

## AMOS & HOSEA WEEK 3

### INTRODUCTION

In these two prophets we have God's final warnings to Israel just a few decades before He lets Assyria conquer them.

Joe and Amos

Amos is from Judah and Hosea from Israel itself.

Amos focuses on God's unapproachable righteousness → that He must punish their exploitation of others.

Hosea focuses on God's unfailing love → that He will redeem them from their slavery.

### AMOS - Judgment for exploiters

- **Amos is probably the diminutive of Amasiah - *sustained by God***
  - He was from a region about ten miles south of Jerusalem called Tekoa.
  - He was a shepherd<sup>1</sup> and a fig grower.<sup>2</sup>

This and his response to the priest Amaziah (7:10-17), suggest that he was fairly well off prior to his call.
  - Hosea & Jonah were probably alive during this time.
- **Amos was called from Judah during the reign of Uzziah to prophesy in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (782 - 753).**<sup>3</sup>
  - Jeroboam II was expanding on conquests of father Joash<sup>4</sup>
    - He took control of Damascus 2Ki.14:28
    - It was a time when Aram was very weak.
    - He recovered territory lost after Solomon.
  - Judah/Israel cooperated during this period.<sup>5</sup>

It was a time of great prosperity.

However, wealthy & powerful Israeli people were profiting on the backs of the poor and they continued in some of the worst kinds of idolatry.
- **Amos was sent by God to warn them of their impending doom**, if they did not change their minds.

Amos has much to say about the righteousness of God and the role repentance plays in reconciliation.

### Dating 767-753 BC

The only years where Uzziah reigned in Judah while Jeroboam II ruled in Israel are 767-753 BC. Additionally, Amos (1:1) reported a massive earthquake.<sup>6</sup>

Archeological studies indicate a substantial earthquake occurred between 765 - 760 BC.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *noqed* 1:1; The only other person in the Bible where this particular word for shepherd is used was for a wealthy ruler (2Ki.3:4).

<sup>2</sup> 7:14

<sup>3</sup> Since we have a southerner in the north, Beyer includes the comment that he carries the message, "Ya'll repent!" Consider the implications of Amos being contemporary with Jonah; with Hosea.

<sup>4</sup> Kings of Israel

<sup>5</sup> so much so that 2 Kings 14:28 literally reads, "(Jeroboam II) restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel."

<sup>6</sup> this was such a remarkable event that Zechariah mentions it (14:5) two centuries later.

<sup>7</sup> Yigael Yadin (1970), *Hazor*, Schweich Lectures, London: Oxford, p.151. The conclusions of this study are corroborated by another study of Beersheba by Yohanan Ahoroini.

Thus, the dating of Amos is fairly unambiguous. It falls within a fourteen year period from 767 - 753 BC; 20-30 years before the Assyrian conquest.

### Authorship

- **If Amos was an oral prophet (7:10-17?) ∴ who wrote the book?**
- **Proponents of “Form criticism method”<sup>8</sup> conclude that editors<sup>9</sup> compiled and modified the words of Amos over the course of time.** Yet, there is no compelling evidence of such activity in the book.<sup>10</sup>
  - There are some abrupt changes in grammar or subject matter – However, these may be points of emphasis rather than evidence for different authors.  
For instance, couldn't a form change because a section reached a climax?
  - There are shifts from first to third person (7:12-16)  
Yet an author may do this himself<sup>11</sup> other passages show such shifts<sup>12</sup> OR  
The use of a secretary could have resulted in such shifts.<sup>13</sup>

### Amos' Message

The themes of Amos include social injustice, the righteousness of God, the sovereignty of God and the coming together of these in the Day of the Lord.

The mosaic covenant required loving the neighbor...they didn't...they would be punished by a just God.

#### **Chs.1-4 Yaweh roars from Zion**

1:2a In Joel 3:16 the Lord roars against the enemies of Israel. Here he roars against all nations and especially Israel.

1:2b Mt. Carmel was the most verdant part of Israel<sup>14</sup>; if it withers, everything withers<sup>15</sup>

1:3-2:6

Note: in 1:3-2:6 Amos uses **the X...X + 1 Pattern** to announced judgment.

If it took three sins<sup>16</sup> to incur judgment, they had committed four.

This is a literary devise used to argue that they deserved God's wrath.

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<sup>8</sup> This refers to studies of vocabulary and literary style: 1. To distinguish authentic from editorial; 2. To understand the meaning of the text and 3. To compare one document with another

Generally, this method is used to undermine the authority and integrity of biblical texts using methods that are questionable for purposes that are often hostile to supernaturalism.

But, there is some positive value to this approach also (see Tremper Longman III (1985) *Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory and the Evangelical*, WTJ 47, pp.46-67)

<sup>9</sup> a.k.a. redactors

<sup>10</sup> Certainly, the use of a secretary is not unheard of in the Bible: Jer.1:1-3; 36:1-32; 51:64; Prov.25:1; 30:1; 31:1; Gal.6:11 implies that Paul often used a secretary. If editors compiled Amos speeches what's the evidence?

The only evidence offered for extensive redaction in Amos is indirect and based on questionable conclusions drawn from the use of statistical & stylistic methods. Legitimate reasons for differences in language or style can be offered without resorting to the conclusion that an original text was severely corrupted by redactors.

In general, form critics may be critiqued because the record of comparison between modern and ancient scripture shows remarkable continuity between the older and newer copies with few editorial modifications.

<sup>11</sup> Bob Dole was widely lampooned for doing this during his presidential campaign but this kind of self-reference is normative in House and Senate presentations or debate because it helps listeners, reporters and secretaries keep track of who's saying what.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy; Ezra 7-10; Dan.1-6 vs. Dan.7-12.; Hosea 1

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah used a secretary for some of his book .(i.e. Baruch, Jer.36).

<sup>14</sup> Song of Songs 7:5 *your head crowns you like Mount Carmel*

<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings 18:19-20 Carmel was a site of Baal worship and thus under judgment

<sup>16</sup> *pesa'* transgressions of the law

It does not mean there were four classes of sin that brought on God's judgment but that the wickedness was full and thus, judgment must fall.

**Note : Amos does not call for the surrounding nations to repent.**

This suggests that the prophecies were not given to the surrounding nations but were given to and for the sake of Israel.

