

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the 12, Session 10, Amos, Visions of Judgment and Promise of Restoration, Amos 7-9

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This is Dr. Gary Yates in his lecture series on the Minor Prophets. This is session 10, Visions of Judgment and Promise of Restoration, Amos 7-9.

The third and final section of the book of Amos is found in Amos chapters 7 to 9. Let me remind you of what the overall structure and message of the book is. The book begins by the Lord roaring from Zion like a lion and thundering like a storm.

He's going to come out in judgment. In chapters 1 and 2, God is going to judge the nations. The surprise element there was that the nations included both Judah and Israel, who were the people of God.

Their status as the chosen people of God would not exempt them. The nations of the earth had violated the Noahic covenant by their crimes, by their violence, by their social sins against other peoples. Israel and Judah had broken the commandments of God that were found in the Mosaic law and the Mosaic covenant.

But all of these nations were guilty of transgression or pasha. They had rebelled and violated the covenant. In chapters 3 to 6, we have the second section of the book and it's an elaboration on why God is going to judge his people Israel.

It talks about the nature of the judgment, the reasons for the judgment, and the extent of that. There again is a significant focus on the social sins of Israel, their practice of injustice, and the fact that their worship is insincere toward God. At the very beginning of our study of Amos, we saw there are three major concerns in his preaching.

It's a warning to people that are complacent in their wealth, a warning to people that are not practicing justice, and a warning to people that are going through the motions of worship. Those details are laid out for us and elaborated for us in chapters 3 to 6. In the midst of the judgment and the warning of the military disaster and defeat that's going to come upon Israel, there are also the calls to repentance. Seek God and live.

It's not too late for Israel to be exempt from judgment. As we move to chapters 7 to 9, the third section of the book, we are going to have, again, a relentless message of judgment. That's characteristic of the book of Amos as a whole.

God is the roaring lion and the thundering storm. This message of judgment in this particular part of the book, a different way, a contrasting way to help the people see the seriousness and the ominous nature of what's about to happen to them, is that this message of judgment is conveyed in a series of five visions. The prophets were messengers of God.

They spoke, thus says the Lord, but often, the way that God would reveal these messages to the prophets is that they would see visions. Often, these visions symbolically represented what God planned to do and what God intended to do in the future. Then the prophet, I think in a way that made the message of judgment more vivid and real and dramatic, would often explain these visions to the people and help them to understand the significance of that, the symbolism that was involved.

We have a series of five visions of judgment in Amos, chapters 7 to 9. Finally, at the end of the book, all of the prophets were messengers of both judgment and salvation. Finally, at the end of the book, in Amos chapter 9, verses 11 to 15, we finally have the promise of restoration and hope for Israel's future. In some sense, as we look at the corpus of the prophetic books in the Old Testament, Amos is one of the most relentless prophets of judgment.

But even at the end of this book, that's talked about 90% of the people being taken away or dying in the judgment, Israel being ripped out of the mouth of a lion like a lamb where there's nothing left but an ear and a tail and a bit of a leg. Even in a book where the judgment is that severe and that intense, there is a promise at the end that, ultimately, God is going to restore them. We're going to look at that passage in chapter 9, verses 11 to 15, and try to understand better what was the eschatological message of the prophets all about. What was the hope that they were giving to Israel? And then, how is that hope understood and developed as we see the broader revelation and the fuller revelation that's given to us in the New Testament? First of all, in Amos 7-9, let's look at the five visions of judgment.

I want to try to explain each of these visions, what they symbolize, and what they convey. In chapter 7, Amos says, This is what the Lord God showed me. Behold, he was forming locusts when the latter growth was just beginning to sprout.

And behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, O Lord God, please forgive. How can Jacob stand? He is so small.

The Lord God relented concerning this. It shall not be, said the Lord. The first vision that we have in Amos 7:3 is that Amos saw a vision of a locust invasion swarming through the land of Israel.

