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The Remnant Concept as Defined by Amos

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Introduction

The study of the remnant concept from a linguistic perspective has revealed that this theme in Hebrew is basically represented by several derivatives of six different roots.¹ Five of them are used in the eighth century B.C. prophetic writings.

The purpose of this article is to investigate the earliest prophetic writing, the book of Amos, in order to understand not only what is meant when the term “remnant” is used but also the reason for its use. We will try to answer the following questions: What was the prophet Amos saying when he used this designation (whether by itself or in association with patriarchal figures)? What are the characteristics of such an entity? What is the theological intention of the prophet?

We have chosen this era because the eighth century prophets (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah) were messengers to God’s people at a crucial time in their history. All of them were sent to announce a message of judgment. Without a doubt the eighth century was “the time of the end” for the northern nation of Israel.

Historical Setting

An understanding of the era in which Amos delivered his oracles to Israel will help to define the context in which he used the remnant

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theme. Amos preached about 760 B.C., less than forty years before the end of the northern kingdom of Israel. Because he is the first writing prophet, in the prophetic literature, and also the first who unequivocally announced the end of "Israel,"² it is appropriate to spend some time to define the issue of the book for a better understanding of the remnant theme.

In the fashion of a typical covenant lawsuit (a common format in the eighth-century prophets) the prophet Amos not only reminds his audience of the stipulations of the covenant, but also of the consequences or the curses in store for the apostate people.³ The language of the covenant curses is abundant in every chapter of the book. Judgment pervades the book.

Throughout the book the prophet deliberately proceeds to unmask the people and to strip them⁴ of all security or hope that they might escape the judgment of God which is about to fall on them as a result of their abandoning the law⁵ and covenant.⁶

One by one all the beliefs and institutions—religious, social, political or military—which nurture the people's complacent attitude of confidence that God is in their midst⁷ and on their side,⁸ are targeted, reversed or dismantled. Before the threat of encountering the covenant curses, the competence of the people is irrelevant for survival; all expectations other than the announced coming judgment are discouraged.

Physical ability to shun danger is dismissed; there is no escape, for flight will perish from the swift (Amos 2:14, 15), courage is unavailable (2:16); all defenses or offenses are useless, for he who grasps the bow will not be able to stand (2:15); military enterprise will fail, for the city that goes forth a thousand (strong) will have a hundred left, and the one which goes forth a hundred (strong) will have ten left to the house of Israel (5:3).

The city defenses will crumble, the citadels will be looted (3:11); the palaces, the summer or winter houses, are not spared either (3:15). Even the land, clearly a gift of God, formerly the land of the Amorites,

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is surrounded by an enemy (3:11); moreover, it quakes, and along with the sun and moon, departs from its appointed function (8:8-9). The people are trapped.

The protection once available within the religious or cultic sphere is frustrated, for the horns of the altar will be cut off and destined to fall to the ground (3:14). The sanctuaries, themselves places of reconciliation where the worshipers express their gratitude, have become places where the very acts of worship are called transgressions (4:4, 5), and they are therefore destined to be destroyed (5:5, 6; 9:1).

The expressions used in popular beliefs to designate Israel as “virgin Israel” (5:2), the leading or the foremost of peoples (6:1), are of no value before God and His prophet, for the “virgin Israel’s” fate is sealed, so that her dramatic fall is described by means of a dirge (qinah), framed in a prophetic perfect (the usage of a past tense for the description of a future event):

Fallen is Virgin Israel,
never to rise again,
deserted in her own land,
with no one to lift her up (5:2, NIV).

Likewise, the head of the people will go into exile at the head of the exiles (6:7). Thus, on God’s behalf the prophet lamented.

The joy and pride subsequent to military conquest, narrated in Amos 6:13, is negated and turns into affliction by an enemy, land-loss and exile (6:14).⁹ Even the “day of the Lord,” which was understood to be a time when God vindicates Israel by confounding and defeating her enemies, will be a day of disappointment. Darkness will come instead of the expected light (5:18). Instead of the anticipated joy of liberation, the overwhelming sound that prevails in that day will be that of mourning. There will be wailing not only in all the plazas and in all the streets, but also in the fields; farmers switch jobs to join the

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professional wailers (5:16). There is indeed no escape.

