

The Stuff Prophets Are Made Of

AMOS AND AMAZIAH, Amos 7:10-17

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I would like to deal with one of the strangest incidents that has ever taken place in the ancient kingdom of Israel. It was during the time of the divided monarchy, when a little hick from the southern kingdom by the name of Amos, from the Ozark Mountains just south of Jerusalem, made his way north about 22 miles to the religious capital of the northern kingdom, at Bethel, and there denounced everyone and everything in sight. No one was exempt from his wrath or from his vengeful talk. But he didn't start out that way.

At first everyone listened to him with amusement and then finally with approval. Because Amos started out by first of all denouncing all the enemies of the northern kingdom, and they really appreciated that. He denounced Damascus and said that it was doomed, and everybody applauded. There were many Amens in the congregation. Then he lit into Gaza and he went on to denounce Tyre; he said it would be destroyed by fire. He denounced Edom and Ammon, the arch enemies of Israel. And by that time he had gotten about ten invitations for steak dinners. While he was eating very lavishly with the people in Bethel, he kept on with his denunciations.

He finally came right down to pinpoint the major enemies of Israel and to denounce them. Moab, across on the other side of the Dead Sea, as well as the southern kingdom of Judah. And by that time, he was ready for advancement. The local divinity school called him in and asked him to address the divinity students, whereupon would be conferred upon him a Ph.D. degree a "denouncer of the phonies," a Ph.D. Unfortunately his popularity in Bethel did not last too long, because he not only denounced the enemies of Israel but he suddenly started with certain vituperative statements against Israel itself.

In three successive addresses, starting with the words "Hear ye these words," he denounced certain of the sins of Israel, certain social injustices. And then with a series of five visions, he showed the Israelites what God had been doing for them in the past, how they had failed him so miserably, and what would happen to them in the future if they did not repent. Needless to say, the steak dinner invitations no longer came in to him. The Ph.D. degree was withdrawn from him. And one wondered how anybody as ignorant and as insolent as Amos could ever make it out of the mountains and come up to the sophisticated northerners and in his uppity ways try to denounce their sins, when there were enough sins to be denounced down in the southern part of the former empire of Israel.

So as he stumbled around, no doubt barefoot—not through the countryside, nobody would have minded if Amos preached to some of the villagers, the ignoramuses out in the countryside; but he came right to the heart of the kingdom, to the religious capital and denounced the sins of the people and of the princes in no uncertain terms. Strict measures were called for. There was only one man who could meet the challenge to confront Amos. This was the priest, Amaziah. You have a major confrontation between Amaziah the priest and Amos the prophet.

In this unusual encounter, in the 8th century before Christ, we have really a picture of a true prophet of God. And we can glean from this incident something of the stuff that prophets are made of. You see, each one of us, you and I, are called to be prophets—not the Old Testament kind who would foretell the future—but we are all called upon to forthtell the Word of God, to preach His Word. We are called ambassadors, we are called to be witnesses. So in a very real way we can identify with Amos. He was not a prophet by profession. He was not a prophet by training. Some of us may be preachers of the gospel by training. But Amos was none of these things. He fits right down to our level. We, like Amos, were called upon for a special occasion, not as a matter of occupation, to proclaim the Word of God. As we look at this incident, let us note certain factors which illustrate the stuff that prophets are made of.

The incident is found in Amos 7. I would like to invite your attention to this passage. If it helps you any, Amos comes just before Obadiah. Let us look at verses 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 herdsman
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.”

So here we have the confrontation between Amos and Amaziah. As we notice the passage, it falls very naturally into three major divisions. In verses 10-13, we have **the Antagonism against the prophet**, in verses 14 and 15 we have **the Authority of the prophet**, and in verses 16 and 17, **the Announcement by the prophet**, his final announcement of doom.

1A. The Antagonism Against the Prophet: 7:10-13

Let's first of all look at the Antagonism against the Prophet.

