

When God Calls The Common: Amos

Amos 7:7-9

“God’s Straight Line To Holiness”

Deuteronomy 7:1-7

When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

God sets His sights on a people, covenanting to be their God no matter what, forever. Beloved, how do we—in our small, human minds—comprehend God’s unrelenting pursuit of Israel? How do we understand why He upholds a holy standard for His chosen people? In His perfect love, He exacts punishment for their continual disobedience *only* after three visions given to common-man prophet Amos. Oh, the mercy of God over His beloved children! First the plague of locusts which God did not release, then a consuming fire which God held back. And today, we learn of a harrowing plumb line—God’s Word, to see if Israel measures up. If they don’t, *no more mercy!* Certain punishment and destruction is on the way.

Amos 7:7

(KJV) Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

(NIV) This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand.

Vision number three is shown to Amos. God with a plumb line in hand. A plumb line being a measuring line with a lead weight on the end—used by builders to make sure all border walls are perpendicular and straight, so that they do not compromise the structure and collapse later in time. This word picture of God measuring a wall—namely Israel—and seeing if they measure up in heart and deed to God’s Word, the plumb line, should be cause for us to hold our breath or cry out for mercy.

We know Israel doesn't line up with God's straight line to holiness.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: How do you feel when the Holy Spirit convicts of a behaviour or sin that violates God's will? How readily do you settle accounts with God through Jesus? Then how do you feel? How do you think feelings factor into conviction and repentance?

Deuteronomy 7:8

(KJV) But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

(NIV) But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

God will continually bring Israel back to His covenant promises, to His faithfulness. His love!

Hear this again: *but because the Lord loved you!*

When would they get it? When would they understand?

When will we understand this verse we know *by heart* but rarely know *in our hearts*?

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Our God is a covenant-keeping God!

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you had a definitive encounter and/or revelation of God's love? How does John 3:16 act as a plumb line for our understanding of and personal relationship with God?

*STUDY POINT: Find three passages in the Old and New Testament where the central character encounters God's love for the first time. How were their lives changed? Be specific.

Amos 7:9

(KJV) And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

(NIV) "The high places of Isaac will be destroyed and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined; with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."

God will—no turning back from His punishment this time—cut off and destroy Israel's connection and lifeline to worship as well as access to a king and leadership that bankrolls their sinful, decadent lifestyle. Amos zeroes in on these two targets of punishment so the Israelites will *feel* the pain of losing all they have coveted in their hearts in the place of God.

So, we have to ask. How do we—today in 2022—measure up to God's glorious standard in Holy Scripture? To His straight line to holiness? We have the Holy Spirit to empower us to say yes to God. But are we learning to say no to our lustful desires?

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland