

Dr. Robert Chisholm, Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear?

Session 8: Amos 9:7-10, Shaken in a Sieve, Amos 9:11-15: A Happy Ending

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm and his teaching on the Book of Amos. Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear? This is session 8, Amos 9:7-10, Shaken in a Sieve. Amos 9:11-15, A Happy Ending—Blood and Iron Come Up Lavender and Roses.

Blood and iron come up lavender and roses. Well, here in our final lecture on Amos, we're going to pick up in chapter 9, verse 7, where we left off, and this section I would call shaken in a sieve. And so you'll see why I say that as we read through it.

And so the Lord says to the Israelites, and I think there's a little bit of a backdrop here. Israel, they're the covenant people of the Lord. They were delivered from Egypt.

The Lord came to them at Sinai and gave them the law and the covenant, and so they're aware of the fact that they are the Lord's special people. But sometimes that can be a problem, because you can take things for granted, and they were rebelling against the Lord and sinning, and I think maybe assuming that they were insulated from judgment just because they were the Lord's people. Jeremiah faces this later in his career.

People just thought, well, the Lord lives in Jerusalem. He would never destroy the city, and Jeremiah said, Yes, he can and he will. And I think that mentality may be present here.

Even though they're pagan, they may be thinking we're special. Well, the Lord's going to pull that rug out from under them here. Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites, declares the Lord.

Cush is in Ethiopia. That's the way it's sometimes translated. So we're talking about people living in Africa.

For ancient Israel, this is on the perimeter of their known world. And so you're the same to me as those distant Cushites who look different. I mean, they were aware that they had some contact with these people, declares the Lord.

Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt? Yeah. You know, you're my covenant people. I brought you up from Egypt, but I've been moving people around for a long time.

The Philistines from Caphtor. That's where they came from. And the Arameans from Kir.

Remember the Aramean oracle, the oracle against the Arameans back in chapter one. And one of the judgments was, I will take you back to Kir, to send you off to Kir in exile. And we're not sure where Kir is, but it's where the Arameans migrated from.

And so the Lord is basically saying, I move people around. I control all nations. I'm not some local deity.

I control all nations, and I am providentially or sometimes directly moving people around from place to place. And so in one sense, you're just one of the nations of the earth over which I exercise my control. You're not necessarily special, especially when you act like the pagan nations and you don't conform to my covenant demands.

So yeah, I brought Israel out of Egypt. I brought the Philistines out of Caphtor and brought them here. I brought the Arameans out of Kir.

And in some ways, you're no different than the Kushites. And I have sovereign control over you. And so with that foundation laid, you can't bank on the fact that you're my special covenant people to expect to be insulated from judgment when you do wrong.

Surely the eyes of the sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth, yet I will not totally destroy the descendants of Jacob. So I will destroy it from the face of the earth.

That sounds pretty severe, but then he qualifies that, but I will not totally destroy it. And in Hebrew, he uses an emphatic construction, Hashmid, Hashmid, destroying, I will not destroy. And he negates it.

So it's not going to, that's emphatic. I'm not going to destroy it totally. The descendants of Jacob declares the Lord.

So what the Lord is declaring here is that there will be a remnant. And this is an important theme in the Old Testament. In fact, there was a scholar many years ago, Gerhard Hasel, who wrote a book on the remnant theme in the Old Testament.

And so, yes, God will always preserve a remnant. And this pattern goes all the way back to the flood, where the Lord said he was going to come and destroy the earth. But then in Genesis six, there was this man, Noah, who was following the Lord.

Just an unbelievable minority. But the Lord takes notice of Noah, and he spares Noah's life. And kind of in a communal, corporate, what kind of way Noah's family is spared along with him.

So there's always a remnant of faith. The Lord just doesn't sweep the godly away. The book of Habakkuk is about this.

