

## Finishing Things we Start...

What are things we can start and not finish?

Imagine taking off in a small airplane...

- What is absolutely guaranteed to happen?

What are things that, once started, are guaranteed to finish?

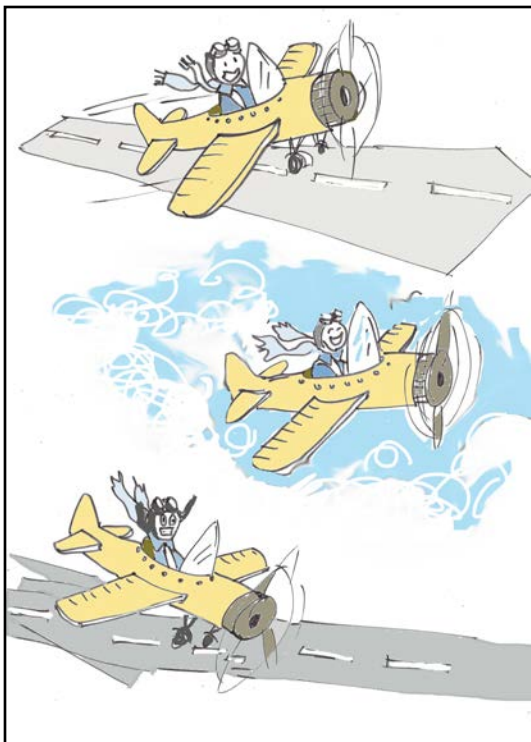
“You have made my days a mere handbreadth;  
the span of my years is as nothing before you.  
Everyone is but a breath,

**even those who seem secure.”** *Psalm 34:5*

Only a fool would simply live in denial of a certain future

Given the certainty of death, how will we live?

1



Not “If”  
But “When and how”

Amos 9

[bib.ly/Am9.NIV](https://bib.ly/Am9.NIV)

2

### *Setting*

- Amos: a prophet from ‘the other side’ (the south)
  - Tribal division in Israel
    - 10 tribes in the north: **Israel**
    - 2 tribes in the south: **Judah**
  - **Israel** believed everyone else was the real problem
  - Peace and prosperity reinforced their arrogance and complacency

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### *Setting*

- Amos: a prophet from ‘the other side’
- Amos’s message: God hates your evil
  - “Whoever **claims to love God** yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, **cannot love God**, whom they have not seen.” *1 John 4:20*
  - “**Sinful kingdom**” *Amos 9:8* → systemic injustice
    - General rules and behavior supported the wealthy in staying wealthy and keeping the poor poor

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### *Setting*

- Amos: a prophet from ‘the other side’
- Amos’s message: God hates your evil
- The people’s response
  - Believed they didn’t deserve God’s wrath
  - Believed they could avoid God’s wrath
  - **Amos said, “There is no escape!”**

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### *Amos 9*

[bib.ly/Am9.NIV](http://bib.ly/Am9.NIV)

1-4: God’s judgment is inescapable: “top to bottom” *merism*

5-6: • Rather than God’s people escaping His judgment

7-10: by their special status...

11-15: • Judgment began in the house of God

- “For it is time for judgment (disciplining, purifying) **to begin with God’s household**; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” *1 Peter 4:17*

- Yet prophecy of judgment is an invitation to repent

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*Amos 9*

1-4: God's judgment is inescapable: "top to bottom" *merism*

5-6: This God is The God over all

7-10: • Earth + Heavens + Sea = all of creation

11-15: • No one and nothing can stand against Him

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*Amos 9*

1-4: God's judgment is inescapable: "top to bottom" *merism*

5-6: This God is The God over all

7-10: God is judge over all people & over every person

11-15: • Those who do not submit to God will pay the price

- God will sort people. Illustrations from Jesus:
  - Wheat and weeds sorted at harvest
  - Fish are sorted when the fishing net is pulled in
- Thinking "**I'm not in trouble**" is irrelevant
  - Self-righteousness (I'm right and the rest are wrong) is **a great danger before God!**
  - One's confidence before God may be **a warning sign** rather than an indication of one's high standing

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### *Amos 9*

1-4: God's judgment is inescapable: "top to bottom" *merism*

5-6: This God is The God over all

7-10: God is judge over all people & over every person

**11-15: God promises abundant blessing to *all* who submit to the **promised Son of David: Jesus Christ****

- This is God's invitation and intention for all peoples
  - Not conquering but inclusion
- Being fulfilled in the church...

