

Amos 7:10-17 "Peace in Our Time"

For the Children: It is good to want peace at home, at school, in the church, and in our country. When people are upset with us, we should try to make peace with them. But we should never try to ignore God's Word, just to keep the peace. God's Word tells of peace between sinners and God, through the Lord Jesus. That is a peace we want to tell others about. But God's Word also warns that there will be no peace for those who refuse to believe in Him. We should not fail to give that warning, even if it upsets many people around us. **Questions:** Give some examples of "false peace." What is true peace? Why should we tell others what God says even if it upsets them?

Introduction:

First Point: The Temptation to Allow False Peace

- 1) The Pressure of Authority: Bethel was the king's sanctuary and residence. Amaziah, as priest there, backed by the king, came with great authority. He orders Amos to go back to Judah, and to go quickly; to stop prophesying in Bethel. This put a lot of pressure on Amos to back off.
- 2) The Pressure of False Charges: Amaziah also brought false charges against Amos. He accused him of conspiracy against the king – as well as prophesying the king's death and Israel's exile. He concludes that the nation cannot bear to hear such things. This would not be the first time a prophet had sparked rebellion by his prophesying against a king (2 Kgs. 9). However, Amaziah had twisted Amos' words, putting his life in danger.
- 3) The Pressure of Insecurity: The implied threat to, and from, the king put pressure on Amos to leave, for his own safety. The order to "flee" implies that threat. There was also an implied threat of loss of livelihood. Amaziah tells the prophet he can make a living back in Judah – not, he implies, in Bethel. False prophets often earned their living from telling people what they wanted to hear (Ezk. 13:9; Mic. 3:5).
- 4) The Pressure Today: All this is very similar to the pressure on elders – and on believers in general - today. See 2 Tim. 4:3. Government, media and employers often try to prevent believers from speaking either Gospel or law – insisting on "pc" rules. This is to be expected. It should not prevent us from sharing the Gospel, nor from rejoicing in the privilege of doing so (1 Pet. 4:12f).

Second Point: Amos Resists the Temptation

- 1) A Higher Authority: Amaziah ordered Amos, "Go home! Don't prophesy here!" Amos answers this abuse of authority with the Lord's command to him to prophesy in Israel. Amos intends to "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, 4:19). Amos then repeated the very message to which Amaziah had objected, and even strengthened it! The following chapters continue with this message, rather than "backing off."
- 2) Answering with the Truth: Amos does not bother to answer the false charge against himself. His answer to this pressure is simply to deliver the Truth God would have him speak. Thus the warning of exile is repeated, for that is the truth Israel needs to hear. Moreover, Amaziah is cursed for interfering with God's Word. His family-life, livelihood, land and life will be brought to a terrible end by the Assyrian invasion. All who oppose God's Word – and the Word-made-flesh – will eventually be humbled. This should encourage us to keep bringing that Word, even in the face of opposition. We are to bring the "whole message of...life" (Acts 5:20) – both the warning of judgement, and the true peace of the Gospel (Acts 5:31).
- 3) The Ultimate Security: The time may come when doing so threatens our livelihood or security. Amaziah tried to entice Amos to go back to Judah where he would receive support. Amos replied that he was not a "professional prophet" (v. 14). He received no pay from it. He went because the Lord told him to. He trusted the Lord to provide for servants doing His will.

Conclusion: