

Some People and Nations Deceive Themselves
International Bible Lesson

Amos 2:4-16

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“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked” (Amos 2:4—KJV).

“Thus says the LORD: For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, but they have been led astray by the same lies after which their ancestors walked” (Amos 2:4—NRSV).

People and nations deceive themselves when they think it will not matter whether or not they obey the law of the LORD, which is often called the law of love or the moral law as summarized in the Ten Commandments. Through the prophet Amos, God said He would judge all the nations surrounding Judah and Israel because they committed horrible atrocities against their neighbors in violation of His law—and God destroyed them all. God declared that He would punish Judah and Israel for their

perversions and unjust treatment of the poor and the righteous in violation of His law—and using the Assyrians, God utterly destroyed Israel in 722 BC, and using the Babylonians, God sent Judah into exile in 586 BC, and using the Romans, God utterly destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. Any nation that allows the unjust treatment of others, especially the unjust treatment of the poor and the righteous, will face the just judgment of God if it does not repent and obey the moral law of love. Unjust nations and rulers will often be punished by God through all the consequences of losing a war, and by sometimes losing a war to a country and rulers worse than themselves. If a people and a nation turn from God's law and statutes based on His law, then they will be led astray by lies. Numerous reports in our daily newspapers show that God spoke the truth through Amos.

– L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. How do you think the Israelites felt when they heard Amos foretelling their neighbors, who were their enemies, would be punished by God?

2. What did God say the Kingdom of Judah had done, and what was the result of their choices that led to God's judgment?

3. What did God mean when He said, "I will not revoke the punishment"?

4. Was anyone righteous in the Kingdom of Israel? Give a reason for your answer.

5. How did God expect the poor to be protected and have their needs met?

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