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### *Acts 15:13-17*

The early church was debating how ethnicity fit in the life of the church.

That is, what place was there those who were not Jewish?

The default expectation:

- Being Jewish was the standard
- Others could join if they would fit in with being Jewish

After much discussion, James (the brother of Jesus) spoke and quoted Amos 9:

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*Acts 15:13-17*

“Brothers,” James said, “listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles [the peoples of all nations]. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

“After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

that

**the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,**

**even all the Gentiles who bear my name,**

says the Lord, who does these things’—

things known from long ago.”

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*Amos 9*

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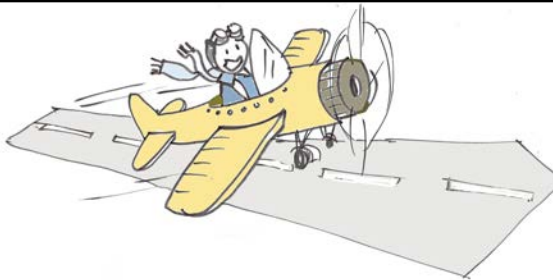
- Overwhelming flourishing of life
- Abundant crops stand for God’s amazing blessing in all parts of life

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*The Big Idea*

**All humanity and every human  
will one day encounter God  
for **judgment** for those  
who **do not submit to God in Christ**  
and for **overwhelming blessing**  
for those who **do submit to God in Christ****

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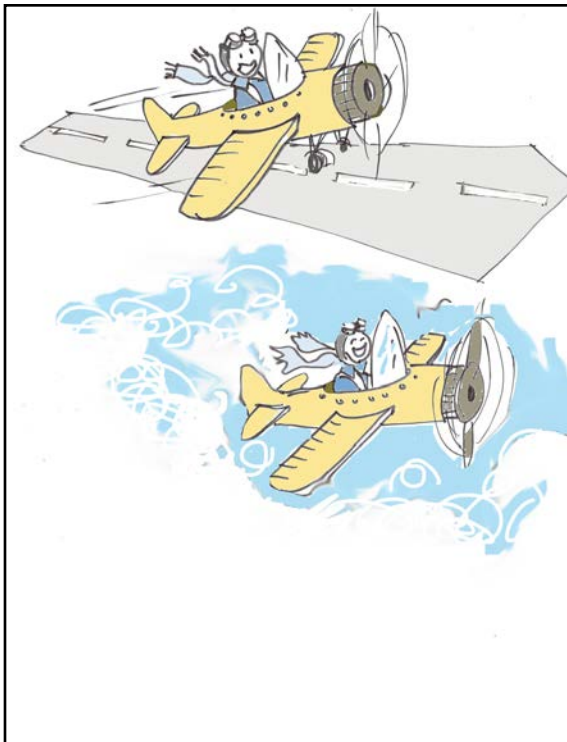


**3 Phases of Flight**

**Takeoff:**

- **exciting, a little tense**
- **somewhat challenging**

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### 3 Phases of Flight

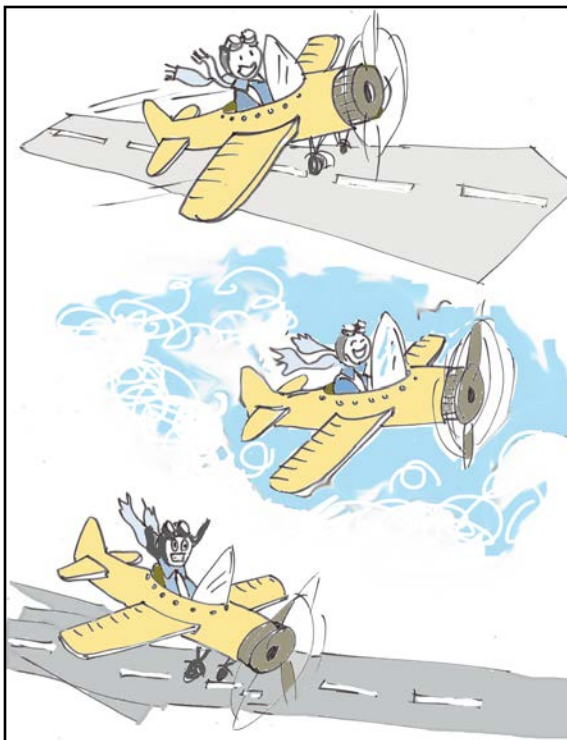
#### Takeoff:

- exciting, a little tense
- somewhat challenging

#### Flight:

- enjoyable
- usually wonderful!

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### 3 Phases of Flight

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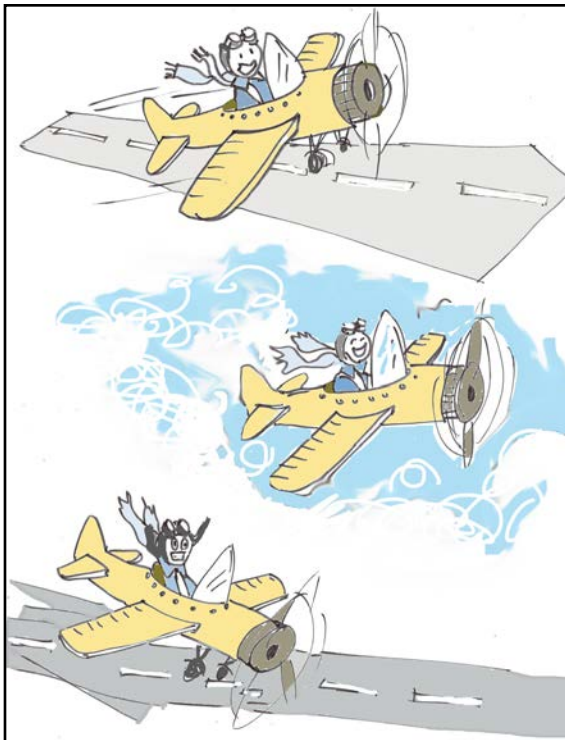
#### Landing:

- more tense
- hopefully uneventful!

Once you take off, avoiding the landing is no longer an option

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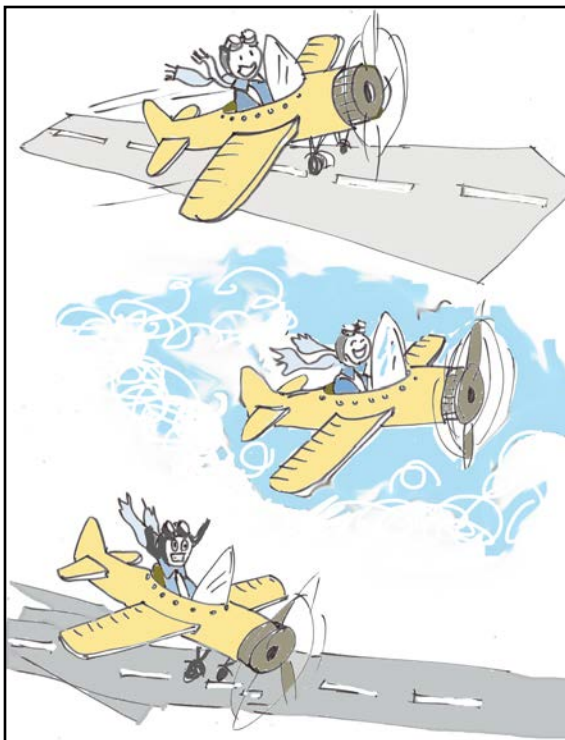


### 3 Phases of Flight

#### The secret of a good landing:

- A good approach to landing
- The quality of the landing is largely determined long before the actual landing