It's easier to see the mistakes of others. Once we agree that someone is wrong, the similarities between ourselves and them become harder to ignore (e.g. Nathan w/ David).

Also, Amos does not detail many sins of the other nations or even of Judah but is very explicit about the sins of Israel. This reinforces the suggestion

**Note: the order of the prophecy. It runs far to near: politically, genetically and geographically.**

From enemies of Israel to friendly governments

From genetically related nations; to Judah; to Israel itself.

From northeast to southwest...northwest to southeast...south and then to dead center.

He works his way around Israel, then zooms in for the kill.

1:3-5

**Damascus - capital city of Syria** (a.k.a. Aram) (Syria, not Assyria) (**Northeast of Israel**)

- **Threshed Gilead with iron sledges**<sup>17</sup> - the Arameans/Syrians pushed into this region (2Ki.10:32; 13:7) using very severe tactics to subdue. ***Israel was brutal like Syria.***
- **Assyrians defeated Syria in 732 BC**, exiling them to Kir<sup>18</sup>, ~20-30 years after this prophecy
- **The valley of Aven** ('the plain of On' according to the LXX) may be Baalbek, a city north of Damascus or, since Aven means 'wickedness,' it may not refer to a place but to the behavior of the Arameans.
- **Beth-Eden may refer to Aramnaharaim (a.k.a. Mesopotamia)**, an Aramaean territory ruled by an Assyrian governor at the time of Amos.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, since Beth-Eden means 'pleasure,' this could be a reference to the hedonism of the Arameans.

1:6-8

**Philistines (Southwest of Israel)**

- **2Chron.21:16** or any one of many other times
- **The Philistines may have invaded for the sole purpose of gathering slaves to sell.**

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<sup>17</sup> This section is from the Masoretic text. A sledge was a heavy wooden platform that is curved upward on its leading edge and studded with rocks or metal blades. It was pulled over sheaves to separate the grain from the straw, after which the whole mess was winnowed. This was an apt description because such a tool cut, crushed or flattened everything in its path.

Alternatively, the LXX says, *because they were sawing with iron saws the pregnant women of Gilead.* This rendition is supported by a fragment recovered from Qumran but the fragment may refer to verse 13 rather than verse 3.

Elisha prophesied with tears that Hazael would kill young Israeli men, dash children to the ground and rip open the pregnant women (2Ki.8:12). His son and successor, Ben-Hadad (not his predecessor Ben-Hadad, whom he killed) was as destructive as he was.

<sup>18</sup> 2Ki.16:9; the Aramean people originated in Kir 9:7 but its actual identification is uncertain at this juncture.

<sup>19</sup> Shamshi-ilu, the governor of Aramnaharaim, became quite independent of Assyria during his reign because of the weakened state of Assyria and exerted considerable influence over this region.

“Selling off whole communities” suggests something more than the enslavement of conquered people.

**Israel was selling people into slavery like Philistia** (e.g. 2:6), It was easy to see the Philistines were wrong but harder to see they were just as guilty.

- **730 BC the Assyrians defeated the Philistines**, ~20-30 years after this prophecy.

1:9-10

#### **Phoenicians (Tyre) (Northwest of Israel)**

- **2Chron.21:16; Joel 3:4-8** or any one of many other times they exported Hebrews
- **Didn't honor the covenant of brothers (with David & Solomon)**<sup>20</sup> **Neither did Israel keep their covenant of brothers with Judah.**

- They were so wealthy they kept buying their way out of trouble. Mainland **Tyre was burned by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar** but The rebuild island of Tyre **was completely Razed in 332 BC by Alexander the Great** (420-430 years after this prophecy).

Alexander's policy was that if people submitted to him it would go well but if people resisted the men would be crucified and the women & children sold into slavery.

Tyre resisted and so Alexander built a land bridge (i.e. a mole) to the island city and destroyed it, the bridge is still there today.

1:11-2:3

#### **Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15) & Moab (2:1-3) (genetically related to Jews) (East & Southeast of Israel)**

- **It is a dangerous thing to harm Israel**, the apple of God's eye.<sup>21</sup>
- **All of these nations fell to Babylon around 587 BC**, ~170-180 years after this prophecy.
- **Edom**...no mercy, fratricide, perpetual hostility.<sup>22</sup>  
v.12a Teman is modern Tawilan (50 miles south of the Dead Sea)  
v.12b Bozrah is modern Buseirah (extensive fortifications c.700's BC found here)
- **Ammon**<sup>23</sup>...ripping open the pregnant women of Gilead.<sup>24</sup> Archeological digs have shown that Rabbah<sup>25</sup> was destroyed by fire in the 700's BC, probably due to the Assyrians. But, the Ammonites were finally destroyed by the Babylonians around 587 BC.

<sup>20</sup> Between King Hiram of Tyre & David/Solomon; 2Sa.5:11; 1Ki.5:2-6; 15-18; 9:11-14; no Israel/Judah king ever made war on Phoenicia.

<sup>21</sup> FYI - The expression "apple of the eye" is an English idiom meaning the pupil of the eye - something precious. Translators sometimes substitute it for Hebrew idioms conveying the same idea of preciousness (e.g. Zechariah 2:8, *babhath 'eno* lit. the gate of the eye OR the quince of the eye, is translated, "apple of my eye"; it is equivalent to Deut.32:10 *'ishon* which means 'little man' which is like our word 'pupil' (c.f. Ps.17:8)) Our term 'pupil' comes from the Latin term *pupilla*, originally "little doll," dim. of *pupa* "girl, doll"; from the tiny image (i.e. the little doll) one sees of himself reflected in the eye of another when relating face-to-face; The Greek also used the same word, *kore* (lit. "girl"), to mean both "doll" and "pupil of the eye." <http://www.etymonline.com/p11etym.htm>

<sup>22</sup> Deut.23:7 Israel commanded to not despise the Edomites b/c they were brethren; Gen.25:30; Ps.83

<sup>23</sup> Ammonites from Lot's son via incest with his younger daughter (Gen.19:30-38); Molech worship was common here (Lev.18:21 until 2 Ki.23:10; c.f. Jer.32:35)

<sup>24</sup> This was a common practice in war but they were doing it in a time of peace to enlarge their territory. This was extermination for expansion. This was the idea behind the Nazi concept of lebensraum (i.e. lit. 'living space' but embodying genocide; See <http://history1900s.about.com/library/holocaust/aa110899.htm> )

An Assyrian text praises Tiglathpileser I (c.1100 BC) because *he shredded to pieces the bellies of the pregnant* (c.f. 2Ki.8:12; 15:16; Hos.13:16 and dashing children Ps.137:9; Isa.13:16; Hos.10:14; Nahum 3:10).