One of the most graphic illustrations of this unanticipated tragedy is provided in the fifth chapter of the book. It is “as when a man flees from a lion, and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall, and a snake bites him (5:19, NASB).” The nation is so entrapped in her sins that neither sheol nor heaven, neither the summit of Carmel (which is dry anyway, according to Amos 1:2, subsequent to covenant curses, and, therefore does not provide pasture), nor the floor of the sea, nor even captivity, will provide a refuge (9:2-4). The space is closed, the horizon is indeed bleak. It appears as though there is no way out. There are no fugitives in this portrayal (9:1).¹⁰ The end has come.

Prophetic Insights on the Remnant

This leads to a crucial question: Is there any future whatsoever for God’s people? If not, how about the promises made to the patriarchs? Is the end absolute?

A Prophet of Doom? Facing this gloomy picture described above, a number of scholars have contended that Amos is an unconditional prophet of doom. Furthermore, any indications of hope in the book that bears his name must be later additions by a postexilic redactor (or, redactors) who, stunned by the harshness of the prophet’s message, determined to smooth it out. The “original” Amos is then labeled as a consistent prophet of doom.¹¹

An increasing number of scholars, however, have adopted a different perspective. They are endeavoring to understand the prophetic message from the available Masoretic text and are meeting with fruitful results without resorting to emendations or reconstructions.¹²

It is true that God, through Amos, announced the fate of His people Israel in terms of end and exile. As a matter of fact, the very remnant theme is at times used with a negative connotation. This is the case in Amos 3:12; 4:1-3; 5:3; 6:9-10; 9:1-4. In all these texts

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remnant terminology heightens the picture of judgment, because of its meaninglessness.¹³

Certainly judgment pervades the book of Amos, however, salvation is not out of the picture. There are significant hints of hope implying the possibility of a remnant. This is indisputably the case in Amos 5:3. After the devastation of Israel's armies, we are told some will be left to the house of Israel. Moreover, the next explicit occurrences of the word or concept of "remnant" are even more revealing and indicate that this theme is indeed the essence, center, or core issue of the book both literarily and theologically.

Identifying the Remnant Theme. From a literary point of view it has been demonstrated that the center of the book is Amos 5:14-15.¹⁴ "Taken together the two verses are a capsule of the book's essential message, but they also have a specific function in the immediate context."¹⁵ The remnant theme appears precisely in verse 15 with the expression "remnant of Joseph."

Theologically also the remnant idea is a dominant feature. The book authenticates the existence of God's true people, a real and visible entity within national Israel. It signifies the miraculous continuation of God's true people as in the time of the prophet Elijah when seven thousand in Israel resisted the tide of apostasy.¹⁶

As acknowledged by Lawrence O. Richards, the doctrine of the remnant underlies the OT teaching on faith.

It affirms that however great Israel's apostasy and God's judgment, a core of the faithful will still exist (e.g. 1 Kings 19:18; Mal 3:16-18). It is prophetically important, for it pictures the fulfillment of the divine purpose in only part of the people Israel.¹⁷

It is important to notice that Amos, as well as the other eighth-century prophets, uses the designation "Israel" sometimes alone or sometimes qualified in expressions like "sons of Israel," "house of Israel," "my people Israel," to designate several entities such as the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom, or the kingdoms combined.

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At times he refers to the historic Israel of the past, to Israel of the eighth century (or part of it, that is, the people as distinct from the leadership, see Amos 6:1), or to a future entity. These designations sometimes bear a national, political, social, cultic, or religious connotation depending on the context.

More significantly, Amos mentions the names of important figures in their past history whose experiences parallel those current with or expected from God's people. Did Amos use these names (such as Jacob, Joseph, Isaac, David) just for stylistic variations or for other reasons? In particular, did the Holy Spirit have a theological purpose to help the nation (and us) to better understand the message of the prophet?

