

# Amos' Call

**Bible Background • [AMOS 7](#)**  
**Printed Text • [AMOS 7:10-17](#)**  
**Devotional Reading • [PSALM 119:1-8](#)**

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE the challenges Amaziah and Jeroboam presented to Amos' prophetic ministry; OBSERVE that like Amos, we are called to serve in unfamiliar places and capacities; and SHARE examples of our commitment to serving God in spite of opposition.

## In Focus

The veteran teacher at the Seeds of Promise Charter School hurried down the hall to report the new teacher to the principal. Mrs. Priestly enjoyed all the perks of being the senior teacher on staff, plus a strong personal relationship with the principal. She told the principal that the new teacher, Ms. Ashliegh, was having secret meetings with parents, giving them too much information, and bringing them into the school to let them do God knows what. When the principal talked with Ms. Ashliegh about this report, she explained herself calmly. Ms. Ashliegh was called to work at the school because of her strong Christian beliefs and her reputation for effectively resolving issues. Ashliegh had taken on the most students, all of whom had behavior and learning difficulties and hostile parents. Then she regularly called and e-mailed families to discuss their child's progress. She invited parents to volunteer in the classroom. Ashliegh wanted to educate and engage families in changing the outcomes for their children. When the principal took no action, Mrs. Priestly felt threatened. She was concerned her year-end report would look poor compared to Ms. Ashliegh's. She began a campaign to turn everyone against Ashliegh with the intent of driving her from the school.

*In today's lesson, we will see that the people God calls will often encounter opposition. Have you ever experienced opposition in relation to something God has called you to do?*

## Keep in Mind

“Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel”  
([Amos 7:14-15](#)<sup>Ⓛ</sup>).

## KJV

**Amos 7:10**<sup>L</sup> Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel 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.

**11** For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

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

**13** But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

**14** Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:

**15** And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

**16** Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.

**17** Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

## NLT

**Amos 7:10**<sup>L</sup> Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent a message to Jeroboam, king of Israel: "Amos is hatching a plot against you right here on your very doorstep! What he is saying is intolerable.

**11** He is saying, 'Jeroboam will soon be killed, and the people of Israel will be sent away into exile.'"

**12** Then Amaziah sent orders to Amos: "Get out of here, you prophet! Go on back to the land of Judah, and earn your living by prophesying there!

**13** Don't bother us with your prophecies here in Bethel. This is the king's sanctuary and the national place of worship!"

**14** But Amos replied, "I'm not a professional prophet, and I was never trained to be one. I'm just a shepherd, and I take care of sycamore-fig trees.

**15** But the LORD called me away from my flock and told me, 'Go and prophesy to my people in Israel.'

**16** Now then, listen to this message from the LORD: "You say, 'Don't prophesy against Israel. Stop preaching against my people.'

**17** But this is what the LORD says: 'Your wife will become a prostitute in this city, and your sons and daughters will be killed. Your land will be divided up and you yourself will die in a foreign land. And the people of Israel will certainly become captives in exile, far from their homeland.'"

## The People, Places, and Times

**Amos.** His personal name means “one who is carried,” and he was a prophet from Judah who ministered in Israel around 750 BC. Some might describe the prophet Amos as a “burden bearer.” He carried a heavy burden for his people, or rather, his people were a burden he carried. As a prophet, Amos was a primary figure among the series of courageous men known as the minor prophets. They are called “minor” only because their books are far shorter than the major prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In Judaism, the minor prophets’ writings are commonly known as the “Book of the Twelve” because there are twelve of them and they fit onto one scroll (i.e., book).

**Priest of Bethel.** Once the ten tribes of Israel separated from Judah and Benjamin, they began to worship at Bethel instead of Jerusalem, complete with priests and a temple. But instead of remembering God’s commandment not to make any graven images, they worshiped two golden calves. The temple at Bethel was attended to by priests who led people in worshipping these calves. Amaziah was named as the priest of Bethel in the book of Amos.