This is something that commonly happened in this part of the ancient Near East. It's something that still happens in that part of the world today. In Deuteronomy 28, the invasion of locusts that would consume the crops was one of the covenant curses that the Lord had mentioned he would send against the people.

In chapter 4, they had experienced this in the recent past. And so, Amos sees a vision. Now where this locust plague is going to completely swarm through the land, utterly devastate it.

And as a result of this, Amos plays the role of an intercessor. He intercedes for the people, and he says, God, do you realize that the nation of Israel is so small, they cannot survive an agricultural and economic devastation like this locust plague? The amazing thing is that the God of the Old Testament, who is often portrayed as being this angry, vengeful, wrathful God, God is responsive to the prayers of Amos.

And it says that the Lord God relented. Another way that we could translate this, he changed his mind. And we'll focus on this when we get to the prophet Micah as well.

But here we see the patience of God, the mercy of God. Remember that in the covenant, God said in Exodus chapter 34 verse 6 that he was a God of compassion and hesed. Specifically, part of that compassion involves a willingness to forgive sins and he is slow to anger.

The Hebrew expression is that he has a long nose. In other words, you think about the nose, the nostrils flaring or getting red when a person is angry and ready to explode in anger. God is slow to do that.

And although this judgment Amos is warning about is going to be terrible and awful and significant, the people need to be prepared for this. The Lord is also reflecting that in numerous ways, he is giving the people multiple opportunities to repent. We even see in the Old Testament that as God prepares to judge both Israel and Judah, he continually moves the deadlines.

Politicians talk about flexible deadlines when they're unable to get things done on time. But God had flexible deadlines because he was giving the people more and more opportunities to repent. So when the prophet prays, God relents and does not send judgment.

The Lord is acting here at the end of Israel's history in a way that is consistent with the way that he acted at the beginning of Israel's history. In Exodus chapter 32, after the sin where Israel had worshipped the golden calf and had committed covenant infidelity against the Lord, at the very beginning of this relationship, God said to Moses, stand back; I'm going to destroy these people; I will start over with you. In the midst of that, Moses, as a prophet, interceded for his people.

He said, Lord, what are the Egyptians going to say when they hear that you've destroyed your people? As a result of that, we have the same language that's used here in Amos. God relents. He changes his mind.

He does not send the judgment, and the people of Israel are spared because of that. The same thing happens to the Lord's response to the report of the spies in Numbers 14. When the people listen to the majority of the spies, they refuse to go up to the land.

God decides that he's going to judge his people, he's going to destroy them. Moses again intercedes and God relents from sending the judgment. The prophet Samuel reminds us that the role of the prophets was to intercede for the people of Israel.

When they sin against God by asking for a king and the Lord sends this dramatic thunderstorm at a time when you would not expect that in the land of Israel, the people recognize that God is angry with them, and they beg and plead with Samuel to continue to intercede for them so that the Lord would not destroy them. Samuel says God forbid that I should sin by failing to pray for my people. The prophets are a great example for pastors today, and one of our roles as men of God is to be an interceder for the people that are under our care and the people to whom we minister.

I think that's true of any man or woman who's given a pastoral responsibility. We are to intercede for those who are under our care and to whom we're called to minister. One of the significant ways that God judges the people of Judah is that after the time of Amos, when it comes to the point that God has decided that he is going to judge his people, they will not avoid, they will not avert the judgment that God is going to send against them.

The Lord says to Jeremiah, do not intercede for these people. Do not pray for these people. That is a significant judgment because it was the intercession of the prophets that ultimately often spared the people from the wrath and the anger of God.

God even tells Jeremiah, even if Moses and Samuel were the great intercessors that Israel has had in the past, even if they were to intercede for these people, I would not listen to those prayers. However, at this point in Amos' ministry and in the life of the nation of Israel, God is still willing to spare them from judgment, and in response to the prophet's intercession, the Lord changes his mind and does not send the judgment that he had initially planned. I think that, also dealing with this later time in Judah's history from the prophet Ezekiel, we see the exact opposite of what is being talked about here because we read this verse in Ezekiel chapter 22 verse 30.

