

Amos

Judgment for Social Injustice			
Eight Judgments	Three Sermons	Five Visions	Promise of Restoration
Chapters 1–2	Chapters 3–6	7:1–9:7	9:8-15
“This is what the LORD says...” (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4)	“Hear this word...” (3:1; 4:1; 5:1)	“This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me...” (7:1, 4, 7; 8:1)	“In that day...” and “The days are coming...” (9:11, 13)
God’s Impartiality	God’s Justice	God’s Judgments	God’s Grace
Pronouncements of Judgment	Provocations of Judgment	Future of Judgment	Promises after Judgment
Judgment		Renewal	
Horror		Hope	
Neighbor Nations	Northern Nation		
767-753 BC (before the fall of Samaria)			

Key Word: Injustice

Key Verse: “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream”
(Amos 5:24).

Summary Statement:

Amos’ message of judgment against the social injustices of Israel and the surrounding nations warns of the coming exile and declares God’s promise to restore a remnant in faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant, urging the nation to repent.

Application:

Prosperous Christians must not wink at social injustice.

1. What social injustices do you see in your society?
2. What responsibility does the Church have to correct these wrongs?
3. What is God telling *you* to do about a social inequity?

Amos

Introduction

- I. **Title** The name Amos (עָמוֹס) is derived from the verb 'amas (עָמַס), "to load" or "to carry a load," and thus means "burden" or "burden-bearer" (BDB 770c). The significance of such a name is seen in the largely heavy nature of the prophecy. Of the nine chapters, only eight verses refer to anything positive, that being the restoration of the nation (cf. 9:8-15).

II. Authorship

- A. External Evidence: Amos' authorship has not been seriously debated.
- B. Internal Evidence: Amos describes himself as a shepherd (1:1), herdsman (7:14), and grower of sycamore figs (7:14). He came from the rural area of Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem. While this description may sound like he was a poor man (LaSor, 319), the Hebrew may suggest otherwise (Sunukjian, *BKC*, 1:1425):
1. The word used for "shepherd" in 1:1 is not the usual word *rō'eh*, but the unusual word *nōqēd* (נֹקֵד), which refers to a "sheep-raiser, -dealer, or -tender" (BDB 667a). The only other occurrence of this word is in 2 Kings 3:4, where it describes Mesha, king of Moab, who raised 100,000 sheep and 100,000 rams. Thus, as a sheep-breeder, "Amos evidently managed or owned large herds of sheep and goats, and was in charge of other shepherds" (*BKC*, 1:1425).
 2. Similarly, "herdsman" (בֹּקֵר *bōqēr*, 7:14) appears only here in the Old Testament and refers to a "herdsman" (BDB 133c) who oversaw livestock operations much like a cattleman.
 3. Finally, since sycamore figs did not grow in Tekoa, but only in the warmer lowlands in western Judah (1 Kings 10:27), it is possible that Amos supervised the taking care of these trees as a seasonal sideline.

At any rate, Amos himself admitted to not being a prophet by occupation or having received the training of a prophet in the prophetic schools, as a "son of a prophet" (7:14-15).

III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Two powerful and long-lived kings ruled the divided kingdom while he prophesied for a short time (1:1). Jeroboam II, king of Israel (793-753 BC including co-regency, or 782-753 BC alone), ruled forty-one years in the north and Uzziah (Azariah) ruled Judah fifty-two years in the south (790-739 BC including co-regency, or 767-750 BC alone). The overlapping reigns of these kings leave us with a date of composition between 767-753 BC, only about forty years before the northern tribes were taken into captivity by Assyria (LaSor, 320). Astronomical calculations note that a solar eclipse occurred in Israel on June 15, 763 BC—an event perhaps fresh in the minds of Amos' hearers (8:9; *TTTB*, 245).
- B. Recipients: Amos faced the daunting missionary challenge of leaving Judah to prophesy in Israel. Therefore, his message was unpopular, his nationality was foreign, and his credentials were considered suspect since he was an ordinary man made prophet (7:14).
- C. Occasion: Amos prophesied during a pre-exilic time of tremendous optimism. Due to Assyria's pressure on Syria and the battle between Damascus and Hamath over control of their territory, Israel had extended its borders to the original extent enjoyed under David and Solomon (2 Kings 14:25). Judah had also conquered the Philistines, the Arabians, and the Ammonites. During these years, Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, and Egypt all had weak influence, which made it difficult for the hearers of Amos' message to envision disaster from enemies in the near future.