Habakkuk, we mentioned this in an earlier lecture, so I won't belabor it, but Habakkuk is about this kind of thing, where judgment is coming, and Habakkuk is very concerned. But the Lord assures him that, no, I always watch the righteous, and I will preserve a righteous remnant to further my purposes. And so the Lord, this judgment speech is kind of coming to a climax here.

It's a pretty severe judgment, but then the Lord throws in the remnant theme, and that's going to build a nice little bridge to the happy ending that's coming in chapter nine, verse 11. For I will give the command, and I will shake the people of Israel among the nations. So it's going to be an exile.

As grain is shaken in a sieve, not a pebble will reach the ground. So we're not sure exactly what this sieve was like. Is it going to collect the grain and the chaff go down, or is it going to be vice versa? But either way, there's going to be a sieve used, and the sieve is going to separate the grain from the chaff, however we envision it.

And it's the righteous who are going to be preserved, because notice in verse 10, all the sinners, all the sinners among my people, will die by the sword. All those who say, disaster will not overtake or meet us, say, and that's the mentality that caused the Lord to say back in verse 7, that you Israelites are the same to me as the Cushites. I can move them around, I can judge them, and I will do the same to you.

You're not going to be insulated from judgment. And see, that quotation of their words at the end of verse 10 shows they were thinking this way. So the Lord is going to bring judgment on them.

Their covenantal people status isn't going to insulate them from that, but the Lord is going to preserve a remnant. So if it's all the sinners among my people who will die, then that suggests that the non-sinners among his people are going to be preserved. The sieve is going to make the distinction between the two.

And so this is a very important theme throughout the Old Testament and the Bible. God preserves a remnant. And you see it in various genres.

Psalms 37, the Lord is going to bring judgment upon the land, and when the smoke clears and the judgment is over, the righteous will inhabit the land. So we see this

here, there, and everywhere. And it's very encouraging to know, as we live in a very uncertain world, a world where I have to believe that God is bringing judgment.

We can't know for sure, we don't have a prophet, but I'm pretty certain that God is still intervening in his world, and he's still bringing judgment. But we don't need to fear that. We are safe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He shields us, he shields us from, we might suffer. Habakkuk was expecting to suffer, but ultimately nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. So this is a positive turn that occurs there, and those scholars who want to argue that verses 11 through 15 don't come from Amos, because Amos couldn't, wouldn't think of judgment and salvation together. They're kind of missing what's happening in 9 and 10.

There's a signal, there's a positive signal that is given here. But before we dive into that happy ending, let's summarize the principle of this section, chapter 8 verse 4 through chapter 9 verse 10. God's judgment is what we learn in here, tragically bitter.

It's going to be like losing an only child for some. Appropriate, it's going to be appropriate, the punishment will fit the crime, it's going to be inescapable, and it's going to be discriminating, and that's the positive feature of it. It's going to be discriminating.

So let's move to the last section of the book, which I entitled A Happy Ending, and I actually have a subtitle, Blood and Iron Come Up, Lavender and Roses. I get that from a famous Old Testament scholar, Julius Welhausen, 19th-century scholar, who argued that the ending of Amos could not come from Amos, because it's been blood and iron, judgment, blood and iron, the whole book, and now lavender and roses, a happy ending. Actually, that's pretty easy to refute.

I disagree strongly with Welhausen and others who deny that Amos could have written this, and the reason I disagree with them is, yes, it's a radical departure from where we've been. We've got judgment and now salvation, but I see it elsewhere in the prophets. Amos is different from the standpoint that it's all judgment up to this point, and then five verses at the end, with maybe a little hint in verses 9 and 10 of something better to come.

It makes that move, but other prophets do this. There are these paneled structures that I've talked about: judgment, salvation. Isaiah, for example, Isaiah 1 through 12, the first section of Isaiah, has heavy judgment, a little bit of salvation put in there in chapter 2, chapter 4, but by the end of that section, it's all salvation.

We move from judgment to salvation. You see the same pattern in 13 through 27, in 28 through 35, which are the major sections, and then when you come to chapters 40 through 66, yes, he's talking about the judgment that has occurred. He's addressing the exiles of the future.

