

# Amos 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

**But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink**—The Hebrew *vattashqu et-Nezirim yayin* (וַתִּשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַנְּזִירִים יַיִן) 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, Prophecy not**—*Ve'al-ha-nevi'im tsivvitem lemor lo tinnave'u* (וְעַל־הַנְּבִיאִים צִוִּיתֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא תִנָּבְאוּ) 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* (צִוִּיתֶם, "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

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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

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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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

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אֶת־וַיִּשְׁקוּ וְ	הַנָּזִירִים	יַיִן	וְעַל־	הַנְּבִיאִים
to drink	But ye gave the Nazarites	wine		the prophets
H8248	H5139	H3196	H5921	H5030
וְצִוָּה	לֵאמֹר	לֹא	תִנָּבְאוּ:	
and commanded	saying		Prophecy	
H6680	H559	H3808	H5012	

## Additional Cross-References

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

**Amos 7:13** (Prophecy): But prophecy 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, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

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