Amos- Lesson 3

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1. The main theories for the composition of Amos that have arisen in the last century are that most of the book comes from Amos, it is the result of a process of editing, the book is a deliberate literary production, and "Amos' as a later invention. Some strengths to holding to a theory that draws closer to the book's structure rather than original authorship is that meanings can be concluded more clearly. Some weaknesses are that if doing so, "the quest for "authentic" passages becomes rather hopeless" (Barton 27).

2. An important lesson about the person of Amos is to "the appeal to and proclamation of fundamental moral principles" of Amos (Carroll 5). And, "The "Book of the Four" (Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah) presented an interpretation of the history of Israel that sought to explain the events of the exile and the poor socioeconomic conditions of life under the Persians by tracing divine judgment back to various social and religious sins of the people in preexilic times" (Barton 34). Amos' usage of God as not only the God of Israel but the God of justice and moral principles aligned him with the other Old Testament prophets by judging Israel under a greater grid that is not only religious.

3. A prominent scholarly trend that was compelling to me was how "Scholars were to use their training to serve the needs of suffering humanity" (Carroll 30). Scholars in the previous century dove into Amos not for the sake of learning more about him, but it was to serve a need that humanity was going through in their specific times. Exegesis was never done for pleasure or passion but to relieve suffering for fellow brothers and sisters. Another prominent factor of scholarly trends from the reading that was compelling to me was how biblical scholars have found chiastic literary structures throughout Amos. "One tendency that has become especially prominent within this kind of approach is the notion that the book of Amos, in its parts and as a whole, exhibits chiasm (alternatively called symmetric, inverted, palistrophic, ring, or concentric patterns)" (Carrroll 45). It has never crossed my mind that literary structures such as chiasm can be used to deliver God's messages. The fact that the Holy Spirit used these poetic and literary structures to share His revelation really broadened my perspective on the ways God works and even on His character.