He's kind of projecting himself ahead in time and talking to them as if he is there, but he talks about the judgment as something that has happened, but it's a very positive section of the book. The Lord's ultimate purposes for his people will be realized. You go through Hosea, it goes back and forth, judgment, salvation, judgment, salvation.

Pick any prophet, Micah, and you'll see the same pattern. Again, Amos is unique because it's not as complex where you're making the judgment, it's not like a pendulum oscillating back and forth, judgment, salvation, judgment, salvation. It's just all judgment and then salvation, and that troubles some people.

It really doesn't trouble me. Another principle that I find in the prophets and in the Bible is that judgment, ironically, is often the avenue to salvation. Things have got to get worse before they get better.

God's judgment has a purifying feature to it, and so the Lord brings judgment so that he can create a righteous remnant, and he can use that righteous remnant to further his purposes. So judgment is purifying, and therefore it goes hand-in-hand with salvation. They're not contrary ideas.

They go together. Judgment contributes to salvation. I mean, the ultimate example is Jesus.

He has to endure the judgment of God, the punishment of God for our sins. But what does it bring? Ironically, it brings salvation. And so the themes are related in the Old Testament, and furthermore, Amos is simply building on Moses.

He's building on Moses, and actually Solomon in 1 Kings 8, but let's go to Deuteronomy chapter 30, verses 1 through 10. I haven't been turning to other passages and reading them as much, but I want to read this one because I think it's really important. Beyond what we're doing with Amos, it's just very important to understand the prophets as a whole.

And when you encounter the judgment salvation, and it might seem a little contradictory, like he's bouncing back and forth, it's all rooted in what Moses said. Now, realize that a lot of critics of the Bible don't believe Moses wrote Deuteronomy 30. They would put this after a lot of the prophets, but as the text stands, this is what Moses says.

He has been urging the people to obey God. He's warned them about judgment to come in chapter 28, and here's what Moses says. This is foundational to understanding Amos.

It's foundational to understanding the prophets. When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you, and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, it sounds like Moses, having lived with these people, knows that the curses are going to come upon him. The Lord will bless them, but they will eventually come to the point where the Lord will have to send them into exile.

When that day comes, and you're in exile, and you take to heart what the Lord has said, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God, notice that repentance is foundational. You're taking ownership, human responsibility. The Bible holds divine sovereignty and human responsibility in perfect balance, and the Lord is not saying here, I change your heart.

Not yet. They've come to the place where they're sorry for their sin, and they return to the Lord their God, and they begin to obey him with all their heart and with all their soul according to everything I command you today. So there's a spiritual transformation that's going on here, and I do believe that that can't happen apart from the work of God's Spirit.

I know that from the scriptures, but God's not forcing it on them. His Spirit is working in their hearts, and they're responding positively. So human responsibility is very strong and very foundational here.

Then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes or reverse your circumstances. Fortunes can be a little misleading. What are you talking about, money? No, it's he who will reverse your circumstances and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

Even if you've been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. Now that's an allusion to the Abrahamic promise, which is foundational here.

He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors. And here's where the Lord does a miraculous work spiritually, because we could never sustain our obedience. So notice what he's going to do.

The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul and live. Jeremiah talks about this, and the Old Testament calls this the new covenant, where God

comes and transforms his people as they repent. So, human responsibility is the catalyst for this work of God, and then we have divine sovereignty creating the people.

And Jeremiah says you won't need to go around exhorting each other to obey the Lord, because everyone will be obeying the Lord at that point. The Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. You will again obey the Lord and follow all his commands I'm giving you today.

Then the Lord your God will make you the most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb and the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. All those curses are going to be reversed. The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors, if you obey the Lord your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this book of the law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Kind of ends up where he started. So it starts with the people recognizing that they have suffered punishment from God. There's going to be a righteous remnant, and I think God is at work stirring them up to do that, but not forcing them to do it.

