

**THE BOOK OF AMOS**  
**Lesson 12, Chapter 7**

The 2 main roles of a biblical Prophet were 1) to be an intercessor who is to speak for and defend the people of Israel, and 2) a messenger from Yehoveh who is to announce a warning or a coming judgment. In Amos chapter 7 we find our Prophet doing both. Open your Bibles to Amos chapter 7.

**READ AMOS CHAPTER 7 all**

The first thing to know about chapter 7 is that it really ought not end at verse 17 (where it typically does). The thought process of the narrative that includes a series of visions that forms the basic structure of chapter 7, flows into what our Bibles say is chapter 8 verses 1 - 3. I'll remind you that it was well more than 1000 years after the Bible was completed that chapters and verse numbers were first added to the text (they had never before existed), and in fact the first of several attempts at doing this are not how we typically see it ordered in our Bibles today. The standard way our English Bible books are divided into chapters and verses today didn't happen until about the 16<sup>th</sup> century upon the creation of the Geneva Bible. Therefore, since many arbitrary decisions necessarily were made about where to begin and end chapters within any Bible book, and how to define the length of a verse and to also number it, we find that the current system can at times confuse and mislead, with the result that one time an ongoing thought pattern is prematurely interrupted, and another time a new thought pattern gets added to a section of the Bible where it doesn't belong. Amos chapter 7, as it is structured in modern times, is one of these cases. Nonetheless we'll study this chapter just the way our Bibles have it in order to maintain continuity, and when we get to chapter 8 I'll remind you that the first 3 verses are really better placed as the final 3 verses of chapter 7.

Chapter 7 amounts to a series of visions about what God intends to do to Israel as punishments for their rebellion against Him. Amos responds to the first 2 visions of doom by interceding for Israel and God relenting. In the next 2 visions God interrogates Amos, Amos answers, but God responds that He will not relent. The bottom line is that while God indeed will not visit upon Israel some of the horrors He shows Amos in these 4 visions, on the other hand Israel will still be

devastated by an enemy and the survivors exiled to a foreign land. The chapter opens immediately with just such a vision of a God-ordained catastrophe.

The first vision is about an invasion of locusts. I want to point out an issue that we'll find with practically all translations of verse 1: it is that in the original Hebrew God's formal name (Yehoveh) is written, but it is not used in English or modern Hebrew Bibles. The CJB, for instance, instead of saying Yehoveh says Adonai Elohim. Adonai (meaning lord) is accurate. But the word Elohim doesn't appear in the original Hebrew manuscripts. More usual in English Bibles are the words "Lord God". But, the Hebrew word for God, which is Yah, also isn't in the original Hebrew. The correct translation, then, is "Lord Yehoveh".

Locusts are the Middle Eastern version of the Black Plague. They are actually grasshoppers that come from eggs hatched in the spring and then soon swarm in gigantic numbers and were an unstoppable force of complete destruction of the food crops they invaded. This verse seems to imply that there were 2 cuttings or crops involved; the first crop or cutting going to the king (Jeroboam) more or less as a tax. So, it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> cutting or crop that the common people relied upon as their own food source or from which to trade, barter, or sell.

According to the Hebrew Calendar this locust invasion would have been in the months of Shebat and Adar and therefore consisted more of an attack on the vegetable crops rather than grain crops. The vision Amos saw of the grasshopper invasion seems to occur, then, at the time just AFTER the first crop was already safely harvested and given to the king and just before the second was ready for the picking. This timing would have meant starvation (or at least great hunger) for many people, and since some of their livestock were fed by those hay cuttings, it would have included a loss of those livestock that were dependent on that food source. In other words, so far as it directly affected the common citizen, the envisioned locust plague is carefully timed by Yehoveh so as to provide maximum damage. This locust disaster is a God-directed curse for Israel's rebellion as specifically called for in The Law of Moses.

