. Everything seemingly was going their way. Nothing adverse had happened, nothing adverse would happen, or at least so they thought.

But Amos realized that disaster would come, moreover that it was imminent. He knew that God was long suffering towards his errant people and would wait a long time before inflicting judgment. But the fact that judgment would eventually come was certain, and in his fervent zeal and burning desire, not only for the honor of God's name, but also for the welfare and happiness of his nation, he had to speak out. The inspiration of the prophet came upon him, and he left his cattle and his country home, and made his way to the cities where his voice could be heard.

Amos was a notable example of the apostle Peter's statement in 2 Peter 1:21, where Peter said, prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Amos message began with the adjoining nations. First of all, Damascus, the capital of Syria on the north, is mentioned as being in line with the divine retributions. Secondly, the Philistines on the west. Third, the nation of Tyre to the northwest, then the Edomites to the south, followed by the Ammonites on the east, then the Moabites to the south, then Judah, and lastly, the center of the message, Israel, the ten tribe kingdom.

One might assume that a great deal of attention was given to his message by the people of Israel, as long as they heard of judgment that would come upon the surrounding nations, who in large part were enemies. But as the circle grew narrower and narrower, and as the weight of Amos testimony was found to be especially against themselves, we may be sure that there was intense indignation. If at first they shouted a true prophet, they probably became increasingly uncomfortable with that that Amos had to say, perhaps to the point of demanding his departure. Indeed, as we look at the seventh chapter later on, we'll see that that was the case. But concerning the pronouncements upon the surrounding nations, we know that the predictions were fulfilled at various times during the ensuing seven centuries.

Syria suffered first at the hands of the Assyrians. Barely a generation after Amos, Philistia, Tyre, Ammon, Moab, all came next in the war between Alexander of Greece and Darius of Persia, which led to the universal empire of Greece in 322 B.C. finally, Edom disappeared under Rome shortly before the first advent. By the time Jesus arrived in Judea and Galilee, this part of the prophecy of Amos had been fulfilled.

We would like to suggest, however, that there could be a secondary fulfillment. Although the words of the prophets almost always bore direct relation to the events of their own time and had to do with the failings and sins of their own people, the fact that these books have been preserved by the Holy Spirit for so many centuries for the instruction of God's people in subsequent generations, leads to the conclusion that they do indeed have a message for us today just as vital as was the message to the prophet's own people. In this particular instance. There can be traced a correspondence with the divine judgments which at the end of this age will surely come upon every aspect of the present world order which have been and still are the enemies of the Christian in his endeavor to maintain his loyalty and his allegiance to Christ. Each of these six nations might be characteristic of one particular aspect of this present evil world.

With that in mind, we'd like to make a few suggestions. First of all, Syria, more than any of them, was the warlike nation continually sending in her troops to harass Israel. Just as militarism in all modern nations, and particularly the despotic totalitarianism of some, results in the oppression of those who name the name of Christ, we in the Western countries perhaps cannot relate to this to the same degree that our brethren in such countries as Poland and Russia and other Eastern

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countries, Eastern European nations, can attest to such conditions even today. The Philistines were a cultured and artistic people. They came originally from Crete, which up to the time of Moses possessed a unique civilization of a high order.

Philistia could well picture the attraction and the allure of the cultured and pleasant things of this world.

Tyre, the nation of merchants, is fittingly representative of the commercial powers of today, a threat to every Christian who allows himself to become entangled in the web of money making for its own sake. In the parable of the Sower, you'll recall our Lord Jesus described a class of people who were unfruitful because they allowed the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke out the word of God.

Edom, the blood brother of Israel, could represent the snare of the social life, while Ammon, the pastoral agricultural people, the appeal of the workaday world, with all its interests, its preoccupations and obligations. Finally comes Moab, the most intensely religious of of all six But a religion which was focused upon a false God, a God who demanded human sacrifice and whose service involved debasing and degrading rituals. One of the greatest enemies of those who would know and serve Christ is presented in systems of false and debasing theology which pictured God in a guise far removed from his true character and inculcate standards way below those that are truly his. So Amos may well have a message for our own day. Every aspect of any force and power in this world which is in opposition to the orderly development of the people who God is training for future purpose, is to come before the bar of justice and be condemned by his judgment.

