

“All the Prophets Testify”: Amos 7:10-17

Midweek Bible Study – 2026 June 10

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<https://www.pilgrimlc.org/bible-studies/prophets>

Invocation & Opening Prayer

Follow-up to last class: pace, depth, other comments or questions?

Outline (the following is adapted from *TLSB* p.1457; we are expanding/collapsing the major divisions as we proceed through them):

- I. Judgment against the Nations (1:3-2:16)
- II. Declarations concerning Israel (3:1-6:14)
- III. Visions (7:1-9:15)
 - A. Visions That Do Not Come to Pass (7:1-6)
 - 1. Vision of the locusts (7:1-3)
 - 2. Vision of the fire (7:4-6)
 - B. Visions That Do Come to Pass (7:7-9:10)
 - 1. Vision of the plumb line (7:7-9)
 - 2. Historical interlude (7:10-17)**
 - 3. Vision of the summer fruit (8:1-14)
 - 4. Vision of the Lord beside the altar (9:1-10)
 - C. Restoration of David's Booth (9:11-15)

Historical Interlude (7:10-17 [on the concept of a “Historical Interlude”, recall Revelation]):

7:10 *Then*: the Hebrew conjunction can be a simple “and”. There seems to be chronological sequence, as well as some cause and effect, especially if the vision of the plumb line is the basis for Amaziah's report to Jeroboam.

Amaziah the priest of Bethel: Laetsch says “apparently the high priest of Bethel”. Lessing notes the unusual identification of the priest with his location rather than with the true God; Lessing contrasts what a faithful priest would do with what Amaziah was doing; Lessing reminds us how a true prophet and faithful priest should work together; and Lessing refers to Amaziah, like Eli and Caiaphas, as “the last people on earth to know the mind of God”. Whatever regard we might naturally give to those in God's Holy Office, what the men in the Office do must be measured against what God's Word says. In the case of Amaziah, that he was the priest of a break-away sanctuary at Bethel almost tells you everything you need to know regarding how he should be regarded.

sent: the Hebrew verb can have the added sense of “send away”. We are not told how exactly Amaziah communicated with Jeroboam, nor are we told where exactly Jeroboam was at the time. Laetsch says, “sent a delegation”, but Lessing says the passage “assumes that Amaziah sent a letter to the king” and refers to its traveling 25 miles.

to Jeroboam king of Israel: Jeroboam's mention alongside Uzziah king of Judah back in 1:1 was used there to help date the prophecy between 792-740 B.C. “Israel” is taken by Lessing as of both the northern and southern kingdoms, and we remember that the southern kingdom apparently was a vassal of the northern kingdom.

saying: presumably in the message Amaziah sent to Jeroboam. Amaziah gives his “overview” statement before ostensibly paraphrasing Amos. Laetsch remarks, “Amaziah very shrewdly does not stress Amos’ denunciation of Israel’s apostasy from the Lord, does not mention his pleas for repentance, nor his pleadings with God”. Lessing refers to the things Amaziah “conveniently” forgets to mention.

“Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel: apparently Amos needs no “introduction” to Jeroboam, and/or Amaziah does not recognize or dignify Amos as a “prophet”, though see 7:12-13. Regarding the conspiring, *TLSB* comments, “Amaziah charges Amos with inciting insurrection and so overthrowing the dynasty ruling Israel.” The Hebrew “you” is masculine singular of Jeroboam.

The land is not able to bear all his words: Lessing explains, “Amaziah portrays Amos’ oracles as being so abundant that ‘the land is not able to contain/endure all of this words’”, and Lessing mentions John 21:25, which the Divinely-inspired St. John says something similar of Jesus’s deeds. *TLSB* comments, “Apparently, Amos’s message was getting through” (confer Laetsch). Or, perhaps Amaziah makes it sound like there is more impact than there was so that Jeroboam would be more inclined to take action.

Roehrs-Franzmann comments, “Amaziah wants to silence Amos, not because his words are false, but because they are against the national interest”. Kretzmann, published in 1924, writes, “This is a common charge against the teachers of truth to this day, that their preaching creates a disturbance in the land.”

