

# There Will be Consequences

Amos 7:7–15

“Holy roller” visits Presbyterian church ...

- Responds to sermon with loud “Amen, brother!” and “Praise the Lord” ...
- Usher approaches quietly and whispers: “Sir, we don’t do that here.”

Sort of like the incident we read about in Amos this morning:

- Goes to the cathedral of the northern kingdom for the morning service ...
- Speaks up during the joys and concerns with a really big concern
- Gets shushed by the chief priest ...

Amos, a herdsman and field laborer from the south ... sees a vision ...

- The Lord shows him a plumb line ...
- Gauge for building solidly and measuring performance ...
- Torah ... God’s “specs” for Israel ... Calvin: the law fundamentally constructive ...
- Getting ready to rebuild ...
  - The north isn’t plumb ... is in danger of collapse ...
  - Like a retaining wall that collapsed, and had to be rebuilt at great cost ...

And Amos goes north to Beth-El to deliver the message ...

- Beth-El is the ancient sanctuary where Jacob spent the night and dreamed of a ladder to heaven ...
- Now the “royal cathedral” of the North ...
- The north is wealthy and powerful ... Jeroboam the king ... Amaziah the chief priest ...

- And, although greed reigns ... they are still God's people ... the threat flows from the promise

Amaziah tries to shush Amos ...

- Throws his weight around ... this is “the king's sanctuary” (not God's) ... the “temple of the kingdom” (not of the Lord) ...
- Amaziah a court priest ... the royal chaplain ... his job is to legitimize the ruler and speak comforting words ... and to put upstarts like Amos in their places ...

“Go home, Amos. Find yourself a nice little church; preach there.”

- Amaziah assumes that has credentialing authority, and that Amos is a professional prophet ...
- Amos ... “Neither a prophet nor a member of the guild.” “God has other plans for me ... here.”

The behavior that the Lord found to be “out of plumb” and sent Amos to warn about was this ...

- The ruling elite of Israel were taking advantage of their powerless neighbors ... making them even poorer ...
- This behavior violated the law of Moses, which required fair treatment of the poor

Jesus talks about “the Law and the Prophets” ... by which he means the law of Moses and the witness of prophets like Amos ...

- Prophets are not so much predictors of the future as people who see the consequences of present behavior ...
- They speak truth to power ... “Your behavior doesn't measure up ... the Lord will have to rebuild.”
- The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stood solidly in the prophetic tradition when he quoted Amos <sup>5:24</sup>: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

- The PC(USA) believes that the church exists to promote social righteousness ... which is what we are trying to do when we take stands on social justice

We thank God for the witness of prophets like Amos, who warn us that the law serves as a guide for how we treat each other.

To the Lord our God, Alpha and Omega,  
be all glory and honor forever. Amen.