1b. The accuser of Amos:

You and I, who are out to witness, to proclaim the Word of God, whether it be on an individual level or in a church situation, always have antagonists. And the interesting feature is that usually you are opposed more by the religious crowd than by anyone else. This was true in Amos' case, too. After Amos had just gotten done with giving three of his visions, he was interrupted by the chief defender, Amaziah, the high priest in Bethel, and was denounced in no uncertain terms. The accuser, the antagonist of Amos was the mighty Amaziah, and he's a rather ironical person. Because the name Amaziah itself means "God (Yahweh) is mighty." And yet he in a very real way did not worship God, but worshiped idols. You see, it had been a couple centuries before that in the tenth century, when Jeroboam I upon the division of the kingdom, had decided that he didn't want his people from the northern kingdom to go down into Jerusalem to worship there at the temple. So at the northernmost extremities of Israel, in the city of Dan, and in the southernmost part of the northern kingdom in Bethel just two miles north of the demarcation line between Israel and Judah, he had put up places of idol worship, idolatrous altars.

And you all recall the account, I am sure, from I Kings 12 and 13, how that God on the day of dedication of the altar in Bethel, God sent a man of God to denounce Jeroboam I for his iniquitous activities there. On the way back, the man of God himself became disobedient. That was in the tenth century shortly after the division of the kingdom and people were still worshipping just twelve miles north of Jerusalem at an altar, bringing their animal sacrifices. It was at the wrong location. It was a substitute form of worship. It was a wicked mimicry of the true worship which took place 12 miles to the south in Jerusalem. Amaziah was the chief representative of that idolatrous form of worship.

So Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam II, who ruled from 793-753 B.C. and said to him, "Amos has conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel." That's an interesting observation by Amaziah. You can never have a conspiracy with just one person. It means that Amos' words had had some effect among the people. Amos couldn't have conspired with himself. You don't have the Watergate One or the Chicago One. You have the Watergate Five and the Chicago Seven. They are the ones that have the conspiracy. So the fact that Amos is charged with bringing about a conspiracy in the northern kingdom around Bethel shows that some people, at least, were listening to his message.

2b. The alignment of Amaziah:

Amaziah's alignment is with false prophets there with the false priests and evidently when this confrontation took place between Amaziah and Amos, it was a feast day. It was probably two years to the day before the mighty earthquake took place that Amos mentions in the first chapter, and which remained a part of Israel's national history because Zechariah way back in the 14th chapter in the fifth verse mentions *the* mighty earthquake. So two years before the earthquake took place, probably on a New Year's Day on a major feast day, Amos the prophet of God and Amaziah the false priest had the confrontation.

3b. The approach of Amaziah:

The first avenue of approach that Amaziah took was to send to the king and to charge the servant of God with treason. You will notice that he's charged with bringing about a conspiracy. "For thus saith Amos, Jereboam shall die with the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land." Amaziah knows how to get at the sore spot of the king. It would be at his own person. Amos said that Jereboam would be killed with the sword. So he would die and his empire would be taken away from him. "Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land." And up above he had just said that the land was not able to bear all his words. What does he mean by that? The land stands as a personification of the people, really. And the land is not able to bear all his words. There's a play on words here, incidentally. Amos means "burden." And what Amaziah is saying is that Amos' words are too burdensome, spoken by the burden, namely, Amos, so that the people can't stand them.

If you allow his words to be any longer here in Bethel, you will have a fire on your hands that you cannot expunge, that you cannot extinguish. So he is warning the king that unless Amos be handled properly and be gotten rid of, the kingdom would be in danger not only that, but the king himself would die. Amos is guilty of treason. Amaziah, I am sure, expected immediately a response from the king where a troop of men would come up to Amos and carry on a very neat decapitation, or something of that sort.

3b. The apathy of Jeroboam II:

Much to Amaziah's surprise, nothing like that happens. The king doesn't respond. We don't know why Jereboam II doesn't respond to this challenge. Here there is treason in his kingdom. Amos told him that he would most assuredly die and that his kingdom would be lost from him. Why no response on the part of Jereboam II? The answer is probably found in what happened to his predecessors. Where the prophets of God had admonished the kings and while the kings did not listen to the prophets, the prophecies always came to pass. There was a certain awe, a certain reverence, a certain fear on the part of these kings to lay their hands on one of the men of God. Jereboam was reticent to deal harshly with Amos.

