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THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF AMOS
COMPARED WITH THAT IN
THE WRITINGS OF EDWIN LEWIS

By

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A Thesis

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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THE BACKGROUND OF AMOS, HIS BOOK AND MESSAGE

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THE BACKGROUND OF AMOS, HIS BOOK AND MESSAGE

A. Introduction

In order for one to interpret a man's message on any subject and to be fair in the interpretation, it is necessary to take into consideration his background as to his personal life and associations. Without such a consideration, one is liable to misunderstand the message and be in danger of leading others to a wrong interpretation. This is especially true when dealing with any writer of the Bible books. To know the background of the writer is to help much in arriving at the correct understanding of the writer's message. With this general principle in mind, the following chapter will be an attempt to apply such to the prophet Amos, and his message concerning the nature of God and His dealings with man. First, it will be the purpose of this chapter to investigate the geography of the book. Secondly, the conditions of Israel, as to the nation's political, social, and religious condition, shall be briefly discussed. The third part of the chapter will deal with a similar study of the nations surrounding Israel. A part of the chapter will be taken up with some reasons for the urgent need of Amos' message concerning God and His dealings with men. The chapter

will conclude with a short personal history of the prophet and a summary paragraph covering the entire chapter. It is believed that such a study will make Amos' message vital for life today, as many of the conditions in Amos' times can be paralleled in our own times.

B. The Geography of the Book

The land of the book is Palestine and neighboring nations. The following places are mentioned in Amos and are mentioned here for sake of reference later on in the thesis. In the first chapter and part of the second,¹ the prophet proclaims the judgment about to fall upon Philistia, Syria, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. These are nations which immediately border on Israel. The prophet is careful to give precise detail as to localities and events. Amos has a universal outlook with a keen appreciation of national character.² How this influences his concept of God will be shown later on in the thesis. It is of interest to note here that the prophet arraigns in turn all of the six nations of Palestine that bordered on Israel - Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon and Moab. Baldwin points out the following that makes the judgment more vivid:

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1. Amos 1:1-2:3
2. Amos 9:7

"He (Amos) naturally begins with Syria the most powerful and at the same time the most hated of the enemies of Israel, but seems thereafter to follow no geographical order, passing from Aram on the northeast to Philistia on the southwest, thence to Tyre on the northwest, crosses to the southeast and Edom, leaps Moab to Ammon, and then comes back again to Moab."¹

Baldwin suggests that to the ancient Hebrew mind this judgment was very meaningful, for in the illogicalness of it there was a certain force, that of "the swift successive and unpredictable strokes of lightning: and always in Israel there remained associations of the storm with the manifestations of God."²

Although Amos was sent by the Lord to leave Tekoa, his home, which was just south and east of Bethlehem in the Kingdom of Judah, to preach in the Northern Kingdom of Israel,³ to the kingdom of the ten tribes, he is not only to preach in the north but has been given a message for the southern kingdom as well.⁴ Thus the prophet's reach was universal, made possible by a God whose interest was universal.

In order that the land of the book might become graphic and impressive, the following map has been drawn.⁵

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1. E. C. Baldwin: The Prophets, p. 52
2. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. W.W.White in Old Testament Characters, Diagram XXVIII, who makes a spiral of places mentioned.
3. Amos 7:15
4. Amos 2:4,5
5. See p. 11

The map contains those landmarks of major importance to the study of the Book of Amos.

C. The Condition of Israel during the Prophet's Time

1. The Political Condition

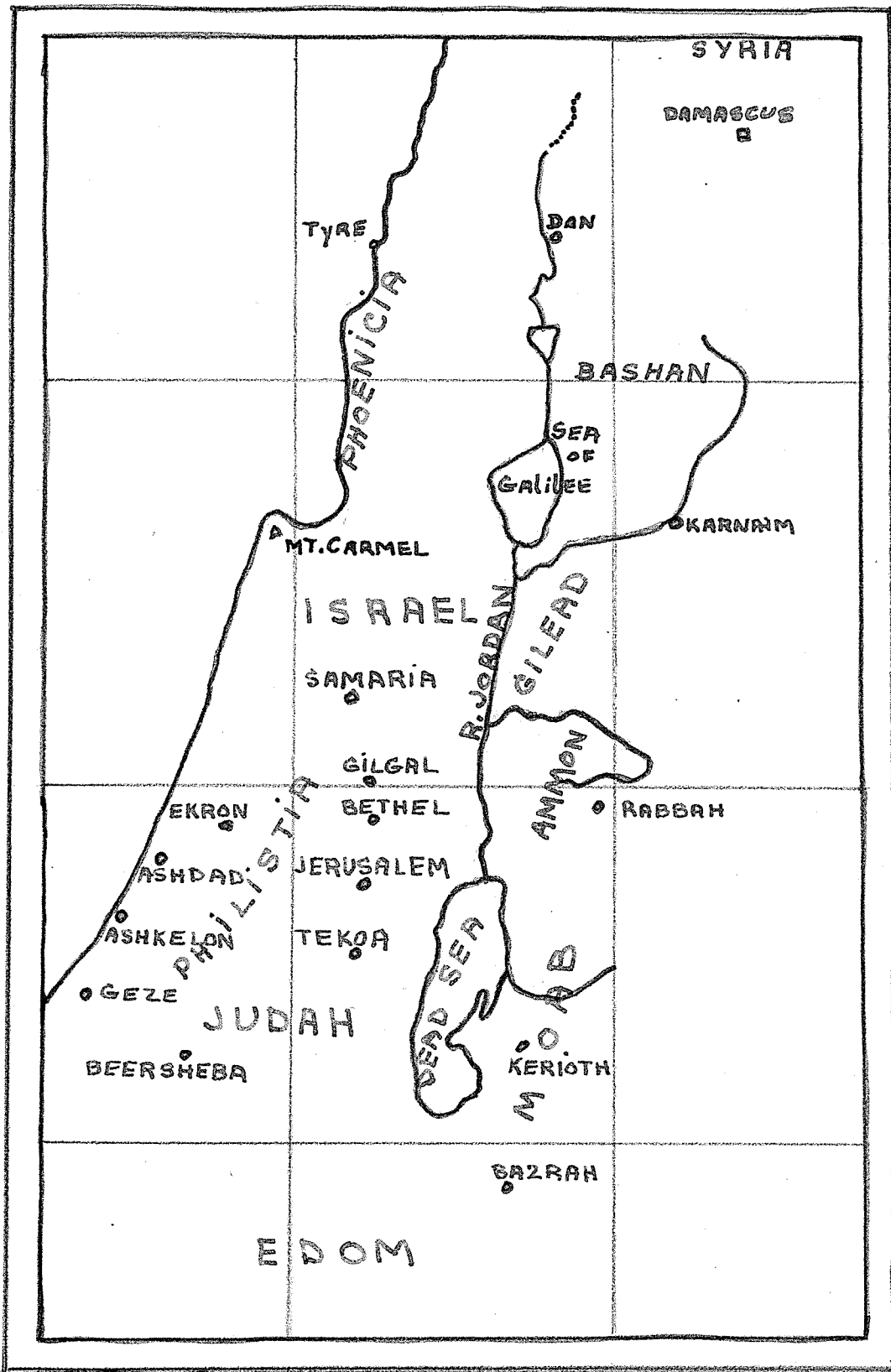
The setting for the political stage of the book is found in the following verse:

"The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen 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."¹

Amos was called by the Lord to preach under the two kings Uzziah and Jeroboam II of the northern and southern kingdoms respectively: "i.e., between 760--² 750 B. C. Because most of his preaching was to Israel, the northern kingdom, we will confine our study of the political situation mainly to the north. Under these two kings both kingdoms were at the height of prosperity. Uzziah had completely defeated the Edomites and Philistines, bringing them under subjection. He had made strong fortification for the city of Jerusalem and had maintained a powerful army. His name was known as far south as the³ land of Egypt. As to Judah this kingdom had, under

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1. Amos 1:1
2. George L. Robinson: The Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 49
and S. R. Driver: Cambridge Bible on Joel and Amos,
Intro., p. 98
3. II Chronicles 26



(Map copied from John Edgar McFadyen's, A Cry For Justice, p.19)

Jeroboam, defeated the Syrians and restored the original borders of the kingdom, i.e., from Hamath to the Dead Sea.¹ The significance of this defeat was that Israel no longer needed to fear the power of any enemy, for at this time Assyria who later defeated Israel, was not a powerful nation. So Israel was at their political summit. They had none to fear and in the midst of their self-complacency they forgot the God who made their safety possible. A defeated Israel was far from the people's minds as they continued on in their God-forgetting ways, and "in the consciousness of their might."²

2. The Social Condition of Israel

While Israel enjoyed freedom of politics, instead of feeling grateful for deliverance from the hand of the enemy, she abused her period of peace and great prosperity and plunged into tremendous social sin. The rulers of Israel trusted in the power of their own strength. Amos makes this clear when he writes, "Ye that rejoice in a thing of nought, that say, Have we not taken to ourselves horns by our own strength."³ The main concern of the national leaders was the gain of wealth for a life of luxury and ease. This was to be gained at the cost of broken fellowship with Jehovah, the One who made

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1. II Kings 14:25-28

2. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch: Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Intro., p. 235

3. Amos 6:13

their own prosperity a reality. This luxurious living was also to be realized at the cost of others. Great social sin darkened the record of the nation. The poor were oppressed and made the object of those who desired¹ to increase their wealth. Cripps says:

"The nation was divided very sharply into upper and lower classes. The former consisted of the possessors of the land, and merchants. From them were supplied the king's counsellors and the administrators of justice. The other stratum of Israelitish society was composed of peasants and laborers."²

It was under such social conditions that Amos the prophet sounded forth his message of God.