The 19th chapter of Revelation depicts the forces of evil in this world, whatever they may be, gathered together to oppose the one who rushes forth from heaven with the powers of heaven behind him, and all those forces are defeated and liquidated. The fire of divine judgment, which Amos declared should come forth to devour those nations of his own day, will be revealed a second time to consume all in this present order, which has its prototypes in those peoples whom Amos denounced by name. In the days of Amos the judgment was sometimes long in coming, but it did come at last. Likewise, it may seem in these days of the ending of this age, when the world appears ripe for judgment, that it also is long in the works. But come it will, and when it comes it will be final.

Chapter three commences a new section in the prophecy of Amos. The next four chapters, chapters three through six, comprise a fourfold expression of the national failings and sins of Israel, which were leading inevitably to the breakdown of their nationhood and their extinction at the hands of the Assyrians and the Babylonians, which eventually came to pass just as Amos had foretold. Each of these chapters appears to look at one of the four broad sectors in which the structure of the nation could be divided. Therefore, chapter three describes and condemns the nation's military power and its trust in warlike abilities. Chapter four deals with the commercial and the social structure of the community.

Chapter five It's a religious organization and its priesthood, while chapter six directs stern condemnation against the royalty and nobility, the kings and princes of Israel and Judah, the shortcomings of each are declared and the consequences that will inevitably follow. As a measure of the solemnity and emphasis with which Amos felt he had to invest these declarations, he changed his former introduction that he used for the first two chapters. To begin those chapters he started by saying, thus saith the Lord. But as we move into these chapters, he uses a different introduction. Hear this word which the Lord has spoken against you.

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And he reiterates, hear this word, that phrase three times as he proceeds with his denunciation. These chapters are directed against both kingdoms, that of Israel and Judah. This is playing from chapter three, verse one. Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel. Against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt.

Although the two tribe kingdom of Judah had remained loyal to the Davidic kingly dynasty and more or less so to the temple worship, while the 10 tribe kingdom had frankly gone over to self styled kings and a pagan worship and priesthood, there was in God's sight very little to separate the two. They were both each in their own way disloyal to God, and the same condemnation was applicable to Judah and Israel.

You only have I known of all the families of the earth. We're probably very familiar with that scripture from Amos, but that's only part of it, because you are the only one that I have known of all the families of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

This was the chosen nation, all 12 tribes ordained at Sinai to be set apart, having a special commission with corresponding obligations. They defaulted on these and showed themselves as being unworthy. They had undertaken to be set apart and to be above the surrounding nations. But they proved in the end to be no better morally.

Wherefore God allowed them to experience the same vicissitudes of fortune as normally befell the other nations.

There are no uncertain implications here for spiritual Israel today. We too have been granted God's special and undeserved favor and attention. We have been blessed with the knowledge of the truth and the spirit of adoption. No one else has received as much from the divine star house. The Apostle Peter assessed the situation as but you speaking of the Church.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people. Why? For this reason that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

As was the case with Israel of old. The Church has a responsibility to fulfill, for responsibility is a companion of rights and privileges. Peter indicated part of that obligation in the verse quoted we are to declare the wonderful deeds of our loving, powerful, and merciful God. This declaration is to be made daily and should be expressed in our thoughts, in our words, and our actions.

Although the Israelites may have entertained notions that God's dealing with them would be forever and that his patience was unending, they learned too late that enough was enough. Likewise, the members of spiritual Israel should deduct from this that there is a limited amount of time in which to make their calling and election short. Indeed, as the Apostle Paul said, now is the day of salvation for the church class. But it will not always be this way. The night is coming when we will not be able to work out our heavenly salvation any longer.

Therefore we must now do with our might what our hands find to do. We must now make the most of the talent or the talents which were entrusted to us for our use. To ignore them or to utilize them wrongfully will not grant for us the approving words of our Lord, well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of thy Lord. Instead. It will result in much consternation, disappointment, grief, if not total oblivion.

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Returning to Amos 3:3 we read of this can two walk together, except they be agreed? The RSV rendering puts it this do two walk together unless they have made an appointment, and this translation seems to be borne out in some of the others rotherham and a few of the others that I have checked. The two, of course, are Israel's God and Israel. How could they walk together when every act of Israel was in direct defiance of the express commands or pleadings of God?

For God does not only command in those things in which he has a right to command he also pleads in respect to those things which lie within the realm of man's own free will. In both cases there was disharmony. It had been said of old times that Enoch walked with God, Noah walked with God, but now Israel no longer walked with God. Looking at the antitype spiritual Israel, we can apply it on an individual basis. Do you believe that once in grace, always in grace?

