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OT655: Amos (Eng Text OA: Spring 2023

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Written Assignment: Introduction analysis

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1. Author/Audience: What questions do you have about the author and audience?

The question about the author focuses on how the prophet denounces and prophesies the injustice and spiritual weakness of those who believe themselves to be rich. I noticed the book of Amos' record of the prophecies and teachings of the prophet Amos imparted to the kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II. Unfortunately, the people reject Amos' warnings and teachings and wish he would send his powerful message elsewhere. Studying this book can help me better understand and find the crucial role that prophets define in the work of the Lord and be more grateful for the calling of prophets in our day.

2. History/geography: what historical or geographical references would you like to know more about and why? What I will have to try to master is the time and why the author chose to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom.

Amos lived in Tekoa in the southern kingdom of Judah. He was from the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos was prophesying towards the end of the reign of Jeroboam II. The book of Amos is prophetic and not an ancient history, like those written by authors. Throughout the book, I see the names of some kings like Jeroboam, Uzziah, David, etc., and some cities and regions like Hamath, Ammon, Tekoa, Moab, etc. The remainder of this historical event like the earthquake in Israel. When I deepened the research, I discover that the author was a sheep farmer from Tekoa. Unfortunately, it does not give and very little is known about Amos himself except

that he was a native of Judah and is now considered one of the minor prophets of the Old Testament. According to, Jeremias, “Among Amos' oracles against the nations, the first against the Arameans still reflects the temporal proximity to these gruesome battles, as does also the quotation of the boasting victors in 6:13. On the other hand, the corpus of Amos' sayings presupposes a time of economic prosperity in the Northern Kingdom, concentrated in the capital Samaria, of the sort conceivable only during a time of peace; excavations in Samaria as well.”¹ Less than 200 years after Amos prophesied to Israel his destruction if his people did not return to God, the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar II, invaded Israel, conquered Jerusalem, and exiled tens of thousands of Jews to foreign lands.

Historically, its message is aimed at the Northern Kingdom at the time of its greatest prosperity. The kingdom of Israel, that of the ten tribes, is experiencing a last respite due mainly to the decline of its great and always threatening neighbor, Syria.

3. Language/literary features: what strikes you as curious about the language used (for example repetition, figures of speech, literary conventions)? What questions do you have about the original Hebrew?

The prophetic style of Amos is indeed an example of pure Hebrew. His language is simple but dignified and strong. It uses common language expression fragments. He never uses the word “covenant” although he is a covenant person. He introduces God and his preferred term is “the Lord, the Eternal, or the God of Hosts. It underlines the features of his character concerning his authority and his government. According to Stefan, “The three hymnic elements in the Book of Amos show an obvious parallel structure and content: (1) they use prepositioned to describe YHWH's actions; (2) they end with a similar clause: YHWH is His name, (3) they

¹ Jorg Jeremias, “*The Book of Amos: A Commentary*”, 7th Edition, (Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 1.

represent a theology in which creation and destruction are closely connected. These characteristics can be demonstrated easily and are widely recognized. However, there is a fourth characteristic which as far as I am informed has never been observed before: each hymn describes five actions of YHWH, which are ranked in such a way that they reach a climax in the final clause”.² They consider Amos where secretaries wrote down extracts from his teachings and collected them in the book of Amos (see Amos 1:1). Amos is a shepherd who lives in a town called Tekoa, about nineteen miles south of Jerusalem. The Lord called him to prophesy to the northern kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, a calling he did not expect but faithfully fulfilled (see Amos 7:14–15).

4. Culture: where are there references to cultural things that intrigue you? What do you wish you knew about the cultural background so you could understand the context better?

In research I learned that the book of Amos is one of the most quoted books in the Bible when it comes to addressing social and political issues is, without a doubt, the collection of oracles that 'Amos addressed the inhabitants of Israel, Judah, and the surrounding nations. The prophet of Tekoa is deeply moved and scandalized by the injustices present everywhere within the society of his time and, in particular, in the kingdom of the North, where he exercises his ministry. Prosperity only benefits the elite, the poor and marginalized are destitute and at the mercy of those who deny them dignity.

5. Theology: where is there conflict or tension between theological themes (eg despair/hope, judgment/restoration)?

² Paas Stefan, “*Seeing and singing: visions and hymns in the book of Amos*”, Academic Journal 2002, 2.

It is in the midst of this political and economic, and religious, that Amos appears. He bases his theology on the social corruption and injustice that poisons the kingdom and his preference is based on the Lord or the Eternal revealing the spiritual value of his authority received by God.

6. Structure/organization: how easily does the book “flow,” in your opinion? Where are there “seams” or “speed bumps” you “trip” over? Where are there indications of the organization?

The structure of the rhetoric and prophetic book. The three approaches strongly mark the history of the exegesis of the book of Amos. It is biblical writing, this corpus is built according to the specific rules of Semitic rhetoric of a composition of biblical texts; they seek precisely to detect traces, inclusions, parallelisms, and other forms of proceeds. It consists of nine chapters that present the message and the intention of the author. Chapters 1-5 introduce the people of Israel and their friends to this repentance. Chapter 3 talks about how God can reveal his secrets to servants. Chapters 6 to 8 show the prophecy of the book and the fall of Israel. Finally, chapter 9 gives a message of Victory for the people of Israel who will be called back to their land.

7. Message: what are 3 different one-sentence titles for the book that captures what you think is the central message?

The three different titles that I can cite are found in the text Amos 2.4, and finally in a word despising the law of God. Amos 2:4 - "This is what the Lord says: Because of Judah's three crimes, even four, I will not change my decision. Because they despised the law of the Lord and did not keep its statutes, because they were led astray by the false idols which their ancestors had worshipped. The book of Amos focuses on the prophets. Amos explains that God uses prophets to do His work (Amos 3:7). He warns of the judgments that are about to befall the people of

Israel because they rejected the prophets. Thus, it emphasizes the morality of God, the righteous ruler of all nations and all men. Amos shows that the offering the Lord most appreciates is that of a righteous life; animal sacrifices lose their meaning if they are offered instead of personal righteousness.