### Background

Amos documented the reasons for God’s judgment against Israel, such as legal injustice, economic exploitation, religious hypocrisy, luxurious indulgence, and boastful complacency. The violations resulted in the nation being doomed, but individuals who repented were spared. This did not sit well with those in power. These sins exposed their spiritual state and called them to account. Regardless, Amos continued to show not only the sins of the rich and powerful but also the fate of Israel as the people continued to practice sin and injustice. Amos was confronted by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel. This confrontation resulted in Amos being charged with conspiracy against the king. Amos had denounced the legitimacy of the shrine at Bethel and the people’s worship.

### At-A-Glance

1. The Angry Priest ([Amos 7:10–13](#)<sup>L</sup>)
2. The Called Prophet (vv. 14–15)
3. The Fateful Prophecy (vv. 16–17)

## In Depth

### 1. The Angry Priest ([Amos 7:10–13](#)<sup>L</sup>)

Amaziah was a priest at Bethel who led the people of Israel in idolatry. Bent on keeping his position, he is threatened by Amos’ prophecy against the Israelites. Because of this, he tells the king of Israel, Jeroboam, that Amos’ message is not good for the kingdom.

Amaziah then tells Amos to leave Israel and go back to Judah. He basically tells Amos that he has no authority there since he is not from Israel but from Judah. Amaziah believes that Amos’

prophecy has no place in Israel since it is under Amaziah's and Jeroboam's jurisdiction. The problem is that Amaziah fails to understand the entire universe is under God's jurisdiction, and His Word has the final authority.

## 2. The Called Prophet (vv. 14–15)

Amos then lets Amaziah know the details of his call. Unlike some who were trained as prophets (perhaps at the school of the prophets mentioned in 1 Samuel 10, 19; 2 Kings 2, 6), Amos was a shepherd and farmer. He had no sights on making a name for himself; he had not planned this or put it into motion. To put it simply, for Amos being a prophet was not a career move.

Amos was content as a shepherd. God had called him away from his flock so that he could speak the truth to God's wayward flock, Israel. Amos was called to prophesy and did not do this out of self-will; God sent him to speak the truth to Israel and call them to repentance.

## 3. The Fateful Prophecy (vv. 16–17)

Amos' response to Amaziah's message is full of doom and gloom. He not only continues with the message that Amaziah refused to listen to but he also spells out the people's fate in detail. Not only will the Israelites be taken into exile, but also Amaziah's own wife will be a prostitute and his sons and daughters will be killed. Amos' words expound on the message and make it personal for Amaziah.

Because Amaziah refused to listen to Amos' message, he would die in a foreign land. His wife and children would be oppressed and killed by invaders. Their temple of idolatry would not be a sanctuary. Although they believed that Bethel and Israel were under their jurisdiction, the Israelites were mistaken; they were under God's jurisdiction and He would judge them for their sins.

## Search the Scriptures

1. Do you think Amaziah gives a good reason for telling Amos to stop prophesying ([Amos 7:13](#))?
2. Why do you think the Lord chose Amos to be a prophet since he was a shepherd and farmer (v. 14)?

## Discuss the Meaning

Amos didn't have the training to be a prophet. Do you think it is necessary to have training for preaching the Word? Is seminary or Bible college necessary or helpful? Why or why not?

## Lesson in Our Society

God called Amos to prophesy in a land that was not his own. He was called to do something that he was not trained to do. Many times God calls us to situations we have not been in before where we are not properly trained. To get through the backlash and rejection that comes with that, you must be secure in your call. God's call is what qualifies you, not your training. Training is helpful, but the call keeps you going when everyone and everything is against you.

## Make It Happen

Have you ever experienced the call of God on your life? Talk to three pastors or missionaries and ask them how they received the call. Also ask them whether it has helped them through tough times to remember God's calling on their life. Bring your answers back to the class to discuss.

