

The Faithful Preacher

By Jeff Noblit

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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Grab your Bibles and go to Amos 7. We'll finish that chapter this morning. If you're visiting with us, we're going through the Old Testament prophet of Amos. That's another good Getty song. I don't know of anybody that's written more good sound hymnal-type music or just choruses or whatever you want to call it than the Getty's. I'm so thankful that they're going to be with us this Christmas season and have a Christmas praise concert with them and our choir and orchestra. It's just going to be a great great weekend.

We're here in Amos 7. We're going to be in verses 10 through 17. Amos is the country preacher from the rural region of Tekoa. He was a herdsman and to some degree a simple farmer and God called him to lead the southern kingdom, Judah, and go to the more apostate kingdom, Israel, and preach against their wickedness, their idolatry, and their false worship that they had developed and embraced in that country, specifically centered in the northern kingdom city of Bethel. That seemed to be the centerpiece of all of it. And Amos is a real encouragement to me as a preacher because he faced such great overwhelming opposition and odds against him, humanly speaking, but Amos simply remained faithful. He was just faithful. He didn't stick his finger in the air and see what would increase his numbers or what might increase his offerings. Amos was a faithful preacher.

You know, there always have been, there continues to be, and there always will be false prophets in the land and very often those false prophets will be among the established religious systems of the day. It's always been that way. Now to be balanced, we have to be careful because in our great Christian denominations that we have in the last couple of centuries, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, to a degree the Anglicans, Episcopalians, or whatever other ones, there are still some good men who are preaching the word who are trying to stand on the truth, but unfortunately when you look at the whole bureaucratic system, it's bankrupt. It's simply bankrupt. It's compromised and it's compromised. It's bent and it's bent. It's accommodated and it's accommodated. And what happens in any bureaucracy and it's true in a religious bureaucracy, it begins to exist to sustain the bureaucracy. That's what it's there for. And so that's what happened in Israel. It's become this giant system of religion but it's lost the truth; a giant state religious system that had gone AWOL from God is now standing in pure apostasy and it exists to protect that. Then here comes Amos heralding and powerfully and faithfully declaring the

two-edged sword of truth into the heart of that fallen hellish system and if you're a preacher in today's world, you appreciate forerunners like Amos.

But there are always going to be some false prophets. Just watching Fox News this last week, the famed actress, Jennifer Lawrence, some of you probably saw this, said that Hurricane Irma is Mother Nature's wrath because we as a nation elected Donald Trump and have ignored climate warming or climate change. I thought for sure she was just, you know, tongue-in-cheek, she wasn't serious, then I saw the video and she looked dead serious, deeply convicted and concerned that somehow we've upset the forces that be in the universe with this audacity of questioning or rejecting the notion of so-called climate change in electing Donald Trump as President. And by the way, can I just say this: where in heaven's name do folks who spend their lives acting like someone they're not have the authority to tell us anything or teach us anything? Who are these? Who cares? So what you can act like somebody else and do it very well, well, that's a commendable skill, I supposed, but it doesn't mean you've got any sense about anything else more than anyone else. I'm not saying none of them do but there's this...have you noticed that as we've become a God-less, Bible-less culture, we keep seeking for saviors? This movie star, they're a great wise one or this politician, he will save us. No they're not. Go back to our founding fathers who had a great and deep skepticism of central localized authority because they knew whenever you put your faith in a man or a system and you give it control and authority, it almost always will go bad. But we want a savior so bad and we won't look to the right one.

But these false prophets, no matter if it's an actor or an actress or Oprah Winfrey and her gospel or Joel Osteen and his so-called gospel, or some sitting left-wing Senator who is interviewing a judiciary nominee and convictedly questions him or her as to whether or not they believe the Christian faith that they so-call confess, because if they believe strongly in the Bible and in their Christian faith, then they believe they're no longer fit to sit as a judge in America in any part of our system. They have their own gospel. They have their own definition of truth.

