



# amos

## DECLARING ABSOLUTE TRUTH IN AN ABSTRACT CULTURE

“I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs” (Amos 7:14 ESV). Amos did not have the pedigree, credentials or appearance to impress people, but he was chosen by God to speak truth even while others despised and discredited him for it. And the message God gave to Amos was not based on Amos’ ability even to fully comprehend it, but upon Amos’ willingness to be faithful to proclaim it to his generation and to us today.

I find myself continually amazed at how determine the world around us tries to define reality apart from any measurable means of truth. Truth is and has been the foundation of life, society, government, civility and democracy. In our own democracy, “We hold these *truths* to be self-evident.”

Over and over, we confront the reality of truth and yet, we live in a world that seems to have very little or nothing to do with truth. However, there has to be truth!

Truth is used in medicine in regard to decisions about measures. How much of a chemical can heal your body and at what point will it kill you? How much oxygen or blood is needed after an incision is made?

All of these measures are known and yet, somehow we step away from that arena and say there is no truth.

It is true in history. It is true in construction and engineering. I don’t want to be a building that hasn’t been constructed and developed with strong measurable design and with an understanding of stress loads. Do you?

Truth is used in finance—the *bottom line*. The bottom line helps us to see whether something is profitable or something is failing. There has to be a line of measure.

Even in the area of art, there is truth. Art can be very abstract. Although “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” it is color that makes art beautiful. Color is a definable reality; it is not just something we imagine. If it were, we could just hang blank canvases for people to imagine anything they want and to choose the colors they want to apply.

We face the reality of truth everywhere we look. Yet there is this philosophy, argument and

debate in the world around us today that tries to tell us again and again we cannot have truth.

For anyone who is committed to the belief there is truth or absolute truth (especially those of us who believe the Bible is the truth of God), then very quickly we are attacked as people who are lagging or lacking in knowledge. It is often believed we do not have appropriate education or even intelligence to be able to understand the bigger realities of life. We live in a day that is bent—I might even call it *hell-bent*—on self-identification to the point that there is no conceivable reality of truth. As a result, there is conflict and confusion that continues to grow and fester in our world.

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“The man who fears no truths has nothing to fear from lies.”  
—Thomas Jefferson

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It appears we are living in a world that has lost its fear of lies because it no longer has a foundation of truth.

You cannot escape the truth-factor when you open the books of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. We have been studying these minor prophets—12 of them in all. They are called *minor* not because they are insignificant; they are just minor in size compared to the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, etc. However, these minor prophets are very

fertile and rich in substance, and in truth.

The books of the minor prophets are strong, stern and big on truth in a day when the people who had received and been exposed to truth, chose to reject it. God sent prophets to address and confront the distorted realities of their day even as you and I deal with the distorted realities of our day.

### *Amos, the man*

As I mentioned before in this series, we know very little about the minor prophets and their backgrounds. We have the historical timeline and framework, but when we meet this man, Amos, we don't know much about him except from what we read in the opening verse of the book.

“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds 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” (Amos 1:1 ESV).

This information is a telling and identifiable time and place in history. During the reigns of King David and King Solomon, there was great prosperity with a united kingdom in Israel. However, during the sons of Solomon, a division occurred in Israel—10 tribes in the North established their own kingdom and two tribes in the South.

In Amos 1:1, we learn Amos is living during the period of the Divided Kingdom, but before a significant, catastrophic event occurred—an earthquake. With this as the backdrop, Amos simply tells us he was a shepherd from Tekoa.

Have you ever heard the phrase, “I’m not a prophet or the son of a prophet”? That phrase is taken from the book of Amos.

Basically, Amos said, (*paraphrased*) “I don’t have a pedigree or credentials in which to impress you. I’m a nobody from the back woods. I probably don’t have a great appearance either—shepherd, herdsman, fig picker.”



The bottom line? Amos was a “redneck”. He was from the South speaking to people living in the North. Frankly, people despised him just based on his background and culture.

Israel was now the Northern Kingdom and Judah was the Southern Kingdom (which included Jerusalem). Not far outside of Bethlehem—which was a little town—was Tekoa. Frankly, Amos was from the backside of nowhere.

I don’t know how many of you are true Southerners. Some of you have moved here from not only the North, but other parts of the country. And some of you are still trying to get acculturated to the South.

In Amos 7:14, the Bible tells us that Amos was being challenged and charged by one of the priests in Samaria (northern kingdom) about who Amos was, his background, and what gave him authority to speak on the subjects that he addressed. Amos answered Amaziah:

If you need some assistance determining whether or not you are a “redneck,” here are some guidelines:

“I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs” (Amos 7:14 ESV).

- If your house still has a “wide load” sign on the back of it, you might be a redneck.
- If you were stopped by a state trooper and he asked if you had an I.D., and you responded, “About what?”, you might be a redneck.
- If you think possum is the other white meat... if you think fast food

is hitting a possum at 65 miles an hour... if you carried a fishing pole to Sea World, you might be a red neck.

- If the centerpiece on your dining table is a signed work by a famous taxidermist, you might be a redneck.
- If you think *subdivision* is a math problem, you might be a redneck.
- If you believe *dual airbags* refer to your wife and your mother-in-law, you might be a redneck.
- If you think the last words to *The Star-Spangled Banner* are "Gentlemen, start your engines," you might be a redneck.

This is all in fun, but there are people still trying to get their hands around the different cultural pockets in our nation, not to mention the various cultures in the ancient world.

People disrespected Amos, put him down and tried to discredit him. But the beauty of God in every generation is that it doesn't matter who people are based upon earthly standards; it matters what God has given people to say. God had given a message to Amos that was not based on Amos' ability even to fully comprehend it, but upon Amos' willingness to be faithful to proclaim it.

"This is what He showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the LORD said to me, 'Amos,

what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb line.' Then the Lord said, 'Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will never again pass by them'" (Amos 7:7-8 ESV).

Literally, God is saying that here is My standard and everything that you see about the people is crooked because this line is straight.

Have you ever used a plumb line? Have you ever tried to hang a picture in your house? Maybe you used a level to make sure the picture was straight only to step back and notice, "Something is not right here." If the picture does not look straight, you may have a crooked wall.

The Bible is saying we live in a day, a time, a place when our world has no sense of how to measure what is true and what is false; what is good and what is bad; what is righteous and what is evil. The same was true of Amos' day.

God gave Amos a job that required him to stand and courageously speak even though he would be despised and discredited by others. Throughout the Bible as well as today, God mightily uses people to speak truth who may not have all of the badges of honor accredited to this world.

I am not encouraging a lack of education or the indulgence of ignorance. I am, however, saying

God has given us His Word as a plumb line of truth that we might be able to see, know and understand what is right and wrong, what is up and down in a world that is very confused about its direction and values.

God *can* use people like Amos. God *can* use people like you and me to affirm and speak absolute truth even though we live in an abstract culture.

“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God” (1 Corinthians 1:26-29 ESV).

If you know the Word of God and you affirm the truth of God, you have the ability to speak even to the most complex and difficult issues of our day. Truth will always stand!

That was the issue and challenge Amos faced. Amos was spurned, despised and criticized as being uneducated and unsophisticated. He was unconventional and accused of being judgmental, bigoted and hypocritical. Many

people believed Amos belonged in the “social basement”, but God had called this man. Amos was not an obstructionist or an extremist; he was a prophet of God given to speak to the needs of a nation.

The faith of Amos was not something limited to his heart, mind or to the walls of the temple in which he worshiped. He also wasn't bound simply by the borders of Judah. He spoke, declared and proclaimed the truth of God even in a world that would find reason to default and despise him for it.