They're responsible, and they come back to God, and God takes it from there. He brings them back to the promised land, the land he promised to the patriarchs, and he transforms them. And so that's simply what Amos is describing here.

He is picturing the day when Moses' promise is going to be realized. So let's get into it in detail. On that day, so on this day, when I have preserved the remnant using the sieve, I've destroyed the sinners, I've purified through my judgment, and now I've got the non-sinners, the ones who are following me, left.

On that day, here's what's going to happen. I will restore David's fallen shelter. I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins, and will rebuild it as it used to be.

Some will say, see, this can't be Amos. This is talking about a time when the Davidic kingdom was no more. It could be if you just looked at it in isolation, but doesn't need to be.

The Davidic throne had fallen on hard times. After the Davidic and Solomonic eras, Judah was never as powerful as it once had been, and so it could sort of look like a shelter with broken walls and ruins, and the Lord is basically saying, I'm going to revive the Davidic empire to its former glory. It doesn't have to be something that he says after the Davidic kingdom has ended.

He could be saying it later in the pre-exilic period, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that bear my name, declares the Lord who will

do these things. So the Davidic covenant is going to be fulfilled. God made promises to David along these lines, and those promises are going to be fulfilled, and there are other passages that talk about a time when Israel will defeat their enemies in the future.

I'm not so sure that we've got to take it. This would resonate with them, because there are all these hostile nations around them, but if you put this together with other passages throughout the Bible, I'm not so sure there's going to be a war. David's going to conquer the Edomites, and the Ammonites, and all that.

I'm not even sure those people are going to be there. So I think there's going to be an essential fulfillment of this, which is the Davidic. Israel under David is once again going to be the strong, powerful nation that God intended it to be.

More powerful than the nations around it. But it uses war imagery. We'll just have to wait and see how it all plays out.

There may be opposition that will need to be put down. Isaiah describes this in chapter 11 as well, as the Davidic Empire is going to be restored. Well, David formed the Davidic Empire by defeating hostile nations, and so naturally, when they're describing the future as the fulfillment of God's promise to David, kind of the renewal of David, the Davidic Empire is going to come back.

They're going to talk about it in terms of defeating enemies. We'll just have to wait and see. And yes, I do believe that the new David, the ideal David, the descendant of David, Jesus, is going to rule on earth.

And I think I can defend that from Romans 9 through 11. That's where I am. I realize that there are others who want to say this is talking about the church.

I don't think that's the case. There's going to be a kingdom that's established. Isaiah talks about it in chapter 11.

And David is the new David is going to rule over it. And if he has to put down enemies at some point initially, so be it. Maybe that's what we see in Revelation.

I'm not sure, but God is going to be faithful to his promise to David. That seems to be the case here. He's going to restore the Davidic dynasty.

This is going to happen through Jesus, and Jesus is going to rule over the nations. And notice the nations that bear my name. Isn't that interesting? When you bear the name, it's in Hebrew; it's all the nations over whom my name is called.

When a name is called over something in the Old Testament, it means you own it. That's an idiom for your ownership. And so the Lord is saying all the nations over whom my name is called right now.

This agrees with what we saw at the beginning of the book, where the Lord comes and basically says, These nations are responsible to me. I think via the Noahic covenant, they're responsible for me. I own them.

They're mine. And I'm going to hold them accountable for their rebellious deeds, their violation of the Noahic mandate, where you show respect for your fellow human beings because they have the image of God. And so this agrees with what the book implied at the beginning.

He's not a localized deity. All the nations bear his name, and he is someday going to extend his kingdom directly over all of them through this revival of the Davidic throne. So, for those of us who are pre-millennial, we see this as referring to Jesus' kingdom, where he rules over the earth in the future and fulfills the Davidic ideal.

But the prophet's not finished here. He's kind of announced that the Lord is going to intervene and bring about a revival of the Davidic kingdom. Now he's describing what that period would look like.