But this force against sound doctrine, this striving against biblical values and, of course, the faithful preachers who preach sound doctrine and biblical values, this has been around from the beginning. This is a spiritual force. When Eve was in the garden of Eden, Satan comes to Eve and says, "Has God said you can't eat from any of the trees in the garden?" Ah-ha, a little twist on the truth right there. Watch them, they always give you a truth and then put a twist on it. God never told Eve she couldn't eat of any of the trees of the garden, God just said, "There's one tree you can't eat of, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve, you've got everything else. You've got all of paradise but this one tree you can't eat." Satan twisted it around as if God is going to rob you of eating from any tree and every tree. Eve explains, "No, it's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Satan said, "Yeah, that's it, because you know why? God wants to rob you, Eve, of enjoying all of your heart's desires. He's holding you back, Eve, from your self-actualization. He's denying you your full fulfillment as to who you really are because he knows when you eat of this tree, then you'll be knowledgeable like he is knowledgeable." Here's the point: God can know good and evil without the association that brings

corruption but when we enter into the knowledge of good and evil, it brings corruption and defilement. We can't handle knowing evil personally and intimately without us embracing it and becoming evil ourselves.

So here Satan is at the very beginning working against the truth, God's word, and trying to undermine it and it's been that way ever since and it was that way in 750 BC when Jeroboam and his high priest that he himself had appointed in Israel, Amaziah, developed a false system of religion and worked against the truth of God and God in that setting sends Amos to confront it. So Amos comes and he faces this counterfeit hypocrisy that they called Judaism in ancient Israel and he confronts the false priest, Amaziah, and that's where we get to in our text today, this confrontation between Amos, the faithful preacher of truth, and Amaziah, the false counterfeit preacher who challenges him.

Look at it there beginning in verse 10 and let's read through verse 17. Verse 10,

10 Then Amaziah [that's the false counterfeit], the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is unable to endure all his words. 11 For thus Amos says, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'" 12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying! 13 But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence."

Well, that's what Amaziah had to say to Amos. Now Amos is going to respond, verse 14,

14 Then Amos replied to Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. 15 But the LORD took me from following the flock and the LORD said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.' 16 Now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you speak against the house of Isaac.' 17 Therefore, thus says the LORD, 'Your wife will become a harlot in the city, your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, your land will be parceled up by a measuring line and you yourself will die upon unclean soil. Moreover, Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'"

Three simple points as we have entitled this "The Faithful Preacher." The faithful preacher. 1. No matter the time or the day, to some degree every faithful preacher must endure the opposition of the false church and the state. To some degree, it's almost always been true that the faithful preacher will have to deal with and endure through the opposition of the false church and the state.

Now here we have in verse 10 the high priest appointed by King Jeroboam, is the counterfeit priest. He rules over all the many high places in Bethel and all of these, by the way, are splendid counterfeits of true worship, and by the way, God ordained true

worship not to be in Bethel and not to be by a priest appointed by Jeroboam but true worship was to be in Jerusalem headed by a high priest of the line of Aaron or the Levitical line. So here you have very clearly the counterfeit in the northern kingdom, the counterfeit priest, Amaziah, the counterfeit church there in Bethel, and it's being confronted now by the true preacher, Amos, for the lie and the fake that it is.

Now there is no doubt that Amaziah was a priest who had gloried in the fact that he had a position of both wealth and power and he saw this Amos coming up here from the country way down in Judea, as coming in here to mess up everything. He's going to bring division in the land. He's going to bring corruption. He's going to dismantle this great system we've amassed and Amaziah is thinking, "I'm going to lose my position of power and my position of wealth if he prevails and influences many of the people." He's like old Demetrius, the silversmith in Acts 19. Remember Demetrius? He was making all these idols of silver and making a good living out of selling idols to the people. The Apostle Paul and his associates come into the land and begin to preach the Gospel and saying that idols are stupid and idols are nothing and idols are not god. There is one true God and Jesus Christ is his Son and you must repent of looking to idols and look to God and look to his Son, Christ, and Christ alone. Well, he was hurting the silversmith business and so they began to riot and rage against Paul and they locked up two of Paul's associates.

It's always been this way. There are those, always those who are of the counterfeit religion who hate the faithful preacher because, by the way, if he's successful, he'll undermine the counterfeit system and bring it down and they know that. In John 19:12, Jesus, "As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, 'If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.'" That's exactly what Amos was facing. Amaziah is talking to King Jeroboam in verse 10 and he's telling King Jeroboam, "Amos is going to mess up everything, King. He's undermining your entire kingdom." The same thing with Jesus. The same thing throughout the whole Reformation ages as early Reformed pastors began to preach the Gospel that they had rescued from the word of God and the state Catholic churches began to oppose them, knowing that if these men prevail they're going to dismantle our system.

