

June 22

Amos 7 and II Kings 14, 15 and II Chronicles 26

Welcome back everyone. My name is Lisa Ashton and it is June 22. As you know we are wrapping up our study in the book of Amos today as well as read a few snippets in II Kings 14, 15 and we see the end of King Uzziah's life in II Chronicles 26. As we look at these two characters today, Amos and Uzziah, we will learn some things from their actions...both good and bad.

Well our reading began today with a face-off! A face-off between God's appointed prophet, Amos and man's appointed priest, Amaziah. Now you must realize that both of these men are recognized as religious leaders but they are in conflict with each other. The problem? Amaziah is accusing Amos of a conspiracy against the Israel king Jeroboam. Amos has proclaimed Jeroboam's death and exile on the Israelites and Amaziah is furious. Do you notice his words, "Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the KING'S sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom." He didn't say it was GOD'S sanctuary he said it was the kings. What does that tell you about Amaziah's heart? It wasn't about God. And furthermore, for a man to resist or oppose a prophet's words was against the law of God. Here again is evidence of how Israel was out of line even at the core of its leadership. Remember when we talked about the plumb line yesterday and how Israel was likened to a wall on the verge of collapse? Case in point, Israel is not acting vertically with the law of God and here is a perfect example of it.

What I really appreciate about this portion of the text is hearing how Amos handles opposition from a religious leader. I am amazed at his courage especially after the priest basically said (in Lisa paraphrase), "Go back to where you came from, go do your thing in your own land. Amos, you are not welcome here." Amos counters Amaziah with boldness and with conviction. He claims his authority is from God and he exhibits true security in who he is. He says, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. BUT the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go prophesy to my people Israel.'" What a stud! Amos says(in Lisa paraphrase), "Hey Amaziah let's get something straight here...I didn't ask to prophesy, I wasn't even in the family line to do so...but God told me to do so, here I am!"

I don't know about you but this inspires me. This inspires me to be a follower of Jesus that fears Him more than I fear man. That I care more about what God has called me to do and who he has called me to be rather than what others think.

How about you? Are you someone who will diligently follow through on the assignments God gives you? Amos knew his calling was divine and THAT gave him the courage to stand up to the enemy. And ironically, an enemy who should have been on his side!

Reading on we see the consequence of Amaziah's resistance to the prophesy and it is a harsh one. Basically, the Lord's judgment allows his wife to be shared among

other men in the city, he no longer is promised a legacy of children, he loses his land, and he is disgraced by being exiled and having to die among the unclean – the pagans – which to be among the unclean was one of the biggest no no's of all for a priest! Ouchy. This face-off abruptly ends our study of Amos in our Daily Bible.

So let's say someday you are walking through the cookie aisle at the grocery store and your friend picks up a box of Famous Amos cookies. Quickly you are reminded of your 3 day journey through the book and exclaim, "Hey that reminds me of the minor prophet Amos in the Bible" Your friend says with exuberance, tell me more!" And so you respond confidently well....

Do you know how you'd respond?

Well as a bit of a review, here are three main points that I think are good remember:

- 1) Amos was a shepherd/fig tree farmer who obeyed God to prophesy despite being called out of his land.
- 2) Since Israel did not keep covenant with their God, even after numerous chances to repent, God announced his judgment would fall on them. Amos uses various oracles and visions to communicate this. Israel was guilty of idolatry, materialism, social injustice, and putting on the "religious show" while their hearts and actions were far from Godly.
- 3) Even though Israel's destruction was inevitable, God promised to restore His exiled people. Amos ends with hope of David's line continuing and Israel become a thriving nation.

### King Uzziah

Changing gears now, let's revisit our King Uzziah who is back in Judah and has been reigning during Amos' prophecies.

If you remember, we left off King Uzziah when he was at the height of success. However, today we see he takes a turn for the worse. What happened? We read. "After Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall."

The writer of Chronicles does not tell us why Uzziah took it upon himself to usurp the priestly function, that is why he burned incense on the altar of incense, but he did nonetheless. And since this action was reserved only for the priests and in essence it's like Uzziah is now claiming religious authority as well as political authority.

HUGE mistake Uzziah. In fact this was such a huge violation that Azariah had 80 catch that 80 priests COURAGEOUSLY followed him into the temple. Azariah knew he would need some back-up support to confront the King. Ok, time out. If I was about to do something edgy and I looked behind me and saw 81 men of God following me, I'd think twice about whether or not I'd follow through with that. King Uzziah went ahead and burned the incense. Result? He is confronted by the army of priests and given a chance to repent. However, instead of repenting he becomes angry and immediately he is struck with leprosy. He is ushered out of the temple and placed in a

separate house. We learn that he spends the last years of his life living in isolation -- a leper, bearing the consequences of his sin against God. What? King Uzziah, who started out being described as doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord and a man who sought God. Now, look at him.

I believe this is a grave warning to where our pride can take us...especially when things may be going really well. King Uzziah was at his prime, he was powerful, but somewhere along the way he began to lose sight of God. He lost his reverence, his fear of God and it cost him everything.

This story makes me want to evaluate my own heart - To ask God, "God, are there any places of pride in my life that need to be dealt with?" Maybe that's something you need to do as well.

Well folks, its time. Time to say see ya later once again. I have enjoyed these last 3 days with you. Til next time, this Lisa Ashton reminding you that God's word is alive, active and can change your life. Grace.