Klaus Westermann, who has studied these prophetic speech forms very carefully, would call this a salvation portrayal. It's not a salvation announcement. A salvation announcement says the Lord will deliver you, and here's how he's going to do that.

This is assuming it's already happened, and the people are back in the land and experiencing the blessings that Moses said they would experience. And so it's portraying, it's a picture of what the world is going to be like or Israel is going to be like at this time. So let's read it.

The days are coming, declares the Lord, when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine, and it is wine, new wine, sorry it's not grape juice, it's a new wine, will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills, and I will bring my people Israel back from exile. So it's kind of flipped chronologically there.

They've got to come back before this can be the case, but this is all going to happen because I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine.

They will make gardens and eat their food. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted. Where we're talking about agriculture and planting and harvesting, and notice the Lord steps back and says, I'm going to plant Israel.

I'm going to do some planting of my own. They're going to be doing planting and harvesting as they experience the fertility that I provide and the blessing that I give to them, but I'm going to plant them in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them, says the Lord your God. I want to go back to the reaping and all of that.

We need to kind of review the agricultural cycle as we understand it, and I have said elsewhere that Israel is enjoying the Lord's blessings here, and having returned and rebuilt their once desolated cities, the people would plant their crops and enjoy an abundant harvest with a burst of hyperbole. Well, we'll have to wait and see, but it sounds like hyperbole to me. With a burst of hyperbole, exaggeration for the sake of emphasis, the Lord pictured a time when the crops would be so abundant that the reapers who work in April and May, the barley harvest, wheat harvest, yeah, the reapers who worked in April and May would still be harvesting when the plowmen who normally work in October-November, according to Gezer calendar, they're getting ready to do their work, and the harvest isn't even in.

The prior harvest isn't even in, and the harvesters can't get it all in before the plowing starts again. That's the picture. The grape harvest, normally occurring in August-September, would still be underway when planting season, November-December, arrived.

So, get the picture? You have the normal agricultural cycle. Planting, rain, harvesting, it's all going to be messed up by God's blessing. It's just going to be so many crops and so much, so many grapes that they're just not going to be able to make it work.

That's what's being pictured here, and then the wine is going to be so plentiful it would overflow the vats and cascade down the hillsides. Remember, they bring the grapes in, and then they put them in the vat, and they start stomping on them or using whatever method, and the minute that grape skin gets broken, it begins to ferment, and so it's natural, it will ferment. I don't think it will exceed 14% alcohol.

That's what I read, a Harvard dissertation on viticulture in ancient Israel. I think those were the numbers that Kerry Walsh gave, but at any rate, the vats are going to be so loaded with grapes as they press the grapes, it's just going to be flowing down the hills, just overflowing the vats. That's the picture that is given here, and it's a picture of abundant blessing, and I think, you know, we could say, well, unless there's going to be some radical changes in how agriculture works, it looks like it's an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis, and the Bible and the prophets will often use hyperbole exaggeration, and it doesn't mean it's wrong or anything like that.

It's just emphasizing how abundant the harvest is going to be, and when he talks about, I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I

have given them, you go back into Genesis, and this verb, *natan*, to give, in Hebrew, is used of the land, and it shows up in the Abrahamic promise. So the Lord tells Abraham, This is the land that belongs to you, and it's as if God gives the title deed to the land to Abraham. He's still kind of wandering around, living from place to place.

It's not his land yet, in fact, but it's his land legally from the Lord's perspective, because remember, he tells Abraham, he tells him it's not going to happen right away, because the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full extent, and so the Lord is just. He's patient. He's not ready to do to the Amorites what he will later do to them through Joshua.

He's going to give them a chance, and they, of course, fail, and so the time comes for the Lord to hand the land over to his people to uproot the Canaanites. In fact, the Lord says in Leviticus, the land is going to vomit them out, and then what follows is a list of atrocious, abominable sins of a sexual nature that are going to cause the Lord to vomit, and he warns Israel, if you follow in their footsteps, it'll vomit you out, so it's the Lord's land, and the Lord, the land can't tolerate it. No, the land wasn't made to support people like this, and so the Lord is going to remove those people.

