



Daily Verse and Comment

[Amos 3:9-11](#)

(9) "Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:
"Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;
See great tumults in her midst,
And the oppressed within her.
(10) For they do not know to do right,"
Says the LORD,
"Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces."" (11) Therefore
thus says the Lord GOD:
"An adversary *shall be* all around the land;
He shall sap your strength from you,
And your palaces shall be plundered."

New King James Version

In [Amos 3:9-10](#), the prophet is told to proclaim the tumults, oppression, violence, and robbery in the nation. The man on the street was not too disturbed at the lack of law and order. He did not seem to realize that this cancerous immorality plaguing the country from *within* would result in her being crushed and destroyed from *without*.

However, when the time came to defend Israel from foreign invasion, Israel would have no strength (verse 11). [God](#) says, "They have blown the trumpet and made everyone ready, but no one goes to battle" ([Ezekiel 7:14](#)). Because the people were so preoccupied with their own self-interests, they did not respond to the external threat of invasion. As a result, the nation fell easily.

In our own generation, we have seen that our adversaries could not conquer us on the battlefield when our general level of morality was high. But as our moral fiber weakened between 1950 and today, they began to destroy us in the business world. Our foes in World War II, in becoming our allies during

the Cold War, learned our ways and now rival or outpace us in most economic categories—not only in the area of heavy industry, but in highly technological matters as well.

As our economic power is being sapped by moral cancer, our fighting spirit is being drained too. We are no longer able to present a united front on any matter. In addition, as the United States takes on the role of sole superpower, as our troops are used to enforce United Nations policies, our military strength is exploited and thinned. In our moral and social malaise, we find rousing ourselves to action as a nation gets harder and harder to do. Our allies know we are a weak branch to lean on.

And behind all this is God, who sees our corruption and warns us that the time is near.

"Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'An [adversary](#) shall be all around the land; he shall sap your strength from you, and your palaces shall be plundered'" ([Amos 3:11](#)). "Therefore" connects the preceding verses with a conclusion or result. Tumult, oppression, violence, and robbery beget weakness and destruction. [Sin](#) is inherently self-destructive. It holds out such promise of pleasure and fulfillment, but contains within it the seeds of destruction. Whatever is sown is reaped.

Why does Amos depict Israel as a powerless nation while she was at the height of her economic, political, and military power? The nation's religion was a sham! Morality and righteousness make a nation strong, but immorality and unrighteousness will always bring it to ruin ([Proverbs 14:34](#)). Where religion is powerless, government, business, and community become ineffective because their moral undergirding is gone.

"For they do not know to do right," says the Lord" ([Amos 3:10](#)). Unable to tell the difference between good and evil, Israelites finally reached the point where they called evil good and good evil ([Isaiah 5:20](#)). Not only is this in regard to spiritual truths but also to the marketplace. While they no doubt complained about the violence, *they could not see that their own selfish ambitions actually produced the violence on the streets.*

Evidently, even the religious people never made the connection between the moral and social breakdown in the nation and their own selfish ambitions. They may have been embezzling from their company or overcharging their customers, but they went to church every week! That is why God says He will destroy the religious system too ([Amos 3:14](#)).

Cold, calloused, indifferent, the common Israelite just did not care about the other guy. "So what if he suffers while I enrich myself—that's life in the big city, baby!" Whether politician or businessman or religious person, all Israelites, it seems, looked at life this way. It was a view of life almost totally devoid of a social conscience. Their lifestyle glorified amorality. But, most condemning of all, it was a lifestyle diametrically opposite to that revealed by God through [Moses](#).

We, too, need to be careful of this attitude in our own self-absorbed culture. The media even calls the "baby boom" generation the "Me Generation," and a popular magazine found in supermarket checkout lines is boldly titled *Self*.

Notice the repetition of "palaces" and "houses" in verses 9-11 and 15. God instructs Amos to tell the kings of foreign nations (verse 9) about the Israelites' stockpiling "violence and robbery in their palaces" against themselves (verse 10). To paraphrase, He says, "Look, My people have weakened themselves through sin! They are ripe for destruction!" God empowers the heathen, so they, as His battle-ax, will punish His people. His ultimate aim, of course, is to bring them to [repentance](#).

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Prepare to Meet Your God! \(The Book of Amos\) \(Part One\)](#)

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