<sup>JPS</sup> **Deuteronomy 28:42** *All thy trees and the fruit of thy land shall the locust possess.*

Amos would have understood this vision as calling for the Northern Kingdom to become utterly denuded of vegetation, making the lives of humans and animals essentially impossible. Somehow in this vision it's as though Amos has been transported across time and dimensions to stand in the very presence of God such that he sees a potential future scenario unfolding. I underline the term **potential** because clearly it was a future event not yet written in stone. In response, Amos pleads for the Lord to not bring this calamity of locusts upon Israel. His petition is interesting because in it a very specific Hebrew word is used to describe what he asks of God: *salach*. While *salach* is often translated as "forgive" in English Bibles, it is better nuanced to mean "pardon". There are a few Hebrew words translated as "forgive", such as *nasa* and *kaphar*. But in biblical Hebrew *salach* carries a little different meaning by extending the idea of forgiveness to the point of complete absolution of the crime; a pardon so thorough that it would be as though the offense never happened. Thus, there would be no need either to punish or to forgive.

In what seems to me to be a knee-jerk, emotionally-charged plea, Amos blurts out "how could Jacob (Israel) survive?" ... should God bring this locust plague upon them in such a ferocity as he (apparently) saw in his vision. It so stunned Amos that he responds by taking on the role of a loving and concerned mediator who stands between God and His people. While I can't be certain of it, I think the reason Amos speaks of Israel as "Jacob" in this instance is to make it more personal; it is meant to humanize Israel as a collection of living individuals rather than merely as a political entity...a national collective... called Israel. And, since Jacob is such a revered Patriarch perhaps it is Amos also calling on God to remember from whence the nation of Israel came and the great favor He has shown the Israelites over the centuries on account of Jacob's faithfulness. There is one other point that I want to make, and perhaps this is the most important one; despite chapter after chapter of reading about Amos warning Israel about their rapidly approaching exile and the destruction of their nation, clearly to Amos the words he spoke didn't mean a destruction so total that it was the **end** of Israel as a people group nor did he see that as God's aim. That is, Amos certainly saw severe punishment that, in reality, would perhaps mean as much as 90% of all Ephraim/Israelites being killed. But, even in exile, at least a small remnant would continue on, like seeds saved from a fire to be used to replant at a later time. In the locust invasion vision, apparently Amos saw

something so terrible that he took it to mean the 100% annihilation of Israel and it shocked him enough to spontaneously speak out to Yehoveh about it. To put it another way: the vision he saw seemed to indicate to him that Israel (Jacob) could not possibly survive such a thing. Thus, he says to God:

<sup>JPS</sup> **Amos 7:2** *O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech Thee; how shall Jacob stand? for he is small.*

In verse 3, Yehoveh responds in mercy that it won't happen because He has essentially changed His mind...He has "repented" ... or at least that's the standard way we find it in our Bibles. The Hebrew word used to describe God's reaction to Amos's plea is *nacham*, which is usually translated as "repent". However, *nacham* more leans towards the idea of being comforted as opposed to the Christian view of the term repent, which is to change one's attitude and behavior from bad to good. The idea of God repenting (again, in the same way Christians use the word repent) is not something that ought to ever be applied to Him. It is my opinion the challenge lies in that this Hebrew concept of *nacham* is difficult to precisely bring across from the Hebrew into another language and culture and so something gets lost in the translation. We assume the wrong mental picture of a God who first decides to do one thing, but then re-thinks it, and being flexible is sorry for what He at first determined to do, and so decides to do something else less drastic. Rather, I see the dialogue as God responding to Amos by reassuring him... comforting him... that the vision he saw did not mean that a locust invasion was going to completely wipe out Israel down to the last man...essentially making Ephraim/Israel extinct. Thus, it is recorded that God says to Amos: "It won't happen", with the idea being that Israel will not be completely erased from the planet by means of a plague of locusts (which is what a deeply shaken Amos incorrectly thought the vision was telling him).