There, the Lord says, I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. One of the reasons that God ultimately brings the judgment of the Babylonian exile, he was looking for an Amos, a Moses, a Samuel that would stand up and maybe intercede for the people or call them back to repentance. There was no one there.

As a result of that, God ultimately had to bring judgment. If we ever come to a place where we think that the prayers, the actions, the words, and the repentance of a single individual ultimately don't matter, we have these examples scattered throughout the Old Testament where one person prayed, and ultimately, a nation was spared from judgment. As a Christian, I grew up in a Christian home, and I know that my dad is a man of prayer.

I often think about what have the prayers of that one man, what impact have they had on my life and my ministry? What impact have they had on his grandchildren as he's prayed for my kids? I'm thankful for that. God listens to the prayers of single individuals. The Lord listened to the prayer of Amos.

There's a vision of a locust swarm. God relents. There are five visions of judgment here.

Again, there's another reminder of God's willingness to spare the people from judgment. We see the same thing in the second vision. Chapter 7, verse 4. This is what the Lord God showed me.

Behold, the Lord God was calling for a judgment by fire. It devoured the great deep, and it was eating up the land. Here we have the judgment portrayed, a vision of a fire that is going to sweep through the land.

If you have ever seen a forest fire, you know its destructive force. Back in chapter 1 and chapter 2, when God speaks of the judgment of the individual nations, He says, I will send a fire on the walls of these various cities. Well, now that fire is consuming the land of Israel.

Amos realizes, even more so than the locust plague, that this is something that Israel cannot survive. He calls out to God. He says, God, please cease.

Jacob is too small. How can they withstand this onslaught of judgment? Again, God relents. A second time, God is doubly willing to spare the people of this.

But what we're going to see in the visions that follow, after visions 1 and 2, in visions 3, 4, and 5, the judgment has become irrevocable. I think there was always a point in the life of God's people. This happened in Israel earlier than it did in Judah, where

there were these flexible deadlines where God would give them opportunities to repent, but there was ultimately a point where God said enough. God's patience, God's compassion, and God's slowness to anger, even that has a limit.

We see here the movement from possible judgment that can be averted to unavoidable judgment that is going to inevitably happen. That takes place in these visions as well. The third judgment speech is the vision of the plumb line that is given to us in chapter 7, verses 7 to 9. Here's the vision.

Amos sees this in a visual way and then explains this picture and image to the people. Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people, Israel. I will never again pass by them.

The high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will raise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword. Now, the judgment that God relents from, the high places are going to be desolate, the sanctuaries are going to be laid waste, the house of Jeroboam, I'm going to bring the sword against it. The things that Israel was trusting in to provide them security other than God and having the right kind of relationship with Him, sanctuaries, and their leaders, and those things become the target of God's judgment.

The reason for this is that God sets a plumb line against His people in the midst of the people, and they do not measure up to the standards of God's law and righteousness. Now, that's the traditional understanding of the vision that is given here. We have the translation of this word anak by the word plumb line.

A plumb line is a string or a rope that has a weight on the end of it. The purpose of a plumb line is that this measuring line is used to measure the straightness of a wall. So, when the plumb line is lowered by a builder, the builder can determine if this wall is straight. Is it secure? If it leans, if it's not too plumb, then ultimately, it can be destroyed.

That wall is going to collapse under its own weight. That's what has happened to Israel. God places the standard of His righteousness and His law.

God had said, you are to practice justice toward your neighbor. You are not to have a tight fist. You are to have an open hand toward your neighbor.

When Israel has not done this and when they have not lived by the standards of God's law, the wall is not to plumb, and ultimately, that wall is going to collapse. God is going to tear that wall down because it's not what He designed it to be. It can't serve the function of what it was designed for.

A leaning wall ultimately is not secure and is not going to provide protection. It's interesting here that something that is used normally, we think about a plumb line, is used for the building and the construction of something. The plumb line here becomes a vision of something that is about to be torn down.

