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**ESTABLISH JUSTICE IN THE LAND:
RHETORIC AND THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN THE BOOK OF AMOS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, FERRY YEFTA MAMA HIT, declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit to the University of Pretoria for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work and has not been submitted by me to any other university for degree purposes at this or any tertiary institution.

Signature : _____

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ABSTRACT

Title : Establish justice in the land: rhetoric and theology of social justice
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The aim of this research is to construct a biblical theology of social justice drawn specifically from the book of Amos. This is done on the basis of rhetorical analysis. The use of rhetorical analysis is considered to correspond with the genre of the selected texts analyzed (Am 2:6-8; 5:1-17; and 8:4-6), which are mostly rhetorical and relates to the issue of social justice in nature. The rhetorical criticism used in this research combines both diachronic and synchronic approaches, and consists of several steps such as dividing the rhetorical units, finding rhetorical situations, drawing rhetorical inventions, describing rhetorical dispositions and identifying rhetorical techniques.

The analysis shows that the prophet Amos used a wide variety of literary devices to persuade his audience, the people of Israel, such as chiasm, rhetorical entrapment, oracle against the nations (OAN), N + 1 formula, inclusion and progression, woe oracle, dirge or lament, wordplay, hymn, wisdom techniques, imagery, sevenfold structure, cause-effect form of speech and “quoting what the accused have said.” These primary devices are utilized in the context or in the imagery of a courtroom. In this connection, Amos used the epideictic, judicial and deliberative rhetoric in order to bring his audience to the “divine court” for the religious and social sins that they have committed.

These rhetorical devices function as a means of exposing a theological intention of the utterances of Amos, which is establishing justice in the land of Israel. The

message of social justice is mainly based on the covenantal relationship between YHWH and his people, as seen in traditions of creation and redemption in the Old Testament, particularly in the Torah (the codes of law) and the former prophetic writings. The covenant calls for God's people to love YHWH and to act socially just toward other fellow human beings. As a concept, this research proposes a triangular relational model. YHWH, as the theological angle must be independent, and his people, either the powerful (the political angle) or the powerless (the social angle), are dependent on him. Meanwhile, the powerful and the powerless are interdependent with each other. Keeping a balanced relationship among the angles means manifesting the ideal state of social justice in the land.

This research shows that the covenant was broken by the Israelites when the powerful disobeyed YHWH and did social injustices toward other human beings. The powerful became independent both toward YHWH and the powerless. As a result, YHWH took responsibility and action to keep his covenant, and called his rebellious people back into repentance and obedience. In other words, justice must be maintained in the land of Israel. Such a divine decision was carried out in the context of the day of Lord (DOL), a day of either judgment or salvation. The option of death and life are offered to be chosen by the powerful. However, God's people deliberately choose death, and, consequently, their end is near. YHWH himself definitely will defeat and exile them by using the mighty army of Assyria.

Key terms: Amos
Theology of social justice
Rhetorical analysis
Literary devices
Covenant
Covenanted relationship
A triangular relational model of social justice
YHWH
The powerful
The powerless

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM	1
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	7
1.3 HISTORY OF RESEARCH	8
1.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	13
1.4.1 Rhetorical Criticism	14
1.4.2 Brueggemann's Biblical-theological Method	25
1.5 RESEARCH ORGANIZATION	31
CHAPTER TWO	
HISTORICAL ISSUES IN THE BOOK OF AMOS	34
2.1 THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF AMOS	36
2.2 THE PROFESSIONS OF THE PROPHET AMOS	40
2.3 THE HISTORICO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND	50
2.4 THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND	53
2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS	59
CHAPTER THREE	
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS 2:6-8	63
3.1 RHETORICAL UNIT	63
3.2 RHETORICAL SITUATION	66
3.3 RHETORICAL INVENTION	69
3.4 RHETORICAL DISPOSITION	73
3.5 RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES	84
3.5.1 Alternating Syntactical Structure	85

3.5.2	Numerical (N+1) Formula	85
3.5.3	Oracle against Nations (OAN)	86
3.5.4	Word Repetition	87
3.5.5	War Oracle	88
3.5.6	Paralleled Structure	89
3.5.7	Chiasms	90
3.5.8	Judicial Rhetoric	92
3.6	REVIEW OF ANALYSIS	92
CHAPTER FOUR		
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS 5:1-17		96
4.1	RHETORICAL UNIT	96
4.2	RHETORICAL SITUATION	100
4.3	RHETORICAL INVENTION	104
4.4	RHETORICAL DISPOSITION	107
4.4.1	A-A' (Amos 5:1-3; 5:16-17)	110
4.4.1.1	Amos 5:1-3	110
4.4.1.2	Amos 5:16-17	113
4.4.2	B-B' (Amos 5:4-6; 5:14-15)	115
4.4.2.1	Amos 5:4-6	115
4.4.2.2	Amos 5:14-15	117
4.4.3	C-C' (Amos 5:7; 5:10-13)	118
4.4.3.1	Amos 5:7	118
4.4.3.2	Amos 5:10-13	118
4.4.4	D (Amos 5:8-9)	123
4.5	RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES	125
4.5.1	Chiasms	126
4.5.2	Inclusion and Progression	131
4.5.3	Elegy/Dirge	132
4.5.4	Word Play	134
4.5.5	Hymnic Tradition	136
4.5.6	Woe Formula	137
4.5.7	Sapiential/Wisdom Tradition	138
4.5.8	Imageries	139
4.5.9	Sevenfold Pattern	140
4.5.10	Epideictic Rhetoric	142
4.5.11	Judicial Rhetoric	143
4.6	REVIEW OF ANALYSIS	144
CHAPTER FIVE		
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS 8:4-8		147
5.1	RHETORICAL UNIT	147
5.2	RHETORICAL SITUATION	151
5.3	RHETORICAL INVENTION	154
5.4	RHETORICAL DISPOSITION	156

5.5 RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES	163
5.5.1 A Call of Attention	163
5.5.2 Oath Formula	164
5.5.3 Accusation	164
5.5.4 Sevenfold Structure	165
5.5.5 Chiasm	166
5.5.6 A Quotation of the Accused	167
5.5.7 Ethical Reasoning	168
5.5.8 Judicial Rhetoric	168
5.6 REVIEW OF ANALYSIS	169

CHAPTER SIX

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE BOOK OF AMOS	174
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6.1 RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE BOOK OF AMOS	177
6.1.1 YHWH: The Theological Angle	179
6.1.1.1 YHWH is the God of the Universe	180
6.1.1.2 YHWH Concerns and Controls the Nations	181
6.1.1.3 YHWH is a Warrior God	182
6.1.1.4 YHWH is the God of the Covenant	183
6.1.1.5 YHWH is the Judge of Israel	185
6.1.1.6 YHWH is the Personal and the Living God	186
6.1.1.7 YHWH is the God of (Social) Justice	187
6.1.1.8 YHWH: The Determinative Factor of Social Justice	189
6.1.2 The Powerful: The Political Angle	189
6.1.2.1 The Elders and the Leaders in the Community	190
6.1.2.2 The Leaders in the Monarchy	191
6.1.2.3 The Wealthy and the Merchants	192
6.1.2.4 The Powerful: The Irresponsible Elites of Israel	192
6.1.3 The Powerless: The Social (Preferential) Angle	194
6.1.3.1 The Innocents and The Needy	195
6.1.3.2 The Servant Girl/The Maidservant	195
6.1.3.3 The Nazirites and The Prophets	196
6.1.3.4 The Peasants and the Oppressed	196
6.1.3.5 The Powerless: The Victims of Social Injustice	197
6.1.4 The Dynamics of the Relational Aspects of Social Justice	198
6.1.5 Summary	210
6.2 ESTABLISH SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE LAND	212
6.2.1 The Context: The <i>Realpolitik</i> and the Covenant	214
6.2.2 The Reason: Breaking of the Covenant	217
6.2.3 The End Results: Judgment and Hope	225
6.2.4 Summary	232
6.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS	234



CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSION	242
BIBLIOGRAPHY	257