Francis Landy, commenting on the parallelism of these names with the designation "Israel," writes: "In Amos 7-9, for example, Jacob and Isaac are not simply synonyms for Israel; each brings with it a cargo of national and theological associations. A reader—any reader—has to bear this in mind."¹⁸

The situation described in Amos 6:4-6 is particularly enlightening for answering our question in the affirmative. The group targeted by the reproaches of the prophet is characterized by carelessness and self-centeredness.

Those who recline on beds of ivory
And sprawl on their couches,
And eat lambs from the flock
And calves from the midst of the stall,
Who improvise to the sound of the harp,
And like David have composed songs for themselves,
Who drink wine from sacrificial bowls
While they anoint themselves with the finest of oils,
Yet they have not grieved over the ruin of Joseph.¹⁹

The analogy with the story of Joseph cannot be overlooked. This

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is particularly so in the record of Genesis 37. After Joseph's brothers stripped him of his tunic, they threw him into a pit and sat down to eat a meal, caring little about his fate (vs. 25). Likewise, in the immediate context of Amos 6:4-6, the leaders are denounced for this luxuriant living accompanied with an uncaring attitude about the impending fate of the nation. As Shalom Paul puts it:

While devoting themselves to all their creature comforts of personal pleasures and delights—banqueting and imbibing, music making and cosmetic ointments—they nevertheless remain totally indifferent, apathetic and oblivious to the perilous situation in Israel. . . . According to the prophet, Israel, despite (and because of) the self-indulgent attitude of its leaders and their false confidence of security anchored in their bon vivant life style, is actually on the brink of impending disaster.²⁰

In this setting the expression “ruin of Joseph” is chosen because it echoes the predicament of Joseph brought about by his brothers (Gen 35; 45; 50). The plight of Joseph is used in an analogy to designate the ruin of the people because of their wrong allegiances and worship described in the previous chapters, In the context of Amos 6:1-7 the leaders, who ought to have brought about reforms, are targeted by the indictment of the prophet. Their complacent, self confident, and careless attitude towards the continuing deterioration of the nation contributes to the continuing exploitation and oppression of the people.²¹ The “ruin of Joseph” therefore, is a metaphorical allusion to Israel's ancestor to describe the present distressful condition of the people under the oppression and exploitation of an indifferent and wealthy leadership of both the Northern and Southern kingdoms.

In Amos 5:14-15 the name “Joseph” in the expression “remnant of Joseph” also shows an analogy with another experience of this hero of faith. In Genesis 50, Joseph himself clearly indicates that he understood God's plan. He told his brothers: *“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring*

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about the present result, to preserve many people alive” (vs. 20, NASB, italics added).

Likewise, Amos 5:15 speaks about the possibility totally dependent on God’s sovereignty, of the preservation of a remnant, called here the “remnant of Joseph,” to indicate the Joseph-like experience relevant to the new people of God, to carry on His purpose. In the fifth chapter the remnant is precisely called the “remnant of Joseph” as the indication of the entity God preserves, as He preserved Joseph, despite the course of the events of his life, to fulfill His purpose. This entity which is eschatological in the sense that it survives the end of national Israel, is characterized on the one hand by the mercy of God which they graciously receive, and also by their search for God, which shows their faith in God. The criterion therefore at the foundation of its existence is a covenantal faith in God, which expresses itself in a total allegiance to God’s will, negated by the apostate people described all through the book of Amos.²²

These apostate people have failed to be moved by “justice and righteousness.” These are covenantal terms. They imply the sovereignty of God and the allegiance due to Him and to His reign and world order, which is the criterion for the remnant identify. In fact, the “remnant of Joseph” in Amos 5:15, like those who will remain from the “house of Jacob” (9:8), is the repentant Israel who, according to the context of 5:14-15 in parallelism with 5:4-6, returns to the covenant stipulations not only by the negation of illegitimate cultic activities and places, but also by commitment to a moral-ethical lifestyle conformed to the covenant.²³

There are two aspects present in the usage of the name “Joseph.” The first is as an eponymous ancestor who is linked to the main tribe (Ephraim) of the Northern kingdom. The other, concerns his commitment to God as a faith hero, even in the midst of adverse circumstances. The socio-political and religious entity “Israel” of the eighth century, as described in the book of Amos, identifies with the first. Even if the Israelites of Amos’ time used the second aspect as a self designation, they clearly missed incarnating its reality, which only

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a genuine remnant, the “remnant of Joseph,” truly experiences. Moreover, the name “Joseph” in itself indicates the possibility of salvation.

Another reference to a genuine remnant occurs in Amos 9:8 by implication. Yahweh announces He is going to destroy the sinful kingdom from the face of the earth. Nevertheless, He will not totally destroy the house of Jacob.

Douglas Stuart points out the issue in this verse when he writes:

Destruction will not be total, as v 8b insists. Here enters the theme of the escape of a remnant so clearly promised in the Mosaic Covenant (Lev 26:44; Deut 4:31; 30:3; 32:36-43) and so strongly reaffirmed by the pre-exilic prophets (e.g., Hos 2:1-2 [1:10-11]; Joel 2:18-19; Micah 2:12-13; Isa 11:10-11). God’s plan for His people envisioned their destruction as a nation and their exile, but explicitly avoided their total annihilation.²⁴

In other words part of the house of Jacob will experience the continuity of God’s purpose for His people. These are those who repent, unlike the hardened sinners who pretend no calamity or evil will overtake nor confront them.²⁵ Amos is very specific about the target of the destruction. He specifies the sinner, that is, those who say that the calamity will not overtake or confront them.²⁶ This is an expression of a complacent, even arrogant mind.

It is clear that the ultimate target of the prophet’s indictments are here the unrepentant, those who are confidently complacent in their sins (described throughout the book), and who have not given heed to the prophetic message. They are the apostate entity among the people of Yahweh, bound by the illusions of invincibility before danger, because of the fact they are the chosen people of Yahweh.

Amos 9:8 indicates that a remnant within the people of God, designated by the phrase “house of Jacob,”²⁷ or more thematically accurate “the remnant within the house of Jacob,” is the entity through whom God will carry out His plan. National Israel as merely a social and political entity in the book of Amos does not constitute the true

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people of God. There is an entity within that group, however, the remnant to whom this title may be properly given.

Eschatological Overtone

The eschatological tone of all this subunit of Amos 9:7-15 indicates that God's plan for His people is not over as a consequence of the end of national Israel. There is indeed a sifting. Actually, the prophet uses this very image taken from the agricultural realm to indicate what is going to happen: "I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground" (vs. 9, NIV).

Even more significant is the specification of a new entity called people of God in the same chapter of the book of Amos. Amos 9:11 reads: "*In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches: I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old*" (NASB, italics added).

The interpretation of this verse has been problematic because of the so-called incongruous suffixes which are said seemingly to defy explanation.²⁸ However, an insightful perspective has been acknowledged according to which the suffixes attached to the words "breaches," "ruins," and the verb "build" to describe God's ultimate intervention for His people (here designated "the booth of David") are shown to be theologically significant.²⁹

The third-person feminine plural suffix in the word "breaches" (literally, "their breaches") is best understood to refer to the collapse of both kingdoms (north and south).³⁰ The third-person masculine singular suffix in the word "ruins" (literally "his ruins") refers to David, more specifically the new-coming David, namely the Messiah (not to the "booth/tent" which is a construct feminine). Finally, the third person feminine singular suffix in the phrase "build her" refers to the fallen "booth/tent."

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. suggests that the key to the passage is the clause "as in the days of old," for it points back to the promise in 2

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Samuel 7:11, 12, 16, implying that what is in view in this passage is a remnant, an eschatological one, which will also include those from the nations who belong to Yahweh, for they are called by His name.³¹

Another entity will emerge, not in the form of a nation of Israel per se, but an entity encompassing the repentant people from the fallen booth of David joined by the remnant of Edom, namely, the nations who are called by Yahweh's name.³² This is clearly fulfilled with the existence of the NT church in Acts 15 (see especially vss. 13-19).