This political peace brought false religious worship (3:14; 5:4-5, 21-23; 7:9; 9:1-4), great material prosperity (3:15; 4:1; 6:1, 4-6), and international trade, resulting in greed, injustice, neglect of the poor, and finally persecution of the poor (5:11-15; 6:4-7; 8:4; cf. LaSor, 321). Thus God called Amos to speak out against the religious and moral evils of his day in the northern kingdom so that justice could "roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream" (5:24).

IV. Characteristics

- A. Most of the book is negative, with all but the last eight verses speaking of judgment. This gives it the highest judgment/blessing ratio of the prophetic books.
- B. Amos was likely the only businessman to write Scripture, preaching blunt, pointed sermons and using picturesque sign language that incorporated everyday objects.

Argument

The Book of Amos begins with seven judgments upon the nations surrounding Israel as well as Israel itself (chs. 1-2), followed by three sermons against Israel's injustices (chs. 3-6), illustrated through five visions of judgment (7:1-9:7), and concluding with eight verses of hope in restoration (9:8-15). His purpose for declaring judgment upon Israel for its social injustices is to motivate the nation to repent, since God is committed to the Abrahamic Covenant.

Synthesis

Judgment for social injustices

1-2	Judgments
1:1-2	Introduction
1:3-2:5	Nations indicted for sins against Israel
2:6-16	Israel indicted for sins against itself
3-6	Sermons
3	Ignorance of doing right
4	Exploitation/formalism
5-6	Exile for violations
7:1-9:7	Visions
7:1-3	Locusts
7:4-6	Fire
7:7-9	Plumb line
7:10-17	(Historical interlude: Amaziah opposes Amos)
8	Ripe fruit
9:1-7	Smashed pillars
9:8-15	Restoration
9:8-10	Remnant
9:11-15	Complete renewal

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

Amos' message of judgment against the social injustices of Israel and the surrounding nations warns of the coming exile and declares God's promise to restore a remnant in faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant, urging the nation to repent.

I. God would judge injustice in Israel (Amos 1:1-9:7).

- A. Eight warnings show God would soon judge seven neighboring nations and Israel (Amos 1-2).
 - 1. Amos composes the message of judgment upon Israel about four decades before its fulfillment as proof that the nation had plenty of time to repent (1:1-2).
 - a) The author, Amos, notes he was a shepherd from Tekoa to strengthen his message by showing God's special choice of him as one who was not a professional prophet (1:1a).

- b) Amos prophesied two years before the earthquake (in 760 BC?; Zech. 14:5) while Jeroboam II and Uzziah ruled (767-753 BC) to give Israel nearly 40 years to repent before exile (722 BC; 1:1b).
 - c) Amos' theme is that God, like a roaring lion and thunder, will devastate Israel (1:2).
2. God would soon judge seven surrounding nations and Israel itself that it might realize that God will punish sin regardless of nationality (1:3–2:16).
- a) God indicts nations surrounding Israel for sins against Israel, moving progressively closer to Israel each time to help them see their greater responsibility before God's just punishment (1:3–2:5; see p. 591 and locations on p. 444).

Structural Marker: "This is what the LORD says" (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4)

- (1) God indicts Aram, Israel's bitter enemy, for opposing Transjordan Israel to show that God will punish this unrelated nation (1:3-5).
 - (2) God indicts Philistia, Israel's bitter enemy, for selling Israel into slavery to show that God will punish this unrelated nation (1:6-8).
 - (3) God indicts Tyre for selling Jews as slaves and breaking its covenant of brotherhood to show that God will punish this former ally (1:9-10; cf. 1 Kings 5).
 - (4) God indicts Edom, blood relatives via Esau, yet enemies, for persistent hostility towards Israel, to show that God will punish this "brother" nation (1:11-12).
 - (5) God indicts Ammon, blood relatives via Lot, yet enemies, for taking Israel's land by killing pregnant women to show that God will punish this "cousin" nation (1:13-15).
 - (6) God indicts Moab, blood relatives via Lot, yet enemies, for mistreating Edom to show that God will punish this "cousin" nation (2:1-3).
 - (7) God indicts Judah, Israel's closest relations via Jacob, for rejecting God's law in its privileged position, to show that God will punish this nearest blood nation (2:4-5).
- b) God's longest indictment is against Israel itself for rejecting His grace for sins against itself in social injustices, even though it had much revelation (2:6-16).
- (1) Israel broke the covenant and got involved in injustice, materialism, oppression of the poor, sexual immorality, and ritualistic worship (2:6-8).
 - (2) Israel rejected God's grace revealed in His clearing the Amorites from them, delivering them from Egypt, and sending prophets and Nazirites to them (2:9-12).
 - (3) Israel will be punished so it will realize that God keeps His word (2:13-16).
- B. Three sermons of judgment show God's righteous reasons for judging Israel (Amos 3–6).