The land, as it were, will vomit them out, and it's so the conquest is judgment on the sinful Canaanites, but it's also the Lord fulfilling his promise. He's giving the land to Israel at this point. He repeated this promise to Isaac, Genesis 26, and then he repeated it to Jacob when Jacob finally decided to embrace the promise.

We talked about that in an earlier lecture as well, and so it became the land of Jacob, now named Israel, and it belongs to the people, and so what we have here is the Lord promising to restore his people, and he is doing so in conjunction with his promise to David. I promised David that he would rule from this land, and I promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants that they would occupy this land, and so the Lord is in the business of fulfilling his irrevocable covenants, and along the way, he's also fulfilling Moses' vision of how it would all happen. They're going to go into exile.

They're going to experience the curses, but the Lord is going to bring them back, and I find allegorizing it and making it the church or something like that is kind of a weak way of seeing the Lord fulfill his promises, so I won't pursue that. This is not a theology lecture. So we've finished the book.

We have a little bit of time left, and I think it's important when we go through a book like this with so many details and a lot of repetition along the way. I mean, some of my Jewish friends, when we're looking at the prophets, they say, it sounds like he's saying the same thing. He's constantly repeating himself.

I say, no, let's do a close reading. Look at it carefully. It's not just repetition.

There's nuancing, and there's variation within the theme, so I think it's good to go back and review, and what I'd like to do is review the principles that we've stated, because I've thrown a lot of those at you, and so let's go back to the beginning and just kind of walk our way through the book again, and you'll recall that in the first chapter and then into chapter two, the Lord is going to bring judgment. He's targeting the northern kingdom, Israel. The day of the Lord is coming, and it's going to be a day of judgment, and so in the first seven oracles, we see that God holds nations accountable when they violate his universal standards of morality and ethics.

Another thing I like to do when I'm kind of summarizing the message of the prophets, I think it's always a good question to ask yourself when you're reading any portion of the Bible, what do we learn about God in this book or this passage? What do we learn about God? I think it's important to do theology. Theology needs to grow out of this. This is biblical theology.

What are the themes here? What do we learn about God? And then also we can nuance that. How does God relate to the nations, and how does God relate to his covenant people, Israel? And so if you're going to do a theology of Amos, and I have actually done a theology of the minor prophets that was in a book published way back in 1992 by Moody Press. It was DTS professors who did a biblical theology of the Old Testament and a biblical theology of the New Testament, and I did the minor prophets for a book.

So I've had some experience thinking through the theology of Amos, and so God holds nations accountable when they violate his universal standards of morality and ethics. There's a lot there. God is the God of the entire world and all nations.

That would have been a radical kind of statement in the ancient Near Eastern context of Amos, because every nation has their own patron deity. But no, God holds all of these nations accountable. We talked about this, and I know I'm repeating myself to some degree, but when we review, that's what we have to do, and repetition is the mother of learning, you will recall.

So God holds nations accountable. He's sovereign over all the nations, and Amos is going to make it clearer later, because he created the whole world. So God's sovereignty is definitely an important theme here.

We learn that God is sovereign, and God is just, and God is good. He has a standard, and he stated that standard to Moses, I want you to respect my image in your fellow human beings, and when that gets violated, he's going to hold people accountable. So he is sovereign, and he has a moral standard, which suggests that he's holy and just.

So we learn a lot about God just from that opening section. Then we moved into the latter part of chapter 2, where the Lord zeroes in on Israel, and we saw that God places a higher moral standard upon his people, to whom he has clearly revealed his will. So God is sovereign over all the nations, but he has not revealed himself to all nations in the same way.