7:11 *For thus Amos has said:* we should not be troubled by the fact that what Amaziah says Amos said does not match precisely the words that we have that Amos by Divine inspiration himself recorded in Amos. Amaziah may be drawing the sense of what Amos said, or Amos may have said exactly what Amaziah “quotes”, but the Divinely-inspired Amos may have not included those exact words. To be sure, our modern sense of direct quotation did not seem to be in use then. *CSSB* says simply, “Amaziah’s words summarize Amos’s message”. Although some, such as Luther, differ, Roehrs-Franzmann notes, “Amaziah’s report does not exaggerate.” Similarly, Keil-Delitzsch says “Amos had really said” what follows, explaining the differences and saying, “Amaziah naturally gave the substance of all the prophets’ addresses, instead of simply confining himself to the last. There is no reason, therefore, to think of intentional slander.” Lessing says that Amaziah’s words “ignore or even deny that Yahweh is speaking through the prophet”, making it “appear that Amos is speaking on his own accord rather than as a spokesman for Yahweh” and “inferring that the prophet is speaking only for himself”. Lecturing on Amos from December 1524 through January 1525, Luther comments that Christ heard the same thing about stirring up the people and says, “So also today, the enemies of the Gospel wickedly set against us the dignity and majesty of the emperor as well as the authority of the church.”

Jeroboam shall die by the sword: *TLSB* says, “Amaziah probably refers to the oracle appearing in v 9”, where, indeed, Jeroboam’s house is described as the victim of the Lord’s sword. In this case, *CSSB* says, “the kings’s name also representing his dynasty”, and *CSSB* notes, “Jeroboam died naturally (2Ki 14:29), but his son and successor Zechariah (2Ki 15:8) was assassinated (2Ki 15:10).”

And Israel must go into exile away from his land.”’: regarding the exile, *TLSB* comments, “Amos clearly threatened the nation with this punishment many times (4:2-3; 5:5, 26-27; 6:7; 9:4)”, and we hear exile mentioned again in 7:17 Truly God spoke through Amos promising exile as a consequence of the people’s sin.

7:12 *And Amaziah said to Amos*: again the Hebrew conjunction can be a simple “and”. We are not told how much time or what, if any, communication intervened between Amaziah’s sending to Jeroboam in 7:10 and Amaziah’s speaking to Amos in 7:12, for example, whether Jeroboam authorized Amaziah to say what follows to Amos on Jeroboam’s behalf, or whether Amaziah takes it upon himself to say what follows to Amos on either Jeroboam’s behalf or Amaziah’s own authority (perhaps related is the matter of to whom Amos is speaking in 7:17). Keil-Delitzsch says, “The king appears to have commenced no proceedings against the prophet...probably because he did not regard the affair as one of so much danger” and so that Amaziah “calls upon Amos himself to leave Bethel”. Lessing says, “It may be best to assume that Amaziah does not wait for a reply but takes matters into his own hands”. Laetsch says, “It is impossible to tell whether Amaziah summoned Amos before or after the return of the delegation, whether he acted with or without the command or sanction of the king, whose reaction to the charge we are not informed.” We also are not told whether Amaziah spoke personally to Amos or whether Amos’s reply in 7:14-17 was given in person. Lessing refers to Jesus’s recalling how Israel rejected the prophets God had sent them (for example, Matthew 21:33-46), which rejection typifies the Jewish leaders of Jesus’s day’s rejection of Jesus.

O seer: In contrast to 7:11, Amaziah addresses Amos as “seer”, and Lessing refers to Amos’s seeing visions. *TLSB* says that “seer” “Underlines the visionary nature of the oracles in vv 7-9” (perhaps “fore-telling” more than “forth-telling”, though Amos was clearly doing both).

go, flee away to the land of Judah: Lessing says what literally might rendered “go, flee for yourself” he translates “flee quickly”. Keil-Delitzsch refers to Amos’s fleeing “from the punishment which threatens thee” (presumably at Amaziah’s instigation?). *TLSB* also says, “Amaziah indirectly threatens Amos by commanding him to go back to where he came from (cf 1:1).” Laetsch accents the Judah-Israel split and “the close connection in which Bethel and its calf worship was regarded to stand with the very life and independence of the Northern Kingdom”.

and eat bread there: *CSSB* comments, “Amaziah dismissed Amos as a prophet for hire whom he need not take seriously”. Roehrs-Franzmann explains that “eat bread” means “make a living” and that Amaziah “implies that Amos’ motives are mercenary”. Lessing says, “True prophets were sometimes sustained by gifts of food (e.g., 1 Sam 9:7-8; 2 Ki 4:8; cf. the apostle’s mandate for the support of the Gospel ministers in 1 Cor 9:11, 14 [food is specifically in view in v.13, and see 1 Timothy 5:18]). False prophets could demand food and practice simony (Micah 3:5, 11).” But, ultimately Lessing says, “there is no indication that Amaziah believes Amos is a false prophet.” (As Lessing also mentions, we might think of John 10:12-13 about hirelings and the old LCMS application of that passage to those without permanent calls, at least before the Synod in convention approved “intentional interim” pastors.) In this context of prophesying, the mention of “bread” might make us think of the Divine Service with its Service of the Word and Service of the Sacrament.

and prophesy there: *TLSB* says, “Amaziah implicitly recognizes [Amos’s] prophetic gift.” Later, *TLSB* says that Amaziah “cannot deny that Amos is a true prophet”. Also, we might reflect on what Amaziah by his lack of regard for Amos and God’s message through Amos is indirectly saying about Amaziah’s own regard for God and relationship to God (confer Jesus’s statements, for example, in Luke 10:16, about those who hear the apostles’ hearing the Son and so also the Father Who sent the Son, which statements the Lutheran Confessions at least apply to the apostles successors, pastors today, for example in Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII/VIII:28, where the character of the ministers is in view).

7:13 *but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.*”: Lessing rules out reference to royal palaces, since they were in the city of Samaria. Kretzmann refers to Amos’s prophesy at Bethel making “it very uncomfortable for Amaziah”. *TLSB* says, “Amaziah stops short of forbidding Amos from prophesying altogether. Instead, he forbids Amos from preaching in territories ruled by Jeroboam”. Notably, Amaziah does not say that Bethel is the Lord’s sanctuary or temple (confer *TLSB*). *CSSB* comments, “Amaziah served the king in Samaria, not Israel’s heavenly King; hence he would not allow a prophetic word to be spoken against Jeroboam or his reign at the royal chapel.” Luther refers to the misperception of Jeroboam, Amaziah, and the people of Israel that God had established their religion and kingdom.

7:14 *Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah:* again the Hebrew conjunction can be a simple “and”. And, again, we are not told how the confrontation played out, for example, whether via messengers or face to face.

“I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son: *TLSB* comments, “Amos readily admits he was not originally a prophet” (not that we think that was what Amaziah was suggesting?). *CSSB* comments, “Amos denied any previous connection with the prophets or their disciples...No one had hired him to come and announce judgment on Jeroboam and Israel.” The prophet’s “son” can refer to a member of a guild, order, or class, and we might think of the so-called “schools of the prophets” (*TLSB* refers to 1 Samuel 19:19-24; 2 Kings 2:1-22). Lessing notes that “the disciples, associates, and supporters of the prophets”, unlike the prophets themselves, “did not ordinarily receive oracles directly from Yahweh. Rather, they were beholden to their master, heard the divine Word through him, and helped him carry out his commission”. Roehrs-Franzmann says the context makes clear that Amos does claim prophetic authority and that his oracles show he values the institution of the prophecy and so explains, “Amos is simply saying that he is not a professional prophet, a member of the prophetic guild, who might reasonably be suspected of self-interest.” Lessing distinguishes between Amos and the sellout institutional northern prophets and priesthood. We might reflect on what faithful pastors might be accused of in such regards, for example, of not trying to protect their own income by their own faithfulness.