Verse 4 presents a second vision. It is a different vision (fire instead of locusts) but yet they share the common devastating result of devouring and consuming Israel in totality. This fire spoken of is God's wrath and is so intense that it can consume everything it comes into contact with. Invoking fire as a curse against Israel naturally draws from a curse found in the Law of Moses.

<sup>CJB</sup> **Deuteronomy 32: 22** *"For my anger has been fired up. It burns to the depths of Sh'ol, devouring the earth and its crops, kindling the very roots of the hills.*

Notice how this fire burns to the depth of **Sheol**, in Deuteronomy. Here in Amos, the parallel term "Abyss" is used; they mean essentially the same thing. The thing to always remember about fire (especially divinely directed fire) as it is used in the Bible, is that it either 1) completely purifies, or 2) it completely destroys. It inherently means a complete purification (never partial) or a complete destruction (nothing remains). Keeping in mind what we just discussed about the locust invasion vision as meaning to Amos a total destruction of Israel down to the last man, so did this vision of fire mean the same thing. Yet, we have a difficulty that translators have known about for centuries. Since fire means 100% destruction (or purification), and since clearly Israel is not going to be 100% wiped out, then how are we to understand the sense of the vision? We read in Isaiah 66 a similar thought:

<sup>JPS</sup> **Isaiah 66: 15** *For, behold, the LORD will come in fire, and His chariots shall be like the whirlwind; to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.*

Because the context of this verse doesn't mean to indicate 100% annihilation, and neither does God speak of 100% annihilation of Israel in the Book of Amos, then we have to seek a solution to best explain what we're being told. In my opinion, of the few choices available to us, the best that solves the most problems is that Amos's vision is of a scorching heat...a burning heat... that devours the land and the sea (the Abyss is always associated with the sea). We find this same concept in Joel chapter 1. Therefore, I think this verse (when translated to English) ought to read something like "**Amos 7:4** *Thus the Lord GOD showed me; and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by a fiery heat; and it devoured the great deep, and would have eaten up the land.*"

Amos responds in verse 5 by asking God to stop or to cease (depending on the Bible version). The Hebrew word is **chadal**, and it includes the idea of refraining or foregoing of an action. I think the much better English word choice considering the context is "refrain". So, we have Amos saying to God: "*Oh, Lord GOD, **refrain!** How will Jacob survive? He is so small.*" In the first vision Amos asked God to

pardon Israel; in the second vision Amos asked God to refrain from bringing a fiery heat upon Israel. Please continue to notice that Amos is interpreting the vision as a fiery heat that is so widespread and severe that Jacob's (Israel's) survival...down to the last man...becomes impossible. God responds in verse 6 to Amos's intercession by saying: *"This also shall not be"*. The words immediately before those are *"The LORD repented concerning this"*, again using the word **nacham**, which I contend ought to be translated as comforted or perhaps consoled and definitely not repented. Thus, in this second vision that involves fiery heat, just as with the first vision of locusts, God comforts or consoles Amos's terrible fear by assuring him that what he's being shown doesn't mean that not even a single person of Ephraim/Israel will be left alive.

Verses 7 and 8 are a most difficult task to understand, and translators have struggled with these words. For one reason, the Hebrew text they have to work from is clearly corrupt. And second, we are very likely dealing with some arcane Hebrew words that had meanings in ancient times that we're just not certain about. But, a third reason is that the next two visions of Amos are symbolic and not literal, and so it seems that Amos isn't even sure of what they are symbolic of.