Structural Marker: "Hear this word" (3:1; 4:1; 5:1)

1. Judgment will come on Israel because, although a chosen people, they still did not know how to do right (Ch. 3).
- a) Israel deserves judgment for being a nation privileged with redemption from Egypt and blessed with prophets, yet still does not know how to do what is right (3:1-10).
 - (1) Israel will receive a stricter judgment than the other nations because God redeemed the people from Egypt and gave them a chosen status (3:1-2).
 - (2) As certain events in ordinary life are always associated, so Israel's judgment is inevitable and must be spoken by God's prophets (3:3-8).
 - (3) God calls pagans to see Israel's ruin for not knowing how to do right (3:9-10).

- b) God will judge Israel with destroyed fortresses, pagan altars, and beautiful homes, but leave a remnant due to His commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (3:11-15).
 - (1) God will use an enemy to destroy the strongholds and fortresses (3:11).
 - (2) Only a remnant will be saved in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant (3:12).
 - (3) God will destroy the pagan altars and beautiful homes because of His displeasure with the nation's idolatry and materialism (3:13-15).
- 2. Judgment will come on the rich women of Bashan for exploiting the poor while involved in ritual formalism and upon all Israel for refusing God's warnings to repent (Ch. 4).
 - a) Judgment is coming upon the rich women of the region of Bashan because they exploit the poor to satisfy their expensive tastes (4:1-3).
 - b) God sarcastically invites these rich women to heap up more sins of religious ritualism without proper deeds (4:4-5).
 - c) God had already sent many judgments to motivate the nation to repent, but the people persisted in their sin, thus proving God's righteous judgment (4:6-13).
 - (1) God sent *famine*, but Israel would not repent (4:6).
 - (2) God sent a *drought*, but Israel would not repent (4:7-8).
 - (3) God sent *crop failure*, but Israel would not repent (4:9).
 - (4) God sent *plagues*, but Israel would not repent (4:10).
 - (5) God *devastated some cities*, but Israel would not repent (4:11).
 - (6) God's coming judgment is *fair* because Israel would not repent (4:12-13).
- 3. Exile and death will hit Israel for its idolatry, religious ritual, and refusal to repent (Chs. 5–6).
 - a) Amos sings God's funeral song about Israel's exile with a ninety percent mortality rate in war to alert the people that soon most of them would be dead (5:1-3).
 - b) God warns the people to turn away from cult centers and seek Him as their sovereign, Creator God (5:4-9).
 - c) God warns the people to turn from their legal injustices to seek Him as the LORD God Almighty (5:10-15).
 - d) God warns that the impending judgment and exile will be a time of mourning for the secure and prideful nation (5:16–6:14).
 - (1) The deliverance associated with the Day of the LORD will be accompanied by mourning, darkness, and judgment (5:16-20).
 - (2) God will exile the nation and turn a deaf ear towards its religious ritual accompanied by idolatry (5:21-27).
 - (3) God defeated Calneh, Hamath, and Gaza, though larger and better defended than Samaria, so Israel's wealthy men should not feel secure and arrogant (6:1-7).
 - (4) God will so utterly destroy the nation for its arrogance that even those who survive will fear mentioning God's name lest He hear and strike them too (6:8-11).
 - (5) Because Israel in its pride perverts justice, God promises to stir up Assyria [not mentioned by name] to oppress them (6:12-14).

- C. Five visions of the coming judgments on Israel inform the people that they can avoid them by repenting (7:1–9:7).