3. The Religious Condition of Israel

As one reads and studies the book of Amos it becomes evident that Israel was very zealous for outward show in religious life but inwardly she was dead. Amos³ refers to the sanctuaries that were at Bethel and Dan. Reference is also made to the shrines at Gilgal and⁴ Samaria. There can be no doubt that Israel offered the best in outward ceremonies and sacrifices to the God who had brought them peace and safety. The abundance of sacrifice offered to Jehovah, the music of their instruments, were all a part of the outward form of their

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1. Amos 2:6-8; 5:11, 12; 6:4-6
2. Richard S. Cripps: The Book of Amos, Intro., p. 6
3. Amos 4:4; 7:13; 8:14
4. Amos 4:4; 5:21-23

religious life.¹ But their God was not to be pleased as easily as were the heathen gods. Jehovah desired their heart worship before He could accept their feasting, sacrifices, offerings, and music. But it must be kept in mind that this condition of spiritual deadness, although the general characteristic of Israel, did not mean that all fell into this category. No doubt there were others, along with Amos, who had held to higher principles than the general mass.

D. The Condition of The Nations Surrounding Israel

The nations surrounding Israel were constantly a threat to the safety of the Jewish Kingdoms, Israel and Judah. The following will give us a brief insight as to the political, social, and religious condition of the important nations bordering on Israel.

1. The Political Condition

While Israel enjoyed temporary peace it was only possible because the nations immediately surrounding Israel were either in a state of decline or occupied in other directions. Assyria perhaps was the greatest possible enemy of Israel. W. Robertson Smith says:

"It was the power that had shattered Damascus by

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1. Amos 4:4; 5:21-23

successive campaigns following at intervals since the days of Jehu, of which there is still some record on the monuments, one of them being dated B.C. 773, not long before the time when, so far as we can gather from the defective Chronology of II Kings, Amos preached at Bethel."¹

Smith also brings to our attention that:

"When the power of Damascus was broken, there was no barrier between Assyria and the nations of Palestine; in fact, the breathing space that made it possible for Jeroboam II to restore the old borders of his kingdom was only granted because the Assyrians were occupied in other directions, and apparently passed through a period of intestine disturbance which terminated with the accession of Tiglath Pileser II (B.C. 745)."²

Israel was in danger politically in the final analysis.

Why Israel could not see this is a question still a puzzle to many. Smith suggests that Amos clearly gives an explanation in the following thought:

"The source of the judicial blindness of his nation was want of knowledge of the true character of Jehovah, encouraging a false estimate of their own might."³

The Assyrian nation bordering Israel had not forgotten the object of their military might which was Israel. Palestine has always been a battlefield of the world, for the land cannot be equaled for its fertility of soil. Assyria was not to be considered lightly by Israel. However, with a fanatical faith in past victories, the

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1. W. Robertson Smith: The Prophets of Israel, p. 130

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 131

Israelites rested complacently in their self-sufficiency. Regarding the other smaller nations surrounding Israel as to their political condition Amos himself gives some indications. The first chapter of Amos and part of the second deals with the sins of Syria, Edom, Ammon, Philistia and Moab. These nations were not nations of might as compared with Assyria but were much weaker as touching their political life. The heart of their political life was corrupt which manifested itself in widespread social evils. They were imperialistic and were determined to get what they coveted at the expense of others.¹

2. The Social Condition

It is impossible to separate the political, social and religious life from one another. The political life of any nation will be effected by the nation's social life and the social life surely is conditioned by the religious life.² Socially the heathen nations were corrupt. They stood in the same condemnation as did Israel. These nations have broken the laws of universal morality. For example, we might cite the crime of Ammon. They had treated the Gileadites as follows:

"Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, yea, for four, I will

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1. Amos 1:13b

2. The word "heathen" is used here to mean nations whose religion is other than Israel's, i.e., gentile nations

not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of 1 Gilead, that they may enlarge their borders."

Damascus also treated the people of Gilead inhumanly as the following record shows:

"Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron."²

The picture painted of the social life of these nations is one not pleasant to look upon.

3. The Religious Condition

Concerning the religious condition of the nations surrounding Israel, we are not told much by Amos. But by their very deeds of cruelty one readily sees that they had no concept of the true nature of the true God. It is important to notice at this point that the judgment to be meted out upon the nations surrounding Israel was not so much for religious sins but for social evils. Israel was to be judged primarily for religious sins. A more detailed study will be made concerning the judgment of God upon Israel and the heathen nations in the following chapter.

E. The Urgent Need for Amos' Message of God

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1. Amos 1:13
2. Amos 1:3

In the light of the foregoing section, it is almost needless to say that the people of Amos' time were in dire need of Amos' message concerning God. The stage was set for Amos to make his appearance for God and to speak out against the evils that existed among the people of Israel and the people of the gentile nations. Israel was the special object of Amos' preaching. They needed to be reminded of the true nature of God and His dealings with man. Israel was in a spiritual slump concerning the things of God and an awakening out of slumber was necessary before it was too late. They had drifted away from true religion having substituted the outward form for the inward life. Their concept of God and His dealings with man was distorted and it was the task of Amos to proclaim anew with freshness the true character of God.

As to the gentile nations, the need for Amos' message was just as great. Although God was angry with Israel mainly because of her lack of spirituality it was not so much this that God was displeased with concerning the heathen nations. They had no spiritual life and were in need of true repentance. As we see in the judgments upon these nations, it was not so much for religious sins that they were being condemned but rather for breaking the "laws of universal morality."¹ The need for Amos'

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 134

message was pressing in these times when the power of evil had gripped the hearts of all nations, even Israel and Judah which were the special affection of God's heart.

F. A Personal Life of the Prophet

1. The Life of Amos up to His Call as Prophet

Amos was born in Tekoa, a small village which¹ was located south of Jerusalem about twelve miles on the edge of the desert. Concerning his family Robinson writes, "because his name is nowhere mentioned, it is inferred that he probably sprang from a poor and obscure family."² Amos was a shepherd as indicated by the following verse: "The words of Amos who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa."³ No doubt the life as a shepherd had much to do with his preaching ability. Amos describes himself also as "a dresser of sycamore trees."⁴ He was a man of the outdoors and had much opportunity to become acquainted with his God who was the ruler of all nature. Robinson uses his imagination well in the following description of Amos' outdoor life:

"In the desolate districts of Judah sloping rapidly toward the Dead Sea eastward, where wild beasts

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1. See map, p. 11
2. Robinson, op. cit., p. 47-48
3. Amos 1:1
4. Amos 7:14

often lurked, doubtless he studied the stars, observed the moon's changing phases, and marvelled at the full-orbed sun as it rose over the distant ranges of Moab."¹

It can be supposed that Amos' business as shepherd would naturally bring him into contact with the wool markets of the north, probably Israel and gentile nations. One would not have to stretch his imagination very much to picture Amos as he visited the market places of these northern towns. It was probably such visits as these that made Amos more sensitive to the power of sin which had enveloped the people.

2. His Preparation and Call as Prophet

It is significant to note at the outset that Amos had no formal training as we know formal training in this modern world.

Amos was trained in the school of experience, which often is the best training for anyone who is to do the work of God. Amos was prepared to do God's work. He lived a simple life as implied by his work. He no doubt became aware of the evils of the cities as he saw the luxury and waste in them at times when he was there to trade and sell his wool.² His experience with the lion³ and bear and serpent made him brave as he faced the

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1. Robinson, op. cit., p. 48

2. Amos 6:4b; 6:6a

3. Amos 3:12; 5:19

Northern Kingdom at the possibility of losing his own life. The life that he spent in the desert later on became a source of symbols and metaphors of which he made much use.¹ The vastness of God's universe no doubt spoke to Amos of Jehovah's power. It was with such preparation that God called Amos to do His work as prophet. Robinson says:

"By inheritance he was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son; that is, he belonged to no established guild, such as "the sons of the prophets."²

As to his call as prophet, it must be kept in mind that Amos was not officially a prophet. He was a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees. Yet, God called him from such a common experience of life to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Thus Amos' call was not based upon heritage nor did the human side enter in at all but his calling was directly a result of God's speaking to him personally, "Go, prophesy." Amos was an ordinary member of the society in which he lived and as such was called to preach. God can use any person who will hear His voice and be willing to sacrifice all of this world's life in order to serve Him completely. Amos' special mission was to preach to Israel, the kingdom of the North.³

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1. Amos 3:3-5; 3:12; 5:19
2. Robinson, op. cit., p. 49
3. Amos 7:14-15

3. Amos' Experience as Prophet

Amos obeyed God's call and left for Bethel¹ where he carried out the will of God concerning his life. Amos preached with passion and compassion.² He continually cried out for justice, so that Amos to this day is known as "the prophet of justice."