Or do you know of anyone who once walked with God, but who no longer is so walking? If so, then beware. For as the apostle said, let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he falls. If we ever kid ourselves into thinking that it would be impossible to lose our crown, we must think back to the message of Amos and the subsequent fate of the children of Israel. Verse 6 of Amos 3 contains another interesting question.

Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? That's the King James version, and even though this is only a question, the implication according to some, might be that God is responsible for doing such a thing. However, at least two other translations cast a different light upon the subject. For one, Moffat has it that the Eternal is at work, and the Neb reads, will not the Lord act?

Again Moffatt says the Eternal is at work, and the Neb reads, will not the Lord act? This in lieu of the King James rendering, Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done?

Is possible to take the Hebrew text either as Mapha or the Nab suggests. But when looked at it in the light of the following verse, it is more likely that the sense is that the Lord will take action. Chapter three, verse seven says, surely the Lord God will do nothing without revealing his secret to his servants, the prophets. The Assyrians were on the march, and nothing then could save Israel apart from God's intervention. The Lord had done something to allow them to be subjugated, and the Lord will do something else later on when the lesson has been learned, and we'll come to that in the ninth chapter.

Israel's deliverance is to come about in a future day, and the only ones who know anything of those future plans of the Almighty are his servants, the prophets. Amos was one of those prophets. He knew what the outcome was to be, but he could not proclaim that outcome just yet. He was commissioned at that time to declare the message of judgment. At the end of his prophecy.

He was permitted to reveal something of the purposes of God. When repentant and purified Israel is fully reconciled and restored to God and ready to enter upon their destiny as being a light to the nations. But there is more. In the seventh verse of chapter three, it stands as an expression of a principle. There is never a time in history when no voice is raised to declare the significance of the times and the working of God.

God never leaves himself without a witness, no matter how irreligious the world may become, no matter to what loeb faith in God may have shrunk, and irregardless of how much it may seem that God has deserted mankind, there are always those watchers, to use our Lord's words, who are in tune with the Almighty to such a degree and extent that they understand what he is doing and will do. There is never a generation which cannot attest to the outworking of the divine mission, and

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when, as in our day. The state of the world is one of confusion and disintegration.

Men's hearts fell in them for fear and for looking to the things which are coming upon the earth. The voice of the prophet is heard more intensively and a louder witness given to those things which must shortly come to pass. Whenever God makes a move or introduces another factor in the outworking of his redemptive plan for mankind, he tells his prophets, and they in turn inform the people that they might have the knowledge whether they hear or whether they forbear. For the sake of time, I'd like to skip to the end of the sixth chapter of Amos. With the close of this section, Amos had very nearly completed his mission to the northern kingdom of Israel, the Ten Tribes.

Chapter seven opens a new section. The prophet is now no longer merely a preacher of right and wrong, reproving them and their rulers for their shortcomings and telling them, against the background of the contemporary political situation which was the Assyrian menace, what must be the inevitable result of their sinful course. The aspect of his mission is now finished and done with. The people have not repented. The judgment must come.

In chapter seven, Amos becomes a prophet in a different sense, one who, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, foretells events which are yet future, but will shortly and surely come to pass. True to the spirit of biblical prophecy, he casts that foreview in the form of of symbolic pictures, vivid metaphors which meant little to those who heard them at the time, but so apt as to be recalled when the events actually happened, and so convinced those passing through these events that there had indeed been a genuine prophet among them, and that his words were truly from God.

Here again, a new mode of address marks the change.

As we mentioned, the previous discourses of reproof and exhortation were each prefaced by the expression, hear this word. But now in this chapter, these final declarations open with Thus hath the Lord shewed unto me. The time for preaching repentance was past. Now he was declaring what the Lord will certainly do. Amos was here describing what in a very few years became history.

Amos proceeded to speak of three visions, the locust, the devouring fire, and the plumb line. In the first two, that of the locusts and the devouring fire, there was pictured a partial judgment, followed by the Lord's intervention before the nation was destroyed. But in the third vision, that of the plumb line, the symbology suggested that there was a finality involved and that the 10 tribes were now to come to an end. Let's pick up the narrative in chapter 7, verse 10. There we find these.

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land, and Amaziah said to Amos, o seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah and eat bread there and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary and it is a temple of the kingdom.

Then notice what Amos said in response. I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I am a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, go prophesy to my people Israel. Now therefore hear the word of the Lord.