That's what Amos is facing. The apostles faced the same thing. Acts 16:20, "and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, 'These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews.'" What's the point again? They're messing up the system. We have a good church/state system going on, we've ascended to powers of position, of control and power and wealth, and if these men keep preaching this Gospel, they're going to undermine the whole thing. They've got to be stopped.

And you go all the way through from the beginning of the fall, all the way through to the end time and what's going to happen in the end time? We're going to have the great satanic superman, the antichrist, and he will be so empowered and gifted by Satan the world will finally believe, "We've finally found our savior. This guy is going to bring prosperity and peace and equality and justice to the whole world." And then there's going to be a great, giant, false, counterfeit, harlot church, professing Christian church,

worldwide church, is going to join in with this antichrist but there will be a godly remnant that stands against it. And the antichrist and the great false church will persecute ruthlessly those faithful preachers and Christians who will be on the earth in the end times and this will go on and on, of course, until Jesus shuts it all down.

So this is nothing new. Here Amos comes by the power of the Spirit faithfully preaching against the inhabitants of Israel in this day, preaching against the false church and the king and all of his wickedness, and no doubt he was gaining some converts. We do not know how large, certainly it was a minority, but he was gaining a hearing. Some were, no doubt, repenting of this state sponsored idolatry and they were reforming their lives and worshiping the true God of Scripture and likely they were enduring the persecution of those who would not repent and who would not turn from these things. They probably called this little remnant following Amos a bunch of Amosites. "Look at them old Amosites. They follow Amos. They're old Judaizers. They're from down south in the southern kingdom."

Notice how he words it here as, "Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word," the Bible says, verse 10, who did he send word to? "To Jeroboam king of Israel," there is a church/state thing going on here, "saying, 'Amos has conspired against you.'" That points out to us, indeed Amos must have had something of a following and his doctoring was growing. From Amaziah's perspective, the false priest's perspective, Amos has a growing conspiracy against the church in Bethel and the state headed up by King Jeroboam.

He goes on in verse 10 speaking to the king or writing to the king, the last phrase of verse 10, "the land is unable to endure all his words." So Amaziah, in effect, is saying, "Our whole system, this system, King, that we've built, it promotes sin and it's gained for us power and wealth, it's in danger of being torn apart if Amos continues on in his preaching and if Amos is not stopped."

Where does this come from? Why didn't the people just all stop and say, "Time out. He may be a country boy from Tekoa but listen to what he's saying. The man's of the truth. How can we justify this wickedness? How can we justify these Baal idol calves that we've carted into the church that's supposed to be worshiping the one and only true God? How can we say that we're right and Amos is wrong?" But they don't do that at all. They just bear against him.

Why is this tenacious, consistent, unrelenting opposition against the truth that we see in the earth? From the fall up through the end times it's going to be here. I can tell you why: it's driven by the antichrist spirit. There is a spirit behind this. This is supernatural power. There is something behind this more than just man's lust for sin, as strong as that is. 1 John 4:3, "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." It's already working so don't let it surprise you that faithful preachers of the word of God and faithful congregations find themselves against both the established religious system of the day and often the state authorities themselves.

It is interesting to me in the way our country is moving, that liberal so-called Christians and the secular state authorities seem to find themselves walking together all the time on issues and Bible believing Christians and Bible preaching pulpits, we're the problem. We're the haters. We're the bigoted. We're against women. We're against gay rights. We're what's holding the culture back.

That's exactly what Amos was facing. Amaziah believed this with all of his heart, that Amos was a serious problem to good and even to pleasing God. That's because – look – when a people hears the truth and rejects it, hears it and pushes it away, hears the truth and refuses it, God begins to work with them to give them what they want. They want to believe a lie so God aids them in believing the lie that the Bible is the problem, the truths of Scripture are outdated, that we can follow all our own lusts and our own desires and it would be better for everybody. That's the lie. We don't have to yield to God, we can be our own gods. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 points this out, "with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish," notice this phrase right here, "for though they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved," they wouldn't receive the truth so what happens? Verse 11, "For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false." You didn't want the truth, you didn't receive the truth you had so God says, "I'm going to work on you so that you will believe the lie. You're going to be deluded and deceived yourself."