We need to understand today what Amos knew and understood then. There is no such thing as private spirituality apart from public expressions of faith. When you speak about your faith and speak God's truth outside the confines of the church building, you *are* going to be confronted, condemned and challenged.

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“Something—a backlash against religion's worst sins, a political climate that wants to stamp out religion in public life, the popular rise of atheism, amplified access to polarizing points of view, something—is making it increasingly difficult to practice faith in our society... For many people of faith, it's becoming harder to live their convictions outside of their religious communities. It feels as though forces are pushing religion to the margins. In fact, to millions faith is either irrelevant or bad news. ‘Religion poisons everything’ declares the subtitle of one of

the best feeling books of our new century.” —David Kinsman & Gabe Lyons

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This is the attitude, climate and environment in which we are seeking to try to proclaim, defend and deliver the truth of God today. But that must not hinder us. We, like Amos, must be willing always and repeatedly to be “equal opportunity offenders” though it is never our intent to just give offense.

I do not want to be an offensive person. I don’t think you do either. But if our faith offends, then we have to be willing to stand on the truth of the Word of God even if that brings offense and criticism to us.

I have a great fear that many of us are living in the context of our churches. We want to find a way to be non-offensive and assimilated into a culture that is being radicalized by a “no truth reality”. I fear we somehow believe one day the culture around us will see how nice we are and eventually say, “I would like to be a nicer person like them.”

Christianity is not being nice; Christianity is being faithful to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ. When you speak the Word of God, when you declare that Jesus Christ is the Savior—the absolute and only Savior—the world around you will criticize, despise, and ultimately, seek to destroy you.

## *Amos, his message*

Obviously, with the number of chapters that make up the book of Amos, I cannot read the whole book to you. However, there are some things I want to bring to your attention.

At the beginning, Amos was fairly acceptable. The early part of his message was the condemnation of everyone who lived away from him—the surrounding nations. People were okay with a few barbs and slurs directed to other nations. The problems began when Amos began to draw the line in his own culture and people.

In the opening chapter, there is a repetition of a phrase that yes, was used for dramatic oratory and yet, it was a phrase of absolute clarity regarding the judgment of God.

“Thus says the Lord: ‘For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment’” (Amos 1:3a ESV).

“Thus says the Lord: ‘For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment’” (Amos 1:6a ESV).

“Thus says the Lord: ‘For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment’” (Amos 1:9a ESV).

When Amos began to preach, he spoke judgment and condemnation on the outlying nations—their evils, their faults, their sins.

When God said, “For three... and for four,” three was a number of completion and four meant the absolute tipping point.

Amos was ultimately and initially seen and heard because he was willing to declare judgment on other nations.

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“Although they are not Israel and have not received Israel’s blessing, they are nevertheless responsible for their violation of the law of God implanted in every mind and conscience.” —James Montgomery Boyce

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*“These nations deserve judgment,”* or so the people thought. *“They’ve got what’s coming to them.”* But then, Amos began to speak not only to the nations, but also to the sins of his own nation.

When we look at the whole of the message of the book of Amos, we find a repetition of three things:

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What was the message?

- Denouncing Sin
- Pronouncing Sentence
- Announcing Salvation

—Summary by Mariano DiGangi

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As long as it was beyond the borders of Israel and Judah, the Jews were pretty content. But when Amos began to turn his attention to his own people and the crisis of his day, that was the flash point.

“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan” (Amos 4:1a ESV).

What is a cow of Bashan? It was a group of cattle identified in that day. Amos, however, was speaking to a group of people who were gathering, grazing and worshiping not in Jerusalem, but in Samaria, in their own capital. They had their own priests and their own system. They created their own religion. Although they basically copied the Judaism of Jerusalem, they made it a religion that fit them. Whatever accommodations and changes they needed to make, they did.

So Amos said,

“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink!’” (Amos 4:1 ESV).

By the way, the cows of Bashan referred to women—not exactly a nice thing to say, is it? However, Amos didn’t restrict what he had to say just to women.