<sup>25</sup> The Greeks named it Philadelphia and it is today known as Amman.

- **Moab**<sup>26</sup> ...burned the king of Edom's bones (2Ki.3 background).<sup>27</sup>  
Moab was generally a spur in Israel/Judah's side.<sup>28</sup>  
True to his word, Moab was destroyed utterly.<sup>29</sup>  
2:2b Kerioth is identified as a city in a Moabite inscription

**Like Edom, Ammon & Moab, Israel was brutal with God's people in Israel & Judah.**

2:4-5

#### **Judah (South of Israel)**

The interesting thing is that there's no change in tone between the atrocities mentioned above the sin of breaking the Law – just as heinous.

- **Forsaking Torah**
- **Embracing idolatry**<sup>30</sup> this is really part of forsaking Torah  
2:4b *kizebehem* literally means 'lies' but is translated in the NIV as gods b/c of the additional clause 'walking in them' which typically implies idolatry (c.f. Hosea 2:13 for another oblique ref. to idolatry 'lovers')

**So too, Israel forsook Torah & embraced idolatry.**

- **Judah fell 597 BC**, ~160-170 years after this prophecy  
5 generations after Uzziah (post-Josiah) it was all downhill
- Some argue for a late insertion of these verses because of the topic, religious sin and because of purported linguistic evidence for an older date but most find these arguments weak.<sup>31</sup>

2:6-9:10

#### **Israel**

- **2:6-8 Israel is also under the judgment of God**
  - **Social injustice**  
Unjust enslavement (v.6),<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Moabites from Lot's son via incest with his oldest daughter (Gen.19:30-38); Chemosh was their chief god

<sup>27</sup> The Targum interprets this expression to mean they burned the bones to lime (calcium carbonate) and then used the lime to make plaster for a wall. This would be like the Nazi's using Jewish skin to make lampshades.

<sup>28</sup> For many years, Moab staged annual spring raids against Edom, Judah and Israel. ANET documents from Mesha, a Moabite king, indicate that Omri subdued Moab for 40 years; Jehoshaphat of Judah, the king of Edom and Jehoram of Israel attacked and devastated Moab in a military action. King Mesha sacrificed his own son on the wall of Kir-hareseth to put an end to the attack (2Ki.3).

<sup>29</sup> Moab was subdued by a succession of Assyrian kings ending with Ashurbanipal and depopulated by the Babylonians. All the archeological evidence suggests that many cities were depopulated from the 700's and the entire the region was largely empty from the beginning of the 500's BC.

<sup>30</sup> Uzziah was contemporaneous with Amos and did O.K. for most of his reign but not enough; then Jotham who also failed to make a clean break from idolatry (2Ki.15:34-35); then Ahaz who largely messed up (2Ki.16:2) then Hezekiah who was commended (2Ki.18:1-2); then Manasseh who really rebelled (2Ki.21:2); then Josiah a tremendous reformer (2Ki.22-23 & 2Chron.34-35). However, in spite of this Judah refused to stop idolatry...there's no record of it after Babylon.

<sup>31</sup> See Findley pp. 159-160.

<sup>32</sup> Unjust enslavement (2:6) could mean these people were simply captured and enslaved; enslaved owing to a legal decision influenced by a bribe or enslaved as children of a deceased man who owed debts (c.f. 2Ki.4:1);

Perhaps they were not released at the end of their enslavement.

Perhaps they were enslaved to pay debts that arose because the rich were gouging the poor into bankruptcy thus enslavement.

Unrelenting cruelty toward the poor (7a,8),<sup>33</sup>  
Denial of justice to the oppressed (7b)<sup>34</sup>

- **Sexual immorality (7c)**<sup>35</sup>
- **Idolatry (8)**
  - v.8 Ex.22:26 required returning the cloak by nightfall but they use it as a picnic blanket at their orgiastic, drunken rituals
- **2:9-16 God's grace has been answered by Israel's sin (vv.9-11)** and so they will be judged & nothing will stop it (9, 13-16)
  - v.9 'that you even exist is proof of my power and grace'
  - vv.9-10 the wording is very similar to the original accounts of these events v.9 w/ Deut..1:27 & v. 10 w/ Nu.13:30f; Deut.29:5
  - 'Even though you refused to go up and destroy the Ammorite & accused me of selling you out, I destroyed them for you.'
  - v.11 the Targum says that Nazarites were teachers Nu.6 (c.f. Judges 13:7)
  - v.12 'made' lit. 'led away'
  - v.12b (c.f. 7:12-17) ordered Amos not to prophecy but ironically, God would grant their request, sending a drought of revelation (8:11-12)
  - v.13 'crush you' lit. 'make the ground tremble beneath you' and 'as a cart makes the ground tremble' – earthquake (c.f. 1:1)? military invasion (2:14-16 suggests war)? Both?

The pattern that follows is something like, "Listen (3:1) I've been gracious (3:2) but you've rebelled and will be judged (3:3-10)

- **3:1-8 God's election brings responsibility**
  - 3:2 *You only have I known* in this special covenant sense so you are especially accountable; *yada* = 'to know'; 2b 'punish' = lit. 'visit'
    - The argument, "Since B, then A" is illustrated in vv.3-6
      - Since 2 walk together, then they have agreed to do so
      - Since the lion roars, then he must have some prey
  - 3:3-6 a series of rhetorical questions getting at cause-effect;
    - "All the calamity I've sent those around you should have led you to repent" (i.e. remember from Obadiah, the calamities of others should not lead to gloating but repentance)

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Debt slavery was permitted under Moses but only for a short period (Ex.21:7-11; Lev.25:39-43; Deut.15:12-15) and even then the slave had to be compensated for the relationship.