The expression "my people Israel" in Amos 9:14 is best understood to refer to those who would be faithful to God's purpose, the repentant remnant comprising those from Israel the northern kingdom, Judah the southern kingdom, dispersed among the nations, promised to receive blessings and restoration in covenantal language.³³ This last occurrence of a designation for the people of God concerns an eschatological restored entity, which can theologically be called the remnant, similar to "the remnant of Joseph" in Amos 5:15.

Conclusion

In the book of Amos "the remnant" is not the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom, per se; nor is it Judah as a political entity after the collapse of the northern kingdom. Judah never receives Amos' endorsement to represent the continuation of God's people to carry on His plan. God's people, as remnant, is composed by the part of Israel (but not limited to those from Israel) who repent and have true faith in God. Prophetically, it included the remnant from the nations who truly belong to God, the fulfillment of which began with the NT Church.³⁴ Their experience of faith is a Joseph-like faith and a Jacob-like faith. The former because of his unwavering attachment to God, no matter the circumstances; the latter for his search and true return to God in repentance.³⁵

The usage of the patriarchal names, Jacob and Joseph, indicates not only the continuity of God's people but also the criteria by which the identity of the true Israel of God, the remnant may be ascertained.

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Joseph and Jacob provide a model for the delineation of the identity of God's people just as later in the NT era, Jesus, the remnant par excellence, son of Abraham and son of David, is the model for the end-time remnant as described in the book of revelation.

The end-time remnant ("who keep the commandments of God and hold to the truth of Jesus," Rev 12:17, NASB) is mentioned in the setting of a cosmic conflict. They hold on to their allegiance to God and His kingdom despite the deception and oppression of the dragon. They are victorious because their supreme value is found not in their own lives but in God. Just as Jesus unswervingly committed His will to the Father, so the remnant follow in His steps.

From an existential perspective (not to neglect the historical and prophetic perspectives in their corporate aspects in Amos), one of the main characteristics of the remnant (in any era) is their wholehearted dedication to God, to His kingdom, and to His righteousness.

Endnotes

1 These are: š'r, plt, mlt, ytr, śrid, ʔh^arit. See G. F. Hasel, "Remnant" *ISBE* (1979-1988) 4: 130-34. See also idem, "'Remnant' as a Meaning of 'acharith,'" *The Archeology of Jordan and Other Studies*, ed. L. T. Geraty and L. G. Herr (Berrien Springs, MI, 1986), pp. 511-524; idem, "Remnant," *IDB*, Supp. Vol. (Nashville, 1976), pp. 735-736; idem, "Semantic Values of Derivatives of the Hebrew Root _r," *AUSS* 11 (1973): 152-96; idem, "Linguistic Considerations Regarding the Translation of Isaiah's Shear-hashub: A Reassessment," *AUSS* 9 (1971): 36-46, idem, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972).

2 Amos 8:2.

3 All the components of the covenant or treaty common in Ancient Near Eastern literature are discerned by scholars in the book of Amos.

4 Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday), p. 462, observe that participles to describe the actions or behavior of the covenant violators are significant for their identification. They wrote: The book contains nineteen such participles in all, and when they are taken all together, they give a comprehensive picture of the

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wrongdoers in Israel against whom Amos directs his reproaches, along with a list of the evil deeds of which they are guilty.

5 Amos 2:4.

6 Douglas Stuart, "Hosea and Jonah," *Word Biblical Commentary* 31 (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987), XXXii-XLii and pp. 288-289, has forcefully demonstrated that the book of Amos can only be intelligibly understood by reference to the covenant background which precedes and underlines its message.

7 Amos 5:14.

8 The expectations of the "day of the Lord" in Amos 5:18ff are an example.

9 Amos 6:14. See Walter Brueggemann, *The Land, Overtures to Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 100-103.

10 Amos 9:1. See Samuel Amsler, *Le Dernier et L'Avant Dernier: Etudes sur L'Ancien Testament* (Geneve: Labor et fides, 1993), p. 225.

