



[Leviticus 26:25](#)

(25) And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

[Leviticus 26:45](#)

(45) But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD."

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[God](#) will remember His covenant because He is a jealous God ([Exodus 20:5](#)). Because He does not want His name to be profaned in any way, He is very concerned about those who bear it ([Exodus 20:7](#)). The covenant people, Israel, had profaned His name by their conduct among the other nations. Because God is holy and righteous, what He proclaimed to do against the heathen in the first chapter of Amos, He will also do to Israel—a people who had forsaken their covenant with Him.

Isaiah writes that Jerusalem, symbolizing all the tribes of Israel, will receive double for her sins because of her privileged position under the covenant ([Isaiah 40:2](#)). God will punish Israel for her failure to live up to her responsibilities within the covenant.

God's punishment, though, is never an end in itself, nor does He punish in wild anger or frustration. Rather, He punishes in the best way and at the best time to bring individuals to [repentance](#). He has not forgotten His promises to [Abraham](#), [Isaac](#), and [Jacob](#), but He will correct their descendants so that He can eventually save His people and give them the promises. The process will be painful but also effective; Israel *will* come to repentance ([Romans 11:25-29](#)).

Reflecting on the history of the British Commonwealth and America in the last two

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hundred years, we see two nations quickly rising to prominence along with unparalleled accomplishments. The British produced a great empire far out of proportion to their population, native wealth, and abilities. Through her commercial power, the United States became the single richest nation that has ever existed. American influence has since exceeded even that of Britain, making English the universal language of business and politics.

Thousands of academic, scientific, and engineering breakthroughs and inventions have sprung from British and American individuals, discoveries which greatly affected the rest of [this world](#). Such power and influence have made both nations feel they have an unlimited reservoir of natural ability and wealth. They even feel a kind of invincibility.

Amos warns ancient Israel and her modern descendants, however, that no nation is so great that it can stand without God. He makes and unmakes nations ([II Chronicles 20:6](#); [Daniel 4:17](#); [Acts 17:26](#)). Their rise or fall is largely dependent upon His purpose for them and their significance in prophecy (e.g. [Jeremiah 12:14-17](#); [25:15-32](#)). If their moral and ethical foundation has eroded, the natural process of strong nations displacing weaker ones will take place ([Leviticus 18:28](#); [20:22](#)). It is this process that God often uses to punish His people for [apostasy](#) and immorality.

But though God punishes, there is always the [hope](#) of repentance and restitution:

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God. ([Amos 9:13-15](#))

Central to both the punishment and the restitution is loving and living the [truth](#) of God. This is the responsibility of those who have made a covenant with Him, whether the Old or the New Covenant. It is our part of the deal—as small part really but a difficult one that must be kept ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)). If we do not keep it, God must correct us.

But if we keep our part of the agreement, we will reap the benefits that flow with God keeping His. He promises good health ([Exodus 15:26](#)), prosperity ([Malachi 3:8-12](#)), children ([Psalm 127:3-5](#)), security (Psalm 46), and many other blessings besides His greatest gift, [eternal life](#) in His Kingdom ([John 17:1-3](#); [Romans 6:23](#))!

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— John W. Ritenbaugh

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