While they were waiting for the response from King Jereboam II, let's make a 20th century interpolation here and check something. If this incident had happened in our time, in the 20th century, no doubt Amaziah would have reconsidered the matter and he would have approached Amos and he would have said, "Now look here. You and I are basically serving God. We are both interested in religion. We are both concerned about the moral and cultural and social problems of our society. So Amos, I'll tell you what we'll do. We don't see eye-to-eye on many things. But at least we see eye-to-eye that something needs to be done in our churches, in our cultures. So let's establish some kind of organization and carry on a major evangelistic renewal campaign for one year and see whether we can revolutionize, whether we can change our country; you in the south, I in the north, and see if we can get all the priests and all the prophets together." He already had the name picked for it. He said, "Let's call it Key 763 B.C." A very

appropriate name, something that Amaziah no doubt would have thought of. So for one year, let's have an evangelistic campaign, and then those crowds, the Silent Majority, who are just standing by—who are just listening to us—they already have banded themselves together into an organization called “No Use Taking Sides” or NUTS for short. These people will follow along with anything that we have to tell them. They'll go along with our grand program. We can even get them out to distribute various portions of the Word of God in the various homes.

Now it is rather obvious that Amos would never have gone along with such a suggestion, for one very simple reason. Already in 3:3 Amos had said, “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” He knew very well that a system of worship which was anti-God and a prophet who spoke for God could never work together harmoniously. He didn't even want to be connected with the name of the organization. You see, while Amos would have carried out his evangelistic campaign in the south and done it God's way, Amaziah in the north under the same label with the same name, Key 763 B.C., would have carried on a campaign that would have worked against the purposes of God. While Amos in the south would have led people to God, Amaziah in the north would have sent people to hell, all under the same evangelistic label. Amos saw the truth very distinctly. No two people can walk together except they be agreed. Whether this is in marriage, as we heard so aptly from Dr. Brock this morning, or whether it is in any social relationship, but primarily in a religious affiliation.

Just before that, Amos had denounced the worship place in Bethel, in 14:3 Amos had already proclaimed that in the day that God will visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, He would visit the altars of Bethel and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground. The worship place that is so magnificent, that has the allegiance of the northern kingdom, would one day be destroyed.

I wonder if you and I today realize that while there are prophets of the true God still around, preachers of the gospel, men who proclaim His Word in all purity, there are in the same street houses of worship—altars, if you please—erected to the false god, erected to an idol. Of course behind every idol there is a demon and Satan himself. As we drive down the main street in Ankeny, do you ever think of this church building and that church building as being places of idol worship? Or do we sort of mix up the borders between truth and error, between Christianity and idol worship? I think we of all people as fundamentalists ought to keep the line very clear and distinct between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness. There are in our day, as there were in Amos' day, places of worship where people worship in sincerity.

The places were built to the proper dimensions; the altar a certain length, a certain width, a certain height exactly as in Jerusalem. The same animals were brought to the altar as they were in Jerusalem. But there was just one thing wrong with it. It was not according to God's Word. The proper worship place was Jerusalem. Solomon, sometime before that, had built for his idolatrous wives down in the city of Arat, just to the east of Beersheba, a beautiful worship place. Just recently archeologists have found the altar there, built to the exact dimensions as the altar in the temple at Jerusalem. There was just one thing wrong with it. It was in the wrong place. Proper animals were brought, the priest went through the proper ritual, the proper feast days were kept. And yet they went straight against the Word of God because they did not follow Him in His injunctions as to how proper worship should be carried on. I don't need to remind you of John 4:24 “God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Underscore that word “truth” in your minds.

So today you as a prophet of God, you who have a message to bring to a lost and dying world, what are you going to think about the places of idol worship in your home town or in the town of Ankeny? Do

you say, “Well, they are just worshipping the same way we do yet in a little different manner.” I’m not speaking about other evangelical churches now. We Baptists have never claimed that we are the only ones who will ever make it to heaven. On the other hand, there’s a softness and a laxity in attitude towards those church groups, towards those denominations who have departed from the fundamentals of the faith. When you do that, you find yourself in the camp of Amaziah.

4b. The advice to Amos: 7:12-13

The confrontation did take place. And Amos, instead of linking himself up with Amaziah in a grand campaign, took his stand and he wouldn’t even move. He was waiting for the king to do something about it. He stood right there in Bethel. So we have the antagonism against Amos. We see the alignment of Amaziah, his audience. We see something of the advice, then, which he gives to Amos. It is well-meant advice in verses 12 and 13. After the king did not react at all, Amaziah said unto Amos, “Oh you visionary!” The word is actually the old word for prophet, “seer.” But here it is used with irony. Oh, you seer, you visionary, you who see things that nobody else sees. Today they call you parson or preacher. If you come to your place of work, even if you are not a pastor yet, they’ll mock you with names. They can’t answer your arguments; so they will try to slander your character. They’ll call you all sorts of names, all sorts of epithets. Don’t be surprised. Amos experienced it and we will, too.

“Oh, you visionary!”

Flee to the land of Judah.” Run for your life because Jereboam’s men are just about ready to come. And when you are in Judah, “There eat bread, and there prophesy.” The emphasis is on the locality. It’s all right for you to preach. It’s all right for you to prophesy, to denounce the sins of the people. We are all against sin. We are all against injustices. Just don’t do it here. Don’t raise any fuss here. Things are all right the way they are up here.

You see, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom at the time of Amaziah and Amos were at an unprecedented level of prosperity. In the southern kingdom, the king Aziah had defeated the Philistines. He had defeated the Amorites and the Edomites. Then he had expanded the kingdom in the southern part to almost the expanse which it had under Solomon.

In the northern kingdom just a few years before that, the Assyrians had destroyed the Syrians which were the arch enemies of the northern kingdom, so both kingdoms could expand. With expansion came increased trade; with trade came prosperity. But prosperity, instead of seeping down to the common masses, was only to be had by the people who carried on the trade by the tradesmen, by the princes of the country. This is why there was an extreme difference in wealth and poverty. The common people were still poor. This remuneration through the trade, the wages that were earned were not earned by the common people but by the rich people who were rich already. Everybody in the northern kingdom who was somebody was cashing in on unprecedented prosperity and peace. Amaziah did not want that disturbed.

He didn’t mind Amos denouncing the sins of the people, even mentioning sins by name. And you’re not going to be told by people to simply keep quiet about the gospel, don’t preach any more. After all, this is a free country and you can preach. You don’t have to preach here in our town. There are two or three Baptist churches already. Don’t preach here, go over to the next town where there aren’t any churches. God down to the Ozark Mountains of Judea and preach down there because they need the gospel a lot worse than we do here.

Amos knew, though, that God had led him to that place and he wouldn't budge. He was admonished by Amaziah to first of all depart and flee for his life, and then secondly to desist and not prophesy.

¹³ But never again prophesy at Bethel.

Isn't it strange that the man of God was not permitted to prophesy in Bethel, the "house of God?" Isn't it strange that the true prophet was kicked out of that place where Jacob had ordained the place where he had first worshipped God? What was so special about Bethel? They already had ten Regular Baptist churches there. No, not at all, it's the king's chapel and is the king's court. So what difference does that make? It is the worship center the idolatrous king had established, Jereboam I. Jereboam II just took over the custom. They didn't want their people going 10 or 12 miles to the south to Jerusalem. They wanted them to stay two miles north of the borderline between Israel and Judah. It's the king's chapel that the king has built here; never mind what God has said about the sanctuary. It is the king who determine who we worship and what proper worship is.

One of the nice features I like about the Baptists, not coming from a Baptist background myself, is that there is nobody up there telling us how to worship, how to run our church affairs. You and I ought to appreciate that. If you belong to another denomination, you usually have hierarchical church setups where someone in the home office decrees what you ought to do, where you ought to worship, how you ought to worship, what literature you ought to be using. Not so with us Baptists; we can be thankful for that.

