

FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD 7.11.2021

Let's look at the Bible readings for Sunday, July 11, to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (at 9:00 am) with Abounding Joy.

1ST READING: Amos 7:7-15 The truth hurts

⁷This is what the Lord God 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."

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." 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.'"

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO AMOS, CHAPTER 7

1. A plumb line is used to mark a straight vertical line.
Does Israel measure up straight or crooked?
2. "High places" and "sanctuaries" were often the venues where false (idolatrous) worship took place. What coming punishment does Amos announce will be meted out because of Israel's infidelity (see vss. 8, 9 & 11)?
3. Do you think it's a good idea (vss. 12-13) to tell God's messengers where they should preach and what they should say?
4. Why does Amos announce this word of doom to the people (vs. 15)?

2ND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14 God's blesses us in Jesus; let us count the ways

³**Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us in Christ with every spiritual **blessing** in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he **chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he **predestined us** for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will**, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has

blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of **his will, according to his purpose**, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as **a plan** for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In him we have obtained an

inheritance, having been **predestined** according to **the purpose** of him who works all things according to **the counsel of his will**, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory**. ¹³In him you also, when

you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory**.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO EPHESIANS, CHAPTER 1:

1. What is Paul's point with all of his references to choosing, predestining, purposing, planning, willing, etc.?
2. What do you think is the meaning of the phrase "to the praise of His glory" in vss. 6, 12, and 14?
3. Name ten things that God has done for us and given to us in Jesus, as listed in these verses.
4. What is the "already and not yet" gift referred to in vss. 13 and 14?

THE GOSPEL: Mark 6:14-29 What happens when you speak the truth

¹⁴King Herod heard of Jesus' works, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." ¹⁵But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. ¹⁸For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, ²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. ²¹But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet

for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²²For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." ²³And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." ²⁴And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." ²⁵And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. ²⁷And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison ²⁸and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO MARK, CHAPTER 6:

1. Jesus and what other two "prophets" meet opposition in the Amos and Mark readings?
2. What sin-revealing word (the Law) did John speak to Herod and his wife?
3. What do you think was Herod's strange fascination with John (vs. 20)?
4. Why did Herod go through with the killing of John even though he didn't want to?
5. What later event does the murder of John foreshadow?