The third vision begins with Yehoveh standing by a wall made using a plumbline. At least, "plumbline" is the most typical translation. The problem is that the Hebrew word being translated into English as plumbline is **anak** and technically it doesn't mean plumbline. I'm going to get a bit technical for a minute for the benefit of those of you that like to delve into the nuances of biblical Hebrew. What **anak** means is plummet. Sometimes it refers to a metal weight. Since a metal weight is used at the bottom of a plumbline then translators have guessed that **anak** as used here indicates a plumbline. However, there already existed a known Hebrew word for plumbline and it is **qav**. We have discussed how some of the ancient and obscure Hebrew words have become better understood recently because of the outstanding research done on language cognates; that is, similar words from other ancient languages to which our target language is related. Often we have a better understanding of those words' meanings and so we can transfer that same meaning to the Hebrew word. Since Hebrew and Akkadian are cousin languages, and there is an Akkadian word **anaku** that means tin or lead, then it is likely Hebrew **anak** and Akkadian **anaku** mean the same thing: tin or

lead (probably tin). And that is likely what is meant here in verse 7. Therefore, **if** that is the case with the Hebrew **anak**, then our verse would read: "This is what Yehoveh showed me. He was standing on a *tin* wall and He had some *tin* in His hand...". So, what we find is that while visions one and two call out specific punishments (locusts and fiery heat), this third vision changes form and is symbolic based on a play on words. As Douglas Stuart points out: "Thus, what Amos sees is in one sense ridiculous. It is hard to imagine what a tin wall would look like and what shape the tin in Yahweh's hand would take".

Here's the thing: we occasionally find in ancient Near and Middle East documents references to walls of metal; each time this reference is meant metaphorically or as symbolism and not literal. So, for instance, in Egypt Seti 1 is likened to a wall of bronze, and a great wall of copper. Rameses II is said to be like a wall of iron. While walls of bronze and iron would symbolize very strong walls, then a wall of tin would represent the opposite...a very weak wall. But, there's more.

Verse 8 continues the vision, and God asks Amos what he sees. Amos answers "tin". Now that this word **anak** (tin) has been used 3 times (and to this point it really makes little sense), we (the readers or hearers) are ready for the play on words (the pun, if you would) to show itself. The Hebrew word for groaning or moaning when spoken sounds nearly identical to **anak**: it is **anaq**. Although not certain, it is believed that the way the word for moan was vocalized was **naq**. So, when someone read and spoke these words it would have been **naq** and **anak**, and now we have our word play. Moaning is often associated in the writings of the Prophets with coming punishments. City walls made of tin instead of stone (something foolish that would never have happened) would have been soft, useless, and easily breached by the enemy. Thus, the idea is that verses 7 and 8 are symbolic of the moaning and groaning of Israel as they come face-to-face with the consequences of their rebellion against God, and the defenses of their city walls against invaders that they were sure were as walls of iron are actually as though they were made of tin.

Unlike in the first 2 visions when God consoled or comforted Amos, here in the third vision God offers **no** comfort to Amos. What has been symbolically represented in the vision will come about. What is symbolized is the easy breaching of Ephraim/Israel's city walls by an invading army, and the resultant

moaning and groaning by the city residents as they are put to the sword. God says that "*I will never again overlook their offenses (Amos 7:8 CJB)*". The Hebrew word that is used here to speak of "overlooking" offense is **abar**, and it more means to pass by or to pass over. God has, for a long time, passed over or by Israel's offenses against Him...that is, He has kicked the can of punishment down the road, hoping for Israel to come to their senses and change... but no more. The day of reckoning is about to arrive and it will not be delayed nor will the blow be softened.

I have little doubt that we've only scratched the surface on all that's taking place in this third vision, and that there is more meaning originally intended here than what we have been discussing; although I don't know what it is. Yet, that's the nature of more than a few challenging biblical passages that were written for an ancient people who DID understand the intent.