It was the king who decided on the place of worship. It was the king's chapel. And you don't worship the one true God, Yahweh. You worship the king's way. So don't prophesy any longer in Bethel. This is the king's court. "For it is the king's sanctuary," not that the king lived there. The king lived a few miles farther north in the lovely mountain fortress of Samaria. It's the king's court in the sense that this was the religious headquarters of the entire country. Dan had sort of passed from the scene at that time, and so Bethel was the main religious center of the northern kingdom. So don't denounce sins here. Don't proclaim the Word here, because after all the king decided how we should worship here. This is the headquarters. Go back down in the south and prophesy there. Preach there, but not up here.

We've seen now the antagonism against the man of God, the prophet of God. From it I think we can glean the principle that the stuff prophets are made of first of all, contains courage for the cause of God. Amos never said a word. He just stood there, even when messengers were dispatched to the king to come back and administer the death penalty. Jereboam, legally speaking, had every reason to get rid of Amos that way. Amaziah had every reason to suppose that Jereboam II would send his henchmen to do Amos in. So we see courage for the cause of God.

2A. The Authority of the Prophet: 7:14-15

1b. The pastoral activity of Amos:

In verses 14-15, we have the authority of the prophet. I like Amos' answer. First of all he says 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.”

A very humble answer. He does not launch into a tirade against Amaziah’s wickedness. Amaziah knew how wicked he was. Amaziah knew that he himself had this position in Bethel just because he wanted the wealth and prestige that was involved, the financial remuneration. He suggests to Amos to go back into Judah from Bethel, and there eat his bread. What he is saying is, You earn your bread by prophesying in the south. And Amos’ answer to Amaziah indicates that he didn’t make any money by prophesying; he wasn’t in it for the money. And yet this is what Amaziah suggests, that since he is crooked, everyone else is crooked. Since he is wicked, everybody else is wicked. The impure cannot possibly think of somebody being pure. Those who use wrong motives cannot possibly conceive of somebody using right motives in their ministry for the work of the Lord. So false motives were impugned against Amos and Amos answers it very aptly.

He says, I’m not a prophet by vocation. I didn’t go into this as a full-time ministry. I’m not in it as an occupation. I’m in it because of the occasion which demands it. And then he says, I was not a prophet’s son. Literally, if we give the very strong original rendering, although it is awkward in the English, he is saying, I was a non-prophet and I was a non-prophet’s son. It is a very strong negation here. He’s denying the fact that this is his full-time ministry, that this is his occupation, and he’s denying the fact that he had any training. The Hebrew word “son” has a broader meaning than our English word “son.” It means “belonging to.” What Amos is simply stating here is that he doesn’t belong to any prophetic guild. He wasn’t trained in the local seminary down in the south. He had no training. He admitted that he was from the hills, that he had no exposure to education. He didn’t have any of the northern facilities available for learning, for studies. So he denies the fact that he was in it for the money. He was there because God called him to be a prophet.

“But I *was* a herdsman
And a tender of sycamore fruit.”

In chapter 1:1 he had already used the term herdsman. Actually two different words are used here, and the herdsman in verse 14 in chapter 7 means a herdsman over larger animals, oxen and cattle in general. In chapter 1 it’s a herdsman over smaller animals, such as sheep and goats. Then his third activity besides shepherding small animals and larger animals, was to gather sycamore fruit—literally, to squeeze them.

The sycamore tree is a rather typical tree for this area for the Shephelah, or the Maritime Plain that slopes down to the Mediterranean and the lowlands along the Jordan River Valley. The sycamore trees have a very sort trunk and then widely spread-out branches. The fruit looks something like a date fruit and it grows not out of the end of the leaves but right out of the branches, out of the stem of the tree. To hasten the ripening of the fruits, Amos and the other men who would raise these for a living (they weren’t rich enough to have date palms), they would cut the top of the fruit or just go around and squeeze them a little bit and thus hasten the ripening process. Several crops of sycamore fruit could be gotten a year from these trees.

