

Who Does God Use?

Amos 7

Who Does God Use? Introduction

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- The prophet Amos had no intentions of being a prophet.
- He tended his herds and flocks in the hill country of Judah.
- God sent him to Bethel in Israel.
- He has now been known as a prophet for over 2700 years.

Who Does God Use? Introduction

1. Intercession 7:1-6
2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11
3. The Challenge 7:12-17

A Note on Our God-given Calling.

1. Intercession 7:1-6

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- Twice the Lord revealed coming judgment.
- Twice Amos prayed.
- Twice the Lord relented and judgment did not come.

1. Intercession 7:1-6

The word “relent” suggests a turning away and a relief from an earlier decision because one has been deeply stirred by the appeal of another.

*– Donald Sunukjian, Talbot Seminary,
in The Bible Knowledge Commentary*



1. Intercession 7:1-6

- We can't precisely say that the Lord forgave the people of Israel in these cases.
- They had not repented of their sins of idolatry and so on.
- God simply held back for the time being.

1. Intercession 7:1-6

God is always willing to use
a good intercessor.

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

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- In this case we have no record of Amos interceding.
- Still, being an effective intercessor is a helpful qualification for becoming a prophet called to announce God's judgment.
- Anyone too comfortable with the idea of God's judgment makes a poor candidate to proclaim it.

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11



Like a builder who uses a plumb line to check to see if a wall is properly vertical, so God will assess whether the nation matches the standards of the law, his “plumb line.”

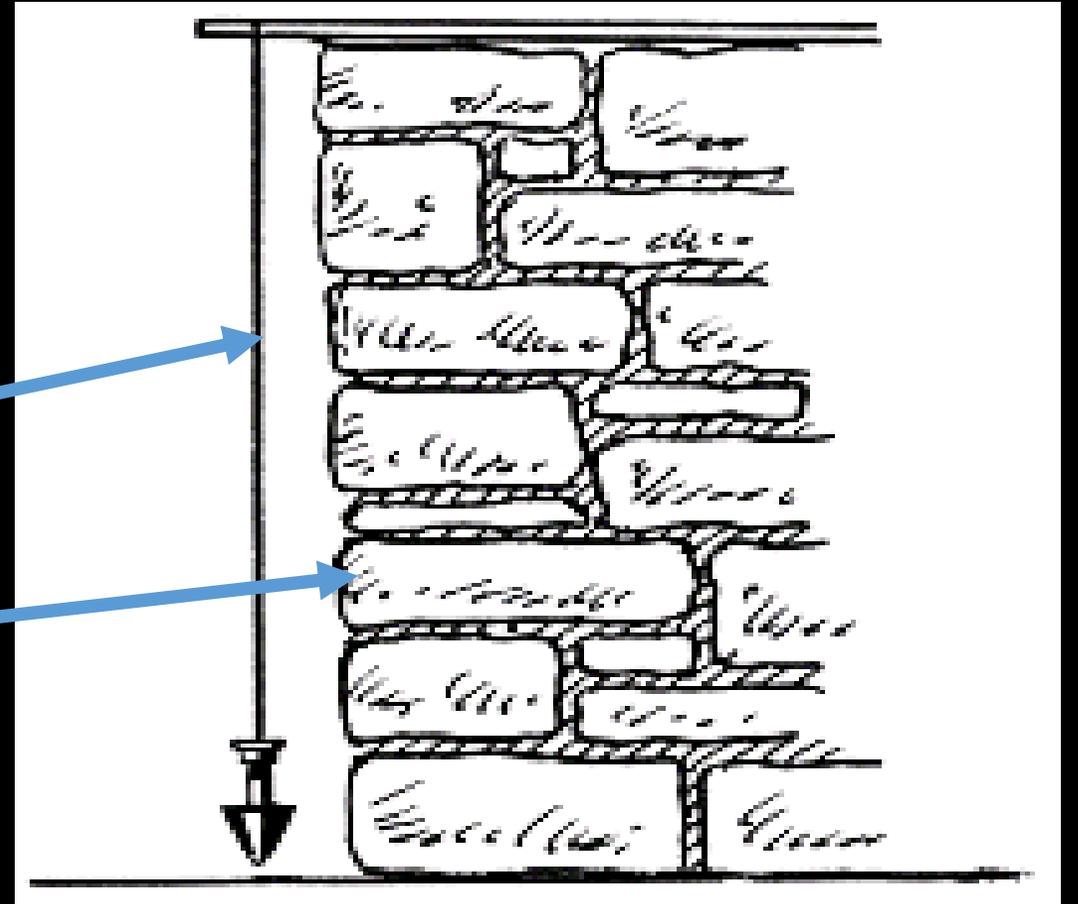
*– Richard S. Hess, Denver Seminary,
in the NIV Zondervan Study Bible*

