

Amos 7:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah—Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, dismisses Amos with contempt. The Hebrew chozeh (חֹזֶה, "seer") is used mockingly here, reducing Amos to a mere fortune-teller. Amaziah tells him to **eat bread** (לֶחֶם אָכַל, lechem ekol) in Judah—implying Amos prophesies for profit, as if he were a hired professional seeking patrons. **And prophesy there** (וְהִינָבֵא שָׁם, vehinnave sham)—go back where you belong, deliver your messages to your own people.

This encounter reveals the clash between institutional religion and prophetic truth. Amaziah represents corrupt religious establishment—Bethel was Jeroboam I's royal sanctuary featuring a golden calf (1 Kings 12:28-33), and its priesthood served political interests rather than covenant faithfulness. Amaziah assumes prophets are mercenaries who prophesy what their sponsors want to hear. He cannot conceive that someone would speak God's word regardless of consequences or compensation. His command to "flee" (בָּרַח, berach) betrays his recognition that Amos's message threatens the status quo—better to exile the messenger than heed the message.

The irony is devastating: the priest silences the prophet. The one charged with teaching God's law rejects God's living word. This pattern recurs throughout Scripture—institutional religion often opposes genuine prophetic ministry. Jesus faced similar opposition from chief priests and Pharisees (Matthew 21:23-27,

26:3-5); they also sought to silence rather than repent. Amaziah's assumption that Amos prophesies for money reveals his own mercenary heart—he projects his motives onto Amos.

Historical Context

Bethel, located 12 miles north of Jerusalem on the border between Israel and Judah, held significant religious history—Abraham built an altar there (Genesis 12:8), and Jacob encountered God there (Genesis 28:10-22). However, when Israel split from Judah (931 BC), Jeroboam I established golden calf worship at Bethel to prevent citizens from worshiping in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:26-33). By Amos's time (760-750 BC), Bethel was Israel's premier sanctuary, featuring a royal priesthood serving political rather than theological purposes.

Amaziah held position as chief priest at Bethel under King Jeroboam II. His title and authority came from the king, not from Levitical lineage or divine calling. This made him a political appointee whose job was maintaining royal interests, not proclaiming covenant faithfulness. When Amos prophesied judgment against Jeroboam's house (7:9, 11), Amaziah reported it to the king as sedition (7:10-11) before confronting Amos directly. His command that Amos flee to Judah was likely both personal dismissal and official expulsion.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Amaziah's accusation that Amos prophesies for profit reveal the danger of assuming everyone operates from mercenary motives?
2. When have you encountered resistance to biblical truth from those in religious positions, and how should believers respond when institutional authority contradicts God's word?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֲמַצְיָה	אֶל	עַם אוֹס	חֵזֶה	לִי	בָּרַח
said	Also Amaziah	H413	unto Amos	O thou seer	H1980	flee thee away
H559	H558		H5986	H2374		H1272
לָב	אֶל	אֶרֶץ	יְהוּדָה	וְאָכַל	שֶׁם	לֶחֶם
H0	H413	into the land	of Judah	and there eat	H8033	bread
		H776	H3063	H398		H8033
						H3899

וְנִבְיָא:

and prophesy

H5012

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 2:14 (Parallel theme): But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Matthew 8:34 (Parallel theme): And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

1 Samuel 9:9 (Prophecy): (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)