So he is speaking of his very lowly occupation. He was a herdsman, and there was no vocation more despised in Israel around the time of Christ and even before that, than a herdsman. An orthodox Jewish man would get up every morning and in his early morning prayers would thank God that he’s not a tax collector, that he’s not a herdsman, and that he’s not a woman. The herdsmen are included with the

lowest people in Hebrew culture. Even around the time of Amos, this already had sort of a stigma connected to it.

But Amos is not afraid of his background. He is free to admit that he had no official training as a prophet, neither was it his full-time capacity. But he was a prophet by appointment.

2b. The prophetic appointment of Amos:

¹⁵ Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock,
And the LORD said to me,
'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'

The emphasis here is on the Lord and what He had been doing. The Lord literally "took me from after walking my flock, as I was pursuing my flock" while I was active, just like Elisha, the Lord called me. And the Lord said unto me, Go prophesy. Look at the contrast between verse 15 and verse 12. In verse 12 Amos is told, Go flee. But by God he is told in verse 15, Go prophesy (literally) against my people. There is a genuine sorrow expressed in these words. Amos, you go denounce My people. They are still My people. Amos concludes his prophecy with the wonderful prediction that his people would be coming back into the land despite captivities. But you go prophesy unto My people; and then comes the awesome announcement.

3A. The Announcement by the Prophet: 7:16-17

1b. The accusation against Amaziah:

As a result of what you have done to me, Amaziah:

¹⁶ Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD:
You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,
And drop not your words against the house of Isaac.'

The term dropping is a customary term for prophetic language, probably based on Deuteronomy 32:2 where God says, "My word is like a dropping; my doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass." So little by little the words of the prophets come forth to bring dew and comfort to those who listen and it's a very wearisome dropping for those who reject.

2b. The announcement concerning Amaziah's family:

Because you have told me not to prophesy any longer, therefore: (then comes the revelation)

¹⁷ "Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;'"

When the Assyrians come twenty-five years later, your wife, not by your will nor by hers, will be a harlot. She will be debased in the city. So the prophecy included the degrading of his wife; secondly the death of his children.

"Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;"

It is interesting that the daughters are mentioned, because the Assyrians were generally rather lenient. They would not kill the women. They would save them, make them their own wives or their own slaves. But there must have come an awful judgment upon Bethel because both the sons and daughters would be destroyed. So the death of his children; the destruction of his line; Amaziah would have no posterity.

3b. The announcement concerning the land:

And then, the division of the land:

“Your land shall be divided by *survey* line;”

This is the land of Israel, since the idolatrous priests of the north had no land of their own.

4b. The announcement concerning Amaziah:

“You shall die in a defiled land;”

In other words, Amaziah would suffer the most miserable fate a Jewish person could think of. His lineage would be cut off, his wife would be degraded in front of his own eyes and the public, seen by everybody, and the children would die; and he himself would have to die in the Gentile land, namely in captivity in Assyria.

5b. The announcement concerning the northern kingdom:

“And Israel shall surely be led away captive
From his own land.”

Never flinching, never leaving Bethel, Amos stands there as a solid rock, as a man of God who has a message; not because he invented it, not because he was trained to be a prophet. But God told him to go, and Amos stayed.

Conclusion:

You and I, much in the same way as Amos, need something of the stuff that prophets are made of. We see that a prophet has **courage for the cause of God**, a prophet has a **commitment to the call of God**. He doesn't run away when he is told to go. And finally, a prophet has **consistency in the conflict for God**.

Amos never changed his message. As a matter of fact, his judgments were much more severe. Let us all have something of the courage, the commitment and the consistency of a man like Amos. He was not a prophet by vocation. Some of us are not preachers by vocation. He was not a prophet by training. Some of us are not trained to be preachers. But we are all called to be witnesses. Let us dispense with that function with courage, consistency and commitment. Shall we pray.

Our father, we are grateful for Amos and for men who through the centuries have stood solidly grounded upon Thy truth and have not budged one inch despite accusations, despite character assassination, despite persecution. And we pray that Thou wouldst give us something of the spiritual backbone that Amos had. This is our prayer and desire. In Christ's name, Amen.