

Amos and the Prophets

Week Two: The Danger of False Prophets

How Dangerous is a Prophet?

- By definition, prophets come out of nowhere: although there are orders of prophets (1 Samuel 10, 1 Kings 20) and sometimes the temple sees prophets rise (Ezekiel, Isaiah), the messages often intrude into “business as usual.”
- As the struggle between Hananiah and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 28) demonstrates, the people never have an impartial authority to whom they can appeal when prophets clash.
- Deuteronomy 13 is legislation specifically for limiting prophets (it runs parallel to Deuteronomy 17, which limits monarchs).

Amos 3:1-2: Trouble for Israel

- With familiarity comes not immunity to punishment but liability for greater punishment

Amos 3:3-8: Signs of the Times

- What sort of literary device is Amos using in every verse here?
- How does the series culminate?
- Why does God send prophets, according to this passage?

Amos 3:9-12: An Adversary for Samaria

- Why is it important to proclaim these things to the Philistines and Egyptians?
- Is verse ten an excuse for Israel?
- How cool is verse twelve?

Amos 3:13-4:5: Oracles Against the Rich

- Why would God attack the altars on which people sacrifice to him?
- What sorts of people have summer and winter houses in the ancient world?
- Does Amos 4:2 make you think of any childhood Sunday school songs?

Amos 4:6-13: Why Won't You Listen?

- Assuming that cleanness of teeth comes from lack of food rather than proper hygiene, what pattern does Amos set up in verse 6?
- What kind of drought does Amos describe in verses 7-8?
- In verse ten, to whom does Amos compare Israel? How about verse eleven?
- Is meeting one's God a good or a bad thing in verse twelve? What clue does verse thirteen give?

Implications

- God's use of prophets is perfectly in line with God's nature but often unpredictable.
- When history does not teach its lessons clearly, a prophet comes and interprets.
- Prophetic oracles can be rather grisly at times.