Amos prophesied,

“The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks” (Amos 4:2 ESV).

In 722 B.C., the Assyrians descended upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They plundered and ultimately took them captive.

Have you ever heard the term, *flesh hook*? Do you know that term refers to an actual practice? The Assyrians would plunder a city, capture the men, and literally use oversized fishhooks and attach them into the flesh of men to drag them away. Horrific. Brutal. Barbaric. That's why the Jews so hated the Assyrians.

Only pockets of people remained in the North. Although there was another brief period of time when they were gathered, it was after 70 A.D. and the destruction of Jerusalem that the final dispersion of Israel occurred. The northern ten tribes were gone. To this day, nobody knows exactly where they are—they have disappeared. They were taken away.

As we go forward in this series, you'll see this unfolding conflict and concern over the merciless Assyrians.

However, in the book of Amos, Amos is prophesying that the people made their own religion, they had forsaken their God, they had done it their own way and the day is coming when God is even going to allow the Syrians to be a part of judgment. It's hard to read and even harder to see.

Let's go on.

"Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression" (Amos 4:4a ESV)

Literally, (*paraphrased*) "*Why don't you come to your own place?*"

Bethel is the place where Jacob in the earlier part of the Old Testament met the Lord. Jacob, the father of the people of Israel, had been to Bethel and worshiped there. They decided that if their father, Jacob, had worshiped at Bethel, it was good enough for them. However, God had clearly led His people to Israel, established Jerusalem and the Temple, and all the things we read about in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles.

The people created their own way apart from God.

"'Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!' declares the Lord God" (Amos 4:4-5 ESV).

(*paraphrase*) "*You love to do what you like to do, but you do not want to do what I [LORD GOD] have commanded. You want to establish your own truth rather than follow God's truth.*"

"Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" (Amos 4:12 ESV).

Not only was there hypocrisy and self-made religion at Bethel, Gilgal and Samaria, we read what God hated about it.



“They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth” (Amos 5:10 ESV).

They wanted a form of religion designed their own way. They wanted—if you will—to ceremonially wash and cleanse their practices, but they didn’t want to hear truth.

“Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate. Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time” (Amos 5:11-13 ESV).

The people were addicted to their own luxury, comfort and prosperity. Rather than seeing the poverty and need of people around them, rather than addressing the issues of their day, they made their whole religious system about protecting their comfort zone and not fulfilling the call, commitment and commands of God and His Word.

And so the weeds of wealth, entanglement and indulgence had begun to destroy who they were. Their faith was not pure; it was defiled by their own system, success and sense of guarding the life they wanted to live.

I love the way *The Message* translation of the Bible (Eugene Peterson) describes the following:

“I can’t stand your religious meetings. I’m fed up with your conferences and conventions. I want nothing to do with your religion projects, your pretentious slogans and goals. I’m sick of your fund-raising schemes, your public relations and image making. I’ve had all I can take of your noisy ego-music. When was the last time you sang to *me*? Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That’s what I want. That’s *all* I want” (Amos 5:21-24 MSG).

God says, (*paraphrased*) “Quit giving Me token songs. Quit tipping Me with your little gifts. Quit playing religion and acting as though you’ve done something big for Me. I want you to live your faith. I want you to live it in your world, society and family. I want you to be responsible, sacrificial, honest and true. I want you to quit guarding your culture and be fully committed to Me.”

This is what God called Israel to do in those days. That was the issue at hand.

“Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes!” (Amos 6:1 ESV).

(paraphased) "You seem to think you can create your own security, define your own success and make life and your faith about your comfort." Amos tells us that God doesn't want to have anything to do with it.

In modern-day Christianity, what is the greatest challenge we might be facing? We do not want a faith that makes us uncomfortable. We want a Christian faith (especially in America) that "lines our pockets", creates comfort, and gives us our own sense of security. Could it be that God is—if you will—walking us through a sifting experience to purify His people in order that our hearts, lives and motives will be known and clear? We cannot defend nor establish ourselves apart from the grace of God and His truth in our lives. This was also the issue with Amos.