Amos' experience as prophet was not all sunshine. There is always the bitter with the sweet in the life of the one who works for and with God. So Amos experiences bitter opposition as he preaches in the north. It is interesting to note that the opposition comes from within the confines of religion. How often this is true in the life of the Church. The greatest enemies of God and His work are often found within the Church. Amaziah the priest at Bethel caused Amos much trouble. He accused Amos of conspiracy. He tells Jeroboam that the land is not able to stand the preaching of Amos.³ Amaziah would rid the land of Amos' presence and preaching.⁴ But Amos was not too easily removed from the place to which God had sent him. Amos remained faithful to his task even in the face of bitter opposition.

G. Summary

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1. See map, p. 11
2. Amos 5:1
3. Amos 7:10-13
4. Amos 7:12,13

In this chapter the background of the life and times of Amos has been discussed. The land of the book, the condition of both Israel and the surrounding nations as to their political, social and religious conditions has been reviewed. In the light of these conditions the urgent need of Amos' message concerning God has been shown. The chapter was concluded by a brief study of the prophet's own personal life before his call as prophet, his call as prophet, and finally his experience as prophet. The universality of the prophet's message is of utmost importance in this chapter. Also it has been seen that the nations of the book are in a state of moral and religious decay and are in dire need of Amos' message concerning God. It has been seen that God has prepared His man in the person of Amos to preach to the nations. Thus we are ready for the discussion of the next chapter, namely, the concept of God in the book of Amos.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

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A. Introduction

"The earliest of the writing prophets of the eighth century B. C. was Amos." ¹ In the preceding chapter it has been seen that Amos was not born into the prophetic office. He was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees. God took him from following the flock and told him to prophesy to Bethel. He went to the Northern Kingdom without hesitation and preached his message from God. What was Amos' message? This chapter will seek to answer this question in the following way. First, the chapter will present Amos' concept of God's justice. Included in this main point will be a discussion of the justice of God in His dealings with man; first, as to nations and secondly, as to individuals. The next main point will be a study of God's demands of justice from man. Next a study of Amos' concept of the love of God will be made. Included in this discussion will be the following two points: God's love for man, and God's love manifested to man. The third main point will deal first with Amos' concept of God as creator and ruler of nature and secondly Amos'

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1. M. Bross Thomas: The Biblical Idea of God, p. 107

concept of God as ruler of the affairs of man in history. The chapter will close with a summary paragraph on the material presented.

B. Amos' Concept of God's Justice

God always purposes and acts in keeping with the rectitude of His nature. To Amos, one of the chief attributes of God is His justice. Amos was not theological in the use of his terms in speaking of his God but he did have knowledge of what the terms meant which he used. To Amos "justice" was a part of life and should be the expression of every human soul, as it is the essence of the Divine Creator. To Amos justice was holiness, i.e., moral excellence exhibited in life, whether social, political or religious.

1. The Justice of God in His Dealings With Men

God has always been just in His dealings with men. This justice may have been in the form of remunerative justice by conferring reward upon the obedient or it may have been retributive justice, punishment for disobedience. But be that as it may, God has always been just for His very character demands that He be so. In Amos we see a clear picture of God's justice, i.e., He acts in harmony with His very nature in His dealings with nations and with individuals. McFayden says:

"Amos's message could hardly be described as a gospel of grace. It is the gospel of law - for that, too, is a gospel: to understand and obey the laws by which God governs His world is the way of peace, to ignore them is the way to destruction."¹

a. Justice Towards Nations

Israel had misused what knowledge they had of the justice of God.² There is no doubt that Israel as a nation understood the ways of God but their failure was not in lack of knowledge but in disobedience to the ways which they knew to be righteous. Because of this, God who cannot act any way but in harmony with His nature, must pronounce judgment upon Israel. Not alone must Israel be judged for ignoring God's ways but so must the Gentile nations outside of Israel fall under the judgment of a just God for their willful ignoring of God's ways. So we see in Amos, judgment being pronounced upon the nations bordering Israel for not keeping the moral laws³ of God which were written upon their hearts.

It has been said that man breaks the laws of God and because of this he is judged. It seems that this principle is not altogether the truth. Can man break the laws of God? Isn't it rather that man is broken by the laws of God? Or to put it another way that man is broken

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1. John Edgar McFayden: A Cry For Justice, p. 71
2. Amos 6:12
3. Amos 1:3; 2:3

upon the laws of God? The laws of God cannot be broken but they can and do break the nations or men who fail to obey them. To fall short of keeping the physical, moral, and spiritual laws of God is to bring utter chaos into life.

Amos' view of God's justice includes the whole world order. As has been shown above, God's judgment is universal. The very fact that God is a universal God makes Him a judge of all. Although Israel was to be judged for religious sin and the nations surrounding her for moral and social sin, nevertheless God's justice was to be realized, for each had failed to live up to the ways of Jehovah. Truly Israel must be judged for she had "cast down righteousness to the earth."¹ She had all the form of religion and godliness but yet lacked one thing, "Justice." Israel was crooked in her dealings with men, and because God is righteous, i.e., "straight² as opposed to crooked," He must pronounce judgment upon this nation. Israel hid behind her outward profession of communion with God, she played the role of the hypocrite, for in all her religious observances of offerings, sacrifices, music, and feasts, she forgot one thing, "Justice." Amos does not speak lightly of her sins when

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1. Amos 5:7

2. B. A. Copass: Amos, p. 42

he writes:

"Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor,
and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have
built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not
dwell in them, ye have planted pleasant vine-¹
yards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof."

Yes, God must judge the nations that do not obey His laws,
but, as God deals justly with nations, one must not for-
get that God also deals justly with individuals.

Of interest here is the manner in which Amos
presents the sins and judgment of Israel. He first
preaches the moral blackness of the surrounding nations
but suddenly, as a lion leaps upon his prey, Amos sounds
forth the terrible judgment of God upon Israel.² For
Israel was the center of Amos' preaching. A lesson for
all time can be seen here in Amos' tactfulness in finally
reaching the heart of his message. Israel had sinned as
well as the foreign nations and she too must be punished.
Judgment is inevitable. Amos knows the awfulness of this
judgment and pleads with the people to get right with
God.³ God expected much from Israel more so than from
the heathen nations as Amos makes clear: "You only have
I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I
will visit upon you all your iniquities."⁴

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1. Amos 5:11
2. Amos 3:1ff
3. Amos 4:12
4. Amos 3:2

There is no escape from God's judgment and this judgment was coming swiftly from the northern nation of Assyria. The judgment of God was to culminate in Israel's exile¹ as a people.

b. Justice Towards Individuals

Amos' cry is for Justice! His heart bleeds within him as he sees his own people who boast so much religion but who show so little in their dealings with men. Thus the prophet speaks for God concerning individuals who have failed to carry into practice just dealings with their fellow men. Amos knew that if the nations were to be just in their relations that individuals which make up the nation must inevitably be just in all their relations with one another. Knowing this, Amos preached a message that touched the individual. He did not talk in generalities but got to the heart of the sin which blighted many lives. He was outspoken, fearless, courageous, and proclaimed his message of justice with divine compulsion and assurance to individuals as well as to nations. With this boldness described above, Amos preached the following words of severe condemnation to the women of Bashan for their unjust dealings with others:

"Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in
the mountain of Samaria, that oppress the poor,
that crush the needy, that say unto their lords,

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1. Amos 3:11; 6:7

Bring, and let us drink. The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by His holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that they shall take you away with hooks and your residue with fish-hooks."¹

Amos again addresses his message to individuals when he speaks to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, to the notable men of the chief of the nations.² It is to these and other individuals that Amos points his message. These notable men were in high places of authority and were looked upon as men of justice but they themselves were anything but men of God. Amos describes them and God's judgment of them as follows:

"Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the calves out of the midst of the stall, that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive; and the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away."³

What a sight to behold! Here are men who have been put in charge of high places and who bring shame on the very One whom they are supposed to represent. Their sins are many and mount up so that Kent and Smith have said: "the climax of their crime is that they do not care for the poverty and misery and wrongs of the poor."⁴

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1. Amos 4:1,2

2. Amos 6:1-6

3. Amos 6:3-7

4. Charles Foster Kent and Robert Seneca Smith: The Work and Teachings of the Earlier Prophets, p. 20

God must judge these who go contrary to His own nature. The judgment is in the form of captivity. Thus a just God deals justly with the unjust. It can never be any other way.

Materialism was a hideous sin of many individuals within the nation of Israel. Money making was the ambition of many. Amos preaches against the money making racket when he says:

"Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; . . . Jehovah hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works."¹

Here was a sin that not only was harmful to the individual that practiced such injustice by focusing his ambition upon the material in life over against the spiritual, but it had direct bearing upon others. The poor suffered. Amos says:

"For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins; ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right."²

Surely the great need of Israel was to right themselves with God and then to make that rightness effective in their relations with all men.