## More Light on the Text

### Amos 7:10–17<sup>L</sup>

**10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel 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.**

In this encounter, Amos finds himself in a hostile situation. His prophecies against Israel had earned him enemies in high places—in the sanctuaries and palaces. Amos was a just prophet declaring the Word of the Lord, and because of this, Amaziah accused him of conspiring against Israel. The word for “conspired” (*qashar*, **kah-SHAR**) means to tie or bind together. Amos was being accused of being in league with someone against Israel, which is ironic because his only ally was God Himself. A true prophet will always have enemies because God's Word is never popular, especially among the powerful few benefiting from corruption in the world. Just like Ezekiel, Amos needed a good measure of prophetic flint-headedness to be able to declare that Jeroboam would die by the sword (Ezekiel 3:9<sup>L</sup>; Amos 7:11<sup>L</sup>). A prophet popular among those in power likely compromised God's message. Hostile reactions and false accusations like those leveled against Amos should be expected by all who dare to speak truth to power on behalf of God. The prophet's call is to speak God's truth to the world, which usually involves confronting unjust systems. Prophets do not have to go looking for trouble; more often than not, trouble will find them. Their only crime will be speaking for justice in a corrupt society. Israel's hatred toward the prophets was so intense, many of them were killed.

**11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.**

This is the climax of Amos' message. Jeroboam, king of a thriving kingdom that took pride in its military strength, was to die by the sword in battle. As if this is not enough, all of Israel would be taken captive from their own land. Threats like this are spread throughout the book of Amos (4:2–3; 5:27; 6:7; 7:17; 9:4), but the mention of the sword here takes Amos' prophecies to a higher level. The sword drawn at 7:9 as the Lord rises against the house of Jeroboam shall not return to its sheath until Jeroboam himself (7:11) and the sons and daughters of Amaziah have fallen (7:17). Jeroboam did not deserve to rule over Israel any longer, nor did the idolatrous nation of Israel deserve any more chances. God's judgment would come without fail.

Delivering such a prophecy is very difficult. A word that threatens the life of the king and the nation can never be taken lightly. Such a word also threatens the life of the prophet. Should he, like Elijah, prophesy and then go into hiding, causing the king to search for him around the country (1 Kings 18:10–15<sup>L</sup>)? Not so with Amos. He prophesied and lingered close to the shrine, well aware that its priest would eventually react. Amaziah had to react, because Amos' prophecy threatened his own livelihood. Amos was clear in his directives: “Seek not Bethel, nor

enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought” (from [Amos 5:5<sup>L</sup>](#)). What would Amaziah do if the people did as Amos directed?

**12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: 13 But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king’s chapel, and it is the king’s court.**

The Bible does not tell of any response from Jeroboam to Amaziah. He probably paid no attention to the message, thinking it was unworthy of serious consideration. However, Amaziah found it necessary to order Amos to return to the land of Judah: “O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah.” The Hebrew word *khozeh*(**kho-ZEH**) is used for “seer” here, meaning “one who has visions.” When used elsewhere in the Old Testament, it is a powerful word of respect, but its use here seems contemptuous, in reference to Amos’ visions recorded earlier in the chapter.

In a rather patronizing manner, Amaziah attempted to advise Amos to flee for his own safety back to the land of Judah. Of course, if Jeroboam had taken the treason accusations seriously, Amos’ life would be in danger, so it would be in his best interests to escape the punishment. Amaziah assumed that, just like himself, Amos was a professional prophet who earned his living like the women mentioned by Ezekiel, who were ready to say whatever pleased their hearers, however false, for “handfuls of barley and pieces of bread” ([Ezekiel 13:19<sup>L</sup>](#)). When he said to Amos, “There eat bread, and prophesy,” he meant, “You can earn a comfortable livelihood there.” He presumed that Amos was in it for the money, so it would make more sense for Amos to go back to safety in Judah, where he would continue to live as a prophet and make better money.