Amaziah is a hypocrite. Amaziah is a counterfeit. Amaziah is using the religious system of the day for his own promotion, his own wealth, and his own power, and he's so deluded he thinks that everyone is like him. He thinks Amos just came in here because Amos wants to find a following, Amos wants to build a congregation, Amos wants the power and control that I now have. He believes Amos is a phony because that's all he knows. You see, when the wicked see genuine virtue, they call it well-masked wickedness. Do you know why? Because that's what they are. They only know some sort of deceptive, hidden ploy in their own hearts to gain for themselves, they can't imagine somebody really wants God glorified and the people truly helped. So Amaziah believes Amos is just like him.

In verse 11, he's continuing on talking to the king, that's Amaziah, the counterfeit, false priest. "For thus Amos says, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'" So this is Amaziah telling the king, "Amos is out here preaching, King, that you're going to die and all the people are going into exile." So here Amaziah, again, seeking the state support to oppose this preacher named Amos from Tekoa but what he does here when he makes this statement, he twists things. He mixes a little truth with a lie. We see that all the time. Amaziah warns the king as if Amos himself and Amos's followers themselves have a death plan for the king, a coup and a taking over the kingdom and Amaziah uses enough truth to gain acceptance of the lie. Remember that. They will always use enough truth to gain acceptance of the lie they're proposing. As one man said: the poison is drunk freely because it's mixed with the good wine. That's what he's doing.

Slanderous heretical doctrine that has been going out from this false church, it always uses some truth to promote a falsehood and then they use falsehood to destroy the truth. As we look at so-called liberalism in Christianity today, we see them saying some good things, helping the poor, social justice, equality, and those are good things, but then they leave the Scriptures and throw in all kind of filth and perversion. They use enough truth to get you to swallow the whole lie.

He says here in verse 11 that as Amaziah is reporting to the king on the danger Amos's preaching is, he says, "Amos is saying that Israel is certainly going to go into exile." Now we go from falsification of the truth to suppression of the truth. Here's what is happening: Amaziah, the false priest, is only telling the king what's politically expedient to tell the king. He's not telling him everything Amos is saying. Amos is saying a lot more than just the king's going to die by the sword and the people are going into exile, he's also saying, "You're going to be judged for your oppression of the poor. You're going to be judged for the injustice in your judicial system whereby you take advantage of the weak and the vulnerable." He's been preaching against the violence and the robbery and the wanton and gross sexual immoralities in the land and Amos has also been saying, "If you repent, there's still some hope." But Amaziah doesn't report all this to the king. He leaves all that out. So by this suppression of the truth, Amaziah states a blatant falsehood. He says only that which is politically expedient for the moment, in effect, he's wrapping it all up to try to tell the king, "Amos is leading a growing faction that seeks to overthrow you and you're going to lose your kingdom."

Let me give you...I told you I think of this before but it's such an amazing story in some ways, but it illustrates this truth of how people want to take part of the truth and put a spin on it. Years ago, I was getting ready to go to Africa and I had gone to bed already and some time about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, my Labrador retriever and my beagle dog barked, barked, barked, wouldn't stop barking. And we had learned through the years if you go out there and open the door and put the Labrador retriever in the garage, whatever she's barking at, she won't be able to bark at it. If she doesn't smell or see it, she'll stop barking. So my wife, Pam, goes to the door, opens the door and lets the Labrador retriever in and something caught her eye out in the yard and so she's standing there, a woman begins to approach our back porch and she is in a horrible state of disarray. I mean, her hair is just oil covered and filthy dirty. There are grass and dirt stains on a ragged old t-shirt. She's mostly wet and she looks like she hasn't slept literally in three days and she's got an infant baby in her arms and she begins crying out or screaming at Pam and saying, "Go get your mother! Go get your mother!" And Pam, bless her heart, was terrified at this point and she couldn't speak. She was trying to say, "I am the mother," but she couldn't get it out.

So she closes the door. I'm sound asleep. She runs back to the bedroom and this woman not only crying out at Pam saying, "Go get your mother!" was also crying out saying, "I've been bitten by a snake, a rattlesnake!" Of course she was out of her mind and we didn't know what was going on, she didn't at the time. Pam runs into my bedroom, I'm woken up with, "Get up! Get up! There's a woman in the backyard and she's got a baby and she's been bitten by a snake!" I mean, I sat straight up in the bed. 100% true story. It's

worse than I can explain. I'm telling you, it's worse than I can explain. Pam said, "And of all things, you run to the bathroom, to the closet." I said, "That's because I had a 9mm pistol in the closet." I don't know why but the first thing I thought was, "This is drug related. They've sent some woman to my door with a baby to get me outside so they can take advantage of us and get money." I did not know the situation.