There is kind of an ironic use of this particular image. However, there are also some interpretive questions with this particular passage. The word anak that is used here, this is the only place where this particular word appears in the Old Testament.

The word that is normally used for a measuring line or for a plumb line is the Hebrew word kav. The word kav for measuring line is used in passages like 2 Kings chapter 21 verse 13. The fact that that word is not used here has raised some questions in the minds of commentators.

They've discussed, could this passage have a different meaning from what has been traditionally given to it? An alternate interpretation based on cognate evidence for this word anak. Again, sometimes it's problematic for us when we try to determine the meaning of words in the Old Testament when they're only used once or twice or a handful of times. Based on cognate evidence from the Akkadian language, the Akkadian loan word that is related to anak means tin.

What this vision could mean, we could have the traditional view, and I think that's probably the best reading in the interpretation that we can go to unless we can find something that explains this better. But the idea of God making the walls of Israel tin, and that the walls that are designed to protect Israel are made out of this cheap material, it may express their vulnerability to the enemy attack that is about to besiege them. They think that they're high places.

They think that they're sanctuaries. They think that the house of Jeroboam, they think that's what makes it secure. However, ultimately, those walls are nothing more than tin.

The opposite of this would be what we have in Jeremiah 1, verse 18, where when the Lord calls the prophet Jeremiah, he says, I'm going to make you a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall. You will be able to withstand the onslaught of your enemies. Here, however, we may be having the walls of Israel portrayed as tin that are going to be easily crumbled down.

I'm going to stay with the traditional interpretation as I teach the book. I believe the plumb line is the best explanation for this, but this is an alternate possibility. One reason that the word anak, this unusual word may be used here, is that it sounds very similar to the word anah, which is the word for mourning.

We may have some type of prophetic wordplay or irony here where anak and anah and the mourning that's going to happen as they experience all of this death and God's judgment, that may be part of this. Those are the first three visions. The vision of the locust plague, God relents.

The vision of the fire, God is going to sweep through in judgment. Amos prays, God relents. However, in vision three, the plumb line is laid.

Israel does not conform to God's standards, and the things that they have trusted to give them security are not going to help them. In the middle of these visions, we then have a narrative interlude in Amos 7, verses 10 to 17. As we read this as English readers, often the way that the Old Testament will mix poetry and prose seems strange to us.

But we have a number of very well-known passages where a writer will juxtapose prose and poetry for specific rhetorical reasons. For example, in Exodus 14 and 15, we have a prose account of the conquest and the defeat of the Egyptians. God drowning their chariots in the sea.

Then we also have a poetic celebration of that. Judges chapter 4 and 5, both a narrative account of a victory that the Israelites win in battle, then a poetic celebration of how God used the troops of Israel to defeat their enemies. Poetry and prose can often be juxtaposed together.

In Jeremiah 30 and 31, poetic oracles promising the restoration and God restoring the fortunes of Israel. Chapter 32 and 33, narratives that go along with this. So, this is not just simply, hey, let's insert a story here.

There is a specific purpose behind this, and I think the reason for this narrative account in chapters 7, 10 to 17, it is to show the rejection of the word of the Lord. God has called Amos to go and preach to Israel. There was a unique set of circumstances among this.

Amos was not a prophet. He was a herdsman. He seems to have been a wealthy landowner who had extensive holdings in terms of livestock.

He had a large amount of land that was used for the raising of sycamore figs. But in the midst of that, God called him to do this unusual thing where he crossed the border and went over to preach in Israel. But when he goes to preach there, we get the response that was given to his message through this priest by the name of Amaziah.

And Amaziah tells him, look, we've heard enough of your preaching. We don't want you to stay here anymore. Stop preaching against the king's sanctuary.

Never prophesy again at Bethel and go home. This is the official rejection of the word of Amos. And so, as a result of this, when the prophetic word is rejected, the opportunity for repentance that was genuinely there, this was a shadow of things that God was going to do.