The comment about the sandals suggests they were enslaved to pay off very small debts that should simply have been forgiven or that their value was so low they were traded for foot ware.

<sup>33</sup> To oppress or mock the poor is to reproach or disdain their creator (Prov.14:31; 17:5).

People have intrinsic worth apart from their social or moral status because they are created by and belong to God.

V.8a may refer to them taking a coat in pledge and then using it as a ground cloth during pagan religious rites (Ex.22:26 forbids keeping a coat as a pledge after sun-down).

V.8b means that they funded their pagan parties with money they unjustly took from the poor. The Targum calls this 'wine robbery.'

<sup>34</sup> The word translated 'way' *derek* of the 'afflicted' refers to the rights of the suffering for legal redress (c.f. Isa.10:2; Deu. 10:17-18).

Perhaps through bribery (5:12) or simply through the haughtiness of the rich & powerful, there was no legal help.

<sup>35</sup> Perhaps v.7c refers to the use of temple prostitutes or simply to the level of sexual immorality of this culture that such social barriers were absent.

- 3:6b since God is not morally evil (Ja.1:13,17) this must refer to calamity; this is a change in form from 'since B, then A' to 'since A, then B'  
 "When disaster falls, then God caused it"
- 3:7 'plan' lit. 'secret counsel' a promise of revelation
- 3:8 Amos speaks because God has spoken
- **3:9-10 Even the Philistines & the Egyptians know better than you**
- 3:9 Ashdod is a Philistine city (c.f. Josh.13:3)
- 3:9c 'oppression' = extortion, dishonest gain (c.f. Isa.5:7; Jer.4:22)
- 3:10 not loot from war but from their own fortresses from *hamas* – unjust violence
- **3:11-15 Very little of you will remain when I'm finished.**
- 3:11 'a surrounding of the land'
- 3:12a 'you'll be rescued...in pieces'; this is a wild illustration about the completeness of the devastation; the judgment of God (c.f. 5:3)
- 3:12b Instead of *dammeseq* (Damascus) it should probably read *demeseq* (corner of) - *edge of their beds & corner of their couches.*<sup>36</sup>
- 3:13 'adonai, adonai, YHWH el shaddai'
- 3:15 they were the very rich having winter & summer homes
- **Ch.4:1-3 You cows of Bashan**
- Bashan was a rich agricultural region in east Manassah, in the region of Gilead, NE of the Sea of Galilee)...the best cows were from Bashan;
- The term Bashan is often used to describe strong and rich in the Torah.
- The problem isn't their wealth but their wealth at the expense of the poor that frosts God.
- It was not unusual for victorious armies to pierce the noses of the losers, attach a chain and pull them along as booty (2 Ki.19:28; 2 Chr.33:11)
- The ruins of Samaria today still have the holes in the walls through which they were taken out.
- 4:3b *haharmonah* – not clear what this means; the MT uses a different word division translating it as '*out, O mountain of oppression*'; this carries the idea that the oppressors would be oppressed.
- 4:4-5 Now he shifts into sarcasm;
- When Jeroboam came to power he did everything he could to insure the continued separation between Israel & Judah by setting up worship centers at Bethel & Dan to rival the temple at Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup>
- The situation at Gilgal isn't clear except it must refer to idolatry given the Bethel reference and Amos 5:5 refers to shrines there.<sup>38</sup>
- 4:4b morning sacrifices Nu.28:3-4; Three-year tithes Deut.14:28; 26:12  
 Sacrifice w/o obedience is pointless.
- 4:5 Why offer sacrifices to God? To have bragging rights; doing it to impress people, not out of gratitude to God.
- 4:6-13
- v.6 famine didn't get your attention; 'empty stomachs' lit. 'clean teeth'; two ways to have clean teeth: 1. good hygiene 2. famine
- v.7-8 drought didn't get your attention
- v.9 blights didn't get your attention
- v.10 plagues didn't get your attention

<sup>36</sup> It makes more sense and it would be an easy error for the Jewish scholars to make (i.e. the Masoretes) (i.e. they provided the vowel markings according to traditional synagogue pronunciation)

<sup>37</sup> 1 Kings 12:28-32; 14:9 which provoked God; 2Ki.10:29 Jehu didn't destroy them when he came to power; see 2 Ki.17:7-18 (v.16) which lists calf worship amongst the reasons Israel fell.

<sup>38</sup> Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew word for 'roll away' b/c God rolled away the reproach of slavery from them when they crossed into Jordan to take the promised land (Josh.5:9); Hosea 12:11 says they offered bulls on altars there.

v.11 overthrown didn't get your attention; the image of a firebrand from a blaze carries the idea of barely anything left and the idea that **apart from God's mercy there would have been nothing left.**

v. 12-13 prepare to meet your creator, revealer & judge

- **Israel fell to Assyria in 721 BC**, ~30-40 years after this prophecy

**Chapters 5-6 Repent** choose life or choose death

- **5:1-2 A dirge<sup>39</sup> for Israel** - you're as good as dead
- 5:3 - Deut.28:62 reduced in numbers due to judgment
- **5:4-17 Seek me and live** - Turn away from sins

**Bethel & Gilgal are worship centers.**

Bethel – calf worship Gilgal – uncertain what was worshipped there

**Many believe that Beersheba was a pilgrimage site where idolatry was practiced (c.f. 8:14).**

Perhaps there was a northern town named Beersheba but the only one we know of was a southern Judean city.

The southern Beersheba may have been revered because of its connection with Abraham & Isaac.<sup>40</sup>

**You hate good & repress the poor (vv.10-12).**

Therefore, you will be judged

v.6 'house of Joseph' – the tribes arising from Joseph's two sons Ephraim & Manasseh constituted the largest tribes of Israel.

v.12 injustice bought with bribes

v.14 they mistakenly thought they were right with God

v.14 adonai, adonai, YHWH El Shaddai - the Lord, the Lord I AM Almighty

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<sup>39</sup> A dirge is a speech given at a funeral.

