

Thursday, December 12

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Amos 7:1 - 9:15

7 1 The Sovereign LORD showed me a vision. I saw him preparing to send a vast swarm of locusts over the land. This was after the king's share had been harvested from the fields and as the main crop was coming up. **2** In my vision the locusts ate every green plant in sight. Then I said, "O Sovereign LORD, please forgive us or we will not survive, for Israel is so small." **3** So the LORD relented from this plan. "I will not do it," he said. **4** Then the Sovereign LORD showed me another vision. I saw him preparing to punish his people with a great fire. The fire had burned up the depths of the sea and was devouring the entire land. **5** Then I said, "O Sovereign LORD, please stop or we will not survive, for Israel is so small." **6** Then the LORD relented from this plan, too. "I will not do that either," said the Sovereign LORD. **7** Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a plumb line. He was using a plumb line to see if it was still straight. **8** And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" I answered, "A plumb line." And the Lord replied, "I will test my people with this plumb line. I will no longer ignore all their sins. **9** The pagan shrines of your ancestors will be ruined, and the temples of Israel will be destroyed; I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam to a sudden end." **10** Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent a message to Jeroboam, king of Israel: "Amos is hatching a plot against you right here on your very doorstep! What he is saying is intolerable. **11** He is saying, 'Jeroboam will soon be killed, and the people of Israel will be sent away into exile.'" **12** Then Amaziah sent orders to Amos: "Get out of here, you prophet! Go on back to the land of Judah, and earn your living by prophesying there! **13** Don't bother us with your prophecies here in Bethel. This is the king's sanctuary and the national place of worship!" **14** But Amos replied, "I'm not a professional prophet, and I was never trained to be one. I'm just a shepherd, and I take care of sycamore-fig trees. **15** But the LORD called me away from my flock and told me, 'Go and prophesy to my people in Israel.' **16** Now then, listen to this message from the LORD: "You say, 'Don't prophesy against Israel. Stop preaching against my people.' **17** But this is what the LORD says: 'Your wife will become a prostitute in this city, and your sons and daughters will be killed. Your land will be divided up, and you yourself will die in a foreign land. And the people of Israel will certainly become captives in exile, far from their homeland.'"

8 1 Then the Sovereign LORD showed me another vision. In it I saw a basket filled with ripe fruit. **2** “What do you see, Amos?” he asked. I replied, “A basket full of ripe fruit.” Then the LORD said, “Like this fruit, Israel is ripe for punishment! I will not delay their punishment again. **3** In that day the singing in the Temple will turn to wailing. Dead bodies will be scattered everywhere. They will be carried out of the city in silence. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!” **4** Listen to this, you who rob the poor and trample down the needy! **5** You can’t wait for the Sabbath day to be over and the religious festivals to end so you can get back to cheating the helpless. You measure out grain with dishonest measures and cheat the buyer with dishonest scales. **6** And you mix the grain you sell with chaff swept from the floor. Then you enslave poor people for one piece of silver or a pair of sandals. **7** Now the LORD has sworn this oath by his own name, the Pride of Israel : “I will never forget the wicked things you have done! **8** The earth will tremble for your deeds, and everyone will mourn. The ground will rise like the Nile River at floodtime; it will heave up, then sink again. **9** “In that day,” says the Sovereign LORD, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth while it is still day. **10** I will turn your celebrations into times of mourning and your singing into weeping. You will wear funeral clothes and shave your heads to show your sorrow— as if your only son had died. How very bitter that day will be! **11** “The time is surely coming,” says the Sovereign LORD, “when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the LORD . **12** People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from border to border searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it. **13** Beautiful girls and strong young men will grow faint in that day, thirsting for the LORD ’s word. **14** And those who swear by the shameful idols of Samaria— who take oaths in the name of the god of Dan and make vows in the name of the god of Beersheba — they will all fall down, never to rise again.”

9 1 Then I saw a vision of the Lord standing beside the altar. He said, “Strike the tops of the Temple columns, so that the foundation will shake. Bring down the roof on the heads of the people below. I will kill with the sword those who survive. No one will escape! **2** “Even if they dig down to the place of the dead, I will reach down and pull them up. Even if they climb up into the heavens, I will bring them down. **3** Even if they hide at the very top of Mount Carmel, I will search them out and capture them. Even if they hide at the bottom of the ocean, I will send the sea serpent after them to bite them. **4** Even if their enemies drive them into exile, I will command the sword to kill them there. I am determined to bring disaster upon them and not to help them.” **5** The Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, touches the land and it melts, and all its people mourn. The ground rises like the Nile River at floodtime, and then it sinks again. **6** The LORD ’s home reaches up to the heavens, while its foundation is on the earth. He draws up water from the oceans and pours it down as rain on the land. The LORD is his name! **7** “Are you

Israelites more important to me than the Ethiopians?” asks the LORD . “I brought Israel out of Egypt, but I also brought the Philistines from Crete and led the Arameans out of Kir. **8** “I, the Sovereign LORD, am watching this sinful nation of Israel. I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But I will never completely destroy the family of Israel,” says the LORD . **9** “For I will give the command and will shake Israel along with the other nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, yet not one true kernel will be lost. **10** But all the sinners will die by the sword— all those who say, ‘Nothing bad will happen to us.’ **11** “In that day I will restore the fallen house of David. I will repair its damaged walls. From the ruins I will rebuild it and restore its former glory. **12** And Israel will possess what is left of Edom and all the nations I have called to be mine.” The LORD has spoken, and he will do these things. **13** “The time will come,” says the LORD, “when the grain and grapes will grow faster than they can be harvested. Then the terraced vineyards on the hills of Israel will drip with sweet wine! **14** I will bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands, and they will rebuild their ruined cities and live in them again. They will plant vineyards and gardens; they will eat their crops and drink their wine. **15** I will firmly plant them there in their own land. They will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God.

Revelation 3:7 - 22

3 7 “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David. What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: **8** “I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me. **9** Look, I will force those who belong to Satan’s synagogue—those liars who say they are Jews but are not—to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love. **10** “Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. **11** I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. **12** All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will write on them the name of my God, and they will be citizens in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from my God. And I will also write on them my new name. **13** “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. **14** “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation: **15** “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor

cold. I wish that you were one or the other! **16** But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! **17** You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. **18** So I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. **19** I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. **20** "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. **21** Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. **22** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."

Psalm 131:1 - 3

131 **1** LORD, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. **2** Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. **3** O Israel, put your hope in the LORD — now and always.

Proverbs 29:23

29 **23** Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor.