

READINGS FOR JANUARY 9, 2011

First Reading: Amos 1:1; 5:21-24

The words of Amos, a sheep breeder from Tekoa. These are the visions Amos had about Israel in the time of Uzziah, ruler of Judah and of Jeroboam ben-Joash, ruler of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Thus says God:

I despise and reject your feasts!
I am not appeased by your solemn assemblies!
When you offer me burnt offerings,
I reject your oblations,
And refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle!
Spare me the racket of your chanting!
Relieve me of the strumming of your harps!
Instead, let justice flow like a river,
And righteousness like an unfailing stream.

Second Reading: Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. John tried to dissuade Jesus, saying "I should be baptized by you, and yet you come to me!"

But Jesus replied, "Leave it this way for now. We must do this to completely fulfill God's justice." So John reluctantly agreed.

Immediately after Jesus had been baptized and was coming up out of the water, the sky suddenly opened up and Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and hovering over him. With that, a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Own, my Beloved, on whom my favor rests."

Third Reading: From Gary Holthaus in "Gift of the Earth: God Speaks Again" from The Unauthorized Bible

You have found so many ways
to break my heart...
The gift I handed you green and lovely,
filled with sun and purest of waters
you blight with careless hands
and greed-filled hearts. Your
corporations blacken the air,

steal the world's water for profit,
while my tiniest children,
10,800 of them a day,
die for lack of good water.