<sup>40</sup> Genesis 21:22-34 Abraham made a treaty & dug a well, 26:23-33 God reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac

- 5:18-27 The Day of the Lord**

v.18 The wicked that long for the Day of the Lord don't know God will judge them it seems they are self-righteous not mocking (contrast w/ Isa.5:19; Jer.17:5)

v.19 things will go from bad to worse

v.20 darkness Joel 2:2

v.21 God wants righteousness & justice to mark his people not religious activities.

v.24 cited by M. L. King Jr. in his *"I've Been to the Mountaintop"* speech<sup>41</sup>

**5:25 is difficult to interpret** (cited in Acts 7:42-43 by Stephen); because it is not clear what the answer to the rhetorical question is supposed to be.

We have no evidence one way or the other whether Israel offered sacrifices once they rejected God and had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.<sup>42</sup>

Although, it seems like a fair assumption that they did, given that they had the Tabernacle whose sole purpose was to offer sacrifices.

If the answer is, "Yes" then, together with the next verse, the point is how far they've fallen.

If the answer is, "No" then, together with the next verse, the point is how rebellious Israel had always been.

**5:26 is also hard to interpret** because it is not clear whether some of the words are proper nouns.

*Sikkut malk<sup>e</sup>kem* could mean "shrine of your king" or "shrine of Milcom" (a.k.a. Molech; like Baal means 'lord' but can also be the proper name of a god, so milcom means king but can also be the god Milcom or Molech).<sup>43</sup>

If sikkut ≠ temple but Sikkuth, an astral deity, then the passage could read "Sikkuth your king."

*Kiyyun* can mean "pedestal" or it could be the proper name of another astral deity.<sup>44</sup>

This is a passage that stimulates form critics to regard it as a redaction because it is the only place directly mentioning idolatry in Amos.

Is this really how to determine authenticity? Are all authors required to bring issues up more than once to substantiate the authenticity of their writings?

There are certainly many oblique references to idolatry in Amos.

Also, Amos' prophecy is largely centered on social justice issues.
- 6:1-7 Woe to the complacent of Israel & Judah.**

6:2a Calneh - leading city of Syria (i.e. called Calno by Isaiah 10:9); Calneh was captured by Tiglath-Pileser III in 738 BC

We do not know what their history was at the time of Amos (767-753 BC, around 20 years earlier).

6:2b **Hamath-Rabbah - leading city of Syrians**

It was conquered by Jeroboam II of Israel, then Shalmaneser III in the mid-800's and again in 730 by Tiglath-Pileser.

6:2b **Gath - leading city of Philistia**

<sup>41</sup> delivered April 3, 1968, Mason Temple (Church of God in Christ Headquarters), Memphis, Tennessee

<sup>42</sup> There was an inaugural sacrifice offered (Ex.24:4,6) prior to this and instruction concerning how to offer sacrifices (Nu.7 & 19) but beyond this we have no information. We also know that this period was full of idolatry (Nu.25) and so Amos might intend to point out that even during this period syncretism was practiced as it was being practiced now

<sup>43</sup> Hebrews preferred to not name pagan gods but to either change the name into an insult that sounded like the name of the god (e.g. Balzebul 'lord of the flies' vs. Baal Zebul 'lord of the house'; or just use the title without the name (i.e. baal - lord or molech - king)

<sup>44</sup> Mesopotamian art does show images of gods attached to poles to be carried about. In one picture there is an 8-point star above the head of the image (from ANET, fig.535).

Hazael captured Gath (2Ki.12:17);  
Uzziah also attacked and tore down the walls of Gath (2Chron.26:6);  
It was finally destroyed by Sargon II.

**Was Amos saying that they will also be defeated or that they are full of greed?**

It is not clear. The passage begins with the claim that they have a false sense of security, thus favoring the first interpretation but the section ends with their hedonism, thus favoring the second.

These are the two alternate interpretations:

1. **Are you better than they? NO! They were conquered and so it will happen to you. Are their territories bigger than yours? NO! They were greatly reduced in size and so will you.**
2. **Are they better off than you? NO! You have more than they do. Are their territories larger than yours? NO! You have more than they do.**

6:3 lit. 'you have brought near a reign of terror'

6:4 **The *marzeah* was a particular kind of banquet that followed the form detailed by Amos.**<sup>45</sup>

Sometimes they were religious in character (idolatry) but it is apparently not the case here.

They are sprawling, strutting, gluttons, screwing around while their country (Israel) falls apart.<sup>46</sup> For this, they will be amongst the first judged.

- **6:8-14 God hates Israel's Arrogance**

6:8 When people swear and oath it is by something greater but the Lord swears by himself that there will be terrible devastation.

6:10 In fact, the destruction will be so bad that God's name will not be mentioned (i.e. a superstitious silence to avoid being noticed).

6:12 two absurd ideas to illustrate the absurdity of their injustice

6:13a Lo Debar is a city in Gilead probably retaken from the Arameans by Jeroboam II but it could also have a double meaning, *they rejoice in "nothing at all"*

6:13b Kanaim was east of the Sea of Galilee and was retaken from the Arameans but the name also means 'horns' which are symbolic for power meaning, *"didn't we take power by our own strength"*

6:14 Lebo Hamath = Lebweh which is north of Baalbek in Syria; the valley of the Arabah is south of the Dead Sea.

### Chapters 7-8 Visions & Judgments

- **7:1-3 Locust vision**

Probably the early harvest (April<sup>ish</sup>)  
Because of Amos' prayer, God relents

- **7:4-6 Fire vision**

The great deep is probably the Mediterranean.  
Because of Amos' prayer, God relents

- **7:7-9 Plumb line**

Israel was built straight but the plumb line shows she is falling over and must be torn down.

- **7:10-17 Amaziah's judgment**

He views Amos as a professional prophet;  
What I am, I am because of the Lord; I didn't ask for this job, I was sent here.

- **8:1-7 Summer fruit**

<sup>45</sup> Meat always preceded wine; anointing, music & reclining were all part of the *marzeah*, from an Ugarit description of a *mrzh* celebrating the house of Shamuman and other ancient near eastern texts.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph had two sons Ephraim & Manassah. Since Manassah is a region of Samaria the expression, 'the house of Joseph' often refers to the northern kingdom.

The time is right for judgment.

This is also A PLAY ON WORDS because 'SUMMER' QAYS (pron. kayz); 'END' - QUETS (Ketz).