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1. Amos 8:4, 7
2. Amos 5:12

2. God's Demand of Justice From All Men

As has been seen, God deals justly with nations and individuals. But Amos' concept of God's justice does not limit itself to God alone but rather Amos sees that the God who created man in His own image demands justice from all men. Amos' own words show clearly that God expects justice from man: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish JUSTICE¹ in the gate." God's great desire is that man, His special creation, might be like Himself.

a. The Problem of Sin

Before justice can be realized, Amos knows that a greater problem must be solved, namely, the sin problem. So in the above verse Amos pleads with the people to hate the evil, and to love the good. Justice cannot come to any people who have not hated the evil and sin in the world and in themselves enough to forsake it and cleave to the good. The demand of God through Amos for justice towards one another as individuals was the end in view and not the means to the end.

b. The Need for Repentance

The real need of the nations, or more specifically, the individuals who make up the nations, was repentance. Upon fulfilling the conditions of repentance,

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1. Amos 5:15a

Amos was sure that justice would prevail. This principle was not only true in the prophet's day but is one that fits every era of history. Therefore, if Israel or any nation would establish justice, she must repent of the evil of her ways and seek that which is good. Repentance is basic, and must be if justice is to have its way in any nation. Here we have the ultimate solution to a world of peace and justice. If individuals comprising the nations of the world will seek Jehovah, Who is the ultimate good from which all good comes, then and then only will justice prevail. This justice is not something that should be sought for after a war has raged between nations, but to Amos it is something which should be realized before the terrible judgment of God grips the nations. Amos' whole purpose was to see that this message of justice was proclaimed and if possible heeded so God's retributive judgment would not be necessary. God does not force individuals or nations to establish justice for that would be against the very nature of things but God does demand justice from all men if they would live in peace and in communion with Himself. One of the permanent values of the prophet is in the truth stated by Kirkpatrick: "that justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society."¹

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1. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 106

C. Amos' Concept of the Love of God

Amos is not the prophet to consider if one is seeking to find out what the Old Testament says concerning the love of God. However, there are traces here and there of this attribute of God which underlies the prophet's message and it must not be overlooked. Amos' message certainly is one which presents the justice of God and His righteous judgments, but the prophet's God is a God of love also as will be the purpose of this portion to point out.

1. God's Love For Man

"God is love."¹ To say this is to imply that in His dealings with men God must exercise this love. It is hard for anyone to read the book of Amos and come away with a feeling that the prophet has touched on this all important attribute of God. Yet, it must be kept in mind that Amos' primary concern is not with the love of God² but rather with His justice which must be exercised if He is to be true to His righteous nature. But to say that Amos does not consider Jehovah as a God of love but only as a God of judgment, is to misunderstand the prophet altogether. It is true that Amos does not make men-

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1. I John 4:8, 16

2. See Hosea

tion of the love of God as we might desire, but this is not to say that the love of God is not present.

The love of God includes His mercy and grace. God's mercy is that attribute of God which shows His willingness to forgive sin. God's mercy is not absent from the book of Amos for the following words of the prophet show clearly that Jehovah was a God of mercy:

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah."¹

Here the character of God, according to Amos, is one of mercy. God will not completely destroy but He wills to exercise His mercy by forbearing complete destruction of Israel. But one can hardly speak of God's mercy without having in the back of his thinking the grace of God.

The word grace speaks to us of the mystery of God's love, for the word means unmerited favor towards the sinner. Israel as a nation had tasted of God's grace from the beginning of their existence as such. From Egypt to the promised land as individuals and as a nation God's grace was their portion. The trouble with Israel was that they took advantage of this grace and misused it altogether. God truly had been gracious to Israel but in spite of this that nation continued in sin

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1. Amos 9:8

both spiritually and socially. Amos shows how Jehovah was gracious unto Israel as a nation when he says:

"I have overthrown cities among you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Jehovah."¹

If any nation did not deserve God's love it was Israel. They had been privileged to know the truth of God. They were constantly being favored by God. Blessing upon blessing was theirs, but still they continued to misuse their privileges. Even in their hardened condition, God offers His grace to them through the prophet Amos. The unmerited love of God is always available to men, but the choice of whether or not this grace will be realized is man's, not God's. So Amos makes the following condition to a sinful people:

"Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph."²

Amos sees no hope for Israel outside of the mercy of God which mercy is always available to the nation but Amos realizes that Israel must be judged for her sin and that judgment is near. What hope was there then, for Israel? Amos makes known that there will be in the future, a time when God will reveal Himself as a God of mercy by

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1. Amos 4:11
2. Amos 5:15

establishing a righteous rule at which time only those who have stood the test of sifting,¹ will be shown this mercy. Amos says: "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, The evil shall not overtake nor meet us."² There will be a few, a remnant, who will enjoy the mercy of God. This mercy is truly an example of the grace of God. For not one man in all of history could ever claim God's mercy as merited by himself. Truly Jehovah is a God of grace. Here Amos holds forth a hope to the hopeless when he makes known the future mercy of God.

"In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this."³

2. God's Demand of Love From Man Toward God and Fellowman

In speaking on the love of God as found in the prophets Aytoun says:

"In return for His Covenant-Love to them Jahveh required loyal allegiance to Him and looked for love, gratitude and trust. In addition He demanded righteousness and justice, truth and love from His people towards one another."⁴

The desire of Jehovah concerning His people was that they

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1. Amos 9:9

2. Amos 9:10

3. Amos 9:11, 12

4. Robert Alexander Aytoun: God In the Old Testament, p. 134

might hate the evil and seek the good. The fact that God is good is sufficient reason to believe that He would have His creatures good also. Otto Schmoller points out the following concerning the good that Jehovah would have His people seek in Amos 5:15:

"The 'good' which men are to love and to do, appears in here continually as rectitude, in opposition to the prevailing unrighteousness, the turning of justice into wormwood and casting righteousness down to the earth."¹

It is true that God demands man's love which is to be expressed in his seeking the good as opposed to the evil. Yet, God also demands that man should live righteously by showing mercy towards others. Such a command of God that men should show kindness and mercy towards others, is implied in the following statement of Amos when he is pronouncing the woe upon those who are at ease in Zion.² Amos says concerning such: "that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."³ Here Amos points to the heartlessness of the sons of Jacob towards their brother Joseph. This same lack of mercy is in evidence in the lives of those who call themselves religious leaders. Amos, by implication, would arouse

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1. Otto Schmoller: The Book of Amos, Lange's Commentary, edited by Philip Schaff, p. 37
2. Amos 6:1
3. Amos 6:6

Israel's conscience by bringing before her the great need she has of dealing with her fellowmen in grace and mercy.

D. Amos' Concept of God as Creator and
Ruler of the Universe and the Affairs of Men

Amos' experience as a shepherd in the desert had a profound influence on his idea of God. Amos was ever in contact with outdoor life. Blackwood says: "No other prophet was more fully a son of the wild than Amos."¹ Because Amos was constantly out of doors, he had much time to think of Jehovah as Creator and Ruler of nature.

1. God as Creator and Ruler of Nature

As can be seen throughout a study of the prophet's theology, he assumes God to be. He never for once argues for Jehovah's existence. This might be expected from one who was not troubled with the problem of ontology, for to Amos the very heavens under which he watched his flock and the very earth upon which he lived day by day, spoke to him of the existence of Jehovah. To Amos, then, God was Creator of all things. The following words of Amos confirm this truth:

"For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and
createth the wind, and declareth unto man
what is his thought; that maketh the morning

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1. Andrew W. Blackwood: The Prophets - Elijah to Christ,
p. 73

darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth--Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name."¹

Again Amos speaks of Jehovah as Creator in the following words:

"Seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name);²

Winton says:

"The earthquake, likewise, he holds is Jehovah's, shattering to splinters the costly houses of the rich as well as the huts of the poor, and bringing terror to every heart. It was God who brought along the flame of drought, with its withered fields, its devastating mountain fires, licking up forest and village together. The floods were his, the rolling thunder his voice, the roaring tempest his messenger, the devastating waters his instrument. He was Lord of all these things because he was Maker of them all."³

Winton has well observed that to Amos, Jehovah was not only creator of the universe and all that is therein but Jehovah was ruler of His creation as well. More will be said on this point later on in this section.

Amos makes use of the beauties of nature in preaching. The book is filled with figures of speech and metaphors which come out of the prophet's own experience with the things of nature. Blackwood says: "In

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1. Amos 4:13; 9:5, 6

2. Amos 5:8

3. George B. Winton: Pleadings For Righteousness, p. 73

strength and in vividness his writings are second only to those of Isaiah."¹ Some of the symbols and metaphors used by Amos are as follows:

"Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?
Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no
prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if
he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a
snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for
him? shall a snare spring up from the ground,
and have taken nothing at all?"²

Being a shepherd, naturally Amos would make use of God's creatures like the lion and the sheep. The following are words which show Amos' use of God's creation:

"Thus saith Jehovah: As the shepherd rescueth
out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a
piece of an ear, so shall the children of
Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria in the
corner of a couch, and on the silken cushions
of a bed."³

Without doubt Amos' first thought of Jehovah was as Creator of all things. But because of the lofty concept which Amos had of Jehovah as Creator, he also sees Jehovah as Ruler of that which He has created. To Amos, God is Sovereign. Because Jehovah has created all things He is Ruler of the same. In part the heathen were right when they interpreted the disasters of earthquakes, floods, famines and the like, as being an angry god punishing the people for evil. Yet, Amos knew this

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1. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 74
2. Amos 3:3-5
3. Amos 3:12

God personally as the Creator but more than that, the Ruler of all nature. One thing the heathen did not know, however, was the character of the God of all nature. It was the task of Amos to make Jehovah's nature known to all peoples. It must be said here that all disasters of nature are not the result of immediate sin of a people. But there can be no doubt that Jehovah makes use of this means of judgment as Amos makes clear when he says:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day."¹

Here is an example of Jehovah's use of His power over nature as a means of judgment. Again Jehovah rules His creation as seen in the following verse of Amos:

"And he said, Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."²

Amos would be one of the first to denounce the teaching of Deism; the teaching that God, who created the universe, is not active in it but rather has left His creation to work itself out. No one who sincerely believes in the inspiration of the message of the prophet Amos can honestly hold to such a concept of God. He who has power to create also has power to rule; this is the concept

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1. Amos 8:9
2. Amos 1:2

Amos had concerning the God of Israel.

