

HTPC Adult Sunday School
The Prophetic Call Narratives – Week 2
The Prophets to Israel – Amos and Hosea

I. Historical Setting

A. Amos 1:1

The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

B. Hosea 1:1

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

C. The Reign of Jeroboam II (c.786-746 B.C.)

1. Outward Prosperity and Economic Resurgence in Israel

2. The Spiritual Condition of the Nation

23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. 24 And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin. (2 Kings 14:23-24)

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” 28 So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. 31 He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. (1 Kings 12:25-30)

II. Theological Concerns – Idolatry and Oppression

A. The golden calf of Samaria – Hosea 8:1-7

1 Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law. 2 To me they cry, “My God, we—Israel—know you.” 3 Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him.

4 *They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction.*

5 *I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? 6 For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces. 7 For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.*

B. The cows of Bashan – Amos 4:1-5

1 *“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink!’ 2 The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. 3 And you shall go out through the breaches, each one straight ahead; and you shall be cast out into Harmon,” declares the LORD.*

4 *“Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; 5 offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!” declares the Lord GOD.*

III. The “Call” of Amos – Amos 7:14-17

12 *And Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, 13 but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”*

14 *Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “**I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. 15 But the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ 16 Now therefore hear the word of the LORD.***

“You say, ‘Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac.’

17 *Therefore thus says the LORD:*

“Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line; you yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land.”

- Consider who the LORD calls to rebuke the prosperous and the powerful of his people. What does that communicate about Him?

- What is the “peculiar point of view” of Amos as revealed both in this brief call narrative and in his rebuke of the ‘cows of Bashan’?

IV. The Call of Hosea – Hosea 1:2-9

2 When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” 3 So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the LORD said to him, “Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. 7 But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

8 When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. 9 And the LORD said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

- What does Hosea’s call communicate concerning God and his people, and why?
- What are the broader implications of the call narrative to Hosea’s perspective in addressing the sin of Israel?

V. Synthesis and Implications – Ethical and Affectionate

A. Amos: preacher of justice and retribution *par excellence*

“His interest is ethical, and he summons the divine omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience to give adequate expression to the force of his moral indignation.”¹

B. Hosea: preacher of covenant intimacy

“The demands made of the people are summed up in one thing, that there should be the knowledge of God among them, and that not as a theoretical perception of what is Jehovah’s nature, but as a practical acquaintance, the intimacy of love.”²

C. Implications for the Church

¹ Geerhardus Vos, Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation (P&R, 1980), 277.

² Vos, Biblical Theology (BOT, 2000), 261.