When the Lord was sending the locust plague and the fire, he relented. But when Amaziah and I think the people at large ultimately say, we don't want anything to do with the message of Amos. We want you to go back home.

That seals their fate. As a result of that, the visions that we see, Vision 3, the Plum Line, Vision 4, and Vision 5, all are talking about a judgment that, at this point, has become irrevocable. In Chapter 8, Vision 4 is a vision of a basket of summer fruit.

And you might think, well, what does a vision of a basket of summer fruit have to do with God's judgment? I remember my art class. We painted baskets of summer fruit. So what's going on here? Well, there is a wordplay involved in the vision here that both verbally and visually communicates the message of judgment.

Chapter 8, verse 1 says this: This is what the Lord God showed me. Behold a basket of summer fruit. And the Lord said to Amos, what do you see? And I said, a basket of summer fruit.

Then the Lord said to me, here's the significance of this: The end has come upon my people, Israel. I will never again pass by them. Remember that was in Vision 3 as well.

The songs of the temple shall become wailing in that day, declares the Lord. There will be so many dead bodies. They are thrown everywhere.

Silence. So, what looks like something that would be fairly innocuous to us, a basket of summer fruit? This is an ominous message of death and destruction coming on the land of Israel. What's going on here? Well, what we need to see is that the Hebrew word for summer fruit is the word qaitz.

And then the word that is used to talk about the end that is going to come upon Israel is the word qaitz. And so, the basket of qaitz, summer fruit, indicates that the qaitz, the end, has come upon Israel. That word end is used back in the vision of the plumb line.

And the Lord says that I'm going to bring my people to an end. I will never pass by them again. And so, what's happening here is that Israel is at the end of its history, and now God is about to judge them.

The harvest of the summer fruit was the last event in the agricultural year for the people of Israel. This is now the last event prior to God wiping out his people, and the Lord is going to judge them for their injustice and the many ways that they've sinned against each other. Going along with their rejection of the prophetic word, Amos 8:11 says, Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of God.

One of the ways that God punishes disobedience to the word of God is that he removes the opportunity to hear it. Amaziah did not want to hear what the prophet had to say. The people ultimately did not want to hear what the prophet had to say, and so the Lord is going to send a famine that will eventually take the word of God away from the people.

The final vision, and a pretty devastating picture that brings us kind of to the end of this message, is found in the fifth vision, which is the vision of the collapsing sanctuary. It says this: I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he said, Strike the capitals until the thresholds shake, and shatter them on the heads of all the people, and those who are left of them I will kill with the sword. Not one of them will flee, and not one of them will be able to escape from the judgment that's coming.

I think there are several reasons why the vision of a collapsing sanctuary is a very effective way to sort of provide the summary for Amos' message of judgment. Number one, remember that Amos preached in Israel; chapter 1, verse 1 tells us, two years before the earthquake. And so, what we imagine here with the capitals shaking, falling down on the heads of the people, and God bringing death and destruction on the land, this is picturing the judgment again as an earthquake.

The earthquake symbolized the further destruction that the Lord would bring when he killed the people with the sword brought by the Assyrians. The second thing that is effective about this is that throughout the book of Amos, the prophet condemned them for going to their sanctuaries at places like Gilgal, Beersheba, and Bethel and thinking that their rituals could save them.

The sanctuary is kind of a hideout, it's the refuge, it's the bomb shelter. We can go there and know that we'll be safe. However, the sanctuary itself is pictured as what's collapsing in the early part of chapter 9. Those sanctuaries will not protect them.

And I think the other idea that's being conveyed here is that this is a judgment that is going to be so severe and so extensive that there will be no way ultimately to avoid it. And so that's what's conveyed in verses 2 and 3. They can dig down into Sheol, into the depths of the earth, but my hand will take them. They can climb up into the heavens, but I'll bring them down from there.

What we have there is what we call a merism. The greatest height, the greatest depth, they can go to Sheol, they won't escape God's judgment. They can ascend up into heaven, they will not be able to evade or to avoid God.

