**Amos 7:10-17 10**Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. **11**For thus Amos has said: ‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive From their own land.’ ” **12**Then Amaziah said to Amos: “Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy. **13**But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it *is* the king’s sanctuary, And it *is* the royal residence.” **14**Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: “I *was* no prophet, Nor *was* I a son of a prophet, But I *was* a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. **15**Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’ **16**Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: You say, ‘Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac.’ **17**“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by *survey* line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.’

We’re in the book of Amos tonight. We’re in what some theologians call the Book of Visions. Some say that the book of Amos is really two books in one. The first half is a book of pronouncements against Israel and the second half is a Book of Visions for the future of Israel.

Bethel is an interesting name. It means in Hebrew “House of God”. Beth – when we dig into the original meaning it means a house of closely related people. We see it related most often to families like Jacob. It suggests the entirety of the household – everything the household owns and stands for. El is a shortened version of Elohim – a name for God. Bethel - House of God.

Notice that it’s the priest of Bethel, Amaziah, that makes the complaint against Amos. He comes to the king and he complains that Amos is prophesying things that don’t scratch his ears, they’re not pleasing to the way he thinks, they’re not honey and sweetness. They are hard prophecies that offend the status quo and call for repentance! This should sound very familiar to us – in Jeremiah 38, we saw Jeremiah brought before the king and then thrown into a pit because he didn’t speak pleasing things, but spoke truth to God’s people. He too called for repentance.

Ungodly people hate the truth! It’s not just princes and politicians, it’s not just common people wandering in the streets. There are people sitting in churches all over the world and certainly all over America even today who do not want to hear the truth. They want their ears scratched and their backs rubbed – they want to hear that all they’re doing is OK with God. As long as they think it in their hearts, it must be true! But Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. 2 Timothy 4:3 warns us - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers. This was true in Amos time, it was true in Jeremiah’s time, it was true in Jesus time, and it’s still true today. When the message isn’t pleasant, the messenger must be eliminated – fired, criticized, replaced.

John Ruskin, a noted 19th century thinker, once said, “Nearly all the evils in the Church have arisen from religious leaders desiring power more than light. They want authority, not insight and truth.” It hasn’t improved since he said this. Look at Amaziah, a priest! He of all people should have been learning from Amos, seeking what God said, but instead he wants the power and authority, he wants the position. He’s not looking for inspired prophecy from God, but power from man. Look at so many today, saying what needs to be said to keep their job, preaching to the people comfortable messages that never draw the people to think.

But we must seek God with our all – it’s our one and only assignment, everything else flows from that! Ecclesiastes 12:13 makes that resoundingly clear! Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? It doesn’t get much clearer than that.

Amaziah doesn’t like what Amos is saying, he doesn’t like that Jeroboam will be killed, which happened, and Israel will be led away, which happened. So, instead of repenting and leading the house of Israel to do the same, the priest, in verse 12, tells Amos to go give prophecy in Judah. And so it is today with many who tell the truth of God, the world says, “Go away, we don’t want to hear, leave us in our sin, leave us to pervert justice, and live as we want to and not as God commands.

Listen then to verse 13, But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it *is* the king’s sanctuary and it is the royal residence. What incredibly truthful words Amaziah is inspired to speak – this is not the house of God at all… it has become the house of the king! It has bowed down to the king and worships money and things. It worships comfort. Go away man of God!!! We have no time for Godly things here in the house of God. And so it is today in churches around the world. There is time for social activities, but no time to love our neighbor.

I read a story not long ago about a church requiring that members give information on income before they’re accepted into the church. The church then uses this and sends the member a “bill” for the tithe. I read another story about a church that put a sign in their parking lot that said, “Member parking only. No, we will not forgive your trespass.” I watched a pastor say that, if he said that Jesus was the only way to heaven, he’d lose members in his church. My heavens!!! We are to be about the Father’s business! We’re to love the orphan and the widow, we’re to visit the prisoner, we’re to welcome the stranger, we’re to share the Gospel with everyone. Jesus parents lost Him when He went to the temple, we must not lose Jesus when we come to the church!!!

Listen to Amos response, **14**Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: “I *was* no prophet, Nor *was* I a son of a prophet, But I *was* a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. **15**Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’ This is a beautiful picture of a truly called servant of God. Amos is saying, Look, I was minding my own business and God called me. I wasn’t a prophet, I was a sheep breeder. God calls who He will, when He will, to where He will, for as long as He will. God called Alan out of the textile industry. He called me from the IT industry. He calls policemen, air conditioning servicemen, and engineers. He calls teachers, accountants, and housewives. We don’t seek it, we seek Him and He calls us. We seek no power, we surrender and God assigns.

Let’s finish the verses. Amos pronounces a judgement on Amaziah. **16**Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: You say, ‘Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac.’ **17**“Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by *survey* line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.’ God pronounces judgement on all who resist the Truth. James 4:6 tells us that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Pride comes in many forms, but they all have one message – I am my own god, I worship myself and my own knowledge, I don’t need God. The verse doesn’t say God ignores the proud… it says He actively RESISTS the proud, but He gives grace to the humble… those who bow the knee and admit their utter dependence upon Him.

In these days, take great care what you watch, what you read, who you listen to, and where you spend your time. The world is in open rebellion to God now. We must root ourselves ever deeper in the only Truth there is. In Genesis 3:4 & 5, “Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. **5**For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The world is saying, God just doesn’t want you to be smart like Him. Read all this filth, be lead astray by wealth and false words. Jesus tells us – “I Am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me.” Two very different offerings - we, like Eve, must choose which offering we will consume.