“Prophets: Amos”

Amos 7:10-17

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Lesson Text: Amos 7:10-17

10) “Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

11) For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

12) Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

13) But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

14) Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit:

15) And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

16) Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.
17) Therefore thus saith the Lord; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.”

Introduction:

Amos, as well as all the other true prophets of God, are Kingdom connectors. They are people whom God has used as messengers to put His clarion call out into the hearing of the people to turn from their wickedness, and they were also used to usher people closer in a relationship with God. But, it is up to the people to take heed to that call and listen.

Amos 1:1 gives us some details on not only Amos’ background before his calling but a very specific timeline to the events which were unfolding in his self-named book. “The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen 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.” That puts the story of this lesson at about 760 BC.

Though the writing of his book is listed with the Minor Prophets, Amos once said of himself, “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit,” (Amos 7:14; discussed later in this lesson). Yet, God took him from what he “was;” He took him from the sheep and the fruit to make him a mouthpiece for Him; to make him a prophet to declare to His flock the consequences of the fruit of their actions.

Amos’ prophecies were first directed to those of the surrounding regions: Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus (Tyre), Edom, Ammon, and Moab (see Amos 1:3-2:3), and then he turned his attentions, as being led by God, to His holy people, Judah and Israel (Amos 2:4-16). The message for all was judgment. The message for all was God is not pleased with them. The message for all was to hear and repent.

By the time we reach to the point where today’s chapter picks up we see Amos has several visions, particularly of locusts, fire, and a plumb line (see Amos 7:1-9). A plumb line was used much like a level in making sure whatever was built was
going up straight and in line. It was a weight that hangs from a string that would judge a building’s correctness.

This plumb line that God showed Amos was not going to be used to measure buildings; rather people and the people came up crooked. They were not in line with God’s commands. And, of course, the people didn’t want to hear it, which brings us to the point of today’s lesson where the priest at Bethel by the name of Amaziah confers with the king, Jeroboam II, and confronts Amos regarding his prophecies.

Truth is not always a welcomed visitor at the house of many hearts. Thus, the people to whom Amos was prophesying refused to listen to the message God was pronouncing through him.

**Lesson Summary:**

“Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel.” Rather than use the message of Amos to get the people back into one accord with God, Amaziah used it against Amos, calling him a conspirator, in the hearing of the king.

It was prophesied in Amos’ third vision that God was through with the house of Isaac (which is another symbolic name for His people, those of the 10 northern tribes, in this lesson). His prophecy stated in the verse prior to where today’s lesson picks up, “And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword,” (Amos 7:9; also verse 11 in our lesson text). Amaziah took those words as a personal threat from Amos and declared such to king Jeroboam II.

A little background history, the original Jeroboam, Jeroboam I, turned away from God and His holy commandments when he set up pagan worship shrines to prevent the people from the 10 northern tribes from returning to Judah to worship and sacrifice at the “house of the LORD in Jerusalem” thus realigning themselves with “the house of David” (see 1 Kings 12:25-33). He made a “house
of high places” and put priests in office that were not of the “sons of Levi.” He also made golden calves to be worshipped instead, setting one up in Dan, and the other in Bethel, the address of today’s lesson.

But, it was not for conspiracy Amos spoke the words he did. It was a warning. As God’s messenger, he was a truth deliverer and had to fully deliver what thus saith the Lord to the people, whether it is well-received or not. The words are only uncomfortable to those who wish not to listen. The truth is only burdensome to those who have a hard heart and a stiff neck toward it.

And the truth was, the people are sinking in sin and their wicked ways have come before the Lord. The truth was the ramifications of those actions; of those sins, placed them in a place of receiving God’s judgment. The truth was, the mandate of that judgement passed a sentence of guilty, and the punishment that follows was for their refusal to comply with His holy orders. The truth was, that sentence was going to be captivity for the people and even for Amaziah himself, whilst his family suffer great tragedy and his line be cut off from the earth (more on that later).

Amaziah told the king, “The land is not able to bear all his words.” The truth hurts. There is no other way to put it. Truth is a piercing agent that attacks and cuts out what is wrong, a process that is painful to the one who doesn’t want the truth shining in their dark places; for people who want to adhere to false ways because they tickle the fancy or are just fun to follow.

In my article, Stand for Truth, I wrote:

“Silence is a killer of a nation. Silence allows things to go unchallenged. Silence gives people permission to carry on as is without regard to consequence. Consequences that not only the individual involved must experience, but also how it seeps into the very fabric of our culture staining it forevermore.” (Word For Life Says)

And, as a called man of God, being silent was something that was not on Amos’ agenda, but something Amaziah, the wicked priest, wish he would do.
Quoting from verse 9 (not in our lesson text but discussed already above), Amaziah told the king, "Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land." With this, he made it sound as if Amos had a personal vendetta against Jeroboam and it was himself that was threatening the king.

