

Confronting the Enemy
Amos 7:10-17

July 16, 2006

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction

- 1. last week, the three visions

- 2. verse 9 directs judgement against two institutions in Israel

B. The Enemy is Watching Amos 7:10-11

- 1. Amaziah the enemy

- 2. the Enemy of God's people
 - a. his occupation, Revelation 12:10

 - b. his nature, John 8:44

C. The Enemy Seeks to Hinder Amos 7:12-13

- 1. Amaziah using human authority

- 2. human authority is not friendly to the gospel, 2 Corinthians 4:4

D. There is a Higher Command Amos 7:14-15

- 1. the security of humility
 - a. his former occupation

 - b. the important qualification, 2 Timothy 2:15

 - c. what qualified Peter and John, Acts 4:13

- 2. the security of a divine call

E. The Enemy Will Fail Amos 7:16-17

- 1. the enemy's plan will fail

- 2. the enemy himself will fail

- 3. Satan, a defeated foe (Luke 10:18), an opposable foe (James 4:7)

F. Conclusion - Matthew 11:28

Come to the Saviour now! He gently calleth thee;
 In true repentance bow, before Him bend the knee:
 He waiteth to bestow salvation, peace and love,
 True joy on earth below, a home in heav'n above
 John Murch Wigner (1844-1911)

Go, labour on; spend and be spent-
 Thy joy to do the Father's will;
 It is the way the Master went;
 Should not the servant read it still?

Horatius Bonar (1806-1889)

A. Introduction

1. last week we looked at 3 visions that God presented to Amos
 - a. the locust-swarm devouring the vegetation
 - b. the fire devouring the land
 - c. the plumb-line by which God measured His people
 - d. and while God relented on the punishment shown by the first two visions, in the last one He set the standard of uprightness against His people and they failed the test
 - e. so the Lord declares, 'I will spare them no longer.'

2. we did not spend any time looking at the last verse of the passage last week, verse 9, where the Lord is still speaking: "The high places of Isaac will be desolated And the sanctuaries of Israel laid waste. Then shall I rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." (Amos 7:9 NAS)
 - a. this prophecy pronounces judgement specifically against two institutions in the northern kingdom, Israel
 - b. the first was against their religion
 - (A) we have already mentioned in past weeks that when the 10 northern tribes, under Jeroboam I, split away from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin
 - (B) their new king, Jeroboam I was concerned that if they went and worshipped at Jerusalem, they would soon desert him and return to being part of the Judah
 - (C) so he replaced the true worship with a false one
 - (D) he made 2 golden calves, placing them in sanctuaries, one at Dan in the north, the other at Bethel in the south, and these, he said, were the gods of Israel who had brought them out of Egypt
 - (E) then Jeroboam I established a false priesthood at Bethel to lead the people in worship of these false gods
 - (F) moreover, to this worship, the people of Israel added the worship of the gods of the surrounding nations, building altars in the high places to sacrifice to them
 - (G) these high places, these sanctuaries, says the Lord, are going to be laid waste, desolated
 - c. the second judgement pronounced, was against their government, their rulers
 - (A) God particularly focuses upon Jeroboam II

- (B) his house would perish as the rulers of Israel
- (C) all of which shortly came to pass
- (D) for, after Jeroboam II's death, Zechariah his son was king for only six months being slain by a usurper

3. now, in addition to the written record of these visions
 - a. recorded here in the Scriptures before us,
 - b. Amos also declared them – that was his responsibility – to the people of Israel, in the religious centre of Israel, Bethel
 - c. including this prophecy against their religion and ruler
 - d. this leads to the historical incident related in the passage that we read, at which we are looking this morning
 - e. here Amos confronts Amaziah, the enemy, the false priest of the false religion at Bethel

4. let's consider this incident using the following outline – and you will, I am sure, readily see the application of the message
 - a. verses 10–11: the enemy is watching
 - b. verses 12–13: the enemy sees to hinder
 - c. verses 14–15: there is a higher command
 - d. verses 16–17: the enemy will fail
 - e. first, ...

B. The Enemy is Watching Amos 7:10-11

1. 10 Then Amaziah, 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.'" (NAS)

2. Amaziah was an enemy
 - a. he was a false priest of a false religion; as such, he was an enemy of God
 - b. what Amos was preaching had a direct impact upon him; Amaziah had a vested interest; his livelihood

was at stake

- c. it is not surprising, then, that he willingly misrepresented Amos' ministry as being a conspiracy against the king
- d. he used an old technique, often used against God's people, he vilified Amos, made him out to be a public enemy
- e. this was all the excuse that Jeroboam II needed to permit Amaziah to set out to hinder and to obstruct Amos

3. the Enemy of God's people is watching, too

- a. his name is Satan (adversary) or the Devil (slanderer)
- b. Revelation 12:10b reveals his occupation, that of accuser: *'... for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.'* (NAS)
- c. if you read the first two chapters of Job, you will find a dramatic portrayal of Satan's work: how he prowls the earth watching for opportunities to do his evil
- d. his accusations need not be true; they were not in the garden of Eden, a lie will do as well; therefore Jesus called him the father of the lie in John 8:44.
- e. he works though the self-interest of unbelievers
 - (A) in Jesus' day, it was through the religious rulers in that same verse, John 8:44, *'You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning ...'* (NAS)
 - (B) in their own self-interest, lest their place as rulers be taken away, they first planned, and then carried out that plan and had Jesus slain, the innocent Son of Man
 - (C) in our day it is no different: Satan works through those whose position, whose prestige, whose power, is enhanced by their disdain of God and of the gospel of Jesus Christ; so they use their influence to discredit God and the gospel as much as they are able

C. The Enemy Seeks to Hinder Amos 7:12–13

- 1. *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."* (NAS)

2. Amaziah uses human authority to hinder God's message
 - a. having seen the king, he can speak with human authority
 - b. and he attempts to deport Amos back to his own country
 - c. in speaking to Amos, Amaziah does not dare repeat the false accusation that Amos was conspiring against the king
 - d. for in calling Amos a 'seer' he is giving recognition to the truth that Amos speaks ...
 - e. 'but, keep your truth for another place!'
 - f. 'we don't want your truth here!'
 - (A) it's not comfortable
 - (B) it's bothering and annoying important people

3. with exceptions, human authority is not friendly to the gospel
 - a. Some years ago, we had in this church a young girl who very early in her life trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as her own personal Saviour. When she went to school and it may not even have been yet grade 1, she witnessed to some of her classmates about Jesus. The school called the parents and told them that this had to stop.
 - b. you see, religion is fine, but in its own place
 - (A) but keep it where it belongs (in the church)
 - (B) don't let it upset us (or the way we live)
 - (1) let us set our own standards and make own rules on things like marriage, divorce, abortion, drugs
 - (2) leave us free to pursue our own agenda
 - (C) you are bothering and annoying people with clout or who are extremely vocal: politicians, educators, the media, false religions
 - c. 2 Corinthians 4:4 tells us that the god of this world, a reference to Satan, has blinded the minds of unbelievers, and in these things we see that he is still fighting, winning some battles, despite having lost the war at the cross

- D. There is a Higher Command Amos 7:14–15
1. 14 Then Amos answered and said 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.’ (NAS)
 2. Amos had the security of humility
 - a. Amos recognized that from a human standpoint he did not have all the credentials that would bring respect
 - (A) in the books of the kings there are a group of men referred to as the ‘sons of the prophets’
 - (B) in particular, these are found in the days of Elijah and Elisha, who may have acted as their head and teacher
 - (C) these were publicly recognized as speaking from God
 - (D) but Amos was not part of this group; his was a rather lowly profession, that of being a herdsman
 - (E) also, as we talked about when we started looking at this book, to make a subsistence living, he had to augment his income from herding by gathering the poor quality figs of the sycamores
 - (F) so Amos had the security of knowing that no matter what Amaziah might do or say, he couldn’t put down Amos; humility is a great defence!
 - b. sometimes in Christian circles today there is an undue emphasis on titles and degrees (secular and otherwise)
 - (A) large churches won’t consider a person who does not have a masters or doctoral degree
 - (B) now, training is important and useful, and God can use any training that your are able to get to His glory
 - (C) but the degree and training that really matters is that which is described in Paul’s instructions to Timothy, ‘Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.’ (2 Timothy 2: 15 NAS)
 - (D) because God can use the one who in lowliness of heart has a sincere, loving desire to serve Him
 - (E) yes, Jesus chose Paul to serve him, a man educated at the feet of Gamaliel, the foremost teacher of his day
 - (F) but Jesus also had included among his disciples such men as Peter and John, of whom the religious leaders of the day made this assessment: ‘Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John,

and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marvelling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.' (Acts 4:13 NAS)

c. maybe ...

