



A Plumb Line

Amos 7:7-15

To be measured for our actions happens in different areas of life—our jobs, our schooling, our families, our personal goals—is a simple idea. We look at expectations set before us, and try to see if we have met them or not. But what happens when we learn of the ways God measures our actions and our spiritual well being? Are we quick to reject his measurement, or do we allow those measurements to become the driving point of our lives? This is the question posed to Israel, by the prophet Amos in Amos 7.

In Amos 7, the prophet Amos is found in the town of Bethel, which was one of the idolatrous high places in Israel (this is the place of the Golden Calf). In this city, Amos reveals a vision he was given from God. In this vision, God used a plumb line to measure the people of Israel. *“7This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. 8And the Lord said to me, ‘Amos, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘A plumb line.’ Then the Lord said, ‘Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them; 9the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”* A plumb line is a measurement tool used in construction, to measure verticality or depth. In this instance, God is measuring the depth of Israel’s righteousness, as the wall in the vision is referring to the people of God. When God measures the wall, he finds the people lacking. They do not measure up.

Because God measures his people, we have to understand two things: One, If we meet his measurements we will be spared of his wrath. This is a common idea in all of the prophetic books and messages. Righteousness is rewarded! Second, if we fail to meet God's measurements, we will have sorrow and wrath. This is seen in the destruction of Israel's Idolatrous high places and sanctuaries, as well as the destruction of Jeroboam's kingdom. Like the Israelites, our rejection of God and his measurements of righteousness will result in our eternal condemnation.



These measurements are not always universally accepted—as we see with the High Priest of Israel, Amaziah. *“¹⁰Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said, “Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.”¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, ¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”* Amaziah hears this judgment pronounced toward Israel, and does two things. He accuses Amos of conspiracy to Jeroboam, and then attempts to banish Amos out of Israel. He was unable to cope with the message of God, and rejects it by rejecting the messenger. God’s measurements can be hard to swallow and hear, because we reject his law for the way of the world. We turn away, and are found lacking in his measurements. In those moments, we allow our guilt and shame turn to anger and fear, and lash out like Amaziah. Yet the result is the same—wrath.

Yet in the last few verses of this highlighted passage, we are given encouragement. *“¹⁴Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. ¹⁵But the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.”* God continues to use his people to give his measurements to the world. He wants people to

understand what is coming for sin and wickedness, and find a way to be made right in his eyes before judgment day. Amos doesn't back down, because God has commanded him to speak and teach. For those of us who have committed ourselves to Christ, we have a duty to continue to spread his message and his measurements to others. For those who have not yet committed themselves to Christ, the measurements and expectations of the father are waiting for you—along with promises of blessing and judgment for the actions we choose.

Let us line up our lives with the plumb line of the father, and be found meeting his measurements.