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

- God is comparing the nation against a straight line and it is not measuring up.

Plumb Line

Vertical Wall



2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

- God announces, therefore, that destruction will eventually come to the nation.
- Amaziah the priest of Bethel goes and tells the king.

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

- When the nation split into two **Jeroboam I** set up two golden calf idols each with altars for sacrifice.
- One was in the far north at **Dan**.
- The other was in the south at **Bethel**, less than 15 miles from Jerusalem.



2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

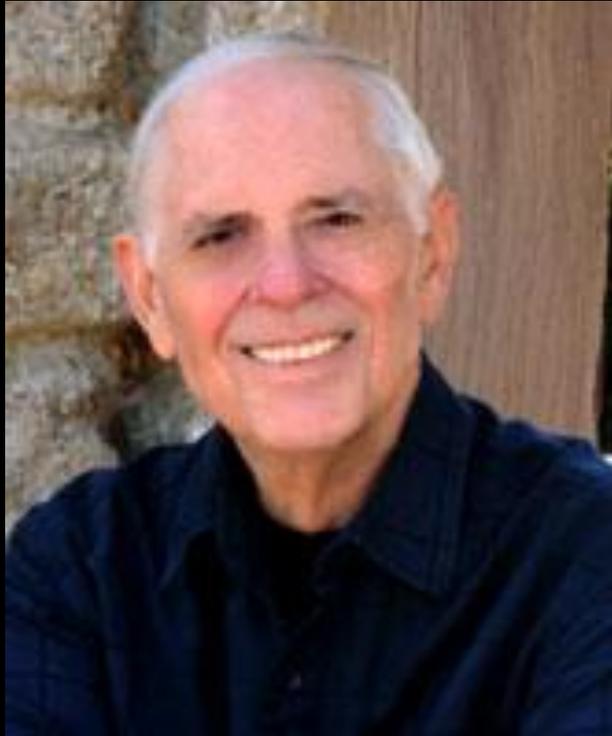
- **Amos** prophesied near the end of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- It was a prosperous time.
- The present king is **Jeroboam II**.
- **Amaziah** was the high priest of the golden calf at **Bethel**.



2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

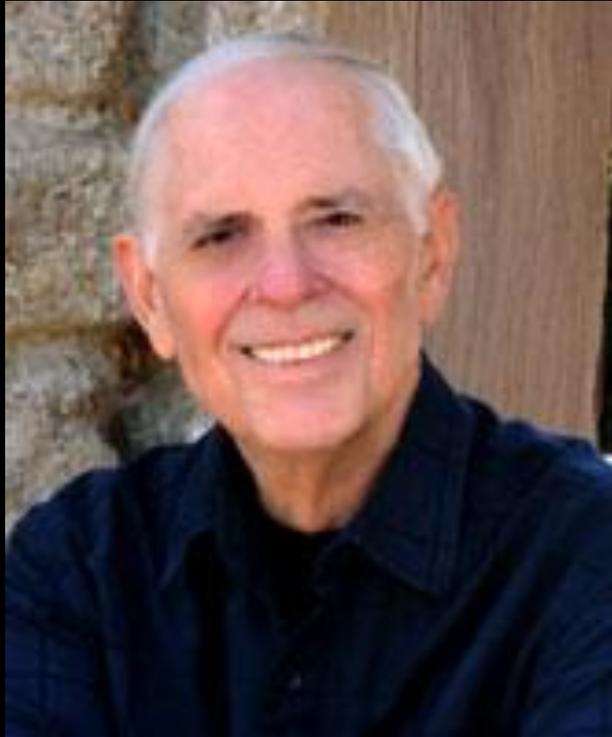
- Amos was sent to speak God's word to a nation that had rebelled against God.
- He had to do so in one of the very centers of that rebellion.

