

Amos 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

Analysis

But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink—The Hebrew vattashqu et-Nezirim yayin (וַתְּשַׁקְּו אֶת-נְזִירִים יָין) describes forcing consecrated Nazirites to violate their vows. Nazirites took vows abstaining from wine, cutting hair, and touching corpses (Numbers 6:1-21), dedicating themselves wholly to God. Making them drink wine violated their sacred commitment and mocked their devotion. **And commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not**—Ve'al-ha-nevi'im tsivvitem lemor lo tinnave'u (וְעַל-הַנְּבִיאִים צִוַּת לֵאמֹר לَا תִּנְבְּאֹו) means Israel commanded prophets to cease speaking God's Word. This represents deliberate suppression of divine revelation.

This verse concludes Amos's indictment of Israel (2:6-12) with their most damning sin: actively corrupting those dedicated to God (Nazirites) and silencing those who speak for God (prophets). After recounting God's gracious acts—destroying the Amorites (v. 9), bringing them from Egypt (v. 10), raising up prophets and Nazirites (v. 11)—Amos reveals Israel's response: perverting the holy and muzzling the truth. The contrast is devastating: God gave them everything; they repay Him with contempt.

The Hebrew verb tsivvitem (צִוַּת, "you commanded") is the same root used for God's commandments. Israel presumed to issue counter-commands opposing God's will: "Don't prophesy!" This directly violates Deuteronomy 18:18-22, which mandates listening to God's prophets. Amos himself faced this hostility—Amaziah the priest commanded him: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of

Judah... but prophesy not again any more at Bethel" (Amos 7:12-13). Israel wanted comfortable lies, not convicting truth. This anticipates Paul's warning: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:3).

Historical Context

Nazirites like Samson and Samuel represented consecration to God's service. Their visible commitment (long hair, abstinence) served as living testimony to covenant faithfulness. By corrupting Nazirites, Israel eliminated witnesses to holiness. Similarly, silencing prophets removed the voice calling them to repentance. This created an echo chamber where sin faced no challenge.

Amos experienced this rejection firsthand when Amaziah tried to expel him (Amos 7:10-17). The pattern continues: Jeremiah was imprisoned for unpopular prophecies (Jeremiah 37-38); Zechariah was stoned (2 Chronicles 24:20-22); John the Baptist was beheaded (Matthew 14:1-12); Stephen was martyred (Acts 7:54-60). Israel's hostility to prophets culminated in crucifying the ultimate Prophet, Jesus Christ (Luke 13:33-34; Acts 7:51-53). Rejecting God's messengers is rejecting God Himself.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do modern Christians tempt consecrated believers to compromise their convictions, and what does this reveal about our own spiritual condition?
2. In what ways do churches and individuals today effectively command prophetic voices to "prophesy not" by marginalizing uncomfortable biblical teaching, and how should we respond?

Interlinear Text

אֶת יְתָשַׁק	to drink	H8248	בְּנֵר יִם	But ye gave the Nazarites	H5139	וְעַל יְהִי	wine	H3196	נְבִיאִים וְעַל	the prophets	H5030
צָוָה מִ	and commanded	H6680	לֹא לִאמְרָה	saying	H559	תְּנַבְּאָה	Prophesy	H3808			H5012

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 30:10 (Prophecy): Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

Amos 7:13 (Prophecy): But prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

Jeremiah 11:21 (Prophecy): Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophesy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

Micah 2:6 (Prophecy): Prophesy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame.

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