Verse 9 opens somewhat curiously; it employs the name of Isaac. Isaac, Jacob's father, gets mentioned I think more for poetic value than for any substantial reason. "The high places of Isaac...the sanctuaries of Israel" represent a typical Hebrew poetic couplet. The message being given is that regardless of the great and lofty place that the Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob hold before God and before Israel, nonetheless the entire religious establishment of Israel will be brought down. And, along with it, the royal line of King Jeroboam...his dynasty... will be brought to an end. So, everything that represents the leadership of Ephraim/Israel... their religion and their historical monarchy... will be no more. God says He will attack Jeroboam by means of the sword. Nearly always in the Old Testament, when punishment is said to be brought by the sword it is due to a serious violation against the Covenant of Moses. This is emphasized when the Lord says "I will rise" against the house of Jeroboam. Yehoveh, personally, will punish the monarchy of Israel for their rebellion against Him. Israel's kings were to rule righteously, as God's appointed representatives on earth. Israel's kings are often called in the Bible "sons of God", so close was their relationship supposed to be. Jeroboam, however, was the epitome of a king's unfaithfulness as he ruled as his pagan neighbors ruled, and worshipped as his pagan neighbors worshipped, rather than as the Torah said he should rule.



At verse 10 a pause in the visions occurs. Here, a confrontation of sorts happens between the recognized head of the religious establishment of Israel (Amaziah) and the current representative of God on earth (Amos). Very quickly the confrontation turns political in nature. Amaziah, no doubt the chief priest of Israel's religious cult, sends a letter to the current reigning king Jeroboam II. In this letter he exploits a very explosive accusatory word that any king in any era would have to give ear to: conspiracy. Amos is accused of conspiring against King Jeroboam, inherently meaning to foment a rebellion for the purpose of a change of government leadership.

These words would be especially sensitive to King Jeroboam since his own dynasty that began with his ancestor King Jehu was the result of a prophet of God (Elisha) inciting a conspiracy to overthrow the dynasty of Omri. It might sound strange to imagine one of the Bible's great Prophets to get so involved in Israel's politics as to foment a rebellion against the sitting Israelite king, but it did happen and it happened at God's command. So, precedent for it had been established. Prophets wielded serious power in ancient Israel. Here's the story of Elisha inciting rebellion as found in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings.

**CJB 2 Kings 9:1-10** *Elisha the prophet summoned one of the guild prophets and said to him, "Prepare for traveling, take this flask of oil in your hand and go to Ramot-Gil'ad. <sup>2</sup> When you get there, look for Yehu the son of Y'hoshafat, the son of Nimshi. Enter, have him step away from his companions, and take him to an inside room. <sup>3</sup> Then take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and say, 'This is what ADONAI says: 'I have anointed you king over Isra'el.' " After that, open the door; and get away from there as fast as you can." <sup>4</sup> So the young prophet left for Ramot-Gil'ad. <sup>5</sup> When he arrived, he found the senior army officers sitting there. He said, "I have a message for you, commander." Yehu asked, "For which one of us?" "For you, commander," he said. <sup>6</sup> Yehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on his head and said to him, "This is what ADONAI the God of Isra'el says: 'I have anointed you king over the people of ADONAI, over Isra'el. <sup>7</sup> You will attack the house of Ach'av your master, so that I can avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and of all the servants of ADONAI, blood shed by Izevel. <sup>8</sup> The entire house of Ach'av will perish; I will cut off from Ach'av every male, whether a slave or free in Isra'el. <sup>9</sup> I will make the house of Ach'av like the house of Yarov'am the son of N'vat and like the house of Ba'sha the son*

***of Achiyah. <sup>10</sup> Moreover, the dogs will eat Izevel in the dumping-ground of Yizre'el, and there will be no one to bury her.'" Then he opened the door and fled.***

Although Amaziah's accusation against Amos wasn't entirely true (Amos was not conspiring with others to overthrow Jeroboam), Jeroboam did have every reason to believe it may have been true. After all, considering the long series of diatribes in Amos's prophecies about the wicked government leadership of Israel that was leading the nation into certain destruction, and also about the blasphemous leadership of the state religion that was headquartered in Bethel and led at this time by Amaziah who, in turn, let the people into idolatry, it is no wonder that both the Priest of Bethel and King Jeroboam would believe that a conspiracy to rebel is exactly what Amos was doing. Amos, indeed, was prophesying that both the Priest of Bethel and King Jeroboam were going to be overthrown; but it would not be any Israelite rival or a rebellion of the people, but rather it would be at God's hand that it would happen and that the new government would be of foreign enemies.

