

THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHET AMOS

In the mid-eighth century BC, the northern tribes of Israel were no better than the pagan nations that surrounded her. God had called Israel to fulfill a special task, but Israel had failed to carry out that task. What was the reason? God's people were filthy with sinful deeds. Listen to what the prophet Amos said about God's people.

They sell the righteous for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals.
They trample on the heads of the poor
as upon the dust of the ground
and deny justice to the oppressed.
Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.
They lie down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge.
In the house of their god
they drink wine taken as fines (Amos 2.6-8, NIV).

Because of their iniquities, because of their complacency and false security, God would bring judgment upon the northern Israelite tribes.

Now then, I will crush you
as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.
The swift will not escape,
the strong will not muster their strength,
and the warrior will not save his life.
The archer will not stand his ground,
the fleet-footed soldier will not get away,
and the horseman will not save his life.
Even the bravest warriors
will flee naked on that day
declares the Lord (Amos 2.13-16, NIV).

As God's chosen people today, we have an important responsibility. We must not fail to accomplish the purpose that God has for us. If we do fail, then "the kingdom of God will be taken away from us and given to a people who will produce its fruit" (Matthew 21.43, NIV). Our

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God is a holy God, and he will judge us if we become workers of iniquity rather than workers of righteousness. If we, like ancient Israel, fall to Satan and sin, what is the remedy? The prophet

Amos gives the answer.

Seek me and live . . .

Seek the Lord and live . . .

Seek good, not evil,
that you may live.

Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you,
just as you say he is.

Hate evil, love good;
maintain justice in the courts.

Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy
on the remnant of Joseph (Amos 5.4, 6, 14-15, NIV).