By the way, on Thursday, Sept. 1, the morning news quickly turned their reporting to the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket explosion that occurred on the launch pad in Cape Canaveral. Of course, it got my attention since I spent six and a half years of my life as a pastor in Merritt Island, Florida, the residential community on the South side of the cape. I saw many rockets and missions through the space shuttle program during the years I lived there. But I thought this was interesting:

"An unmanned SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket exploded on the launch pad during a test Thursday morning,

destroying the rocket and an Israeli satellite called Amos-6."

I don't know why the satellite was called Amos-6. Maybe it had to do with "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1 ESV). Were they trying to be sure they had some means of security in the air? It could also mean that Amos, whose name means *Burden Bearer*, was used in regard to the payload on the rocket. However, just as recently as September 1, Amos was in the news.

Let's look again at Amos 7 where we learn God provided a plumb line in order for people to know what was right and wrong. Amos began to establish that plumb line of truth, and this is what happened:

"But you... commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy'" (Amos 2:12 ESV)

(paraphrase) "Do not preach to us; we don't want to hear your message. We don't want to hear your assessment. We don't want to hear what you have to say."

We experience a similar scenario today. When the word, *preach*, is used, the first response is often, "Don't preach to me. I have a right to my view. I have a right to my rights. I have a right to my perspective. If I want to call a red balloon green, than I can call it green."

And yet, God has called you and me to honor and uphold His Word.

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit” (Hebrews 4:12a ESV).

People fear the Word of God because it pierces and is painful.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105 ESV).

Every time you shine the Word of God on a dark pathway, it is going to expose the darkness as well as the wrong and crooked ways that are there.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV).

The Bible is a Divine source and a Divine force. It is given by inspiration of God.

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8 ESV).

When you choose to honor the Word of God and determine to uphold it—what it says about life and the sanctity of it; marriage and the beauty of its exclusivity; the family; the gospel mandate; missional living; sacrifice; greed; injustice; and so forth—I can promise you people are going to despise you for speaking in accordance with the Word of God, just like they did Amos.

If you are looking for a safe faith, may I suggest you started in the wrong place from the very beginning? Jesus said,

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it” (Mark 8:35 NKJV).

Our problem is that we are risk-averse people. We don’t want to risk anything that might call attention, bring criticism or might even bring persecution to our lives.

If you read the history of the Christian faith, in every generation those who sought to honor Christ as Supreme had to address the reality of struggle and suffering.

So for that reason, we understand only God can make us fruitful. Our goal is simply to be faithful—faithful in what we say, faithful in what we do—and let God work in our lives.

In his commentary, J.A. Moyer said there are three challenges every true believer will face when they seek to uphold *absolute truth in an abstract culture*. He didn’t use those exact words; he just pointed out what happened with Amos. However, since this has been my focus in this message, I will choose this description while using Moyer’s three challenges—the three tests every one of us will face.

## 1. Test of Misrepresentation

“Then Amaziah the [false] priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, ‘Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, “Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land”’” (Amos 7:10 ESV).

Amos prophesied that Israel would go into exile, but Amos did *not* say Jeroboam would die by the sword. Amaziah used his platform and prominence to falsely represent and criticize Amos.

Nothing is harder than seeking to be faithful to represent God’s truth and have people turn on you and misrepresent what you are seeking to deliver to them. I can promise you this: If you choose faithfulness in today’s culture, you will not be affirmed for your faithfulness. You will be maligned, criticized, and ultimately, condemned as an extremist.

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“That often happens when the word of God is spoken. People will allow us to speak the truth of God so long as they agree with us, or if we do it vaguely... But let the message be heard and understood, and immediately the opposition and misrepresentation begins.”

