

The Literary Unanimity of Amos

by

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I. ISSUES CONFRONTING STUDY OF AMOS

For about a century, Scriptural study has been governed by the historical-critical method of investigating texts by comparison to any extant contemporary textual articles, changes to the author's original words, or the context in which the author lived and worked. However, Amos' traditional study resulted in a fragmentation of the text. But with a re-emergence of literary investigations appearing within the last forty years considers it holistically, though an inconsistency regarding Amos' structure, role, and significance of some of its sections persist. One cannot readily neglect these common critical concerns.

Most books in the Old Testament are nearly unquestionably the effect of a lengthy period of the anthology, and the multiple degrees by which they crossed have implications for their application. One can see the interlacing of interpretative and critical matters beginning with the most extreme critical positions that are clear. Thus, it is vital to address these observations from a renewed perspective.

Other issues toward the investigation of Amos exist that scholars note contribute to the ambiguous readings that often render interpretation in error. Such blunders often become the dominant interpretation for a time period and cause undue harm to those whose desire is to rightly divide God's word. "The main reason for this diversity, in my view, is that insufficient attention has been given to the criteria for making such analyses. In particular, formal criteria, such as introductory and closing formulas, have been given much greater prominence that they merit. (As well), Literary criteria such as palistropic structuring have been employed too loosely."¹

Concerning Amos 6 validity, the consistency and vitalness of 6:2 project more than ever when the subsequent circumstances are considered: (1) it creates a part of the larger

¹ P. Noble, (1995). The Literary Structure of Amos: A Thematic Analysis. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 114(2), 209-226. doi:10.2307/3266936

rhetorical section of 5:18-6:14 with its primary theme of Israel's trust in false assurances, (2) the conspicuous similarities between 6:1-14 and 5:18-27 and (3) Amos' distinctly patterned grammatical recursion to preserve agreement and union in quite larger designs using themes rather than words or phrases.

Previous conclusions about writing prehistory or trying to unravel the hidden ritual hierarchy of words are usually based on the assumption that there is no important connection in the stated discourse. Recently, however, scholars have become more cautious. Some scholars will temporarily point out that the important links of the text components of the link do not exist because they have not identified them.

In review, the authenticity of 6:2 cannot be challenged on form-critical, syntactical, stylistic, or architectural grounds. In addition, similarly, it will be argued that historical debate cannot question its authenticity.

Why does Amos not mention Gath with the further four existing Philistine cities (1:8) however, linked to the Assyrians' two casualties as an illustration of misfortune (6:2)? The explanation presumably rests in one of two ways. First, Tiglath-Pileser III presumably struck Gath during his crusade to Philistia in 734 B.C.E with Assyria's sworn objective of dominating eastern Mediterranean trade. However, the onslaught against Gaza was the key match in the attack. As well, 2 Chronicles 26:6 specifies Uzziah's demolition of the walls of Gath in the path of his expansion into Philistine territory requires further investigation. Stating that the prior verse (6:1) connects to Jerusalem and Samaria's confidence related to their defenses and fortifications' strength and defensibility, the implication to the destruction of the massive walls in nearby Gath would be characteristic of the rhetoric linked with Amos' satiric techniques. If the recorded chronologies are correct and Uzziah perished in 742 and 736, this intrusion on Gath could be harmonized with Hamath the Great's decline and the fall of Calneh into a traditional flow of exhibitions more or less 738 B.C.E.

Another challenge ensues: Scholarly denial of allusion to Tiglath-Pileser III and the Assyrian threat:

Because Jeroboam was thought to have died before the rise of Tiglath-Pileser in 745 B.C.E., thus ruling out any overlap in their respective reigns, most scholars conclude that Amos had no knowledge of Tiglath-Pileser III. This is based on a strict Jeroboam-based dating of the prophet and since Tiglath-Pileser, or the Assyrian threat that he embodied, is never unambiguously referred to in the text of Amos. According to Noth the non-appearance of the name Assur—completely in contrast to his “prophetic successor” Hosea and Isaiah—cannot be accidental, but indicates that Amos “preached” shortly before Tiglath-Pileser III.²

II. THESIS

The purpose of this thesis is to exhibit the literary unanimity of Amos 3-6. One will show the fittingness and the ascendancy of a synchronic analysis of Amos 3-6 by considering the complete text. Among the Book of the Twelve, Amos’s scholarly interest has resulted in a large secondary literature collection. Chapters 3-6 present a closed assemblage comprising the prophet’s main message. Following this approach, one will demonstrate that these four chapters provide a fitting text to argue with secondary references.

