

• *Prophetic teaching brings a reaction and is likely to get us into trouble*

Prophetic preaching is likely to get us into trouble. By 'prophetic preaching' I mean preaching which is divinely guided and highly applied. Amos's preaching was applied preaching. He did not state the teaching and leave it at that. He applied what he was teaching to the situation and was not afraid to mention names when necessary. To say 'God will judge sin' would not get him into trouble. People would nod their heads in agreement – and think what Amos was saying applied to other people! But to say '*I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword*' ^{Am1} was more precise and particular. It is not surprising that it brought a reaction..

^{Am1} 7:9

¹⁰*Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel. "Amos has planned a rebellion against you, in the heart of Israel. The land is unable to endure all his words.*

¹¹*For this is what Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall certainly go into exile, taken out of its land.'"*

1. Prophets arouse opposition

1. **Prophets arouse opposition.** 'They persecuted the prophets who were before you', said Jesus ^{Am1}. 'As an example... of suffering ... take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord', said James ^{Am2}.

^{Am1} Matt 5:12
^{Am2} in James 5:10

(i) *Jeroboam was told*

(i) Amaziah reported the matter to someone he thought could do Amos harm; Jeroboam was told about what Amos had said.

(ii) *Amos was taken as being personally hostile to Jeroboam*

(ii) Amos was taken as being personally hostile to Jeroboam. '*Amos has planned a rebellion against you...*'. Of course Amos had done no such thing. He had simply preached God's word in a rather detailed manner. He had nothing personally against Jeroboam.

(iii) *Protest exaggerated*

(iii) The impression is given that many people agree with Amaziah. 'The land is unable to endure all his words'. It gives the impression that hundreds of people are protesting against Amos. When people criticize preaching, they like to pretend that their opinion is shared by dozens of other people. Generally they are exaggerating.

¹²*And Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, run away to the land of Judah. Eat your bread there; prophesy there.*

¹³*But at Bethel you are not to prophesy any more, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.'"*

(iv) *Amos was attacked as a foreigner*

(iv) Amaziah makes use of Amos's Judean nationality. He said to Amos, 'Go, you seer, run away to the land of Judah'. It was easy to attack Amos as a foreigner.

(v) *Amos's motivation questioned*

(v) Amaziah seems to think that Amos is saying what he has said simply to earn money and because he is a 'professional' prophet. 'Eat your bread in Judah', he says. He seems to think that Amos is concerned simply about earning a living, and getting bread to eat.

(vi) *Amos's criticism of 'the establishment' was disliked but the truth was what was needed*

(vi) Like many people in high office, Amaziah dislikes any hint of preaching that seems to criticize 'the establishment' or the 'official' religion of the country. 'Bethel ... is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house' he says. He obviously thinks it is scandalous to say anything against such 'official' places in the life of Israel. But do not kings and official sanctuaries need the truth rather than flattery simply because they are people and places of such prestige.

2. The truly prophetic preacher stands by God's word despite opposition

2. The truly prophetic preacher stands by God's word despite opposition. Amaziah imagined he would easily be able to silence Amos, but it turned out to be not as easy as he thought. Prophets are not always so easy to squash. They are willing to suffer for the word of God. They are willing to stand alone if necessary.

14“And Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I am not a prophet, and I am not the son of a prophet; I was a herdsman and I took care of sycamore trees.

*15*But Yahweh took me from following the flock and Yahweh said to me “Go prophesy to my people Israel.””

(i) Amos refused to comply with Amaziah's request

(i) Amos did not comply with Amaziah's requests. He was not intimidated by threats. He did not apologize or withdraw his teaching. He knew what he said was a word from God and he had no intention of pretending otherwise.

(ii) Amos appealed to his divine call

(ii) Amos appealed to divine call. He had not appointed himself to be a prophet. He was quite content to do what he was doing as a shepherd and tree-farmer. But God had called him; God had given him a message for Israel. He was not 'the son of a prophet', that is, a prophet's disciple in training for prophetic ministry. He had a purely 'secular' job when God had abruptly taken him away from his previous work and sent him to Israel. A prophet is a person who knows his or her calling and knows the message that God has given him.

(iii) Amos repeated his message making it even more offensive!

(iii) Amos repeated his message and made it even more offensive!

16““And now hear the word of Yahweh, You are saying, ‘You shall not prophesy against Israel, nor shall you speak against the house of Isaac.’

*17*Therefore this is what Yahweh says: ‘Your wife will become a prostitute in the city. Your land will be divided up by a measuring line. You yourself will die upon unclean soil. Moreover, Israel shall indeed go from its land into exile.’”

• Assured and certain - predictive and precise

This has all the characteristic of prophetic preaching. It is assured and certain ('Now hear the word of Yahweh'). Amos knows that what he is saying is true. It pin-points Amaziah's sin ('You are saying, "You shall not prophesy..."'). It is predictive and precise, focusing upon wife, family, land and nation. It is capable of being checked in future days. If Amos's prediction does not come true (assuming there is no repentance) Amos will be revealed as a false prophet.

• The unpleasant truth from God delivered by His intercessor-prophet

I do not suppose that Amos enjoyed saying such things. We have seen that he had the heart of an intercessor. Although Israel and Judah were at enmity at this stage of their history, yet Amos repeatedly ¹interceded for the nation of northern Israel. Yet Amos had no choice. Sovereign Yahweh had spoken. A prophet had no choice but to prophesy. ²The true prophet stands by God's word.

¹ 7:1-3, 4-6

² See 3:8



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Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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