Amaziah did not understand that Amos was inspired and motivated by a different Spirit. It seems safety and earning a livelihood were very important to Amaziah. He probably got his security from his relationship with Jeroboam, which could explain Amaziah’s defense of the throne and the shrine, calling it the “king’s chapel.” He presumed the same of Amos—that he would be safe and able to earn his living back in Judah. The scene of this confrontation, the shrine at Bethel, was both a royal chapel and national cathedral where calf worship took place. It was probably preferred by Jeroboam to Dan and the other shrines because it was nearer to Samaria, the capital. It was also the king’s court, where the king’s nobles gathered to discuss kingdom business—no place for unknown and uninvited priests and prophets. A place of such significance deserved reverence, and a foreign commoner like Amos was not welcome. His preaching and message near such a place would threaten his own life.

**14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: 15 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.**

In this verse, Amos is forced to defend himself against the charge of being a professional prophet who earns his living through the prophetic ministry. He comes out swinging, asserting that he did not belong to a professional prophetic guild. He was not ordained by any man to be a prophet; he did not study to be a prophet; and he was not born into a prophetic family, nor raised in a prophetic school. He was a sheepbreeder and a caretaker of sycamore trees. He did not need to earn a living from the ministry. He was not in it for the money. He went to Israel to prophesy only because God snatched him from his vocation to send him on a mission. Amaziah’s wisdom that Amos would be better off in Judah was contrary to what God had said. God snatched Amos

for the sole mission of speaking to Israel, whom He calls “My people.” Thus, God still claims Israel as His people, even though they do not follow Him.

Like many other true prophets, Amos laid down his tools to follow God’s direction to prophesy against an evil king (with a great military reputation) at the risk of everything he is. His ministry was not intended to provide him with safety and a livelihood. Contrary to expectations of reward, true prophets should expect imprisonment or death from prophesying in Israel, even as the prophets of Baal were maintained at the king’s expense ([1 Kings 18:19<sup>L</sup>](#)). Nevertheless, when God calls with a Word for His people, the prophet must obey. The risk of earthly oppression will always be there. However, to obey God’s bidding is better than to be intimidated by the world’s opposition.

**16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. 17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.**

It would seem that Amaziah had told Amos not to prophesy against Israel and the House of Isaac, invoking the names of their common ancestors as a channel of authority, but Amos turned his attempts against him. He addressed Amaziah regarding his defense of the king and the shrine. Because Amaziah had tried to stop Amos from prophesying against Israel, and also advised him to return to Judah, he too had to be judged. Instead of reducing the force of his words to ease the fire of his condemnation of Amaziah and Israel, or even withdrawing his prophecy, Amos reaffirms them. Amaziah had to hear the true Word of the real Lord whom he contradicted while pretending to serve Him. Indeed, Amaziah had sought to silence Amos, but when his judgment comes, he would be silenced by God’s fury. His own family would be destroyed. His wife would be abused and treated as a harlot by the victorious Assyrian army (see [Isaiah 13:16<sup>L</sup>](#); [Zechariah 14:2<sup>L</sup>](#)). In addition, his children would be killed by the sword. His land would be divided among the new occupants. Amaziah himself would die in a religiously unclean or polluted (*tame*’, **TAH-meh**) land. To conclude it all, Israel would be taken into exile.

God protects the servants who engage in His work faithfully. The prophet is only required to speak the Word, no matter the circumstance. After that, he must trust and obey, expecting God’s next direction.

### Say It Correctly

Amaziah. a-mah-**ZEYE**-uh.

Jeroboam. je-ru-**BO**-um.

## Daily Bible Readings

### MONDAY

The Elect Keep the Commandments

([Deuteronomy 7:7–11](#))

### TUESDAY

Hananiah Opposes the Prophetic Message

([Jeremiah 28:12–16](#))

### WEDNESDAY

Oracle Against Israel

([Amos 1:1–2](#), [3:12–15](#))

### THURSDAY

Seek Good and Live

([Amos 5:10–15](#))

### FRIDAY

Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters

([Amos 5:18–24](#))

### SATURDAY

David's Kingdom Restored

([Amos 9:11–15](#))

### SUNDAY

Amos' Call

([Amos 7:10–17](#))