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11



- **Thomas Oden** was building a career as a highly regarded progressive theologian.
- He was teaching at the **Drew Theological School** in New Jersey, a school known less for its study of the Bible than for its **Institute for Ecstatic Naturalism**.
- He began to have a change of heart.

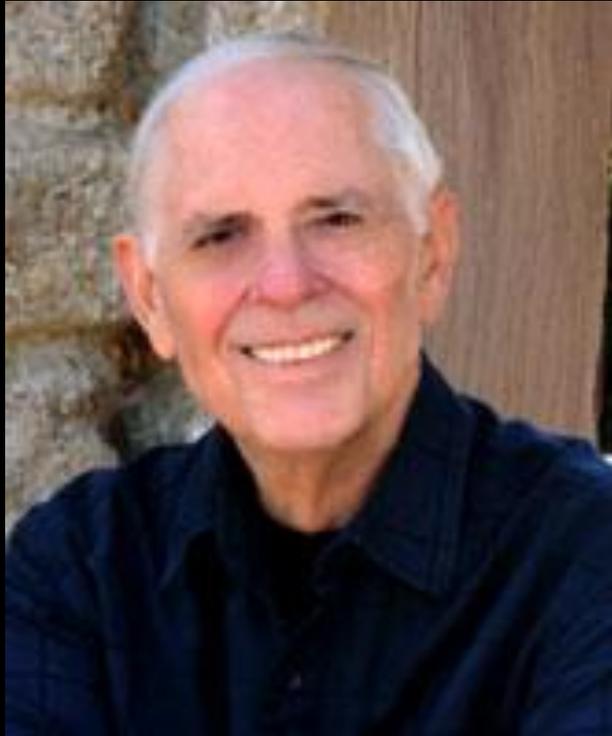
2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11



I asked myself, Could it be that I had been trampling on a vast tradition of historical wisdom in the attempt to be original? ...

– Thomas Oden in A Change of Heart: A Personal and Theological Memoir

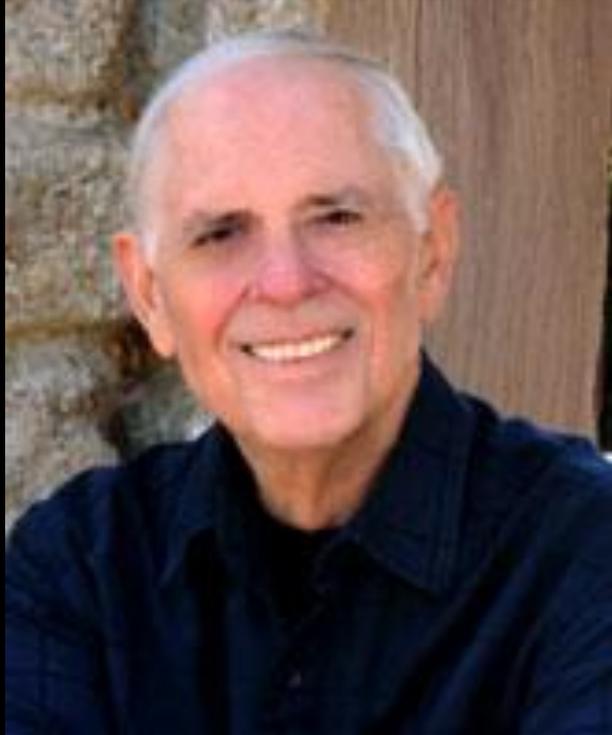
2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11



*I had been enamored with novelty.
Candidly, I had been in love with heresy.
Now I was waking up from this
enthrallment to meet a two thousand year
stable memory ...*