8:5 the new moon refers to a festival 2Sam.20:5-6; 2 Ki.4:23; Ez.46:3

8:5 & 6 together suggest that their price gouging led to debt slavery

They were watching the clock because of the Sabbath's interruption of dishonest gain.

- **8:8-10 The earthquake judgment**<sup>47</sup>

Differing opinions exist as to whether this refers to an earthquake or symbolically to the judgment of God.

I'm inclined to think the references to rising/sinking land and darkened skies (dust) are too specific to be symbolic.

'sundown' = lit. 'the sun to enter' the Targum interprets this to mean that the sun is covered rather than a reference to sundown.

- **8:11-14 The Revelation Famine**

This seems to point to the tumultuous times preceding the fall of Israel when there were no prophets in the land;

There was a 30 year period without a prophet - from the end of Amos' ministry until the fall of Israel; a 30-year revelation drought during the scariest times in their history.

8:14c at least they will not rise as a separate nation (c.f. Ez.37:19)

- **9:1-7 Temple vision**

This is not the temple in Jerusalem but Israel that is being destroyed;

God is portrayed as omnipotent in vv.5-6;

v. 7 sovereign over all nations; Cushites were from Arabia originally but later migrated to Africa (i.e. Ethiopia)... "I moved them, I'll move you too!"

- **9:8-10 God will destroy Israel but not utterly**

- **9:11-15 God will restore Israel**

This is necessary in order for God to make good his promise to Abraham (Gen.12:12).

The restoration has certain features: restoration, national superiority, conversion of the gentiles,<sup>48</sup> fecundity of the land, rebuilt cities and permanency.

9:12 'nations that bear my name' Jewish/Gentile co-heirs; c.f. Balaam's oracle in Numbers 24:17f

## Applications

### **God is a Righteous Judge**

How can God judge nations who do not have the law? Because he reveals himself to all people (4:13).

Paul elaborates upon this theme in Romans 1:18-2:16.

Consider your problem of self-righteousness and how it dulls your sense of God's righteousness (*You thought I was like you*; Deut.32:4; Psalm 50:21)

Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (NASB) Matt. 7:3-5

### **Intrinsic worth of humans**

People have intrinsic worth apart from their functional, social or moral status because they are created by and belong to God.

God takes or service or lack of service to the needy personally (Neh.5:1-5; Mt.25:31-46).

Even if God is judging them, the rest of us disdain God by disdaining them.

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; or the LORD will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him. (NASB) Prov. 24:17-18

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<sup>47</sup> Josephus indicated that an earthquake killed 10,000 during this period (Antiquities 15.5.2)

<sup>48</sup> James saw the conversion of the Gentiles under Paul & Barnabas as commensurate with this prophecy.

For with the judgment you are judging, you will be judged; and with the measurement you are measuring, you will be measured. (a literal rendering of Matt. 7:2)

**Sacrifice without obedience is meaningless & self-serving 4:4-5; 5:4-6, 21-26**

**Miscellaneous Issues**

- Theology proper - God is sovereign; God is just; God is righteous; God's grace never gives up; God is truthful<sup>49</sup>
- Privileges from God include responsibilities to God
- Whom God calls, he equips for his service.

**HOSEA God loves his unfaithful people.**

**Hosea's name means 'salvation.'**<sup>50</sup>

This prophet was contemporaneous with Amos, Micah & probably Isaiah.

He is described as the son of Beeri but we have no other references to Beeri in the Torah.

**This was a time of unprecedented peace & prosperity for Israel and Judah. It was also a time of unprecedented wickedness amongst the people.**

It is always hard to imagine disaster when everything is going well<sup>51</sup> but disaster was on its way for Israel.

Amos prophesied the destruction of Israel for social injustice.

Hosea prophesied their destruction because of idolatry.

Each prophet provided a different snapshot of the moral state of Israel and each showed Israel a different aspect of God.

**Amos emphasized the justice of God that flowed from his righteousness.**

**Hosea emphasizes the discipline of God born of his love.**

**Israel's infidelity toward God took many forms.**

**The most prominent sin was the sexual immorality associated with the Baal cultus.**

In this religious institution sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes and anyone else was encouraged, ostensibly to promote increased agricultural production by arousing Baal to have sex with Anath, his wife.

Putting on sex shows for the gods so they will have sex with one another thus creating fecundity on the earth.

Hosea says that this kind of gross sexual activity was rampant everywhere by everyone.

**Hosea also mentions human sacrifice (13:2) as part of the idolatry.**<sup>52</sup>

**Hosea expresses God's intense hostility toward the gold calves at Dan & Bethel,** which the first king of Israel erected so he wouldn't lose control of Israel.<sup>53</sup>

**The book of Hosea is unusual in that the prophet's failed marriage is used to illustrate God's relationship with Israel.**

Hosea married a woman who left him for a life of prostitution.

God asked Hosea to redeem her in the way he was going to redeem Israel.

Thus in Hosea we have a tragic and moving picture of God's own sadness over Israel's infidelity and God's determination to get her back.

**The first three chapters of Hosea characterize the rest of the book.**

marriage – infidelity – ruin - restoration

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<sup>49</sup> 1Sam.15:29; he keeps his end of the Abrahamic Gen.12:12 & Mosaic covenants

<sup>50</sup> The names "Joshua" & "Jesus" both mean Yahweh is salvation. Hosea is a derivation of these names. To us in the west, his name would be translated, 'Joseph.' In the NT Yeshuva (Jesus).

<sup>51</sup> "When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me" 13:6

<sup>52</sup> Examine appendix A - Religion under Baal, Anath & Molech.

<sup>53</sup> This happened 150 years earlier under the first Jeroboam; see 1Kings 12:25ff

### Date c. 790-725 BC

The first verse of the book indicates that he ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel and the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah.

This would mean that other kings of Israel ruled during the span of his ministry but they were not listed here.

### Authorship Issues

**Hosea writes as someone would write living at this time and in this place.**<sup>54</sup>

However, some hold that **references to Judah**<sup>55</sup> **are editorial insertions** because Hosea would not have commented upon Judah.

If Hosea is a legitimate prophet, what possible reason could be suggested why God would have limited his revelations to the country of which the prophet is a citizen?

Nearly all the other prophets address nations other than their own.

Also, in some cases, to excise the Judah material renders the text meaningless.