III. POSITIONS AND POINTS OF INTERPRETATION

Amos’ great restoration prophecy of 9:11, 12 is directly quoted in the book of the Acts (15:16, 17), based on the Septuagint. The New Testament context is the Jerusalem Council in which the early church is considering whether or not Gentiles need to be circumcised to be saved (15:1). James, arguing against the Judaizers, cites the Amos passage as confirmation that the restoration of the kingdom has begun. The raising of David's fallen hut (Amos 9:11) has already commenced with the appearance of the messianic son of David, Jesus Christ. The possession of nations upon whom the Lord reveals His name (Amos 9:12) has already begun

² Martin Noth, *Aufsätze zur biblischen Landes- und Altertumskunde* (ed. Hans W. Wolff; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1971), 210.

to be fulfilled by the Gentiles' inclusion into the kingdom of God that the coming of the Messiah has inaugurated. As Amos foresaw, Edom would be brought under David's kingship (9:12), so Gentiles are brought under David's greatest son (Acts 15:16, 17).

Amos is distinctive in the motto's inaugural. A diminutive, overall thematic statement preordained to redeploy on how one should apprehend the volume. Its broad images respects that of numerous theophanic statements. These statements regularly portray the divinity's authority as commanding to a cataclysm in the natural world. Additionally, the Lord is compared to a lion (Hos. 5:14), a fairly everyday theme of power in the ancient Near East. However, the feature in the text is of supreme significance: The lion roars from Zion. The Jerusalem-centric message is amply well-defined, as the volume gives the situation as a work that carries the missive of that roaring lion from Zion, specifically Jerusalem. Carmel is an abundant, rugged region in the Northern Kingdom, but the Hebrew word "Carmel" denotes to farmland or an orchard, specifically a vineyard (Isa. 32:15). The overall appeal of the "pastures of the shepherds" (Amos.1:2) provisions and shows the broader sense. The earthly location does not limit the writing's perspective to the specific area of the Northern Kingdom.

To engage in the study of Amos, one considers the present form of the Masoretic Text as a methodology to support the thesis's basis where structural analysis becomes the main focus. One can identify significant components through this investigation. Semantic fields, keywords, themes, parallelism, rhetorical methods, authors, and recipients were considered. As a result, one concludes that Amos 3-6 comprises three analogous parts: 3:1-15, 4:1-14, 5:1-6:14. By identifying this framework, one can extract the prophet's extraordinary message: the inescapable judgment of God upon Israel's repression of the poor. Though one's end may embrace both the diachronic and synchronic work of other scholars, one's thesis handles Amos 3-6's individual components as vital to God's judgment message to Israel by

addressing the fragmentation resulting by diachronic means and by offering a modification to synchronic interpretations that ineffectually frame Amos 3-6's meaning.

The Amos 6 monologue with its expectation of the reign of destruction (6:3), the banishing of the higher classes (6:7), the surrendering up of Samaria and its contents to an opponent (6:8), the tremendous slaughter of souls, and the flight of barely a few (6:9-10), consumption of big and little houses (6:11), and the arrival of a society that will crush them from the crossing of Hamath to the wadi of the Arabah (6:14), must be recorded toward the milieu of the complete Amos text. What later emerged was that Amos demanded that Israel be the victim of an overriding method in which all efforts to defend or evade would be useless. (Amos 2:14-16; 3:12; 5:19; 9:2-4), including the measure of which would be so vast that entire Syria-Palestine would be overpowered to yield to it. Damascus would be consumed, and the Aramaeans banished to Kir in Mesopotamia (1:5), the four surviving towns of the Philistine Pentapolis (1:10), and the principal Edomite cities of Teman and Bozrah would all be consumed (1:11,12). The same fate would befall to the capitol of Ammon, and their king and princes would be expatriated (1:13-15). Moab is also assumed to die while their governor and other leaders would be annihilated and Kerioth torched (2:1-3). Jerusalem and Judah would be incinerated (2:5), whereas the absolute attack (3:11), looting (3:11), pulverizing (2:13), damage, and banishing (4:3; 5:5; 6:7) of Israel in expressive dialogue. In point, the sum of the Ancient Orient would be harmed by this means, and it would be a historical turning point of importance. For Israel, it would indicate the end (8:2), absolute destruction (9:1-4), and blotting from the pages of history (9:8).

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