Although we're not told, very likely Amaziah knew about Amos first hand. It also is probable that Amos did much of his prophesying at Bethel. It is equally probable that in verse 12, when Amaziah addresses Amos, he does so face-to-face. He tells Amos to stop prophesying here, and instead to go back to Judah to earn his money from prophesying. Indeed, in that era prophets (legitimate and illegitimate) were paid by a patron to prophecy. I'm sure it was especially galling to Amaziah for a prophet from the Southern Kingdom of Judah to have the nerve to come north and prophecy terrible things against Ephraim/Israel right in the middle of their religious center no less!

Verse 13 makes it clear that Bethel was the royally authorized place of religious practice for the Northern Kingdom; it was Jeroboam's replacement of Jerusalem. There is also another factor at play. At this time in history, Ephraim/Israel was wealthy and internationally admired, and seen as a place of sophistication and progressive thinking. Judah, on the other hand, was viewed as a place populated by simple country hicks, where the ancient religion of the Hebrews was still practiced in a conservative way as it had been for centuries. It is a strange phenomenon that has existed for millennia, I suppose, that it is generally believed among a society's elites that only the primitive and unintelligent

worship and obey God according to the long existing ways and commands He established in eras past. It seems that with the rise in wealth and worldly knowledge, the accumulation of opulent material possessions as a goal, the desire of the elites to be internationally connected and accepted and admired, and a belief that our human intelligence is now so great that it dictates that we have the right (if not the duty) to continually re-make our morals, ethics, and faith to reflect the ever-changing wants and pleasures of our advancing societies. Therefore, those who embrace such advances at the same time tend to automatically shun those who continue to believe in and practice the morals, ethics, and faith as originally established. We see this sort of attitude in living color in our modern world, today, as throughout the West a battle for the souls of nations heats up. Therefore, it ought not be too hard for us to understand how progressive Ephraim/Israel viewed conservative Judah (and when I speak of progressive and conservative I mean that in an academic way and not in political terms). This worldview made it all the more chafing for Amaziah to have to listen to the prophet from backward Judah condemn the progressive ways of Ephraim/Israel, and especially when it was happening right there at the center of Israel's religious elite where the king himself would worship.

Amos responds to Amaziah in verse 14 by telling him that he is not a trained guild prophet. That is, being a prophet isn't his profession. Rather his identity is as a sheep breeder and grower of figs. There is much controversy about this verse and the next. The wording, when read in Hebrew, is actually rather ambiguous. Most modern English versions gloss over this ambiguity and instead take the standard stance and move on. The issue is this: the wording *could* say that Amos denies that he is a prophet...but then that contradicts what he says next. Or it *could* say he is a prophet, but not a classically trained one. Or that although he was sent to prophesy he doesn't actually come as an official prophet. What we can know for certain is that Amos makes it clear to Amaziah that he doesn't make his living by means of delivering messages from God and getting paid for it. Rather than spend a great deal of time with this conundrum, even though I wanted you to know that this difficulty legitimately exists, I feel pretty confident in understanding this passage to say something like this: "Yes, I am a prophet, but I'm not a member of a prophet guild". Or, "I am a prophet, just not a professionally trained prophet". I believe that my assertion is backed-up by what follows in verse 15.

In verse 15 Amos explains that Yehoveh took him away from his occupation of sheep breeding and fig cultivating, and sent him to prophesy to the people of Ephraim/Israel. That is, his was a sudden and unexpected divine calling and not an occupation of choice. This is very much in the mold of what God said when he chose the shepherd David to be king over Israel.