If those Judah references are retained, for the sake of keeping the text intelligible, then there is no reason to exclude the others.

Some hold that **the salvation passages**<sup>56</sup> **are editorial insertions** because they contrast sharply with the passages concerning Israel's infidelity & God's judgment. The assumption seems baseless.

Is there some reason why this author could not present contrasting truths?

Is there some basis for the belief that prophecies of judgment & of restoration cannot issue from the same pen?

On the contrary, in the day of the Lord passages the juxtaposition of judgment & mercy are **common**.

Also, the first three chapters are universally acknowledged as authentic and yet they bring up salvation.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, the best evidence indicates that Hosea wrote this book and completed it prior to the fall of Samaria.

### Message

#### **Chapters 1-3 Hosea's unfaithful wife**

**1:2-3 There are several views of Hosea's commission to marry an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness**<sup>58</sup>

- Some regard the marriage as **an allegory** rather than an actual marriage.<sup>59</sup>
- Others argue that **Gomer was a prostitute when Hosea married her** because this is the most natural meaning of 1:2<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> He focuses on the known sin problems in Israel at this point; he uses many Aramaisms as would be expected in the region so influenced by Aram.

<sup>55</sup> 4:15; 5:5,10,12-14; 6:4,11 and etc.

<sup>56</sup> 11:8-11; 14:2-9

<sup>57</sup> 1:10-11; 2:14-23; 3:5

<sup>58</sup> *eset z<sup>e</sup>nunim* wife of harlotries and *yalde z<sup>e</sup>nunim* children of harlotries suggests the children were also or would also practice such infidelities.

<sup>59</sup> This was held by medieval Jews and was a popular view into the late 1800's because God would not have asked him to marry an unchaste woman (i.e. he didn't allow priests to do so, why would he allow a prophet? c.f. Lev.21:7,14).

However, the evidence shows that it is not symbolic because formal names are used; details are supplied that have no relevance to the supposed allegory but are typical of historical narrative and the putative allegory is split by chapter 2.

<sup>60</sup> Against this argument, *eset z<sup>e</sup>nunim* (an adulterous wife) doesn't fit her status.

If she were a whore, why not say so by the word for it (*zonah*)? She'd have to be married to be an *eset z<sup>e</sup>nunim*.

The command to 'take' refers both to Gomer and children and so she must have been sexually active to have children;

Only priests were forbidden to marry unchaste women.

- Some say that **Gomer was chaste when she married but resorted to prostitution later.**

This makes 1:2-3 predictive of her eventual behavior rather than descriptive of her actual behavior.

There are no compelling grammatical reasons to interpret 1:2-3 this way but the problems with the alternative interpretations tend to favor this view.<sup>61</sup>

**1:6 & 8** Some believe failure to say, *Gomer conceived and bore him* (Hosea)..., is evidence that **the last two kids were fathered by someone else.**<sup>62</sup>

**1:10** after the exile Israel was an undivided nation but it was never autonomous and was later dispersed by the Romans. **Not until May, 1948 was Israel both autonomous and united.**

**1:11** *the land*, identity is not clear but most view it as Egypt, as the symbol of the nations of earth 2:14-15.

The Day of Jezreel is also unclear, though some take meaning from the name Jezreel (lit. scatter to sow seed or cast down to destroy) the first use in 1:5 being cast down and in 1:11 sown.

2:1 versus Lo Ruhamah (no love) & Loammi (not my people)

**2:2-7 Israel is estranged from God because of her infidelities;** God is going to interfere with her entanglements.

2:2 Hosea may've disowned Gomer

2:2b some take this expression to mean that she flashed her breasts to entice men.

**2:8-13 Israel doesn't know the source of her blessings, so God will take the blessings away**

2:11 yearly – monthly – daily & the rest of her religious celebrations

**2:14-23 After the time of discipline God will win Israel back through tenderness;** their relationship will be restored.

2:14 'tenderly' lit. 'speaking on her heart'

**3:1-4** Hosea is to win back Gomer the way God will win back Israel.

3:1 *issah* – 'your woman' or 'your wife' (Jer.7:18; 44:19)

3:2 the price of a slave (Ex.21:32; 2Ki.7:1)

3:4 no leadership; no worship; no insight into God's plans (i.e. teraphim used to divine (Gen.31:19-34; 1Sam.23:9; 30:7)

#### **Chapter 4-14 Israel is guilty so, she will be purged, cleansed & restored**

- **4:1-7:16 Israel's guilt**

- **4:1-4** Israel's general sins include infidelity toward God & hatred toward others<sup>63</sup>

- **4:5-5:7 The leaders did not show God to Israel**

They rejected the law<sup>64</sup> (vv.4-10), promoted corrupt religious practices (vv.11-19)<sup>65</sup> and so they will be judged.

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Also, the second part of this expression, if it were parallel with the first, would mean the children are also adulterous.

Unless there are unnamed children accompanying Gomer into her marriage, the kids she had were born after her marriage to Hosea.

Finally, if God prohibited priests from marrying unchaste women, why would he allow prophets to do so?

<sup>61</sup> Also, it better fits God's relationship with Israel if Gomer started out chaste (Jer.2:2-3).

<sup>62</sup> Bannon or McBannon vs. O'Bannon; The prefix 'Mc' or 'Mac' before a surname implies 'the legitimate child of...' versus 'O' which means the 'bastard child of...'