Well, I go to the door. I speak to the woman through the door and I started realizing this woman is mentally deranged and in terrible terrible shape. We called 911 and they say, "Don't let her leave. If she's been bit by a snake we need to get to her." She finds her car and leaves and by the way, the sheriff's deputies tell us that she had been living in the woods around my house for several days. They found the baby's clothing and a little campfire out in the woods and just an unbelievable situation.

I get some sleep and I call the sheriff early the next morning and he said, "Well, she's in the emergency room at Keller Hospital. She went and checked herself in early in the morning." So I went down to Keller Hospital just to check on the lady to see if there's any way I could minister or be of any help and actually I didn't even get to see her. I saw her some distance away, stayed maybe 5 or 8 minutes and left. It wasn't a week until some nurses at that hospital had spread the rumor that Jeff Noblit had severely beaten up his wife and had to take her to the emergency room at Helen Keller Hospital and they said, "We know it's true. We saw him there with her."

Now, you can check the medical records, Pam and I have never been to Helen Keller, never been to the emergency room. It never happened, but they had some truth. There was a woman there who looked like she had been severely mistreated and I was there too for just a little bit of time, but it was not my wife and I had not beaten her up. And this went around for a long time and, "I tell you, I know, I saw him there." Yes, you did. Now look, these dear...I'm saying they're ladies, it could have been men, I don't know, but these dear people perhaps they didn't really mean evil but I'm convinced the antichrist spirit wants to smear every man, woman, whoever, who is trying to preach the truth of the word of God. You can't make stories like that up, can you?

This is what Amos is facing. "Amos said this, O King. Amos said that." But he's leaving out important parts of the message. Why? To put a twist on it. Just like Satan did to Eve in the garden, put a twist on what God is really saying so he can put God and the truth and the purveyors of truth in the worse possible light.

Now in verse 12, Amaziah continues talking to the king, "Then Amaziah said to Amos," no he's turned now and he's talking to Amos. Amaziah says to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying!" He uses the word "seer" here. It's an old word for prophet. Probably it's a derogatory statement like, "You think you're one of the great old prophets of old, don't you, Amos? I mean, here you are, you're seeing these visions of what God is saying to us," and Amaziah is saying, "I'm the high priest of Bethel, I'm not seeing any visions, I'm not getting this from God." Now he's being derogatory but he's really saying a great truth. He wasn't seeing any visions and he wasn't getting any word from God because God's not going to give his

word to that kind of man. So in his derogatory demeaning statement to Amos, he's actually saying a great truth.

Amaziah, again, is convinced that all men have carnal hearts like he did so he's convinced Amos is just trying to gain a following. "He wants wealth and power, I've got it now and I'm not going to let him have it." You know, it's amazing how you'll get it from all sides if you're trying to preach the truth like Amos was. When Jesus was dying on the cross, what did the religious authorities say to him? "If you're God's Son, if you're who you say you are, come down from the cross. Your weakness, your humility and your shame proves you're not of God." The Apostle Paul goes to the church at Corinth, the carnal Corinthians began to rail against Paul and demean Paul and undermine Paul because he asked for a decent salary from them. So whether or not you're in abject poverty and shame or whether or not you're seeking some wealth and advancement, on either side you're going to get criticized.

So Amaziah says to Amos, "Flee back to the land of Judah. Go down there and prophesy." In other words, "You're against us, you must be only seeking the advancement of the southern kingdom, Judah. Your preaching should be down there. Go down there for a while." And so he was rejected by the establishment there in Bethel and in Israel.

He continues on. He's saying there to Amos, "Here's another reason why you must quit all this preaching, 'But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence.'" This is a very telling statement because Israel wasn't the sanctuary of the king, Israel was to be the sanctuary of God. God made her. God dwelt in her midst. And Amaziah actually here was saying more than he realized he was saying. Once again he's saying something he thought would have power and effect but he really incriminates himself by the statement. He's basically said, "We built this thing the way we want it. The king's got this whole thing set up the way he likes it and you're trying to undermine the whole thing." He's basically saying, "We've built a man-centered system that's working well. The people are happy. The country is prosperous. Everybody enjoys coming to church now and you come in here with these cold, hard, harsh, condemning things and we don't like it. Furthermore," Amaziah says to Amos, "you're going to find yourself under the wrath of the king and the powers of the state are going to be against you if you continue to preach this way."