One of the most striking examples of God's judicial use of natural calamity is the passage in Amos 4:6-10. The following is a quote from this passage to exemplify the judicial use of nature by Jehovah:

"And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Jehovah."¹

Here it can be readily seen that Jehovah has a moral purpose for the universe which he created. Here the purpose of natural calamity was to bring the Israelites to repentance. Unfortunately Israel did not heed the voice of God speaking through nature's calamities but rather refused to return to the God of their fathers.

2. God as Ruler of the Affairs of Men in History

Kirkpatrick says: "The dominant idea in the theology of Amos is the sovereignty of Jehovah in nature and in history."² Kirkpatrick does well to emphasize this feature in Amos' concept of God's nature. Whether or not the sovereignty of God is the dominant note in Amos' theology remains a question. But one cannot read

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1. Amos 4:7, 8

2. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 100

the book of Amos without realizing that God is Ruler of the affairs of men in history. The sovereignty of God is present throughout the book and to miss this emphasis of the prophet's message is to miss one of the dominant concepts of God's nature according to Amos.

a. The Universality of God

One element in the universality of God is His power over all creation discussed above. When Amos began his preaching at Bethel, the people did not understand the full force of his message. Amos, the prophet of justice, preached judgment which was to be Israel's lot. This message was hard for the chosen nation to believe. "Was not Jehovah the national, the peculiar, the ancestral, the unique God of Israel?"¹ With these and other questions they faced the prophet. Israel was blind as to the true nature of their God. They thought He would be lenient with them and would not judge them as He would heathen nations. It was impossible in their distorted thinking concerning the true nature of God to realize that Jehovah would turn against them. It is here that Amos sounds forth his message of the universality of God. For Amos, God was not only a God of the nation Israel, i.e., a national deity, but Jehovah was the One and the Only God. He was the God of all nations and men.

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1. Winton, op. cit., p. 28

Jehovah is not the God of Israel alone but Amos refers to Him as the "God of Hosts."¹ Amos introduces a form of monotheism as he speaks forth the doctrine of the universality of God. His God was interested in the world at large. This can best be seen in Amos' words concerning the judgment that was to be meted out upon the nations surrounding Israel:

"And I will break the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden; and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith Jehovah."²

Probably the passage which best shows God's interest in other nations besides Israel is the following:

"Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"³

It was hard for Israel to believe that God dealt with other nations by the same principles as He dealt with them. Thus they must learn that God is no respecter of persons or nations but that all individuals and nations must be judged by the same righteous principles of the universal God. We must not be hard on the Israelites for they had been reared to believe that they were a special nation and held a unique position among the nations

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1. Amos 4:13b; 5:14,16,27; 6:8; 8:5
2. Amos 1:5
3. Amos 9:7

of the world. They had a right to hold this belief for God did choose them for a special task. However, the task was to bring to all men everywhere the true nature of Jehovah and to make known His will among men. Israel could not grasp the cosmopolitan spirit. It became the task of Amos to make them realize that the God of Israel was the God of all men and nations.

b. God's Sovereignty in History

We have noticed that God, according to Amos, was not only Creator of the universe but Ruler of His creation. Robinson in speaking of God's nature says: "The expanse of earth and the dome of heaven were alike the product of His activity; all human history, too, was the outcome of His will."¹

Closely akin to God's universality, is His sovereignty in the affairs of men. God, as we have already seen, is the God of history. It is Jehovah who has judged Israel and the surrounding nations. Without a doubt God had revealed Himself in a unique way to Israel and had guided the affairs of this nation. Amos recognizes this in the following words: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt."² Amos sees God in the history of

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1. Theo. H. Robinson: Prophecy and The Prophets, p. 69
2. Amos 9:7a

Israel. Jehovah has led this nation through many years. It was He who brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage through the Red Sea experience on to the crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land. Jehovah had won their victories and it was He who went before them. But this same God who had done all of this, also has prepared an instrument by which Israel should be punished for her¹ sin.

On the other side, the side of the heathen nations, God also is sovereign. It is Jehovah who has the final destiny of these nations in His hand. Because of willful disobedience to Jehovah's moral law, these nations must come under the judgment of a sovereign God. A universal God is not a stranger to the affairs of men in history, but on the contrary His hand can be seen in all history.

Amos presents the ultimate purpose of God in all of history to culminate in the Kingdom of God. This purpose is presented in Amos 9:8-15. There can be no question that Amos has in mind primarily an immediate situation and hence this passage applies to an imminent future. But as in most prophecy there goes alongside of an immediate application, a far future meaning. Here the future meaning points to the Kingdom of God. The

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1. Amos 6:14

lasting and eternal quality of such a Kingdom is described in the words of Amos: "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them saith Jehovah thy God¹." Thus all of history is in the hands of a mighty God whose ultimate purpose is to establish forever His Kingdom.

E. Summary

It has been the purpose of this chapter to study Amos' concept of God. As has been seen Amos' special emphasis is upon the justice of God. In this portion of the chapter it was pointed out that God who is just deals justly with the unjust; both towards nations and individuals. Also it was seen that God demands justice from all men and that only can be realized as men repent of the evil and seek the good.

Next in this chapter viewed Amos' concept of the love of God. It was seen here that although Amos has been termed the "prophet of justice" that he does not exclude the love of God from his theology. God is love and He demands that man express the same love by right living.

Lastly this chapter considered Amos' concept of God as Creator and Ruler of the universe and the affairs of men. This section dealt with God as not only Creator

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1. Amos 9:15

of all things but as sovereign Ruler. As to God as Ruler in the affairs of men in history, it was observed that according to Amos, God is a universal God; a God of all nations and men. Finally, Amos sees God as sovereign in all history. God is no stranger to the affairs of men but His hand has guided, does guide and will continue to guide all of history, which will finally culminate in the establishing of His Kingdom.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE THEOLOGY OF AMOS AND OF EDWIN LEWIS

CHAPTER IV
COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE
THEOLOGY OF AMOS AND OF EDWIN LEWIS

A. General Introduction

In the preceding chapters the look has been into the past. Amos and his concept of God were considered. It will be the purpose of this chapter to look into the present and relate Amos' theology with life today. Dr. Lewis has been chosen as a representative theologian of life today for the purpose of comparing and contrasting his theology with that of the prophet, Amos.

Hence it will be the aim of this chapter in the beginning to survey briefly the life of Edwin Lewis. The next two portions of this chapter will be taken up, first, with comparisons of the theology of the prophet of old and the modern theologian, and secondly, with a study of the contrasts in their theology. Following this study will come a consideration of the implications of all that has been discussed to life today. Particular consideration will be given to the challenge that both Amos and Lewis place before preachers and theologians in this year of 1946. The study will conclude with a summary of the chapter as a whole.

B. An Introduction To Edwin Lewis

In order that the theology of Lewis may be fully and rightly understood, it will be necessary to take a glimpse into the background of his life.

Dr. Lewis is at present professor of Systematic Theology in Drew Theological Seminary which is located in Madison, New Jersey. Lewis has been professor there since 1918. He is a well known preacher and teacher. He has done lecture work and has traveled much. His early life as a Christian worker was spent in Newfoundland. Here he was active in mission work. Dr. Lewis did his undergraduate work at New York State College and at Drew Seminary. This was followed by four years of graduate study at the Seminary.

Dr. Lewis has done much lecturing at annual conferences, summer schools and the like. His travel has taken him to the Far East where he has carried on his teaching and lecturing ministry. Lewis has written many books. Some of his books are as follows: Jesus Christ and The Human Quest, A Manual of Christian Beliefs, God and Ourselves, A Christian Manifesto and others.

In 1934 Lewis wrote a book called A Christian Manifesto. This publication marked the beginning of gradual change for the theology of Lewis from extreme liberalism to a moderate conservatism. Dr. Lewis is still

in the process of change, as little by little he removes from his theology the grave clothes of an extreme liberalism by which his former life as a theologian was characterized. One of his own students recently corroborated this fact of change when he said that Lewis is changing his thoughts concerning theology every day. This is not to be misunderstood, however, for Lewis has arrived at definite foundational truths concerning Christianity. One of these is his strong concept of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. The changes that Lewis is experiencing are not serious but are rather a healthy sign and point towards a growing conservatism.