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### 3 Phases of Life

#### Birth:

- exciting, a little tense
- somewhat challenging

#### Life:

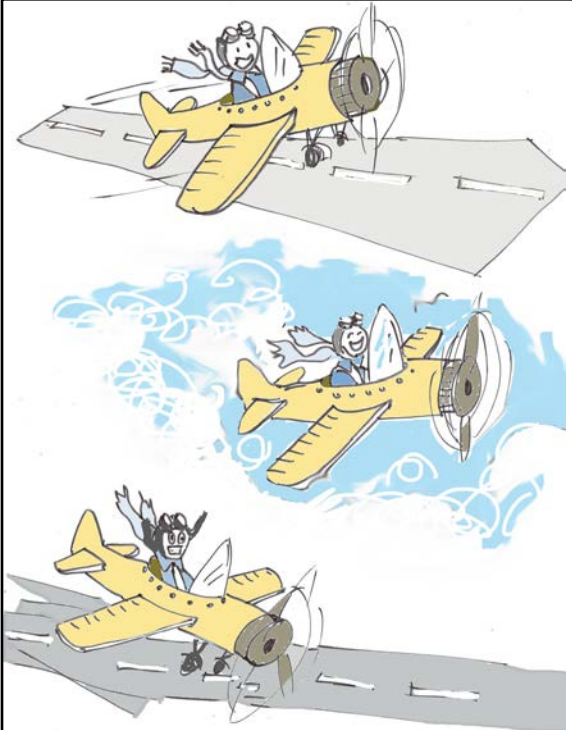
- mixture of joys and sorrows
- dreams fulfilled and broken

#### Meeting God (death):

- lots of mystery!

Once you are born, avoiding death is no longer an option

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### 3 Phases of Life

**Landing = meeting God**

- Guaranteed to come
- For each one in all of humanity

**The secret of a good "landing":**

- The quality of the landing is largely determined long before the actual landing
- Shaped by how you live

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*The Big Idea*

**All humanity and every human**  
**will one day encounter God**  
**for judgment for those**  
**who do not submit to God in Christ**  
**and for overwhelming blessing**  
**for those who do submit to God in Christ**

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## Submitting to God in Christ: 3 parts

### 1. To the holy standard of God

- Rebellion plus denial, avoidance, ignorance, self-justification, blaming others, making excuses, ...
- “Everyone who does evil hates the light [Jesus], and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.” *John 3:20*
- Submitting to God in Christ begins with “owning” (taking responsibility for) **my own sin**
- And accepting the wrath of God as just

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## Submitting to God in Christ: 3 parts

### 1. To the holy standard of God

### 2. To the grace of God in Christ

- “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, **who takes away the sin of the world!**’ ” *John 1:29*
- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are **justified freely by his grace** through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” *Romans 3:23-24*
- Saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone

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## **Submitting to God in Christ: 3 parts**

- 1. To the holy standard of God**
- 2. To the grace of God in Christ**
- 3. To the authority of God in Christ**
  - “In fact, this is love for God: to **keep his commands**. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world.” *1 John 5:3-4*
  - “...teaching them **to obey everything** I have commanded you.” *Matthew 28:20*
  - The people of Israel tried to skip #3 **Not optional!**

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## **Submitting to God in Christ: 3 parts**

1. To the holy standard of God
2. To the grace of God in Christ
3. To the authority of God in Christ

**Confession, repentance, and return to obedience  
are essential and ongoing activities  
in submission to God in Christ**

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## **Submitting to God in Christ: 3 parts**

1. To the holy standard of God
2. To the grace of God in Christ
3. To the authority of God in Christ

### **For Christ's Church:**

**We will love across differences, and recognize and correct broken systems, for these are essential to the vision of God**  
**So we will continue the journey of confession, repentance, and return to obedience regarding sinful bias, systemic injustice, and failure to love across differences for as long as we exist as a church**

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## **Our Hope!**

God is at work as His people join His work

- **Submitting** to His holy standard
- **Trusting** in the grace of God in Christ
- **Obeying** the commands of God in Christ

**Brings overwhelming flourishing of life**

**God is bringing abundant blessing...**

**" 'What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived '**

**– the things God has prepared for those who love him"**

***1 Corinthians 2:9***

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