Amos- Lesson 4

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1. Chapter two starts with Amos' times and seeks to share the religious beliefs and practices of his day. Chapter three shows the viewpoint of theology from his perspective. Chapter four seeks to share the additional theological points on top of what is found in Amos. Chapter five starts to theologize about the book of Amos. Chapter six shares how Amos' theology is received amongst many different circles. Chapter seven applies Amos' theology to today's times.

2. One new perspective I gained from Barton's treatment of popular religious beliefs was how he explained how Amos' audience would have probably received his prophecies. "The audience has to be imagined applauding after each oracle against a foreign nation, beginning with Aram, which the Israelite army had only recently defeated in order to win back two towns in Transjordan (Amos 6:13)" (57). Only to be served a chiasmic poem that highlights the Israelites as the main culprit of the crimes.

3. The fact that Israel is God's chosen people may seem like they are given special privileges. And they, "For them, "YHWH is the God of Israel and Israel the people of YHWH" come what may, since in the exodus a relationship was forged that was permanent and unbreakable" (71). But this theological truth is given to Israel, so that they also have a greater responsibility in being God's chosen people.

4. Depending on the "theoretical model for establishing the "message" that a biblical book conveys", the book of Amos conveys "several possible theologies" (159). The redaction/composition criticism seeks to pivot the main meanings through the changes made by the "latest contributors to the book" (159). The literary readings choose not to discern between "original" and "which are later additions" that may lead to mistakes in highlighting certain parts of the book that most likely should not be (159). The last approach attempts to place Amos in the overall canon that tries to speak alongside other prophets.

5. The theological category I would like to study further is the category of divine action. "We will go to war for what seem to us moral reasons, but we do not suppose that God will always guarantee a just outcome, and we spend much time agonizing over all the innocent victims of even the most just war" (200). This is a statement that definitely will not sit well with many, but if done right, it can offer a truth that our world desperately needs today.