He has revealed himself through nature. You know, the Psalms say this, you can look at the sky, and you know there's, and Paul says this in Romans, that no one is off the hook, because God has revealed his power in nature, and so all nations should know something about the one true God. And just observing the beauty of nature, now there's conflict within nature, and that's a problem that you've got to deal with, but it's such, what's out there is so beautiful, the blue sky, the green grass, we just take it for granted.

There's a design there and a beauty that suggests something about the nature of the Creator, who would create something like this for us to enjoy. But he places a higher moral standard upon his people, because we make a distinction in theology between general revelation, like through nature, and special revelation where God comes and he speaks directly to people through his chosen prophets or whatever, and that's what he did for Israel. He revealed himself to the patriarchs and then to Moses, and so they should know better.

They know what his moral standards are, clearly outlined in the law in detail. And so God places a higher moral standard upon his people to whom he has clearly revealed his will, and we talked about the fact that that's a challenge to us. We can't just point our fingers at the awful pagans and the awful things they do.

They may not have as much light as we do. We may not be doing what they're doing, but in the eyes of God, if we're rebelling against him, it may be worse than what they're doing. Chapter 3, verse 1 and 2 is related to this, To whom much is given, much is required.

The Lord expects more from his covenant people, and we are his new covenant people. The Lord expects more from us. As we move through chapter 3, even when God is displeased with his people and ready to discipline them, he offers an opportunity to repent.

Remember, that's the cause-and-effect thing, and he's trying to get them to see that God has already been moving among you. You should see the handwriting on the wall. God is giving you an opportunity to repent.

He's warning you. He sends a prophet. At least that was the case in Israel.

If we want to somehow try to apply that to us, he's given us his word, and when we put all the books of the Bible together, we can understand his standards and what he expects from us. And then, continuing on in chapter 3 and moving into chapter 4, when God's covenant community fails to live out his principles, grows complacent in its religious traditions, and greedily pursues the toys of this world—remember the cows of Bashan who are demanding that their husbands make life even easier for them than it already is—it invites divine discipline. So, God is going to confront his covenant people when they fail to live out his principles.

It's not going to be a dysfunctional relationship. He's going to confront his people, and he will confront you as one of his people. He will confront his church when they're not carrying out his desires and his will.

We see that in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. He'll confront us as individuals. He'll get our attention when we are not following his way, and we can be thankful for that. It's divine discipline.

Hebrews, you know, any good father is going to discipline his children. And so, we need to be open to the discipline. Sometimes it's hard to know whether this is God's discipline or something else. Yeah, we've got to work through that through prayer and just observation.

But nevertheless, God will—he takes the relationship very seriously. And then, as we continue in chapter 4, our patient God sometimes uses drastic measures in an effort to bring his people to repentance. So, that discipline, he might increase the intensity of that as he tries to get our attention.

He did that with Israel, and they just were not paying attention. And so, he finally said, Well, I'm going to have to really deal with you more harshly. We moved into chapter 5. God places a higher priority on relationships than ritual, and we're talking about our relationship with God vertically and our relationship with others horizontally.

He wants us to value those relationships, and he's not pleased by those who engage in religious activity while at the same time violating his ethical standards. All of your religious activity directed toward God will not impress him or please him if you are an idolater. And you say, I don't worship idols.

No, Paul says idols can be something like greed. Anything that you put in place of God that's more important to you than God, that you have a greater passion for than God, that's an idol. And the Lord doesn't want to receive your worship if you're worshiping false gods as well.

That's what they were doing. And he doesn't want your religious ritual, your religious activity, if you're neglecting your brothers and sisters, and you're not loving others as you should. So, chapter 5 is really, really good on this theme, and we see it elsewhere, in Isaiah 1 and other places in the prophets.

So, now we're in the material that we covered in this particular set of lectures today, as opposed to tomorrow. You can see I have a different shirt on. It's a different day.

It's Wednesday. Yesterday was Tuesday. God hates arrogance and actively opposes the proud.