**CJB 2 Samuel 7:8** <sup>8</sup> *"Therefore say this to my servant David that this is what ADONAI-Tzva'ot says: 'I took you from the sheep-yards, from following the sheep, to make you chief over my people, over Isra'el.*

Biblically speaking, the offices of king and prophet were to be a specific calling from God and not merely a professional position one seeks to occupy. In the Torah we read this:

**CJB Deuteronomy 17:14-15** <sup>14</sup> *"When you have entered the land ADONAI your God is giving you, have taken possession of it and are living there, you may say, 'I want to have a king over me, like all the other nations around me.' <sup>15</sup> In that event, you must appoint as king the one whom ADONAI your God will choose. He must be one of your kinsmen, this king you appoint over you- you are forbidden to appoint a foreigner over you who is not your kinsman.*

A few verses later in Deuteronomy we also read this:

**CJB Deuteronomy 18:15** <sup>15</sup> *"ADONAI will raise up for you a prophet like me from among yourselves, from your own kinsmen. You are to pay attention to him,*

Speaking for God, operating on His behalf, was always meant to be more of a divine calling coming out of Heaven... individual by individual...than it was a trained profession at an academy or guild. That is not to say that as the world's population has grown, and as the Hebrew faith has spread to all parts of the world, that professional training for new faith leaders isn't needed. Or that to make it a full-time occupation is somehow wrong. Rather, the defining issue is about how one views it and on what basis one makes the decision to serve. Is it about seeking a stable job that pays well enough? Wanting a comfortable working environment around nice people? An aim to earn a living that doesn't

require too many hours or too much hard work? Or (as it was much more so not long ago), a person of the cloth is given a title that is admired and respected and gives one authority and special standing in his/her community? Alternatively, do you feel that God is tugging at you and calling you out to serve Him in a special way? A way which may NOT bring with it security or steady hours. A way that is far different from anything you indeed have been trained to do, or every experienced, and so it's a bit of a scary thought? A way for which you know going in that you are totally unqualified? Amos is of the latter and not the former. Amos wasn't looking to be a paid prophet, and very likely was quite successful and comfortable at sheep breeding and tending his fig trees. I imagine it never occurred to him that he would become of prophet of Yehoveh. Although we're not told, it seems that his sudden change of direction happened without him seeking it, wanting it, or needing it. Rather, Amos was merely obedient to God's unexpected call. God told Amos to go and prophesy to His people, and he did.

Verses 16 and 17 puts Amos on the offensive. He's listened to the pompous Amaziah order him to stop prophesying, and now Amos tells Amaziah the reality. This reality is explained not by Amos's words, but rather by God's oracle. For the crime of Amaziah attempting to muzzle Yehoveh's prophet, the Lord says:

**CJB Amos 7:17 *'Your wife will become a whore in the city, your sons and daughters will die by the sword, your land will be parcelled out with a measuring line, you yourself will die in an unclean land, and Isra'el will certainly be exiled from their land.'***

I think we could rightfully call this "being read the riot act". Amaziah has proven himself to be a suppressor of God's truth. He prefers his manmade religion and all its accompanying doctrines to God's Word. Therefore, 5 curses are leveled against Amaziah. The first is directed at his wife who will be forced into shameful prostitution in order to survive. The second aims at Amaziah's children; they will die violently. While losing a child is devastating, the reality especially in Bible times was that loss of *all* of one's children means the family blood line comes to an end. Third, Amaziah's land will be taken from him and divided up. Losing all his property means he has no inheritance to pass along. Fourth, Amaziah himself is going to die in exile on unclean foreign soil. Unclean land means any place where God isn't. Recall that the belief in that era was that gods operated only

within specific territorial boundaries and had no power or influence outside of it. So, Amaziah's god wouldn't be present with him in exile, and therefore the very land on which he resided would be rendered unclean. And fifth, Amaziah will be deported along with the surviving common folks of Israel.

Still at this point in Amos's prophesying he has yet to identify the foreign invader, the place to which Israel will be exiled, or exactly when this is all going to come about.

We'll move into chapter 8 next week, beginning with Amos's fourth vision.