

June 28, 2026

“Amos, the Courageous Prophet”  
Lesson 4

Amos 1:1, 2-11-12. 3:7-8, 7-10-15

### **Intro**

Amos is one of 12 books in the section known as Minor Prophets. They aren't “minor” in importance; they are minor because the books are much shorter than the “major” prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Amos preached in the northern kingdom of Israel in the mid-700's BC. During his ministry, Israel had great economic prosperity. The national borders had also been extended through military victories. All this resulted in excessive pride and injustice among the people (see Amos 6:8, and chapters 12-13). Despite their material wealth, the kingdom was in spiritual decline. The people practiced idolatry, worshipping idols at national shrines in places like Dan and Bethel. The people silenced voices that challenged their practices.

### **Read Amos 1:1**

1. vs. 1: Amos describes himself as a shepherd, not a prophet

The word for shepherd here likely means one who raises sheep, not just tends them

This would indicate that Amos was not a poor man

He says he's from Tekoa, which is in Judah, the southern kingdom

But his ministry is in Israel, the northern kingdom

It's an interesting switch from what we might expect

The second half of the verse locates his ministry time-wise

It's during the reign of Uzziah, the king of Judah

He also adds the time marker of an earthquake

Amos says he saw this vision of an earthquake two years before it happened

### **Read Amos 2:11-12**

2. vs. 11: God is speaking here, showing two ways He has blessed Israel and cared for them

He raised up prophets, and He raised up Nazirites

Nazirites are not commonly used as examples of God's care

They are people who make a “vow of dedication to the Lord” (Numbers 6)

They don't drink fermented beverages, or cut their hair, or eat anything that comes from a vine

Samson was a Nazirite, and Samuel may have been one also

There are at least two reasons why God may have used Nazirites as examples here

First, their strict lifestyle contrasts with the luxurious yet sinful lifestyle of others

Mentions are made of the people's oppression and injustice (Amos 2:8)

Second, Nazirites had consecrated themselves to the Lord

They contrast with the people whose lives contradict God as Lord

The verse ends with a rhetorical question from God: “Is this not true?”

God has provided spiritual leaders and spiritual examples to Israel

But Israel has either abused or ignored them

3. vs. 12: God accuses Israel of doing things against each group  
He says the people made the Nazirites drink wine  
This is a direct violation of their vows  
    This shows how low the people regard serving God or following His ways  
    They are tempting Nazirites to break their vows to God; not a small thing at all  
The people are also accused by God of *commanding* the prophets not to prophecy  
    This is what prophets are called to do—tell what God has told them to say  
    Silencing prophets is a very serious matter

### **Read Amos 3:7-8**

4. vs. 7: God says He has revealed His plans to His people through His prophets  
    This means every time He has wanted them to repent and change, He's told them so  
    God literally says he does *nothing* without revealing His plans to His servants first  
    But people who don't like the message have tried to silence the messenger
5. vs. 8: The imagery used here is a warning of how close the judgement on Israel is to happening  
    Lions usually roar after they have captured their prey, not before (see 3:4)  
    Associating a roaring lion with God's speech is a scary prediction of coming judgment  
    The prophets have spoken in God's name with His message  
        They must speak, as the lion must roar  
    The Lord's roar is noted in Amos 1:2  
    This is right before a series of accusations by God against Judah, Israel, and other nations

### **Read Amos 7:10-15**

In 7:1-9, God shows Amos three visions of judgment against Israel. After each of the first two, Amos intercedes and God relents. But after the third vision, God leaves no room for intercession. He will indeed destroy the religious sites where Israel worshipped pagan gods. In 7:9, God says, "With my sword I will raise against the house of Jeroboam" (the king of Israel).

6. vs. 10: Amaziah is the priest at Bethel, one of the places where idol shrines existed in Israel  
    Israel split into two nations, Israel and Judah, in 930 BC  
    The first king of Israel, chose Bethel as an alternate to Jerusalem as a place of worship  
        It was about 10 miles north of Jerusalem  
    Amos mentions Bethel many times, which shows the degree of idolatry practiced there  
        (see 3:14, 4:5-6, 5:5-6)  
    Amaziah tells Jeroboam that Amos is "raising a conspiracy against you"  
        This is because Amos warned them of God's anger at their idolatry  
        Amaziah feels his position as priest is being threatened
7. vs. 11: Prophets often tell what God has said by beginning, "This is what the Lord says"  
    Amaziah mocks Amos by saying, "This is what Amos is saying"  
    This makes it sound like Amos is making up what he says  
    But God said that Jeroboam would die and Israel would go into exile, not Amos

8. vs. 12: Two things here

First, Amaziah calls Amos a *seer*, not a prophet

The two words appear together many times in Scripture, and mean about the same

But Amaziah doesn't acknowledge that God is the source of Amos' words

Amaziah is likely being sarcastic here

Second, Amaziah refers to Amos going back to Judah and earning bread

This makes it sound like Amos is merely prophesying for financial gain

9. vs. 13: Amaziah gives Amos a direct order: don't prophesy in Bethel anymore

Bethel belongs to Jeroboam and Amaziah, not Amos

He has no right to say anything in Bethel, according to Amaziah

Note in this section (vs. 10-13) Amaziah says nothing about God

Amaziah does not contradict Amos' accusations of sin

Instead, all he does is issue threats

10. vs. 14: Amos answers Amaziah's charges in a way that sounds odd at first look

He says he's not a prophet, or the son of a prophet

Though he does speak what God tells him to (prophesy), that isn't his "occupation"

This could also mean that he speaks freely, not owing anything to any school of prophets

He also says that he is a shepherd and cares for sycamore trees

Our first thought might be, "So? And your point is...?"

As noted before, Amos is more like a businessman who cares for livestock

He also cares for trees

Both of these are his occupations, the way he earns his living

These both counter Amaziah's suggestion that Amos prophesies to make money

11. vs. 15: Amos finishes by explaining how he got to be a prophet for God

God took him away from his livestock and told him to go prophesy

Amos didn't want to be a prophet; he wasn't looking for a chance to speak

Not against Amaziah, not against Jeroboam, not against Israel

Amos isn't working for a king or a political party

This makes Amaziah's resistance to Amos' words so significant

Amaziah isn't resisting a prophet; he is opposing God

Amaziah is a representative of both king Jeroboam and the nation of Israel

His rejection of Amos and God's words are Jeroboam's and Israel's rejection as well

Application: The book of Amos, and Jesus' teachings later, encourage believers to examine the teaching we hear in light of what Scripture says. Another thing Amos calls us to do is to examine motivation in what a teacher says. Amos spoke against the religious, economic, and political status quo, risking his life by questioning Israel's assumption that God was happy with their behaviors and beliefs. Amaziah's risk was in upsetting the status quo, which he had a vested interest in keeping.

For modern readers of Amos, we are encouraged to reflect on how we hear the word of God today. Are we willing to listen? Will we accept God's challenges to our lives and our thinking? Are we so committed to our religious, economic, and political status quo that we become unwilling to give an ear to anything that questions it? The fact that God speaks is a sign of God's grace. He wants to communicate with us. Will we have ears to hear?

Prayer: Father God, help us to be open to your words, to your challenges, and to be quick to repent of sin. Give us ears to really hear your words, and soften our hearts so we will be committed to obeying. In Jesus' name, Amen.