but I was a herdsman: we have previously discussed briefly Amos’s agricultural background and how it may be reflected in God’s words inspired through Amos. *CSSB* notes that the Hebrew word *buwr* used here translated “herdsman” is used only here in the Old Testament and is different from the Hebrew word *nokade* used in 1:1 where it is translated “shepherds” (that word’s only other use in the Old Testament is in 2 Kings 3:4, where it is translated “sheep breeder”). *CSSB* says the word used in this verse is “related to a word for ‘cattle,’ suggesting that Amos may also have tended cattle.”

and a dresser of sycamore figs: *CSSB* comments, “A large tree, yielding fig-like fruit as well as useful timber. To ensure good fruit, the gardener had to slit the top of each fig”. Regarding “dressing” the figs, *TLSB* explains as scraping “the fruit of fig trees in order to hasten their ripening” and says it is “still practiced today”. Lessing describes insects infesting the fruit and needing its top to be punctured so the insects can come out. Keil-Delitzsch rejects such meanings and instead opts for gathering the figs and living upon them. As for the import of the statement, Roehrs-Franzmann explains, “He need not prophesy for a living; he has a livelihood”.

7:15 *But the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’*: again the Hebrew conjunction can be “and”, though “but” helps prepare for what seems to be the intended contrast. *TLSB* points to David’s call in 2 Samuel 7:8, where the people are likened to sheep and there may be some distinction between “following the sheep” and “leading the people” (*CSSB* notes the location of the shepherd and says his activity is not in view, though Lessing seems to think not the relative location of the shepherd but the activity is in view in this passage at least). *TLSB* comments, “Amos became a prophet in the same way as so many others—apart from his own initiative or will. Many of Israel’s prophets resisted and tried to get out of their calls when the Lord unexpectedly came to them with a charge for mission...The OT contains no account about a true prophet taking the task upon himself.” We might discuss what today we might refer to as a pastor’s “inner call”, such as a desire to serve as a pastor, and his “outer call”, the formal call process from God through a congregation and a seminary that confirms the “inner call” and is necessary for ordination. Related are the ideas of Amos’s “immediate” or “direct” call and contemporary pastors’ “mediate” or “indirect” calls.

7:16 *Now therefore hear the word of the Lord*: the Hebrew conjunction translated “Now” can be a simple “and”. The adverb translated “therefore” certainly seems to suggest some causal relationship between Amos’s call as just related and the following proclamation of the Word of the Lord. Keil-Delitzsch says “the had called [Amos] away to prophesy to His people Israel; so that whoever forbade him to do so, set himself in opposition to the Lord God.” Roehrs-Franzmann says, “The marks of the true prophet are on Amos’ words to the priest; he has the authority and courage to make bitterly unwelcome and, at that time, fantastically improbably predictions”. Note that what follows immediately in this verse is Amos’s characterization of Amaziah’s statements in vv.12-13 and that what the Lord says is not really given until 7:17, though we might likely consider both Amos’s originally speaking the characterization and the record of the characterization to be Divinely inspired.

You say, ‘Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac: The Hebrew translated “preach” in this verse is more literally “drop” or “drip” words. We discussed the use of “Isaac” back at 7:9. Again what we have is not a direct quotation but arguably a paraphrase of the sense of 7:12-13. *TLSB* contrasts Amaziah’s human command and the Lord’s Divine command, and *TLSB* says, “Amos wisely follows the divine imperative.” Laetsch asks rhetorically, “Who was [Amos] to disobey the Lord, merely because a human priest disliked his proclamations?” Keil-Delitzsch note Amos’s “meeting” Amaziah’s words “with the keen retort” that follows.

7:17 *Therefore thus says the Lord*: confer the note at 7:16 about where the more-explicit “word of the Lord” begins.