Once again, throughout the ages the counterfeit church has often aligned itself with state authorities to crush and silence the preachers of truth. It's always been that way. This will continue on age after age until the final culmination in the end times when once again a great, false, counterfeit church, the harlot as the Bible calls her, will unite herself with that great satanic superman, the antichrist, and they will ruthlessly persecute the true remnant church until Christ returns and they meet their doom from his righteous right hand. So we see here Amos confronting this apostate church and this apostate nation and getting such resistance from the authorities that be.

Now let's go to II, the faithful preacher's authority. Look at verses 14 and 15. Now Amos is replying back. "Then Amos replied to Amaziah, 'I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of

a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs.'" Amos is simply saying, "I'm not of any special lineage. My dad, my granddad, none of them were prophets. I haven't been trained in any formal school of prophecy like some of your associates up there in Bethel in the many shrines you guys officiate over. My calling," Amos is saying, "and my gifting is not of man, it's all of grace. God simply chose me. God called me and God gave me this message and I must do what God has told me to do." Acts 5:29, the early apostles, same thing again. They're preaching against the establishment of the day and they're upsetting the established religious system as they bring the truth to bear against it and they tell them, "You must stop preaching this Gospel," and those apostles reported back, "We must obey God rather than men." And that's exactly what Amos is saying.

Look at verse 15 as Amos continues on to reply to Amaziah, "But the LORD took me from following the flock and the LORD said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.'" This message that God had given Amos was a fire in his bones. He was under a holy commission and was compelled by a holy power to complete this task. Like the Apostle Paul said in the New Testament, "Woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel!"

You may remember another famous confrontation when the apostate state church opposed the true preacher. Remember when wicked King Ahab confronted Elijah? They run into each other, 1 Kings 18:17 and 18, "When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, 'Is this you, you troubler of Israel?'" And then Elijah just retorts straight back to his face, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals." This warring goes on and on throughout time and throughout the Scriptures.

So as Amos retorts back and said, "I'm just a shepherd and a part-time farmer. I was minding my business, doing my own thing, and God called me to preach this message and God gave me the message to preach and I'm coming here to preach to you, Amaziah, and to King Jeroboam and to all of apostate Israel and here's the way it is: your problem, Amaziah, is not with me, your problem is with God." When you find these folks who come against faithful preachers of the truth or you in the workplace or you in the school or you in the factory or you in the city square, when you try to stand for truth and you find these slanderous, cutting, twistings, all these things coming against you, remind yourself it's not about you. That's the way Amos understands it. They weren't against Amos, they were against God and they're not against you, they're against God. That's what Amos is saying by describing, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman. God did this."

Look at verse 16, "Now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you speak against the house of Isaac.'" Amaziah, you're a false priest. You're heading up an apostate counterfeit church. You're supported by a wicked king and you're living among a backslidden and rebellious people and here's the way it is, Amaziah, you can either repent and humble yourself and hear God through this shepherd, or you stand in opposition to Almighty God. Your attempt to silence me is

nothing but an attempt to silence God Almighty and you may as well be grasping lightning because when you grasp the lightning, you destroy yourself.

Now, III. The severe consequence of refusing the preaching of the truth. The severe consequence of refusing the preaching of the truth. Look at verse 16, "Now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you speak against the house of Isaac.'" When he says "speak against" there, it's an interesting word picture in the Hebrew. It means drip not. Drip not against Israel, the house of Isaac. Drip not. It has the idea of drip, drip, drip. It's almost like Amaziah has been saying, "Amos, you don't understand. Everything was so good and then we get this grating, disturbing, unsettling drip, drip, drip of you screaming at us." Do you ever leave church thinking that way? "That Jeff Noblit is just wham, wham, wham. We could be happy, we could find a happy place, a happy church, then he opens up the Bible and I'm just not comfortable anymore. I just don't feel blessed anymore. It's just drip, drip, drip." That's what this means.