*– Thomas Oden in A Change of Heart: A
Personal and Theological Memoir*

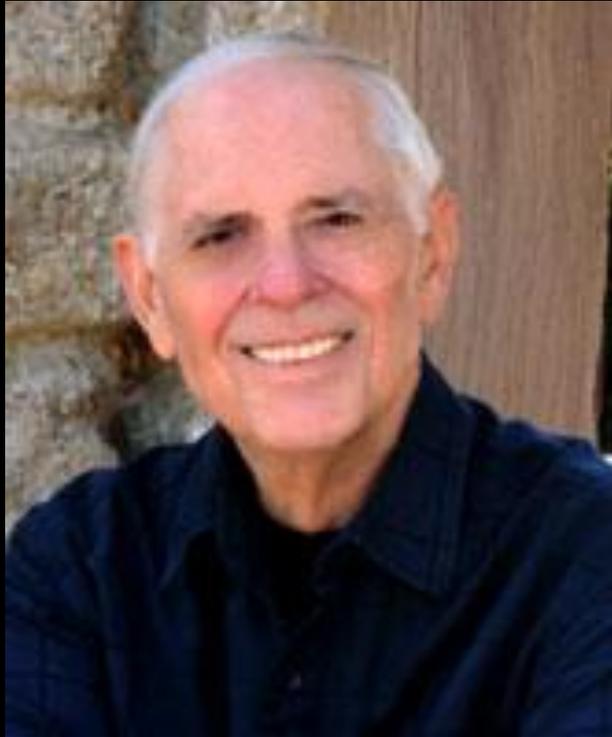
2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11



By the season of Epiphany of 1972, I was pledged to present nothing new or original in basic Christian teaching that would have my initials stamped on it as if it were mine ...

– Thomas Oden in A Change of Heart: A Personal and Theological Memoir

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11



I have honored that pledge, and it has been immensely gratifying for me. Ever since then I have remained deeply committed to the surprisingly relevant idea of unoriginality.

– *Thomas Oden in A Change of Heart: A Personal and Theological Memoir*

2. The Plumb Line 7:7-11

God is always willing to use those who remain faithful to his word.

3. The Challenge 7:12-17

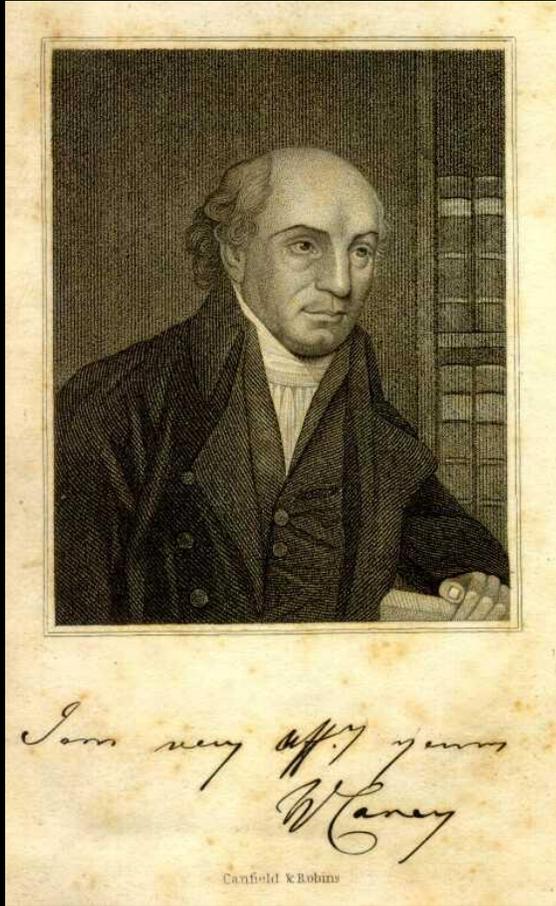
3. The Challenge 7:12-17

- **Amaziah** is quite sure he is the boss at Bethel.
- This is the sanctuary of the king and **Amaziah** serves all the king's religious purposes.
- (Note that the temple belongs to **king** and **kingdom** rather than to God.)
- **Amos** serves a different master.

