

Days of Amos

What's coming  in the next few years? There's bad news and there's good news. The prophet Amos in ancient times brought a set of indictments against Israel that read very much like the sins of America and the Western world.

1. They rejected God's law (Amos 2:4). In many ways too numerous to list here, so have we.

2. They believed in lies concerning false gods and demonic philosophies (Amos 2:4). The list of deceptions in modern times is long and spans a range of doctrines and philosophies, from open theism taught in the church to post-modernistic philosophy dominant in the world around us. The former denies the foreknowledge of God and, by extension, the fullness of His sovereignty; the latter writes God out of the equation altogether. And those are just two examples.

3. They had fallen into an economic self-focus that led to abuse (Amos 2:6-8). This is the America and the West that I have known all my life. Even in the church we have been obsessed with material prosperity and a focus on self.

4. Sexual immorality and perversion ran rampant. This occurred in more

forms than Amos mentioned in this passage (Amos 2:7). The same is true today.

5. They had

become arrogant in a way that led to abuse of those who stood before

God in humility (Amos 2:7). Many Christians in America are increasingly viewed as a threat to society because we who stand on

the Word refuse to join the approval of practices the culture regards

as normal and acceptable. When in our history, until recent times,

was it ever possible to lose a job over the issue of sharing your

faith openly?

6. Their

polluted and compromised devotion to God led to pressure on the

Lord's devoted ones to compromise (Amos 2:12). And so it is today.

What is sown must be reaped. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap"

(Gal. 6:7). This principle applied under the old covenant, and it

applies under the new. Judgment, the reaping, begins in Amos 2:14 and

reads very much like the current state of America and the West.

1.

Amos prophesied Israel's military defeat (Amos 2:14-16). The military might of both America and the West will continue to be

frustrated and their influence in the world diminished despite the overwhelming power of our armament. Iraq and Afghanistan stand as prime examples of extended and frustrated warfare against enemies whose power pales by comparison to our own capabilities. Serious terrorist attacks will ultimately succeed, and governments will be powerless to stop them. Because we no longer fear God, His angel no longer encamps around us (see Ps. 34:7); and America in particular no longer enjoys favored nation status in the world. Don't be deceived by the death of Osama bin Laden. This was one small victory in a wider war, not a turning point, and we have yet to deal with the backlash that must certainly come.

2. Amos

prophesied a destroyed economy for Israel (Amos 3:15). Sin must ultimately and always produce poverty. Isn't it interesting that economic judgment on ancient Israel began with a collapse of the housing market? Sound familiar? Economic recovery will be limited at best, both in scope and duration, and fraught with inconsistency.

3. If Amos

were speaking to us directly he would say that God is about to close

some of our churches (Amos 3:14), or else significantly diminish them.

He will not permit churches to continue thriving where His laws, standards, morality, Word and nature are not honored and His Spirit cannot move. On the other hand, where these things are honored, churches will thrive as desperate people, broken by the destructive effects of sin, seek real answers and as those who desire a genuine experience of God find the places where that experience can be found.

The good news will unfold simultaneously with the bad as God's glory grows brighter in the midst of darkness, consistent with Rom. 8:18-19: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God"

Godly ones—those who will humble themselves in repentance and submission, seeking God with genuine passion—will enter a season of glory like no other. They will be revealed as a lighthouse people, islands of glory in a sea of mud, for a strategic time; and churches and ministries filled with the power and love of God.

Signs and wonders will multiply as expressions of that love so that a huge

harvest of souls will be gathered out of the darkness. The presence of God will rest upon us more powerfully than we've ever imagined. Those of us who have sought holiness and wholeness in purity of passion will be revealed as a generation prepared for such a time. It will be fulfillment of the purposes for which God has so painstakingly prepared us. A line is being drawn in the sand. We live in a day of decision.

About the author: R. Loren Sandford is the founder and senior pastor of New Song Fellowship in Denver. He is a songwriter, recording artist and worship leader, as well as the author of several books, including *Understanding Prophetic People*, *The Prophetic Church* and his latest, *Renewal for the Wounded Warrior*, which are available with other resources on the church's website.