- (A) ... you have never studied systematic theology;
- (B) ... you cannot read Greek or Hebrew;
- (C) ... you possess no formal seminary education;
- (D) all things that count much in some circles

d. but ...

- (A) ... if you have been with Christ,
- (B) ... if you love the Lord,
- (C) ... if you love His word,
- (D) ... if you desire to serve Him,

e. then through the power of the Holy Spirit He will equip and use you to His glory in His service

3. Amos also had the security of a divine call

- a. did Amos feel a sense of inadequacy, an inferiority complex because he was just a herdsman, not a trained prophet?
- b. no, because he knew of a certainty that
 - (A) his coming and being there in Israel,
 - (B) his giving the warnings and the message that he did
 - (C) was not of his own self, but because God had laid hold of him and sent him to do this work
- c. and no evil at all, can overcome you, when you know unmistakably that you are doing what God wants
- d. so if God the Holy Spirit lays the burden on your heart to serve in some fashion, to witness, to teach, to encourage,
- e. that burden is a divine call
- f. and you can do so in the full security of being in God's will

E. The Enemy Will Fail Amos 7:16–17

- 1. 16 "And 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 shameful by

abandoning you, your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, your land will be parcelled up by a measuring line, and you yourself will die upon unclean soil. Moreover, Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'" (NAS, verse 17 altered)

2. The enemy's plan will fail
 - a. look how Amos responds because he trusted God
 - b. he is unperturbed by Amaziah's attempt to hinder his work
 - c. verse 16 is a pregnant construction: by this I mean that it is deliberately incomplete – for each of the orders given by Amaziah, there is an implied refutation
 - (A) Amaziah said, 'you shall not prophesy ...'
 - (1) ... but I, Amos, am going to prophesy!
 - (B) Amaziah said, 'you shall not speak against ...'
 - (1) ... but I, Amos, am going to speak!
 - d. and just to show that this is the case, Amos has a prophesy that he is going to pronounce right now
3. The enemy himself will fail
 - a. for the sake of younger ears, I have softened the language of the last verse of this chapter, but note: this is not an angry curse pronounced by Amos against Amaziah, but a prophesy from the Lord Himself that will be carried out
 - b. Amaziah is seeking to make Amos fail, to quit his work, to return home, but it is Amaziah himself who will fail
 - (A) everything that Amaziah holds dear will be taken
 - (B) he will be stripped of his wife and his family
 - (C) and, his portion of land,
 - (1) the family holding and allotment
 - (2) inviolate since Israel's entrance into Canaan
 - (3) that land so important to every Israelite
 - (4) will be taken from him
 - (5) divided up and parcelled out to others
 - c. Amaziah is seeking drive Amos away, to make comfortable the king and people of Israel, but Israel will

suffer instead

d. we, too, face a defeated spiritual foe

(A) when the 70 returned, Jesus describe the effect: 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.' (Luke 10:18b NAS)

(B) yet Satan continues to fight a rearguard action

(C) so we are instructed, 'Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.' (James 4:7 NAS)

(D) we, like Amos, are to confront the enemy by the power of God

F. Conclusion

1. when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ in obedience to His call, 'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28 NAS)

a. and so set out on your Christian life

b. you can do so with full confidence

c. because of the higher authority of the One giving that command, for it comes from the eternal Son of God

2. but in that life as a Christian, you will discover as Amos did, that opposition will come to your obedience in service to God

a. it may come in the form of outright opposition of force

b. or in the form of subtle temptation that you should keep your service for another time or another place

c. but there is aid in confronting the enemy and opposition

d. if you recall that you have orders from a higher authority

e. One who has called you to love and to serve Him

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
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