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Scripture

Amos 4: 6-13

⁶ I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
and lack of bread in all your places,
yet you did not return to me,
says the LORD.

⁷ And I also withheld the rain from you
when there were still three months to the harvest;
I would send rain on one city,
and send no rain on another city;
one field would be rained upon,
and the field on which it did not rain withered;

⁸ so two or three towns wandered to one town
to drink water, and were not satisfied;
yet you did not return to me,
says the LORD.

⁹ I struck you with blight and mildew;
I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards;
the locust devoured your fig trees and your olive trees;
yet you did not return to me,
says the LORD.

¹⁰ I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt;
I killed your young men with the sword;
I carried away your horses;
and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils;
yet you did not return to me,
says the LORD.

¹¹ I overthrew some of you,
as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
and you were like a brand snatched from the fire;
yet you did not return to me,
says the LORD.

¹² Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel;
because I will do this to you,
prepare to meet your God, O Israel!

¹³ For lo, the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind,
reveals his thoughts to mortals,
makes the morning darkness,

and treads on the heights of the earth —
the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!

Devotional

During Advent, we sing, “Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!” And when the Church proclaims the birth of Jesus, other lovely refrains will resound:

“Hark! The herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the new-born King!’”

“O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore him, O come, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!”

“Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.”

But we hear from the prophet Amos a very different refrain:

“Yet you did not return to me.”

Despite all the Lord’s efforts to get Israel’s attention—“I gave you no bread, I withheld the rain, I struck you with blight and mildew, I sent pestilence”— they did not return.

Therefore, declares Amos, “Prepare, O Israel, to meet your God!”

Have we paid attention? The God whom we will meet in the Christ child longs for us to return to Him.

Prayer

Lord, You form the mountains, create the wind, and reveal Your thoughts to mortal human beings. Prepare us to return us to you through Jesus Christ. Amen.