As can be seen, Dr. Lewis is not only a man of book knowledge but he has a knowledge which comes through experience with the world. His vital contact with people makes his message more than academic and adds vital meaning to what he has to say in his theology. To be taught by means of text books is one thing but to be taught through the school of experience is entirely a different thing. It is because Dr. Lewis has had the latter teaching that his learning now has profound significance in Twentieth Century Theology.

C. Comparisons Between the Theology of Amos And Edwin Lewis

Already in this thesis a study has been made of

Amos' concept of God. Three main points were touched; first and foremost, Amos' concept of God's justice, secondly, Amos' concept of the love of God, and thirdly, Amos' view of God as Creator of all things and Ruler of the same, in nature and in history. What comparisons does one find in the theology of Edwin Lewis with this theology of Amos? The following section will attempt to answer this question.

Lewis and Amos compare best, in their ideas concerning God as Creator and Ruler of the universe and of the affairs of men in history. Lewis like Amos views God as Creator of all things as seen by the following statement: "Profoundly speaking, therefore, 'I believe in God the Creator' must be and is the first article of the Christian creed."¹ Again Lewis says:

"Every time we repeat the Lord's prayer, we affirm our faith in the Creator: 'Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever.' We can only say, therefore, that creation is primal miracle."²

In his book, God and Ourselves, Lewis includes a chapter on The Universal Sovereign. In the course of his argument Lewis stresses God as Creator. Lewis says: "In that case, the whole--the universe--is dependent, and a dependent universe calls for a Creator."³

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation, p.94

2. Ibid

3. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 48

Lewis' argument here is simply this, that a dependent universe must be dependent upon something or someone and to Lewis this something or someone is a creative God¹ "whose act the universe is."

Amos makes direct statement as to his belief in God as Creator when he says:

"For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth--Jehovah, the God of Hosts, is his name."²

Thus it can be seen that the two theologians have a common faith in a God who is the Creator of all things. But this is not all. For both of the prophets can be compared in their ideas of God as Ruler of that which He has created, and of the affairs of men in history. Lewis says: "God conceived simply as Creator is not sufficient."³ If God were simply conceived of as Creator and only Creator then all would be vanity.

Since the time of Amos much has been written concerning the nature of God. Theories upon theories have been held by "scholars" as to the nature of God, His existence and the like. Because of this Lewis must, as a twentieth century theologian, study all these theories and evaluate them in the light of Christian

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1. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 51

2. Amos 4:13

3. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 139

revelation. He has done just this concerning God's re-¹lationship with the world of which He is Creator. Three prevelant views are held concerning God's relation to His world. They are as follows: first, God is completely separate from the world which he made; second, God is completely identified with the world which He made; and third, God and the world are in organic relation. Lewis' belief is that God is the Immanent Sustainer of the world's life but at the same time He transcends the world.² Lewis says concerning God that, "He is within the world, but He is also without it."³ Although these theories were probably unknown to Amos, yet one is inclined to think that Amos' view would agree with Lewis' view on this point. Amos never thinks of God unless he thinks of Him as active in the world which He created, and again Amos never fails to realize that the sovereign God is one who transcends all creation.

But even beyond the concept of God as immanent and transcendent there is, in both Amos' and Lewis' theology a place for teleology. God is not merely interested in creating a world to exercise His power, but beyond this there is an underlying purpose in all creation and experiences in History. Lewis says:

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, pp. 11,12,
13 and 14
2. Ibid., p. 14
3. Ibid.

"Christianity believes in a God who has a gracious purpose with men. It regards the world as an instrument of this purpose, created and sustained by God who thus employs it."¹

In the previous chapter it was learned that Amos conceived of God as not only Creator of all things but ruler of the same. Amos saw Jehovah as a God of purpose. The nations which surrounded Israel were to be the instrument by which Jehovah would punish the Israelites. Lewis says: "He must be everywhere present and active for the purpose of the cosmos conceived as the instrument by which he seeks his ends."² The events of history, then, do not merely happen for the sake of happening but rather all that is, is for a purpose. The God who created has a purpose for the things which He created, i.e., a moral purpose. As Amos shows how Jehovah uses nature and nations as instruments to carry out His moral purpose so Lewis views creation and the events in history as being under the guidance of God. Lewis says: "God is everywhere and He is in everything."³ The hand of God has never been withdrawn from this world. Again Lewis says: "History is process controlled by purpose, and there necessarily enters into the process whatever the purpose requires."⁴ As Amos

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 17
2. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 145
3. Ibid., p. 138
4. Ibid., pp. 112-113

saw Jehovah's judgment in the whirlwind¹ so Lewis regards the so called "unnatural" events of life, such as earthquakes, famine and the like, as being expressions "of the reign of law."² Lewis says further: "The very fact of any event, no matter what it may be, is the evidence that it was provided for in the scheme of things."³

To Amos, the ultimate purpose of God is to usher in a time when God shall rule supreme in the hearts of the faithful few. This idea of the remnant⁴ which shall be saved and together with the Messiah shall rule, is the hope Amos sets forth to the people. The future look is hopefully pointing towards a heavenly reign with Christ as King. This is better known in the New Testament as the Kingdom of God or Heaven. Thus the ultimate purpose of God according to Amos and Lewis is the establishing of the Kingdom of God. Amos speaks of this rule in a materialistic sense:

"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land⁵ which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God."

Thus the final purpose of God in all of history is to establish His Kingdom which shall have no end and which shall be permanent. Lewis' idea of God's ultimate pur-

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1. Amos 1:14

2. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 109

3. Ibid.

4. Amos 9:11 ff.

5. Amos 9:15

pose is basically the same. It must be remembered that Lewis has had the privilege of Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom, and therefore he has a fuller understanding of the ultimate purpose. But generally speaking the hope that each prophet tells forth concerning this final aspect of God's purpose in life is the same.

Like Amos, Lewis believes that the Kingdom is made up of all true believers in God.¹ As Amos points towards the Messiah, so Lewis points to Him also. Lewis says: "The Bible gives us the history of the Kingdom idea and the perfect expression of the idea in Jesus Christ."²

Both Amos and Lewis think of the coming of the Kingdom in the final sense of that fulfillment of God's purpose which is not of this world. Amos did not have the teachings of Christ before him as he wrote concerning the final restoration of God's people, but the language of the prophet is not only to be understood as materialistic but as spiritual. Lewis again has an advantage over the prophet Amos in that he has before him as he writes Jesus own words concerning the Kingdom. The final purpose of God as seen by Lewis is in the Kingdom. Lewis says: "The future of the Kingdom of God on earth is just

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1. Edwin Lewis: Great Christian Teachings, p. 97 ff.

2. Ibid.

as urgent a problem as the future of the Kingdom of God beyond the earth."¹ No one would doubt the truth in the statement above. Yet, as important a thing as it is that the Kingdom of God be advanced here on earth, for there would be no Kingdom hereafter without that Kingdom being first established in hearts of men in the here and now, Lewis sees beyond the immediate purpose of God in establishing the Kingdom within men's hearts, to the future and final purpose of God in establishing His Kingdom forever in the beyond.

The problem here is not the Kingdom of God, for that would entail a study in itself, but it can be readily seen that Amos and Lewis visualize a bright future for Kingdom members, as the God of purpose has revealed to them. Ultimately God shall triumph over evil, and the good along with those made good through His grace shall reign with Him eternally.

The following words of Lewis sum up well the position of the prophet of old and of himself regarding a purposive God:

"The inevitabilities of existence, therefore, whether of thought or of action, whether of life or of the results of these conditions, are determined by God according to the requirements of a fully-chosen purpose."²

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 129
2. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 74

This God, who created all things and sustains the same with a purpose in all of life, according to the theology of Amos and Lewis, is primarily a God of the individual. This is a second and basic comparison of the two prophets. God is an approachable God. He desires the fellowship of men. Lewis says: "For Christian thought, then, there is possible between God and man the most intimate personal relationship."¹ Amos had such a relationship with Jehovah which is best shown in his call as prophet.² To Amos, God was always extending His hand out to man in order that sinful man might repent and live in fellowship with Himself.³ Thus Amos beseeches the people to, "Seek ye Jehovah."⁴ Amos knew that all the injustice of the times could not be righted unless the individuals which comprised the society of the times, would seek Jehovah and enjoy a personal relationship with Him. Thus Lewis says:

"God's purpose is primarily with men, to bring them by means of their manifold contacts with the world to intimate personal relationship with Himself."⁵

Concerning the God who created the universe Lewis says:
"There is no incompatibility between thinking of God as the Source of the universe and God as the intimate

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 19
2. Amos 7:15
3. Amos 5:14
4. Amos 5:4-6
5. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 18

Personal Companion of men."¹ Further Lewis says: "He has a personal interest in men, and for that reason seeks their highest good."² Amos, the prophet of Justice, must also have known that God was on the side of men seeking their good or else to what avail would his message of repentance have been?³ The whole ministry of Amos was taken up with the task of bringing individuals to a new experience with Jehovah. The individual personal relationship with God had been wanting in the lives of the Israelites for years. The call was for a vital experience with God. Forms and ceremonies could not take the place of this needed individual fellowship. These even became hateful to Jehovah.⁴ Alongside of this the following words of Lewis might well be put:

"Any form or device is legitimate that makes God more real to men, or that makes men more sure of God, but it ceases to be legitimate the moment it becomes an end rather than a means."⁵

Again Lewis says:

"It is not the wise in head but the pure in heart who find God. The God who can be approached only through another, or only through prescribed external forms, is not the Christian God."⁶

Sacrifices, rites, ceremonies, are not to be frowned upon

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 19
2. Ibid., p. 21
3. Amos 5:14
4. Amos 5:21-23
5. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 19
6. Ibid., pp. 19 and 20

as evil in themselves but rather they are good of themselves but unfortunately can and are perverted in use. Amos knew that these stood in the way of the individuals need of direct fellowship with God. The Psalmist has said:

"For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."¹

Neither Amos nor Lewis would belittle the need or the place of outward forms of worship as a means or aid to the real fellowship with God but rather they would stress the need for personal relation with God as primary at all times. Lewis says wisely:

"Not that we can know the whole truth of God by a direct experience of him. But what we need to know about him for the purposes of religious faith and for the realization of our sonship-this not only may be a direct personal discovery, but it must be."²

A third comparison between the theology of Amos and that of Lewis is in their idea concerning the love of God. Amos does not directly speak of the love of God.³ The love of God is present however, and underlies the prophet's message. Lewis thinks of God as a God of love. He goes farther than merely calling God a God of love but

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1. Psalm 51:16, 17

2. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 20

3. See preceding chapter, Section C

he adds the qualifying word "holy."¹ God is a God of holy love. Lewis' own words can best explain what he means when he adds the term "holy," he says:

"To regard God's love as merely benevolence or good nature is to endanger such verities as the wrath of God and the certainty of the operation of the moral law."²

Lewis says concerning God's holiness and love;

"God's holiness is His deep concern for what is right. His love is His deep concern for men's good. But the two are never in conflict. God sets Himself against sin and God punishes sin, not merely because He is a holy God, but also because He is a God of love."³

Again Lewis says concerning the love of God:

"His nature is therefore seen to be holy love because His purpose is that we shall find blessedness in and through righteousness."⁴

To Lewis there is a sternness in God's love. Judgment is present. As Amos views God's love, he too sees in judgment a divine love which purposes ultimately to bring men to a closer walk with God.⁵

A fourth and final comparison between the theology of Amos and of Lewis can be seen in their ideas of the justice of God. The most salient note in the theology of Amos is the justice of God. Amos is the prophet of

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 21
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 22
5. Amos 5:14, 15

of justice; individual and social.¹ God is just and must deal justly with all men and nations. At the basis of God's justice is His righteousness. Because God is righteous He cannot tolerate sin. If man sins, and he does, he must be judged. Individual judgment affects society. Amos preaches against the injustice of men as individuals and men as nations. God must be just for He is righteous. Because He is righteous He hates all sin, individual and social. The judgment of God is according to His standard of righteousness. Throughout the book of Amos the cry is for "justice." Lewis says: "There are eternal laws of right because all-knowing Eternal Mind is also all-holy Eternal Will."² Lewis realizes that the holy and righteous character of God demands that sin be punished. God would not be a just God if He did not deal adequately with sin. Lewis says: "If God dealt with sin "softly," He would fail to make us see what sin really is."³

Concerning God's judgment of sin Lewis says:

"Not that God wants sin, and not that he directly produces it, but he maintains the conditions which make it possible, and he has a purpose which renders it inevitable."⁴

Further on Lewis says concerning the preceding statement:

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1. See preceding chapter, Section B
2. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 33
3. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 63
4. Ibid., p. 58

"But it does not mean that God shall not leave men in their sins; it does mean that He shall not pass judgment on them indifferently; and it does mean that He shall use all His resources to save the sinner and put an end to sin."¹

Amos would agree with Lewis here. They both realize that the God who allows sin also is the same God who provides a way of escape from the judgment of God. However, this does not effect the justice of God. The standard of judgment is still the righteous character of God. Why God chooses to make a way of escape is one of the Christian mysteries. One thing which all men can be sure of is that the judgments of God are just.

D. Contrasts Between the Theology of Amos And Edwin Lewis

There are basic comparisons between the theology of Amos and of Lewis, as was seen in the section above. Are there any contrasts between the two prophets concerning their theology? The following portion will point out such contrasts as can be found.

It must always be kept in mind, in attempting to contrast two prophets who are separated by a great period of time, that naturally there will be contrasts in theology. Basically Amos and Lewis compare well. The points at which they may be contrasted are not at all serious, i.e., these contrasts do not undermine the points on which

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1. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 58

they are in complete harmony. It also must be realized that Amos spoke of God as God was pleased to reveal Himself, so that what the world has now in the book of Amos is known as part of God's Word; the special revelation of God to men.¹ Lewis on the other hand cannot add to this Word already given but must base his message upon the Word already revealed in both the Old and New Testaments.

First of all, and probably the greatest contrast in the theology of Amos and Lewis, is the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. At the outset, let it be understood that the writer does not mean to infer that Jesus Christ and His work was not conceived of in the plan of God in the days of Amos. On the contrary, the prophet Amos points to a hope, which hope is in the Messiah.² The plan of God has not evolved, i.e., God has not placed something new in His plan for each age. The plan and purpose of God in Christ was made before the worlds were formed.³ In Amos' day the look was to Christ's first coming as Messiah. Today the look is both backward to Christ's first coming and forward to His second coming. The grace of God was not fully manifested until Christ came.⁴

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1. For Lewis on Revelation in the Old Testament, see A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation, p. 30 ff.
2. Amos 9:11 ff
3. John 1:2
4. John 1:17

In a sense Lewis has an advantage over Amos in that Christ's coming is history. But to Lewis, as well as to Amos, it took the eye of faith to bring God to the heart. The contrast then is that Lewis has in Christ's life and teachings something which the prophet Amos was not privileged to have. God was speaking through Amos and the other prophets but the final message of God to man was in His Son.¹ Although the nature of God has never changed and although He did manifest His attributes to man in Amos' day, yet, there is a sense in which no age previous to Christ's first coming had in full measure realized the finality of God's dealings with man. Whether or not Amos knew of the life which Christ was to live or of the death He was to die or of the resurrection which should be His final work on earth, is not told in his book. On the other hand Lewis has had this revelation of the final and complete work of Christ. It is upon the life and work of Christ that Lewis forms most of his theology. Thus his theology centers in a person, that of Christ. The two fundamental beliefs which Lewis points the world to concerning Christ are: 1) That Christ is Saviour,² and 2) That Christ is Lord.³ Amos' theology centered in Jehovah the God of Hosts.³ The contrast here is not

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1. Heb. 1:4

2. Edwin Lewis: A Manual of Christian Beliefs, p. 84, 87

3. Amos 6:14

between different Gods but rather between different persons of the Godhead, the Father and the Son. Of course it is not possible to think of the Father without calling attention to the Son and the Spirit. Yet Lewis' main concern in theology is with the Son and His redemptive work for mankind.

A marked contrast in the theology of the two men of God, is the manner in which their theology is recorded. In view of Amos' life as a shepherd and a prophet in rural life, one would expect to find his theology to be practical. In studying the book of Amos it is not possible to find statements written for the express purpose of stating a belief about God. Although there are verses that express beliefs concerning the nature of God, yet these verses are part of a message of much practicality. Lewis of necessity must evaluate theological positions and arrive at a dogma of theological truth. The contrast here is between a humble shepherd and a learned professor of theology. The danger of the latter is that one might fail to meet the needs of men unless the abstract theological dogmas are translated into everyday living. Fortunately Lewis has brought his theology from abstract terms to the concrete. All of this can be understood when it is seen in the light of the age of the prophets. Amos' age demanded such a message as he had concerning God, and in turn the age in which Lewis is living demands his

message and its' manner of being written. As a professor of theology Lewis writes and thinks in abstract terms. Yet, one cannot help but feel that this is necessary if he is to reach the mind of the student. There is a sense in which a truth must be set down in words, as clumsy as they may be. The interpretation of these truths should follow, i.e., unless these dogmas are made practical they lose all significance.

E. Implications for 1946

The brief discussion above on the comparisons and contrasts between the theology of Amos and of Edwin Lewis is of little value unless seen in the light of the immediate present. What bearing does all that has been said in the preceding sections have to do with twentieth century theology and Christian living? The following discussion will aim to answer this question.

The trend of theology, taking Lewis as a representative theologian, is towards a growing conservatism. The centrality of teaching concerning God is to be found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is a healthy sign and points towards a growing understanding in the things of God. It also points towards a revitalizing of the Christian ministry.