Turning his attention back to Amos, Amaziah said, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy." "If I were you, Amos," if you will allow me to paraphrase Amaziah, "I would take my own life in my hands and get to the safe place of home. There, make your money through your prophecies. There, your message would be better received. There, in Judah, go!"

You see, by calling Amos a "seer," Amaziah was hoping to take a jab at him. His intention was not to line Amos up as a prophet in the sense of word being used as such previously (see 1 Samuel 9:9). You could almost sense a sneer when he spoke to Amos in what was most likely a disrespectful tone.

Amos, or his message from God, was not welcomed in the land. Amaziah said, "Prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (compare Isaiah 30:10 and Jeremiah 11:21). "Bethel" was one of the places, as we spoke of earlier, where Jeroboam I set up idols. Apparently, Jeroboam II continued the worship of the same false deities in that same place now dubbed "the king's chapel . . . the king's court."

According to Amaziah, the truth of what God was trying to relay to the people, through Amos, at Bethel, was banished in this "chapel" (sanctuary); it was banned from the king's presence where he resided, "the king's court." To show such disdain in modern terms, one would probably give thumbs down while yelling "Boo!" and then slamming the door in one's face. That's how much Amaziah seemed to despise Amos and the message.

But Amos was not going to back down, he was not going to bite his tongue, and he was not going to spare the evil that was taking place in the land. Rather, he
fully committed to the mission he was given, and he was going to set the record straight according to the accusations of Amaziah, and under the authority of God.

He said, “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: and the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, go, prophesy unto my people Israel.” Amos knows who he is and who he is not. In essence, he was saying, “I know who I was, but now I stand before you as whom God made me be. I wasn’t born into this. I didn’t study for this. I don’t make a profit off of this. But, I was called by God to do this.”

“Was,” which is past tense and seen three times in verse 14, speaks of his prior position in life, that he was not one with an important title, but was an ordinary fellow, minding his own business and living a rather normal lifestyle. Certainly, being the shepherd and farmer that he was he was not in a position to come and speak before the king in such a manner.

But he said, “The LORD took me.” God laid a hold of his life in a special way. In other words, he was saying, God chose me for this, and He is the one the flipped the script on the life I used to live. Out of all the people in the world, and out of all the people in his family, God called him out to do more and to be more than what was previously expected of him.

Previously, he was expected to “follow the flock.” But, God saw His people that were like lost sheep, that had gone astray, and they needed someone to shepherd or guide them back to Him. Previously, he was just expected to gather “sycomore fruit,” but now God wants him to gather fruit for His Kingdom, for “the LORD said unto me, go, prophesy unto my people Israel” (compare 2 Kings 17:13; 2 Chronicles 24:19; Jeremiah 26:12). Thus, he was given a new mission in life. He was given a new calling and he would not disobey what God would have him to do, no matter how unpopular the message or the outcome of delivering it.

As for Amaziah’s warnings not to speak anymore, Amos answers him back and has a very specific prophecy not only for Israel but for Amaziah personally.
“Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.”

Amaziah would lose everything! He underhandedly threatened Amos, yet it was he who would fall into calamity. There are consequences for living in opposition to God’s word.

As discussed before in a previous lesson, a choice in disobedience DOES matter to God and disobedience brings consequences, something people tend to forget about.

In Leviticus 26 the wording for not following the commands of God are pretty harsh. Some examples are:

- I will appoint you to terror, vs. 16.
- Ye shall sow your seed in vain, vs. 16.
- I will set my face against you, vs. 17.
- I will make your heaven as iron, vs. 19.
- Your land shall not yield her increase, vs. 20.
- I will punish you seven times for your sins, vs. 24.
- I will make your cities waste, vs. 31.
- I will scatter you, vs. 33.

And on and on the list goes. I skipped over a lot but you get the basic idea: God does not prosper disobedience. Instead of blessings, one would incur consequences. The footsteps one chooses to follow makes all the difference in the world (and, hereafter).
As for Amaziah, things were going to get pretty terrible for him. His wife would go into prostitution, his children would be killed, his land would be allotted out to others, and he himself would “die in a polluted land” (probably the pagan lands where he would be taken captive). As I said before, he would lose everything! Everything he held dear; everything he valued and worked hard for would be lost.

It’s a sad state of affair to push aside the one thing that can lead you to salvation in order to cling to that which perishes.

**Conclusion:**

Many in our society today are turning a deaf ear to God’s truth like Amaziah, Jeroboam II, and the land of Israel in our lesson. Welcome God’s truth into your heart and into your life, for it will save you from calamity.

As God called Amos to be a truth deliverer, so He calls each of us today. The world may push for a watered down version of God’s Word, but like Amos, we are charged to deliver what, “Thus saith the LORD!”