3. The Challenge 7:12-17

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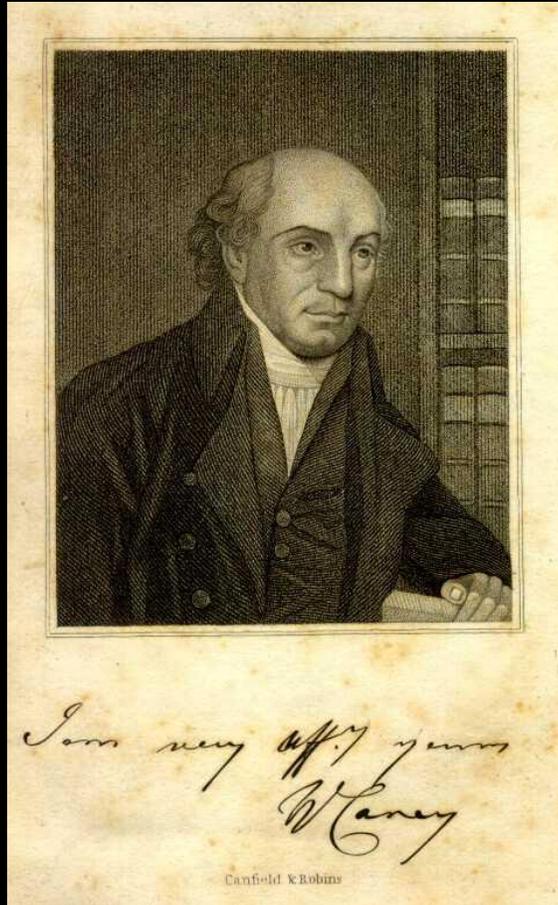
3. The Challenge 7:12-17



William Carey (1761-1834)

- Born into a family of English weavers.
- Apprenticed as a shoemaker.
- Became a schoolmaster and then a Baptist pastor.
- Helped to found the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 (Now [BMS World Mission](#)).

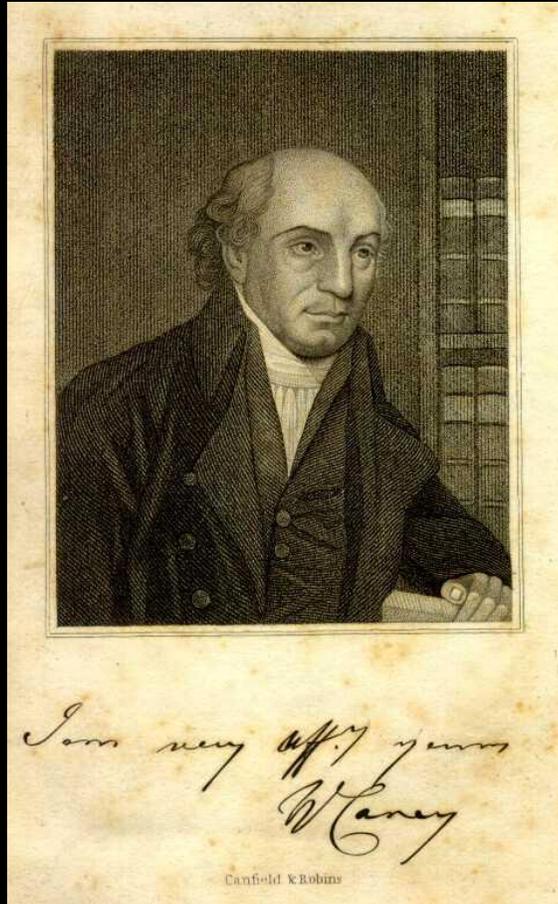
3. The Challenge 7:12-17



William Carey (1761-1834)

- Left for India in 1793.
- Elected professor of Sanskrit and Bengali languages at Fort Williams College, 1800.
- Completed several Bible translations.
- Founded Agri-Horticultural Society of India in 1820. See agrihorticultureindia.com

3. The Challenge 7:12-17



William Carey (1761-1834)

- Helped to found Serampore College in 1821, still thriving.
- Fought to prohibit **Sati** (widow-burning).
- Now commonly known as “**the father of modern missions.**”

3. The Challenge 7:12-17

God is always willing to use those who are willing to be used by him.

A Note on Our God-given Calling

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2. Our God-ordained circumstances
3. His almighty power

We sometimes place too much emphasis on 1 & 2 and not enough emphasis on 3.

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Conclusions

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- God is always willing to use those who are willing to be used by him.
- Amos was all of these. Is anything stopping us?