If they hide themselves on the top of Mount Carmel, I will search them out and take them. However, if they also try to hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, another merism, God ultimately is going to destroy them. They will not be able to avoid this judgment.

All right, at the end of Amos' message of judgment, we finally have something leading into the message of hope. But I just want to read the last two verses of the judgment section in chapter 9, verses 9 and 10. For behold, I will command and I will shake the house of Israel among the nations, as one shakes with a sieve, but no pebble shall fall to the earth.

All of the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, disaster will not overtake us. So, we almost get the idea, it's a complete, it's a total destruction. There are no survivors, there's no hope.

These people are all of the sinners in the land, but in the midst of that, at the end of this message, we have an offer of hope. Finally, after this relentless message of judgment, judgment, and judgment for nine chapters, there is a message of hope that is found for us in Amos chapter 9, verses 11 to 15. And I'm going to just read this passage because it's important to balance this against all the terrible things that we've been reading that God has prepared to do.

On that day, I will raise up the booth of David that has fallen, and I will repair its breaches. I will raise up its ruins, and I will rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all of the nations who are called by my name declares the Lord who does this. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him who sows the seed.

The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all of the hills will flow to it. I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine.

They shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them, says the Lord your God. So, after the judgment has taken place, there will be a restoration.

God will bring his people back to the land. God will restore the dynasty of David. Notice that this is looking beyond the judgment of Israel, and ultimately focusing on even the fall of Judah.

Amos prophetically sees that. And when Israel is back in the land, instead of being devastated by their enemies, instead of the locusts consuming their crops, instead of God sending drought and blight and mildew, and all the things that he's warned them about throughout the rest of the book, there is the promise that there is going to be incredible agricultural prosperity. Now, as we look at this promise, I want to remind you that what critical scholars have often said about these passages is that these are often the later editions of redactors and editors who were in some way trying to offer the people hope and soften the bluntness of the prophetic message.

One of the problems and one of the issues that I have with that, though, is that we see that the role of the prophets, every prophetic book that we have in the Old Testament, contains both judgment and salvation. And so I think the assumption that the prophets only preached judgment and that a message of hope like this would have been out of place. I think that's an assumption that needs some challenging thinking. We have also come to realize that earlier critical scholarship would make a strong distinction between the original words of the prophet and these later editions or editorial emendations that were made to the text.

However, there has also been an emphasis, even a recognition among a number of critical scholars, that we have to deal with the canonical text as it is. The distinction between the original prophet and a later editor may not be that significant after all because the canonical text, the authoritative message, includes both of them. I believe that in the process of inscripturation, God spoke through the original word of the prophet, God spoke through the prophet as the message was written down, and God may have also spoken through the words of the editors who shaped and formed these books into the final canonical form that we have today.

And so, whether we should distinguish between the original words of the prophet or the later word of an editor ultimately isn't a significant issue because God inspires this entire process. There is nothing inconsistent with the idea that the prophet himself preached these kinds of messages. Some would argue, well, this passage is talking about the fall of the house of David and the ultimate exile of Judah.

If we believe that God was communicating prophetically to Amos, there's not a problem with Amos in the 8th century seeing that happening. Judah was beginning to feel the effects of the Assyrian crisis as well. That's not a surprising thing.

The idea that an editor might have clarified some of Amos' later messages and helped us to see that it applied to both Israel and Judah that's a possibility as well. One of the other things that we have to keep in mind is that remember the covenant nature of God as it's summarized in Exodus 34, verses 6 and 7, is that God is a God of compassion, a God of hesed, a God who is slow to anger and who forgives his sins and who shows that mercy to a thousand generations. He is also a God, Exodus 34, 7,

who does not excuse the guilty and he holds them accountable and he even visits the sins of fathers on their children in certain circumstances.

Those are two dual aspects of God's character. The fact that the prophets are God's spokesmen, it shouldn't surprise us that they emphasize both of those things. There's nothing inconsistent with a prophet like Amos preaching this relentless message of judgment but also offering to people words of hope.

It doesn't mean that Amos closed every message he preached with the promise of hope. You're going to be ripped out of the lion's mouth and there's nothing going to be left there but a bit of a tail, an ear, and a leg. But don't worry, God will ultimately restore you.

But at some point, in the prophet's ministry, it was important for him to remind the people of God's commitment to his covenant promises. And there's nothing inconsistent, or there's no reason why we should immediately assume that God could not have revealed that to Amos. God had revealed to Moses, as Israel's original prophet, in some ways the history of Israel before it ever really happened.

And I want to remind you of what that history entailed and what that history involved in Deuteronomy chapter 30. He says, Deuteronomy 30, Moses recognizes they're not going to obey, they're not going to follow the Lord, they're going to be driven out of the land. But when that happens, and the people return to the Lord your God, and you and your children and you obey his voice and all that I command you with all your heart, God will restore your fortunes and have compassion upon you.

And Moses goes on to say when they come back to the land that they've been driven out of. Moses knows as a prophet the history of Israel before it ever happened. And so, it's not inconsistent for us to think that as God revealed the future to Amos and what God was preparing to do for the people of Judah and what God was going to do to the people of Judah and to Israel, it was not inconsistent for Amos to understand, it's not inconceivable for the idea that Amos could preach both a message of relentless judgment but also give us a promise of abiding hope.

Now I want us to understand this message in light of the theology of the Old Testament. In chapter 32 verse 11, In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen. God is going to restore the house of David.

God is ultimately going to keep his covenant promises to the Davidic kingdom because the Lord is going to restore David's house. And even though David's kingdom would ultimately become like a dilapidated shelter, they've already experienced that in some sense. The ten tribes have pulled away.

Even though the house of David is ultimately going to be dishonored and become a fallen booth, God will restore it. God also promises in verse 12 that God will restore the house of David so that once again the Davidic king will become a mighty military leader. And so ultimately, we're looking forward to the rule and the reign of Messiah here.

And what will happen as this dominion is restored, verse 12 says, that they may possess the remnant of Edom. God is promising the future Davidic king a dynasty and then a dominion over his enemies. And this falls in line with the messianic promises that we see throughout the Old Testament.

In Genesis chapter 49, when Jacob blesses his sons and promises dominion to Judah, Judah, your brothers, shall praise you. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's sons shall bow down before you.

In verse 10, the scepter will not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until the tribute comes, and to him shall be the obedience of all peoples. At the very beginning, God is promising a dominion and a dynasty to Judah and his tribe that will include dominion over the nations. The first fulfillment of that is in David.

The ultimate fulfillment of that is in Jesus Christ. Numbers chapter 24 is another important messianic passage in the development of the doctrine and the understanding of Messiah in the Old Testament. Balaam, this man that has been hired to put a curse on the people of Israel, instead, every time he opens his mouth, there's a blessing that comes out.

And here's the blessing that's given to Israel in Numbers 24:17. A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel. We're talking about a king who's going to rise.

And he will crush the forehead of Moab. He will break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be dispossessed.

Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly, and one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of the city. Balaam says, hey, I can't put a curse on these people.

Every time I open my mouth, God wants to bless them. God is ultimately going to raise up a king in Israel who will rule and reign over his enemies. One of the people mentioned there is Edom and Seir; they're the descendants of Esau.

And so, David, when he comes to power in 2 Samuel chapter 8, verses 11 and 12, one of the people that he subjugates, the Edomites. David is the ultimate fulfillment of

Genesis 49 and Numbers 24. Messiah, the future Davidic king, is the final fulfillment of what is being promised here.

In the Davidic dynasty, God had promised to establish that house, but he had also said, if your sons disobey, I will punish them. Because of that, David's house had become like a ruined, fallen booth. It had definitely lost its glory and its might, but this passage promises that, ultimately, God is going to restore that.