11 R. Smend, "Dan Nein des Amos," *EvTh* 23 (1963): 404-423.

12 See Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991); F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989); J. H. Hayes, *Amos, the Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching I* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988).

13 Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos: Basis Issues in Current Interpretations* (Grand Rapids: Baker book House, 1991), pp. 113-114.

14 Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation*, p. 53.

15 Ibid.

16 1 Kings 19.

17 Lawrence O. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), p. 521.

18 Francis Landy, "Vision and Poetic Speech in Amos," *HAR* 11 (1987): 223-224.

19 Amos 6:4-6; NASB.

20 Shalom Paul, *Amos*, p. 209.

21 These accusations have been made already all through the previous chapters. See Amos 2:6-8, the bulk of the oracle against Israel; Amos 3:9-10; 4:1; 5:7, 10, 11, 12.

22 Hasel, *The Remnant*, pp. 204-206.

23 Paul, *Amos*, p. 176 points out that "for Amos, 'seeking' signifies a total dedication to and concern with the 'good' (*nwb*)." The term "good" has the sense of covenant as pointed out by Szabo, pp. 504-505; see also W. Bruggemann, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian," *Int* (1968): 387. Furthermore, the expectation of God is that justice and righteousness, which are the best summary

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of the covenant responsibilities of God's people are to be the essential component of the people's life and activity (Amos 5:24). These responsibilities are precisely those that the people have negated in turning justice into wormwood and in casting righteousness down to the earth (Amos 5:7). In doing so "Israel" dissociates and distances itself from God who is the guarantor of the order characterized by His justice and His righteousness.

24 Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), p. 394.

25 Amos 9:10.

26 Walter Vogels, "Invitation à l'alliance et univéralisme en Amos IX 7" *VT* 12 (1972).

27 Charles Hauret, *Amos et Osée* (Paris) Beauchesne, 1970), p. 114.

28 James D. Nogalski, "The Problematic Suffixes of Amos IX 11," *VT* 43/3 (1993): 411-418.

29 See Walter c. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago, IL: Moody Pres, 1985), pp. 181-185.

30 Already suggested by C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 1:330.

31 Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, pp. 184-185. In this perspective, the expression "remnant of Edom" refers to the nations, the conjunction "waw" before the expression "all the nation" is best understood to be exegetical. Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, p. 473, who adheres to the messianic and eschatological interpretation of verse 11 states that "Amos proclaims that Yahweh, after the exile and dispersion of Israel and Judah, and the eclipsing of the Davidic house, will restore it so that the citizens of the nation Edom which had a history of hating Israel and Judah, will become blessed members of the household of David's offspring."

32 Amos 9:11-12. We understand the conjunction to be epexegetical.

33 Paul, *Amos*, p. 292, who observes that this unit "refers to Israel (and Judah) as well as to the other nations analogous to the beginning of the book, forming an overarching inclusio."

34 We share the insights pointed out by Gerhard F. Hasel that the remnant theme is used by Amos in a threefold sense: 1) to refute the popular remnant expectation which claimed all Israel as the remnant (Amos 3:12; 4:1-3; 5:3; 6:9-10; 9:1-4); 2) to show that there will indeed be a remnant from Israel in an eschatological sense; 3) to include also "the remnant of Edom" among and with the neighboring nations as a recipient of the outstanding promise to David. See G. F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972), pp. 393-394.

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35 The prophet Hosea uses the same procedure in Hosea 12. This is an indication that this procedure is not an isolated incident unique to the prophet Amos. Concerning the usage of the name “Jacob” for example, Hosea uses two phases of the experience of Jacob. On the one hand his deceitfulness to describe the present condition of the apostate people (Hosea 12:2-3), and on the other hand his repentance which is what God expects of His present people (Hosea 12:4-6). Moreover, in Hosea 6:7 the name “Adam” is used to parallel the transgression of the covenant by Ephraim and Judah. Likewise in Hosea 13:1-3, the past experience of an early phase of the tribe of Ephraim in the midst of the tribes of Israel is evoked to illustrate the present idolatrous condition which prevailed in the northern kingdom.