Here's what it is: you've gone asleep on God and you're compromised and you're in a backslidden position and God starts dripping water on your forehead. Drip, drip, drip. That's exactly what that's saying. You know, to the wicked, the truth of God's word is an agitating, irritating drip, drip, drip. But you listen to me, sir, you listen to me, ma'am: it goes from a drip to a stream to a river to a torrent that will sweep you away one day in wrath. You will be judged by this word. But for the child of God, when the drip, drip, drip comes, they go, "Yes, Lord." There's a humility, there's a repenting, there's a shaking yourself by the Spirit's enablement to get your heart and your mind off of the world and off of your sin and off of your flesh and say, "O God, what are you teaching me? Show me what I need to learn! I'll be a repentant! I'll be a learner!" And that drip, drip, drip for you becomes a stream of living water flowing like a river all the way to eternal life.

But Amaziah wasn't that kind of guy. He was counterfeit and fleshly and worldly. He says, "Amos, you're just a drop, drop, drip, drip, drip irritant in our lives." Verse 17. Amos is tough. He has a backbone like a saw log. He just comes just like Elijah did to wicked King Ahab, he just, boom, right back at you, Amaziah. Verse 17, "Therefore, thus says the LORD," you don't want me to preach? You don't want to hear the prophecies of God? You don't want to hear from this shepherd preacher? Fine. Here's what God is saying to you, "Your wife will become a harlot in the city," that means you're going to be apprehended and the enemies who invade your company will use your wives like harlots, "your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, your land will be parceled up by a measuring line and you yourself will die upon unclean soil." You're going to be exiled and you'll die in a pagan country. Here's what God is saying, "Amaziah, you like bringing the Baal idols into Jehovah worship? You'd better like idol worship, you're about to be enslaved in an idol worshiping country. You want wickedness, you want falsehood, you want compromise, you want what happens to people that reject God?" God says, "I'm going to give it to you." America better hear that. You want a country without God? I'm going to give you a big dose of a country without God. "Amaziah, you're going to die in an idol's den because you brought the sensuous pleasures of idolatry into Jehovah worship and I'm about to give you what you want." America could use some Amos's.

"Moreover," the last part of verse 17, "Israel will certainly go from its land into exile." So Amaziah himself, Amos the prophet says, will see this nightmare come to pass. He's going to be alive when the people, including himself, will be enslaved and marched into captivity and so many of them will die and those who live will go into exile and so many of them will die in a land of idolatry. Amaziah, the counterfeit, false priest of a false religion of idolatry that held the people in strongholds of wickedness and sin, will meet this horrid end and this horrid end is nothing but the outcome of a lifetime of hypocrisy, falsehood and idolatry. Proverbs 5:22 reminds us, "His own iniquities will capture the wicked and he will be held by the cords of his sin." In other words, God says, "You like sin? I'm going to give you more of it and watch it destroy you."

As we go through the book of Amos, we see all of Amos's harsh, cutting, condemning preaching and we're reminded that all of these warnings from Amos are gifts of grace. This hard preaching from Amos is but a grace God's given Israel so that she could turn and not meet this devastating end. But Amaziah, the counterfeit priest, wouldn't repent, the nation would not hear much less repent, and so the natural outcome of their lives would soon come upon them.

So they coldly reject and denounce Amos's ministry, no humility, no repentance, so no restoration, and now the final domino is going to fall and that is calamity, captivity and exceeding sorrow. Psalm 114:1 says, "The fool has said in his heart, no God." That means the fool says in his heart, "I don't want to honor him. I don't want to yield to him. I don't want to be a repenter of my ways. I want to be my own god. I will not hear God's word. I will not humble myself to God's word. I will believe my own way. I will worship my own way. I'm going to separate myself from this Bible preacher, Amos, and keep going the way I'm going." That's exactly what Paul warned Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 when he said, "Timothy, preach the word. Be faithful in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience because the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." That phrase "not endure sound doctrine" means the people will literally push themselves away from it. They'll say, "We'll get our own group and we'll do our own thing and we'll get our own kind of preacher. We're not going to listen to that." That's where Amaziah and the people were.

But let me close with this simple sobering statement: when you separate yourself from the preaching of God's truth, you separate yourself from the provision of God's grace. When you separate yourself from the preaching of God's truth, you separate yourself from the provision of God's grace. And when you separate yourself from the provision of God's grace, like Amos told Amaziah, all that awaits you is God's wrath. Amos was a faithful preacher.