The second thing that's part of this promise is not just a promise to the house of David, but ultimately there's a promise to all of the people in verses 13 to 15. And the passage says that in the future time when I restore my people, the plowman will overtake the reaper, the treader of grapes, him who sows the seed. God promises to restore to Israel the incredible agricultural bounty that they were designed to enjoy when God led them into the promised land to begin with.

This was a land flowing with milk and honey. God wanted to bless them in incredible ways. This is a promise that one day they would experience that.

Poetically, these lines are laid out as a chiasmic structure here to show us that they will not be finished reaping one harvest before it is time to begin planting another one. Look at the lines here. The plowman, that's a planting activity, shall overtake the reaper, that's a harvesting activity.

But in the second line, the treader of grapes, that's a harvesting activity, will overtake him who sows the seed. And so, they're going to have so much bounty in their harvest. They're not going to be finished with one harvest before it's time to begin another agricultural season.

An even better picture here. The mountains are going to drip sweet wine and the hills shall flow with it. So, there's going to be rivers of wine flowing through the hills.

This is even better than milk and honey flowing through the land. Incredible bounty and enjoyment and blessing from God. God is going to keep His covenant promises.

The cities and the places that had been destroyed, the Lord says, I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel. They shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine.

They shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them, says the Lord your God. So, the conditions of exile are going to be reversed.

The Lord is going to restore the fortunes of the people of Israel. And so, this promise here is consistent with the eschatological vision that we have throughout the Old

Testament prophets that judgment is not the final word and that ultimately, what this restoration that God has promised in the future and he talks about the latter days, that this restoration that is going to occur in the future is going to bring about the fulfillment of all of the covenant promises that God has made to Israel. What I would like to do in some later sessions as we talk about the prophecies in the Minor Prophets that deal with the eschatological future is to take these Old Testament passages and what they meant in their Old Testament context and help us to understand a little bit more fully what do we mean when we look at these in light of the New Testament.

When the prophet talks about the latter days, what does that mean in light of the New Testament? And what we're going to see in the New Testament is that the latter days do not simply refer to the time just prior to the second coming. They do not just refer to the time of the day of the Lord and the Great Tribulation. But the latter days talk about something that began with the first coming of Jesus.

And people often ask the question, what do we mean by the latter days? Are we living in the last days? They really want to know if Jesus is coming back soon. But the New Testament perspective is the latter days that were promised in the Old Testament prophets have already begun. And there is a now and a not yet aspect to the blessings that the prophet is going to talk about. In some sense, the latter days, the days that are coming that the prophets are talking about, those latter days began when Israel was brought back into the land.

And in a temporary way, they began to experience the blessings that God had promised for them. However, they had not fully returned to the Lord and so those blessings were not fully experienced. In a greater way and in a more dramatic way, the latter-day blessings arrive with the first coming of Jesus.

As we look at how Amos chapter 9 is quoted in the book of Acts, James uses this passage to talk about the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God. What Amos promised back then about the Davidic king reigning and possessing these nations and the nations being called by his name, James says that's being fulfilled as Paul and Silas, these Christian missionaries, explain the gospel and preach it to Gentiles and Gentiles come into the kingdom. That's the fulfillment of what Amos is talking about.

But the completion of this pattern happens at the second coming of Jesus when there is a full realization of the covenant promises that God has made. The new covenant people of God are fully formed. Israel is restored to its place of blessing and God ultimately will rule and reign over his creation and the Davidic king will have his dominion restored so that he rules over all things.

Amos preaches a message of relentless judgment, but at the end of this, there is a promise of hope. As Christians, we read this, and we realize that ultimately, these

promises that God is making to Israel, to the people of God, and ultimately to the nations themselves that they would be included in this kingdom, ultimately, we see that these promises are fulfilled for us in the person of Jesus Christ.

This is Dr. Gary Yates in his lecture series on the Minor Prophets. This is session 10, Visions of Judgment and Promise of Restoration, Amos 7-9.