You say, do not prophesy against Israel and do not preach against the house of Isaac. Therefore, thus says, the wife shall be a harlot in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be parceled out by line. You yourself shall die in an unclean land, and

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Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land. One can imagine Amos taking a cool, searching look at Amaziah, who was determined to retain his own influence and possessions in the community and would allow nothing to stand in his way. More than any other man, Amaziah represented and supported the apostate worship of Israel.

He had no divine authority to exercise the functions of the priesthood. The true high priest of the nation at the time was Azariah, of the line of Aaron, the legitimate holder of the title, administering his sacred office in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem. Amaziah was an imposter, conducting a false worship to a heathen God in a temple which stood in flagrant defiance of the basic principle that Jerusalem must be the seat of Israel's worship. So Amos, knowing all this and realizing that the end of this idolatrous system of worship had come, felt the Spirit's inspiration upon him to utter this last prediction, a personal one concerning Amaziah himself, the judgment soon to come upon him for his unbelief and apostasy. Here we have another lesson in connection with Amos message.

His opponents, at least in part, rose up from amongst those who were professedly religious, the priests, and so it was with our Lord and the apostles, the priests and religious teachers of their Day were the chief opponents of the Gospel in its truth and purity, and we must expect the same in our time.

The tremendous finale to the prophecy of Amos is presented in the ninth chapter. The whole of all that he has to say in the preceding chapters leads up to this. Here he receives a revelation of the Divine majesty such as he has not experienced before.

It was not given to many men to see God. Moses did in vision, Isaiah did in vision, as did Ezekiel. Amos is one of four men of whom it is said that they saw God, and his message is the more significant on that account. Verse one of the ninth chapter begins by saying, I saw the Lord standing beside, as the Revised has it, standing besides the altar. The first ten verses speak of the punishment of the Jewish people.

In verse 2 and 4, God said that he would slay the last of them with the sword. Although they tried to dig into Sheol or climb up into heaven, he would bring them down. They could not escape his reach.

However, Amos tells us that by God's mercy Israel will be restored. Their future is described in the last verses of the ninth chapter, the final book of Amos chapter in his book, verses 14 and 15, and I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them and I will plant them upon their land and they shall be no more pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God. Amos was himself a child of Israel, and it is only natural that he should come back at the last to his own people's place in this glorious sequel to the divine purpose for mankind. Israel was prominent in God's plans from Moses to Christ, and for that period of time was regarded and regarded themselves as his chosen people, representing him in the world and preserving his revelation to man.

But because of disloyalty and idolatry and unbelief, they lost that favored position, and for the next 2000 years were, so to speak, on the sidelines while God executed his further purposes in and through the Christian church. But this state of things is not to continue indefinitely. Paul tells us in Romans 11:1 God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew Israel is to be restored, when belief and faith on their part render such restoration possible in God's due time. This is what Amos sees here at the tail end of his prophecy, the fulfillment of God's promise that one day he will be

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able to restore this ancient people in the same way that he is going to restore all of mankind. Amos, in his prophecy, traces a long, sad history of Israel's apostasy and consequent judgment.

But he brings them through eventually into what the Scriptures call an afterward of peace, when all the failures and shortcomings have been overcome and relegated to the past, and Israel is at last fully in communion with God with no fear of ever returning to their former ways. That in its entirety runs parallel with exactly the same process for all mankind. The same history of rebellion and sin, the same redeemer and Savior, the same utter destruction of man's world in consequence of his own folly, and the same deliverance at the end, when God moves to save man from himself and show him the better way. The radiant future described by Amos, and not by Amos only, but by all his fellow prophets, and not by them only, but by the Apostles and Jesus himself is for all mankind. Whosoever will may at the last come and partake of the water of life freely.

Thank you, Brother Tim, for the thoughts on Amos.

The intermission is to be at 15. We're still just a bit behind. Brother Tim has suggested we dispense with the closing hymn, and so we'll go right ahead and have Brother Tim close with prayer, and Brother Shovelbaum will be next at 2:00, so we'll try to be back by 2:00.

Our father in Heaven, we're so thankful for Thy Word, for the prophecy of Amos and of all the prophets, for the example that he has given to us, for his words fraught with meaning not only for his people, but for us at this time and of the glorious picture of the kingdom to come. We're thankful for these wonderful prospects. Grant Thy blessing and help as we endeavor to study Thy Word, follow the example of our Lord, and to take to ourselves the lessons of the prophets, that we may walk more in ways that would be pleasing and acceptable to Thee. We ask that Thou forgive us for anything that has been said amiss from Thy holy Word. Help us to study more diligently that we may be sanctified by Thy truth.

This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.