<sup>63</sup> Thus violating the core of the Mosaic covenant, Mt.22:36-40

<sup>64</sup> by not teaching the law v.6; by profiting from the peoples sin v.8

- 4:4 either they are told to stop charging each other and charge the priests<sup>66</sup> or God refusing to be accused by them or they are accusing God and he tells them to shut up in 4b.
- 4:13 sex rites associated with trees (Deut.12:2; Jer.2:20; 3:36; Ez.6:13)
- **5:8-15 Impending judgement for Israel & Judah**  
This judgment will provoke a return to God;  
Beth Aven is derogatory for Bethel, *house of deceit* instead of *house of God*.  
5:15 God's silent until they seek Him.
  - **6:1-3 Predicted words of repentance from Israel**  
v.2 addresses the rapidity of the restoration using a Hebrew idiom  
The question of deeper significance is hard to pin down:  
Are stages of restoration in view here?  
Is this a prediction of the resurrection of Christ?  
Will some literal three-day restoration of Israel occur after she repents at the advent of Christ?  
Since numbers are often used to make rhetorical points there's no compelling reason to see this as predictive.
  - **6:4-7:1 Further accusations**  
v.4 Their continued faithful love (*hesed*) for God is insubstantial and fleeting; priests are criminals
  - **7:2-7 Crime & dissipation in Israel**  
v.4 their passions are so aroused they need nothing to sustain them;  
vv.6-7 the continual lust destroys them and numbs them to the consequences of their evil;  
The assassinations of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah & Pekah, those last few kings following Jeroboam II may be in view here.<sup>67</sup>
  - **7:8-16 Foolish associations with other nations**  
v.8-9 Israel, by mingling with other nations, makes itself useless and weak;  
v.8 burnt on one side raw on the other – useless  
v.14 a great picture of metamelomai rather than metanoia  
vv.15-16 they use the very strengths God gave them to rebel against Him.
  - **8:1-10:15 Israel's judgment**
    - **8:1-14 Warning of impending doom**  
v.5 *zanah eglek* lit. *your calf stinks O Samaria. My anger burns against them*;  
v.8 *a vessel for which there is no desire*
    - **9:1-9 Assyria will be God's instrument of judgment**  
Why is Egypt mentioned? Either because Egypt is a type of the exile or because some of the Israelites would be sold to the Egyptians as slaves by the Assyrians.  
v.9 this is a reference to the raping to death of a woman by men in the Benjamin town of Gibeah (Judges 19).
    - **9:10-17 Israel's glory will fly away**  
v.15 Gilgal was where they crowned Saul, thus rejecting God as their ruler;<sup>68</sup>  
*to sane* means to no longer love.
    - **10:1-15 Israel's sin leads to judgment**  
v.11 Cattle love to thresh because they get to eat their work - Israel loves the good life but now she will have a hard life;  
v.13 they were *haras* (lit. plowing) wickedness;  
The reference to Shalman (Shalmaneser V?) destroying Beth Arbel is obscured to us but it is known that hacking open pregnant women and hurling children to their deaths were typical Assyrian warfare tactics.

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<sup>65</sup> by promoting ritual based drunkenness vv.11,18; by divination v. 12; by promoting ritual based fornication vv.12-14; by offering idol sacrifices v. 13 and by parenting illegitimate children 5:7

<sup>66</sup> because it's like the pot calling the kettle black...everybody is guilty

<sup>67</sup> 2 Ki.15:10,14,25,30

<sup>68</sup> 1Samuel 8:4ff; 10:9ff

- **11:1-14:9 Israel's restoration**
  - **11:1-7 God's love & Israel's rebellion**

Matthew cites 11:1b as being fulfilled in Christ because Christ came from Egypt after his parents fled there from Herod.

This could mean that 11:1b is a double reference where the type is historical and the antitype predictive.

Others suggest that the term 'fulfill' includes the idea of completeness. Thus, just as God brought Israel out of Egypt to redeem them, he now brings Christ out of Egypt to redeem them completely.

Matthew's citation is to a much larger passage concerning God's redemption of Israel (i.e. past, future and final; 11:1-14:9 the many redemptions of Israel). Thus, this could be Matthew's attempt to show that Christ completely filled-to-overflowing, God's redemption of Israel.
  - **11:8-11 Restoration will occur in the end**

v.8 Admah & Zeboiim were cities on the plain of Sodom & Gomorrah and were likewise destroyed in the conflagration; v.9

God's actions are not controlled by vindictiveness but love & justice
  - **11:12-12:14 Israel's foolishness**

12:1 to feed on the wind is to chase worthless pursuits; v.4 see Genesis 32:25-29
  - **13:1-16 Israel's decline into evil**

v.14 is cited by Paul in 1Cor.15:55 as fulfilled at the resurrection from the dead but in the context of this chapter it must also refer to the resurrection of Israel;

v.14c lit. *repentance is hidden from my eyes* is grammatically related to the promised resurrection, thus, God will not change his mind about the restoration of Israel;

vv.15-16 are related to v.13 not v.14.
  - **14:1-9 Israel will repent and God will bless**

v.2 lit. *we offer our lips as bullocks*; they confess their change of mind

### Applications

We prefer idols over God

At its heart idolatry is giving something in creation the reverence, trust & service that rightfully belongs to the Creator (Romans 1:18-23).

In this sense, anything that stands in the place of God is an idol whether it is an external image or an internal craving (Colossians 3:5 'over-desire' = idolatry).

A good case can be made from the Bible that we become like what we serve.

In Adam's case he became as prideful, rebellious and deceptive as the serpent.

In Israel's case at Sinai they became as stiff-necked and insensate as their gold calf.

In Israel's case in Isaiah's time they had become as blind, deaf and impotent as their various gods (Isaiah 6:9-13 compare with Psalm 115:4-8 & Deuteronomy 29:4).

As we consider our hyper-desire for approval, significance, pleasure & control we would do well to appreciate the spiritual risk and ruin we invite into our own souls.<sup>69</sup>

Inordinate emotions can clue us in on the idolatry underneath.<sup>70</sup>

**God uses calamity to purge the wicked and to discipline the remnant.**

**God disciplines those he loves**

**God will accomplish his goals with or without our cooperation.**

**Self-sufficiency leads to sin (10:13; 13:6) including the sin of greater self-sufficiency (12:8b)**

### **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

- Read and annotate Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk & Zephaniah
- Memorize Micah 6:8 & Habbakuk 2:4b (*but the righteous will live by his faith*) & Zephaniah 3:5

<sup>69</sup> Ken Sande writes that idols are formed when our desires become demands about which we punish others when they interfere with them.

<sup>70</sup> anxiety when our idol is threatened; anger when it is blocked & devastation when it is lost

- As you read through these three prophets, identify the principles that could apply to you. Which of these are the hardest to believe at this point in your life?
- Prepare answers for the following based on your study:
  1. Identify the kings of Judah during the activity of these prophets. Were any commended? Were any condemned?
  2. What nations posed a threat to Judah during this time?
  3. Identify one major theme for each of the three prophets.