—James M. Boice

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There is no safe zone, but we must be found faithful. For example, do you remember the day when a series of videos exposed the conversations of people who ran abortion clinics? Those videos exposed the hard, callous, profit-making, trivializing views of the abortion industry. In the “turn of a dime,” everything was thrown on the heads of those who exposed the lies and ugliness of the abortion industry, and the other people were simply dismissed as being good, respectful citizens.

There is nothing respectable about abortion, its business or industry. In this upcoming election, let me encourage you to identify where candidates stand on the issue of abortion. This issue is at the core of who we are and what we believe about life. Either there is a Creator God who has uniquely and distinctly made us as people in His image or we are simply nothing more than just one of the many “survival of the fittest” who can be discarded at will.

Earlier this year during one of the political conventions, a woman stood before the crowd and talked openly about her abortion. The entire floor of the convention rose to their feet in applause. Please know, there is nothing courageous about the choice of abortion. It is a horrific evil that needs to be addressed, and we will never quit speaking to it. Ultimately, it is a crisis and curse in our nation and world. I don’t know about you, but I have decided when all is said and

done, I am standing with the Word of God; I'm going down with the Word of God.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12 ESV).

## 2. Test of Self-Interest

"And Amaziah said to Amos, 'O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom'" (Amos 7:12-13 ESV).

Amaziah, this false priest, said, *(paraphrased)* "Amos, the only reason you are up here is that you are looking to make money. You are trying to be the 'shock and awe' person. You are trying to feed yourself from us. Go back where people appreciate your message. Go back where you can get a big love offering for what you say."

Do you know why Amaziah said this? Amaziah's motive for ministry was profit-making, and he tried to accuse Amos of doing the same. In fact, it is very interesting that when Amaziah says, "Go, flee," the phrase literally means *go for your own sake; benefit yourself where you will be benefited*. Ultimately, Amaziah allowed that motive to be leveled against Amos.

"For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:20-23 ESV).

We have to be willing to let God be Judge, but we will be faced with human judgment, self-interests, and the accusation of it.

## 3. Test of Confrontation With Authority

Amaziah said, ... "but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom" (Amos 7:13 ESV).

*(paraphrase)* "Don't prophesy here because this is our kingdom. You are an obstructionist. You are an extremist. You are challenging our authority. Who are you? You have no credentials. You have nothing to say."

They began to just devour Amos.

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will

deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles" (Matthew 10:16-18 ESV).

So here is Amos' life and ministry. He is holding a red balloon while others are saying it is green. Everybody is telling him, (*paraphrased*) "That's not right. You are trying to make a profit. You are trying to tell us what our colors need to be. You are trying to control our lives. You are trying to condemn us."

Yet, Amos was willing to stand and say, (*paraphrased*) "Know there is a Creator God. He made you and the God who made you knows what is best for you. That is why He has given you a plumb line so you may know what is right and wrong, good and evil, and what makes life cohesive instead of that which makes life confusing."

Amos not only says that God is the Creator God, but at the end of Amos 9, Amos concludes by saying God is the Ruler God. One day God is going to rule and reign. Amos, in particular, talks about the restoration of the throne of David and all of what that means prophetically.

There is coming One who will sit on the throne; His name is Jesus. Jesus is going to rule and the kingdom that matters is His kingdom that will come—His will that will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

One of the most precious phrases throughout the book of Amos is this:

"Seek Me and live" (Amos 5:4 ESV).

"Seek the LORD and live" (Amos 5:6 ESV).

"Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you" (Amos 5:14 ESV).

Seek the Lord!



*Father, today we are living in a world of confusion, corruption, chaos and condemnation that is all of our own doing because we have set Your truth aside and tried to define our own reality. But Lord, I pray people would see and know not only the message of Amos of old, but Lord, they would see and know Jesus today (the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life) and that by seeing Christ (His death, burial and resurrection) and trusting Christ (His work of forgiveness and freedom), they might know the life that Jesus gives forever and might walk in this light and truth. I pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.*

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