Along with this growth towards a more conservative view of the Scriptures and of the person and work of

Jesus Christ, has come a note of assurance in theology, again taking Lewis as representative of modern theology. Lewis realizes the need of such assurance when he writes: "The modern religious teacher needs nothing so much as to recover the note of assurance."¹ Lewis goes on to say that: "He can hardly expect to convince others when he himself exhibits a manifest uncertainty."² At this point Lewis stresses the fact that the only way the teacher will have assurance of the things of Christianity is by himself having a vital experience with God.³

Again another trend in theology is the emphasis upon the individual and his relation with God. The need of the world today, as in every age, is for a personal experience of God through Jesus Christ. Lewis says: "The heart of man still cries out for God, and he who speaks for God, knowing whereof he speaks, will find a response."⁴ Man is hungry for food to satisfy the soul. Theology today faces a crises as to what it will do in the face of multitudes who desire the Bread of Life. All signs point towards an awakening, not only to a realization of the problem, but to an active program whereby this inner need of man's spirit might be filled. As Lewis continues to value the human soul above all else in life, so must all

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1. Edwin Lewis: God and Ourselves, p. 35

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 42

4. Ibid., p. 39

who think of themselves as Christian leaders.

One of the outstanding implications in this study between the comparisons of Amos and Lewis, lay in their stress on God as Creator and as Ruler in all of life. The trend in theology is to treat this basic truth with much seriousness. If the God of the Bible is not creator and sustainer of all things then what value is the Book to the world? The Cross and Resurrection mean little if the same Christ who died and rose again did not create all things. God, in Christ, as creator has taken a new place in theological thinking.

The age-long controversy over the person of Christ is still with theology today. The implications however, point to an exaltation of the person of Christ. The trend is away from a humanistic view of Jesus Christ. The deity of Christ has won the thinking of the theologian. There are those here and there who still preach a simply "human" Jesus but as a rule the trend is to exalt the deity of Christ. This should not suggest that the human Jesus is omitted but rather there is a harmonizing of the two natures. Lewis would be the last one to exclude the human Jesus from the divine. He rather would see the two as one, working hand in hand.

Again theology is ever bringing to the fore of Christian thinking the fact that the God who has created all things guides the affairs of history. God has a pur-

pose for the human race. All things work towards the final time when God shall reign with Christ as King of the Kingdom for which He died. This glorious reign shall be forever and redound to the glory of the God of Hosts.

What effect should the preceding sections have upon the life of every Christian? Much in every way. First of all, every Christian must, along with the prophets, have a sense of assurance in the things which they hold to be Christian truths. These are days when Christians must hold fast to the things which are basic to Christianity. There will always be differences of opinions among men concerning minor issues in the Christian faith. The need today is not to quarrel like school children over less important issues, but the need is for each Christian to be assured of the great basic truths of the Christian Faith such as: God as Creator through Christ, God as Purposer pointing to Christ as the end of God's revealed purpose, God, as a God of justice, love and grace towards individuals supremely manifested in Jesus Christ, and God as the final victor over sin through His Son Who shall reign forever with the Kingdom members. These basic truths bring Amos and Lewis together with one accord concerning God. Upon such truths must the individual Christian take his stand concerning the God of the Bible. But to stop here would be folly, for the Christian life cannot stand alone on great truths concerning a great God but

ultimately the only safe and sure ground upon which to take a stand is the person of Jesus Christ. Christianity centers in the person of Christ, God's final and complete revelation to man. With the great truths concerning God and a vital relationship with the person of Christ, the Christian can go on in this life unmolested by all the hosts of evil.

F. Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to compare and contrast the theology of Amos, the prophet of old, and the modern theologian, Edwin Lewis. This comparison was based upon the third chapter, namely, The Concept of God In the Book of Amos.

First, the study was introduced by a general introduction to the subject of the chapter. Secondly, the life of Edwin Lewis was briefly discussed touching on his background as a Christian worker. This part purposed to show Lewis' trend from a liberal view of theology to a more conservative position. Next comparisons between the theology of Amos and of Lewis were discussed. This portion made clear that basically, Amos and Lewis agree as to their ideas of God. Then there followed a brief discussion on the contrasts in the theology of Amos and of Lewis. The comparisons outnumbered the contrasts, the contrasts in no way undermine the great basic agree-

ments of the two men of God. Finally, the chapter ended with a study of the implications, manifest in the preceding sections, for life in 1946.

CHAPTER V
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Purpose and Restatement

As already stated at the outset of this study, the purpose of this thesis has been to examine the revelation concerning God's nature as found in the prophet Amos, and to compare and contrast the findings with the theology of the modern prophet and theologian, Edwin Lewis.

The procedure was to examine the concept of God as found in the book of Amos. This study has been made in the second and third chapters. The fourth chapter has dealt with the comparisons and contrasts between the theology of Amos and of Edwin Lewis. The following sections will present a summary of the second, third, and fourth chapters. Along with the summaries of the chapters will be presented conclusions of the same.

B. General Summary of the Main Chapters

1. General Summary of Chapter Two

The second chapter of this thesis was concerned with the background of Amos and of his book and message. To summarize this chapter, first it was noticed that the land of the book was Palestine. The important locations, i.e., the places of which this thesis was concerned, were

the kingdom of Israel in the north, the southern kingdom of Judah, and the nations which surrounded the kingdom of Israel. The political, social and religious conditions of Israel were very black. This black condition of Israel was due primarily to the backsliding of the nation, a result of disobedience to Jehovah. The nations which surrounded Israel were no better in their political, social and religious life. They, too, were in the midst of darkness. In both cases, of Israel and the nations bordering Israel, the times were black because the right relationship was not held between God and themselves and between themselves and others. It was urgent that someone make known, or at least re-emphasize, the true character of God. This was Amos' task. Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, was well prepared by Jehovah to undertake such a task of proclaiming the true character of Jehovah. His life as prophet was not a life of ease but had its' difficult situations. But Amos, by the help of the One who called him to prophesy, did his work well.

2. General Summary of Chapter Three

In this chapter the concept of God in the book of Amos was studied. It was seen that Amos' concept of the justice of God was the salient note in his teaching concerning the attributes of God. This was seen mainly in two ways, the justice of God in His dealings with man,

and the demands of justice from all men. Next Amos' concept of the love of God was considered. It was noticed that the love of God is not apparent in Amos to any large degree. It also was seen that although Amos dealt primarily with God as a God of justice that underlying Amos' teaching there is the love of God present. God loves man as the special affection of His heart, and He desires in turn that man love Him and his fellowmen. Amos views God as Creator of all things but he does not stop here. He also sees that Jehovah who created all things also rules the same. God is a God of purpose. His hand is in all history.

3. General Summary of Chapter Four

In the fourth chapter the study centered in comparing and contrasting the theology of Amos and of Edwin Lewis. This was done with the purpose of bringing the past into vital contact with the present. In order then better to understand the implications of Amos' teaching on the nature of God for Christian theology and for Christian living in life today, such a comparison of Amos and Lewis was made. Dr. Lewis of Drew Theological Seminary was chosen as representative of theology in the life of the Church today. His background as a Christian worker and scholar have made him of special significance in theology. It was noticed that Lewis has changed his position

in theology from an extreme liberalism to a more moderate conservatism and that at present he is still in the process of this change. The comparisons between the theology of Amos and of Lewis are on basic truths of the Christian faith. Of the many things on which the two prophets agree, the one most outstanding is concerning God as Creator and Purposer of the Universe. God is the reference of all things. He has not only created all things but He has an underlying purpose, which purpose is the final reign of those in the Kingdom with Christ as King. In comparing the two men of God further, it was noticed that each conceived of God as a God of the individual.

Both men realize the problem of social rightness is a problem of personal rightness with God. The stress of the personal relation of man with God in the theology of Amos and Lewis is basic to all their thinking. Next it was noticed that the prophets conceived of God as a God of love. Following this was a discussion on the justice of God found in their theology. Here again it was seen that the basis of social justice among men is a personal rightness with a just and holy God. God cannot tolerate sin because He Himself is righteous. Therefore, man must repent of the sin of injustice and seek the Lord God who alone can make the crooked straight.

Next this chapter sought to bring to light some basic contrasts between the theology of Amos and of Lewis.

It was noticed that the contrasts between the prophets were not serious or in any way harmful. The most important contrast was that of the place of Jesus Christ in the thinking of the two men of God. Lewis has the advantage of history. Amos looked towards the coming of Christ while Lewis looks back to His life on earth. The center of Lewis' teaching is Christ, who is the final revelation of God to man.

The chapter concluded with a section on the implications of the comparisons and contrasts between the two men of God, to life today. Theology today, using Lewis as an example, is moving towards a more conservative position. The implications for Christians today was seen to lay mainly in the need for agreement upon basic truths in Christianity and above all centering the life in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

C. Conclusions

The conclusions of this study are, first, that God is revealed in Amos as a God of righteousness and justice. He also is a God of infinite love. The note of God's universality is salient in Amos. God also is Creator and Purposer of all life. He who created all things guides the same. The ultimate purpose in life as seen by Amos is God's establishment of His Kingdom wherein He shall reign forever with His own.

The next conclusion is that Amos' concept of God is basically the same as the concept of God according to Edwin Lewis, theologian. Both men agree on the essential beliefs about God which beliefs are basic to Christianity.

Finally, in the light of the above, the great need of all who call themselves Christian is to come to recognize that there are basic truths in Christianity concerning God which must be believed with conviction and hope, which conviction and hope should be fixed in God's final revelation of Himself, Jesus Christ.

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