Structural Marker: "This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me" (7:1, 4, 7; 8:1)

1. In the vision of the locusts, God shows His desire to strip the land bare so that Israel would die from famine, but He will not actually do it in fulfillment of His Covenant (7:1-3).
 - a) God shows Amos a vision of His desire to strip the land bare with locusts (7:1).
 - b) Since Israel would die from famine had the locusts eaten up the crop, God relented from destroying the nation because of the Abrahamic Covenant (7:2-3).
2. In the vision of the fire, God shows His desire to burn the entire nation, but He will not actually do it in fulfillment of His Covenant (7:4-6).
 - a) God shows Amos a vision of His desire to destroy the nation with fire (7:4).
 - b) Since the fire would destroy the entire nation, God relents from this act because of the Abrahamic Covenant (7:5-6).
3. In the vision of the plumb line, God illustrates how the nation is morally crooked compared to His absolute standards, so He will destroy the people and the altars (7:7-9).
 - a) God shows Amos a vision of a plumb line on a correctly built house (7:7-8a).
 - b) The plumb line illustrates how the nation is morally crooked compared to God's absolute standards, so He will destroy the people and the altars (7:8b-9).
4. Amos records a historical interlude in which Amaziah seeks to stop him from prophesying, thus revealing how even Israel's religious leaders refused to hear his message (7:10-17).
 - a) Amaziah the priest forbids Amos from prophesying and accuses him before the king of disturbing the peace, showing that even religious leaders reject his message (7:10-13).
 - b) Amos defends his right to prophesy and prophesies judgment on Amaziah (7:14-17).
 - (1) Amos responds by saying he prophesies only because God told him to do it, not because he is a professional prophet (7:14-15).
 - (2) Amos prophesies judgment against Amaziah's wife, children, land, life, and nation (7:16-17).
5. In the vision of the ripe fruit, God relates that the nation's end would soon come in judgment for disregarding social and religious duties (Ch. 8).
 - a) In the vision of the ripe fruit, God reveals that Israel would soon cease to exist as a nation (8:1-3).
 - b) The reason for the judgment is because of Israel's disregard for the poor, the New Moon festival, the Sabbath, and fair business practices (8:4-6).
 - c) Israel will be severely judged in its land, sky, and religious feasts (8:7-10).
 - d) Israel will be severely judged with no more prophetic words from God (8:11-14).
6. In a vision of the smashed pillars, the Almighty God declares that He will destroy Israel's religious system as He did any other disobedient land (9:1-7).
 - a) God declares that He will destroy the pagan religious system so that His name will not be profaned any longer (9:1-4).
 - b) The Almighty God will judge Israel like any other disobedient foreign power (9:5-7).

II. God's promises to restore a remnant of Israel to encourage Israel with His commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (9:8-15).

- A. God declares that He will not totally destroy Israel but will leave a remnant due to His loyalty to the Davidic Covenant (9:8-10).
- B. God promises to restore Israel's remnant politically, evangelistically, materially, and geographically in loyalty to the Abrahamic Covenant [fulfilled in the kingdom era] (9:11-15).
 - 1. God promises to restore the Davidic line in a political renewal to fulfill the promise to David that his descendants would remain to rule forever (9:11; cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-16).
 - 2. God promises to restore Israel to its original evangelistic purpose as a light to the Gentile nations (9:12).
 - 3. God promises to restore Israel materially and geographically to fulfill the Land Covenant (9:13-15).
 - a) Israel will enjoy material wealth with overflowing crops and wine (9:13).
 - b) Israel will once again return to the Promised Land and enjoy its material benefits to fulfill the Land Covenant (9:14-15; cf. Deut. 30:1-10).

Contrasting Hosea and Amos

Israel's Only Two Prophets

While the southern nation of Judah had at least twelve prophetic books directed towards it, the northern nation of Israel had but two prophets: Hosea and Amos. Both of their writings noted that Israel would experience judgment for abusing its privileged position before God; however, they were different in several ways as well:

<i>Hosea</i>	<i>Amos</i>
Professional Prophet (1:1)	Nonprofessional Prophet (7:14)
National from Israel (7:5)	Missionary from Judah (1:1)
Concern: Religious Idolatry (Worship)	Concern: Social Injustice (Walk)
Israel's Unfaithfulness	Israel's Injustice
God's Faithfulness	God's Justice
God's Grace	God's Righteousness
God's Loyal Love (<i>Hesed</i>)	God's Judgment
Sympathetic Tone	Stern Tone
Compassionate (11:1)	Coarse (4:1)
Difficult Structure	Simple Structure
Israel Lacks Knowledge	Israel Lacks Morality
"Know God" (4:1, 6; 6:6)	"Seek God" (5:4, 6)

Eight Nations Denounced by Amos (Amos 1–6)

Wilmingtons Guide to the Bible

NATION	CRIME	PUNISHMENT
SYRIA (1:1-5)	Had often harassed Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capital at Damascus to be burned • Their stronghold to be broken • Their citizen to be enslaved
PHILISTIA (1:6-8)	Had sold Israelites into slavery to Edom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The burning of their main cities: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron
PHOENICIA (1:9-10)	Had broken their peace covenant with Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The burning down of the forts and palaces in Tyre, their chief city
EDOM (1:11-12)	Had murdered many Jews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The destruction of their cities
AMMON (1:13-15)	Had murdered Jewish women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their cities to be burned • Their citizens to be enslaved
MOAB (2:1-3)	Had desecrated the tombs of the dead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would be defeated in battle
JUDAH (2:4-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had rejected the Word of God • Had disobeyed the God of the Word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their Temple in Jerusalem to be destroyed
ISRAEL (2:6-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had accepted bribes • Had enslaved the poor • Had committed adultery • Were totally unthankful • Had caused the innocent of sin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their punishment would make them groan as a loaded-down wagon • Their armies would stumble in battle

**Additional indictment upon the whole house of Israel
—both southern and northern kingdoms (3-6)**

Perils of Prosperity

Israel's Prophets Under Jeroboam II

The reign of Jeroboam II in Israel (793-753 BC) was the wealthiest time of the northern kingdom. Due in part to the weakness of Assyria in decline to the northeast, Israel's boundaries expanded nearly to the dimensions of the golden era of the united kingdom of David and Solomon (prophesied by Jonah in 2 Kings 14:25).

Yet this prosperity brought with it problems as well, so God sent three prophets to this godless, wealthy, oppressive nation:

	<i>Jonah</i>	<i>Amos</i>	<i>Hosea</i>
<i>Responsibility Addressed</i>	Evangelistic	Social	Spiritual
<i>Israel's Problem</i>	Myopia	Injustice	Adultery
<i>God's Attribute</i>	Compassion	Justice	Faithfulness
<i>Key Word</i>	Compassion	Injustice	Loyal
<i>Summary</i>	God cares even for cruel Gentiles, so you should care too!	God is fair with you, so you should be fair with others!	God keeps His covenant with you, so be faithful to Him as well!
<i>Modern Parallels</i>	Failure in Mission Responsibility	Oppression of Maids & Foreign Workers	Church's God is Modernity (Methods)
<i>Date of Ministry (approx.)</i>	785-758 Beginning of Jeroboam's reign	767-753 Middle of Jeroboam's reign	755-710 End of Jeroboam's reign

The Use of Amos 9 in Acts 15

The final verses of Amos' prophecy (9:11-12) provide hope for restoration to Israel after discipline by the Lord. In fact, reference is made to both a restoration of the Davidic reign and expansion of the nation's borders to include land as far southeast as Edom.

James used this text from Amos in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:16-17) to argue for the inclusion of Gentiles in the church without requiring them to undergo circumcision. Yet notable differences remain between the two, as James does not quote Amos exactly.

Amos 9:11-12	Acts 15:16-17
"In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things."	"After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things"

"Edom" (אֶדוֹם) is Hebrew (Masoretic) Text with vowel pointing אֶדוֹם that was not added until the eighth century AD. Yet in Amos' time, without the vowels, the same word could be read either as "Edom" or "mankind" (also אֶדוֹם). In Acts 15, James quoted it as "mankind." A similar problem occurs between "possess" (יָרַשׁ) and "seek" (דָּרַשׁ), which are only different by one consonant.

For interpretive problems, such as the claim that the church is being referred to here, see the supplement to the book of Acts in my *New Testament Survey*. Also, note the following from Donald R. Sunukjian, "Amos," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1451.

