

[Amos 2:6-8](#)

(6) Thus says the LORD:

" For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they sell the righteous for silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.

(7) They pant after the dust of the earth *which is* on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.

A man and his father go in to the *same* girl,
To defile My holy name.

(8) They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their god.

New King James Version

This is part of God's indictment of Israel forty years before its fall. At the time, Israel had regained some of its former glory under the able, though idolatrous, leadership of Jeroboam II, who had regained some of its lost territory and reinvigorated its economy. God's warning through Amos, however, is that material prosperity cloaks the ugly and rotten inner core, which was the true state of Israel's relationship with [God](#). Thus, he concludes that the nation is doomed to fall to its enemies, and its people will die or shuffle off to foreign lands as slaves—and soon.

God concentrates on social injustices like exploiting the poor and weak, perverting justice, abusing sexuality, encouraging addictions, and trampling the sacred. This indicates that such societal ills reveal the "heart of darkness"

hidden by a façade of religiosity and prosperity, much as exists today in modern America. A society that reaches the point of merely adorning the façade rather than changing the heart is taking its last gasp.

This is the punishment Amos foresees for the corrupt in Israel:

Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; your land shall be divided by survey line; you shall die in a defiled land; and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land ([Amos 7:17](#)).

What a horrible end—but a just one in the eyes of God. It cannot be far off.

For us Christians who are spiritually counter-culture, we need to realize the rapidity of the decline and the probability that persecution will increase. People who know and hide their hypocrisy will strike out at those who expose it by their very presence. To face the bleak future of this nation, we need to remain "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" ([Ephesians 6:10](#)), because our "might" will not suffice. This requires us to renew our relationship with God day by day ([II Corinthians 4:16](#)) and strengthen it by growth ([John 15:8](#); [II Peter 3:18](#)). As Paul says, "For our light [affliction](#), which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" ([II Corinthians 4:17](#)).

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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