Your ... your ... your ... your ... you yourself ... Israel ... its: at a minimum Amos with the second-person masculine singular is speaking to Amaziah, or perhaps more-so to Jeroboam, if not to the whole people of Israel as a collective singular. Amaziah likely had a wife and children and maybe even land and a death in an unclean land, but what is prophesied may better be addressed to the king or to the nation as a whole. Laetsch says, “Since Amaziah had rebelled against the word of the Lord spoken by the Lord’s messenger, Amos pronounces in the name of the Lord God’s judgment on Amaziah.” *CSSB* comments, “Amos turned to condemn the priest personally.” *TLSB* comments simply, “Amos responds to Amaziah’s command that he stop prophesying by making some of his most horrifying predictions.” *TLSB* is similar but expansive later on 7:17, saying, “Amaziah (and the people he represents)”. Kretzmann comments, “With people who are unwittingly caught in the meshes of a false religion one may have patience, but the leaders of false religions must be rebuked with all severity, for it is their leadership which results in the loss of souls, and the leaders are rightly held responsible.” *GWfT* refers to Psalm 95:7-11 and the danger of a nation’s exhausting God’s patience. Roers-Franzmann comments, “Amaziah shall see his wife assaulted by the soldiery of the invader, his children slain, and his property divided and shall himself die in exile in a pagan land, along with his people”. Keil-Delitzsch agrees on the wife’s becoming a harlot through violation and explains, “In return for this rebellion against Jehovah, Amos foretels [*sic*] to the priest the punishment which shall fall upon him when the judgment shall come upon Israel” (confer also Kretzmann, who often follows Keil-Delitzsch).

wife shall be a prostitute in the city and ... sons and ... daughters shall fall by the sword: In 7:9 Amos had said that the Lord would rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword, which in 7:11 Amaziah paraphrased as Amos’s saying that Jeroboam would die by the sword. *TLSB* comments, “Wives will be forced into prostitution, and Israel’s children will be killed by merciless enemies. This prediction was fulfilled when the Assyrians invaded.” *CSSB* comments, “With the exile of Amaziah, the death of his children[,] and the loss of the family estate, Amaziah’s wife would be reduced to prostitution to survive.” *and ...land shall be divided up with a measuring line*: The measuring line in this verse is not to be confused with the plumb-line in 7:7-8. *TLSB* comments, “Assyrians will take possession of Israel’s land and parcel it out as they saw fit.” *CSSB* comments, “Amaziah’s private estate would be divided up and given to others.” Lessing seems to think there is reference back to the land as divided by Joshua and forward to the land as divided by the Assyrians.

... shall die in an unclean land, and ... shall surely go into exile away from ... land: *CSSB* notes that in the unclean land Amaziah’s “ceremonial purity as a priest would be defiled”. Lessing discusses the absence of the Lord’s sanctifying presence. Exile was noted briefly above at 7:11. *TLSB* simply refers to “a bleak future in exile”. *CSSB* says, “Amos repeats—verbatim in the Hebrew—the last two lines of Amaziah’s earlier summary of Amos’s message (v. 11).” Keil-Delitzsch refers to that fact, which Amos presumably would not have known otherwise, “as a sign that what he has prophesied will assuredly stand.”

What are you taking home from the prophecy considered tonight?

TLSB's Law and Gospel Application Note for Amos 7:10-17 says, "When Amaziah the priest rebukes Amos and orders him out of Israel, the prophet responds by uttering some of his most chilling words of judgment. Amos does so with good reason for, on top of all their other sins, the people of Israel [or at least their high priest] have now dared to openly despise the prophetic word even as it is being spoken to them. This scenario reminds us just how dangerous it is to ignore God's Word and to defy those sent to call us to repentance. Though guilty ourselves of similar failings, we take comfort in Christ's loyalty and unbounded forgiveness [when we repent]. His death has paid the debt of our rebellion, and His resurrection assures us that even as He lives, so also shall we."

Lessing notes that people wonder what happened to Amaziah and Amos but should wonder what their futures will be like, how they respond to the Divine Word, whether they will live after the patten of Amaziah or of Amos.

Next time, June 17, Amos 8:1-14

Closing Prayer & Benediction