

d. A note on the social criticism.

We don't have a lot of time for special studies on particular themes but this is interesting and appropriate in the light of the challenges of our day. It is obvious that the prophet has a right to speak to the trials of his time and this "right" is properly a part of his ministry. We will see the same thing in Micah but perhaps less developed. Notice his comments on the social order:

- 3:10, deplores the hoarding of ill-gotten gain
- 3:15, denounces excessive living
- 4:1, oppression of the poor
- 5:7, corrupt officials
- 5:10, oppression of the right
- 5:11, exploitation of the poor
- 5:12, moral and legal injustice
- 6:1, lack of morality concern (complacency rules!)
- 6:3, luxurious, corrupt and defiled living
- 8:4, abuse of the poor
- 8:5, all consuming desire for gain
- 8:6, impressment and/or indenture
- 9:10, denial of justice

These gross social sins are produced by disbelief (9:10), substitution of divine law and will (8:14, 5:4), hypocrisy (5:18-20; 4:4-5), and thanklessness (2:10-11), among other things. The prophets message is not to reform society, however, but "seek ye me" and "turn from your wicked ways."

Amos is an enormously practical study and the preacher of this age will find a lot of fuel for his homiletical fire contained therein.

4. A Survey Study of Obadiah (TVT materials again in play)

a. An Overview of Obadiah (God's accounting)

The burden of this, the smallest book in the Old Testament, is for Edom, the land descended from Easu, the jealous kin of the Hebrew peoples. The author is unknown historically although there are plenty of Obadiah's in the Old Testament. Attempts to make him the Obadiah of Ahaz's time (Elijah's friend) would seem to put him too early for the prophecy against Edom as, among other things, Edom was subjugated by Israel for much of this time. It is more likely that the prophecy is directed against Edom after that nation so gleefully joined in the spoiling of Judah in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (Lam. 4:21, Ezek 25:12, cf. Ezek 35:10). Since this is a prophecy of their utter ruin it would seem better placed in the 6th century than in the 8th and I lean that way. There is no absolute evidence, however. A considerable critical debate is waged on the similarity of Obadiah 1-9 and Jeremiah 49:7-22. It is too technical for this sort of a course but it seems highly unlikely to me that either prophet borrowed from the other or from a third unknown source...people occupied with the same set of problems often speak in similar terms and phrases. The prophet's name, as you perhaps know, means "servant of Jehovah" and this may account why there are several of them in the Old Testament...a rather nice name to give to a baby for whom the parents have hope and optimistic outlook. Obadiah is completely poetic although some scholars have seen elements of prose in the last five verses. Almost nothing may be said, as you know, to which no scholar takes exception of has an alternate opinion.