V. The Restoration after Judgment (9:11-15)

After all God's judgments are past, when the nation has received full punishment for her sins, the Lord will move in mercy to renew and refresh His people. God will restore David's kingdom over both the North and the South, and through it He will bless all nations of the earth. He will reverse the covenant curses and bring unprecedented prosperity to the land. Dispersed Israel will be returned to her land, there to dwell securely and enjoy its goodness. Then He who has always claimed them as "My people" (7:8, 15; 8:2; 9:10, 14; cf. Hosea 2:23; Zech. 8:8; 13:9) will once again take the title "your God" (Amos 9:15).

A. Political renewal (9:11)

9:11. In that day (cf. Isa. 4:2; Micah 4:6; 5:10) God will restore David's fallen tent. Previous references in Amos to "that day" had spoken of it as a day of darkness and destruction (Amos 2:16; 3:14; 5:18-20; 8:3, 9, 11, 13). But when Israel's ordeal is finally over, "that day" will also become the day of her renewal.

God will reestablish David's "tent" over both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. A "tent" (lit., "booth") or awning was made by setting up a simple frame and spreading branches over it. Its primary purpose was to shelter those under it, whether troops in the field (2 Sam. 11:11; 1 Kings 20:12-16), a watchman at post (Jonah 4:5), or pilgrims at the Feast of Booths (also called the Feast of Taber-

nacles, Lev. 23:33-42). David's dynasty, which had been a protective canopy over all the people of Israel, had "fallen" with the great schism of the 10 Northern tribes from the 2 Southern tribes (1 Kings 12). This booth had been broken in two. But God promised to unite the two kingdoms once again under Davidic rule (cf. Jer. 30:3-10; Ezek. 37:15-28; Hosea 3:4-5). He will restore the sheltering tent, repair its broken places, building it as it used to be. God will carry out His good promise to David that He would raise up a Descendant after him and establish His rule forever (2 Sam. 7:11-16, 25-29).

B. National purpose (9:12)

9:12. The united kingdom under its Davidic King will then become the source of blessing to all Gentiles. Edom, a nation perpetually hostile toward God's people (cf. Num. 20:14-21; Ps. 137:7; Obad. 1; see comments on Amos 1:11-12), and therefore representative of all Israel's enemies, will become a sharer in the promises to David: Israel will possess the remnant of Edom (cf. Obad. 19). In fact, all . . . nations will be brought under the dominion of the Davidic King, for they too bear God's name. To "bear someone's name" meant to be under the suzerainty and protection of that individual (cf. Deut. 28:9-10; 2 Sam. 12:26-28; 1 Kings 8:43; Isa. 4:1; 63:19; Jer. 15:16; Dan. 9:18-19). All nations belong to God (cf. Amos 1:3-2:16; 3:9; 9:4, 7) and therefore will be included in the blessings of the future kingdom.

From the beginning, God's plan has been to provide salvation for the Gentile

nations. His promise to Abraham was that through his descendants "all peoples on earth" will be blessed (Gen. 12:3; cf. Gen. 18:18; 22:17-18; 26:3-4; 28:13-14). Through Isaiah God continually affirmed that a united Israel under its Davidic King, the Messiah, will bring light, justice, and full knowledge of the Lord to all nations on the earth (Isa. 9:1-7; 11:1-13; 42:1-7; 45:22-25; 49:5-7; 55:1-5). When God restores the kingdom (the Millennium) under David's Son, both Jews and Gentiles will bear the name of the Lord.

At the Jerusalem Council, James cited Amos 9:11-12 as proof that the Gentiles of his day need not be circumcised and live as Jews in order to be saved (Acts. 15:1-20). James was aware that Israel's judgments were not yet over (cf. the Lord's statements regarding the coming destruction of the temple and renewed persecution and death, Matt. 24:1-22; Luke 21:5-24, and that the restoration had not yet begun; cf. Acts 1:6-7). But James also knew from Amos' succinct statement and from extended passages in other prophets (cf. "prophets" in Acts 15:15; also note Isa. 42:6; 60:3; Mal. 1:11) that when the promised kingdom would come, the Gentiles will share in it as Gentiles and not as quasi-Jews. Since this was God's millennial purpose, James concluded that the church should not require Gentiles to relinquish their identity and live as Jews. James was not saying the church fulfills the promises to Israel in Amos 9:11-12. He was saying that since Gentiles will be saved in the yet-to-come Millennium, they need not become Jews in the Church Age.