We saw that in chapter 6, and that's a theme that runs all the way through Scripture in a variety of places. God hates self-sufficiency and pride because they generate so many negative activities and actions. In chapter 7, to understand God's seemingly harsh judgment, this is where the visions occur.

We must look at reality from his perspective. We can't focus so much on the consequences of what happens to the objects of judgment. We've got to focus on why God is bringing judgment.

We need to see it from his perspective. There are always two sides to everything. We need to be focused on God's side, because often in the Bible, he does tell us why he's going to bring judgment, and I think that's the case in the book of Amos.

It's quite clear. So, try to get God's perspective from the context of any passage and from the Bible as a whole. That judgment is going to come, and it's characterized in a variety of ways in the next section as we continue in chapter 8 and on into chapter 9. God's judgment is tragically bitter, like losing an only child.

It's appropriate. It's what you deserve. It's inescapable.

Can't play hide-and-seek with God and win. There's no olly olly oxen free. He's going to catch you.

He's going to find you wherever you go, but God's judgment is discriminating, and that's encouraging. It's all the sinners that are going to come under judgment. Sometimes that's most of the people, but remember Noah and remember Habakkuk.

It's discriminating. God has got his sieve, and when he brings judgment, he's going to separate the sinners from the godly, and he will use the godly to fulfill his future purposes. And then what we just looked at a few minutes ago, that final section, the happy ending.

God's faithfulness to his promises and his commitment to his people. I'm talking about the Davidic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, guarantee that history will have a happy ending, and that his ideal for his people will be realized. And what we see in the last verses of Amos, with what God is going to do for his people in the future, that's what he wanted all along.

He wanted people to obey him and experience his blessing. And some people will say, well, God is awfully selfish, demanding love and all that. No, he's wired us, he's created us in such a way that we're not going to be satisfied if we don't have a relationship with him.

And you might say, that's kind of selfish, wants to make us like him. No, he's the creator, he's all good. And so it's a wonderful act of love and grace for him to want to make us be a certain kind of person, because we'll be happiest when that happens.

I just get tired of hearing people accusing God of being selfish. No, God wants this ideal world to materialize. And what we see in the final chapters of Amos is materializing.

Now it's materializing for his covenant people, but we know as we read throughout the Bible that the Lord has extended his covenant to Gentiles, beyond Israel. The new covenant, as we discover when we get into the New Testament, isn't just for Israel. It's not just for the Jewish people.

We all benefit from it as well. And we see that happening in the New Testament, in the book of Acts, as the gospel goes out to the Gentile world, and they are brought into the fold as worshipers. And Jesus is already hinting at this, more than hinting, in the Gospels when he reaches out to Gentiles, like the Syrophenician woman, and he says, I haven't seen this kind of faith in Israel.

And so, yeah, that picture of what we see at the end of Amos is that's our future. We're going to be living in that kind of kingdom and world where God's blessing is abundant, and we enjoy his presence, and his purpose for us is fulfilled, so that we get to live and enjoy him forever. So, a happy ending for the book of Amos.

And those are the lessons that I hope you take from the study. And so, let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for these ancient prophets whom you chose and spoke through. And we thank you for the message from Amos. We learn much about you in this book, how you rule over the world and who you are, a just, holy God, righteous, but also a gracious God, one who is willing to reclaim fallen sinners.

And we ask that we would go out and we would put these principles into practice, that we would follow the way that you have prescribed for us, which for us is Christlikeness, and that we would be doers of the word, not just hearers. So, thank you for what you have done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to be lights in a very dark world, to share the good news, the gospel, and to show people what you have planned for this world, and to invite them through Jesus and through the repentance and confession of their sins to enter into the narrow way, which leads to this kingdom. And it's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

This is Dr. Robert Chisholm and his teaching on the Book of Amos. Amos: The Lion Has Roared, Who Will Not Fear? This is session 8, Amos 9:7-10, Shaken in a Sieve. Amos 9:11-15, A Happy Ending—Blood and Iron Come Up Lavender and Roses.