

Amos 7:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el 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.

Analysis

Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel (וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶמְצִיָּה כֹהֵן בֵּית־אֵל אֶל־יִרְבֹּעַם מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר קָשָׁר עָלֶיךָ עַמּוּס בְּקֶרֶב בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל)—Amos's prophecy against Jeroboam's dynasty (verse 9) provokes immediate confrontation. Amaziah, "the priest of Beth-el" (kohen Beit-El, כֹהֵן בֵּית־אֵל), holds official religious position at Israel's primary royal sanctuary (1 Kings 12:28-33). His title emphasizes institutional authority—he's not merely a priest but the priest of the state shrine.

Amaziah accuses Amos of conspiracy: "Amos hath conspired against thee" (qashar aleykha Amos, קָשָׁר עָלֶיךָ עַמּוּס). The verb qashar (קָשָׁר, "conspire/plot/bind together") is political terminology for treason and rebellion (1 Kings 15:27, 16:9, 16, 20; 2 Kings 15:10, 15, 25, 30). Amaziah frames prophetic ministry as seditious conspiracy, transforming spiritual warning into political threat. This is classic strategy: discredit the messenger by reframing his message as subversion rather than divine revelation.

The phrase "in the midst of the house of Israel" (beqerev beit Yisra'el, בְּקֶרֶב בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) emphasizes location and public nature of Amos's ministry. He's not speaking privately but proclaiming judgment openly at Bethel, the religious and political center. Amaziah's complaint: "the land is not able to bear all his words" (lo-tukhal

ha'aretz lehakhil et-kol-devarav, אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרָיו, לֶהֱכִיל הָאָרֶץ (לא־תִכַּל הָאָרֶץ)—the prophet's message is too destabilizing, too inflammatory, too dangerous for public consumption.

This confrontation typifies how institutional religion resists prophetic critique. Amaziah doesn't engage Amos's message theologically—he doesn't ask, "Is this truly God's word?" Instead, he appeals to political authority, framing prophecy as threat to social order. Jesus experienced identical opposition from religious establishment (Matthew 21:23, 26:65; John 11:47-50). The pattern continues: whenever God's word challenges institutional power, religious leaders often side with power against truth. Amaziah's loyalty is to Jeroboam and the state religious system, not to Yahweh and covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

Bethel served as Israel's primary royal sanctuary since Jeroboam I established golden calf worship there (1 Kings 12:28-29). By Amos's time (c. 760 BC), Bethel was institutionalized state religion, staffed by royally-appointed priests serving political interests as much as religious functions. Amaziah held official position in this system, making him defender of status quo against prophetic critique.

The accusation of conspiracy wasn't merely rhetorical. Prophets had historically supported regime change: Samuel anointed Saul then later David (1 Samuel 10:1, 16:13); Ahijah announced dynastic overthrow to Jeroboam I (1 Kings 11:29-39); Elijah anointed Jehu to destroy Ahab's house (2 Kings 9:1-10). From the establishment's perspective, prophets were politically dangerous—their words could destabilize regimes. Amaziah viewed Amos through this lens, seeing political threat rather than covenant lawsuit.

Ironically, Amaziah's report to Jeroboam accurately summarized Amos's message (verse 11 quotes him almost verbatim). The prophecy was true; it was fulfilled when Zechariah (Jeroboam's son) was assassinated (2 Kings 15:10) and Israel was exiled (722 BC). Amaziah's attempt to suppress God's word failed; the judgment he tried to silence came to pass exactly as announced. This demonstrates that institutional opposition cannot thwart God's purposes or silence His prophets.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do religious institutions today sometimes resist prophetic critique by framing it as threat to social order rather than engagement with its truth claims?
2. What does Amaziah's loyalty to institutional power over covenant faithfulness reveal about the danger of confusing church structures with God's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁלַח	אֶמְצִיָּה	כֹּהֵן	בֵּית	אֵל	אֶל	יִרְבֹּעַם	מֶלֶךְ
sent	Then Amaziah	the priest	H0	of Bethel	H413	to Jeroboam	king
H7971	H558	H3548		H1008		H3379	H4428
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	לֵאמֹר	קָשָׁר	עַל יָד	עַם וְאֹסֵי		בְּקֶרֶב	
of Israel	saying	hath conspired	H5921	Amos		against thee in the midst	
H3478	H559	H7194		H5986		H7130	
בֵּית יֵת	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	לֹא	תוֹכָהּ	הָאָרֶץ	לְהִכָּיִל	אֶת	כָּל
of the house	of Israel	H3808	is not able	the land	to bear	H853	H3605
H1004	H3478		H3201	H776	H3557		
דְּבָרָיו:							
all his words							
H1697							

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 38:4 (Kingdom): Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

Matthew 21:23 (Parallel theme): And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

1 Kings 13:33 (Parallel theme): After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.

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