

BROADCAST February 17, 1974,
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It Happened In Israel. . .
It Can Happen Here

*"Therefore now shall ye go captive with the first that
go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched
themselves shall be removed. " -Amos 6:7*

Some weeks ago in Harrisburg, Pa., the Governor's Justice Commission of that state reported to the state attorney general that 1976, this nation's bicentennial year, could be one of the most crime-ridden in our history. Its conclusion was based upon the projected increase of the age group 15 to 24 which is now responsible for 50 percent of all the crimes in our nation.

Said the Commission, "Our technical analysis suggests that there will be a jump in the crime-prone population that may peak in 1976 and that this could be accompanied by a rise in serious crime."

Not a very pretty picture is it? And yet this is probable in the modern nation which is blessed beyond that of any other in history. This is but another evidence of the moral sickness of our nation. And it is an ill omen of the threatened destruction which hovers over us. A nation that is sick almost unto death will die unless a remedy is found and applied. And that remedy is a rebirth of our hearts of the moral and spiritual principles of God in Jesus Christ.

Yet the prevailing attitude at the present is to turn aside these alarming facts, to shut them off as we would a radio or television program we do not like, and say, "It cannot happen here." This is exactly the attitude which Amos encountered in ancient Israel as he warned of the coming fall of that nation. It is this attitude that we find in Amos 6. So let us examine it with the hope and prayer that it may shock us into the reality of the gravity of our present predicament.

The prophet begins, "*Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria*" (v. 1). Now this tells us two things. *First*, Zion was in Judah, Amos' own country, and the location of Solomon's temple, one of the wonders of the ancient world. It was where God was said to dwell in mercy with His people. Yet Amos saw the same sins in Judah that he found in Israel. Despite the warnings of Isaiah and Micah In Judah, the people were at ease in Zion.

THEIR LIVES BELIED FEIGNED FAITH

Because the temple was located in their land, they said that Jehovah would not permit destruction and judgment to come upon them. However, their lives belied their feigned faith in Jehovah. They also were worshipping the pagan gods of Canaan. Subsequent history shows that only the religious reforms under their king, Hezekiah, saved Judah from the Assyrians who overran their neighbor Israel.

However, their being at ease in Zion did not rest upon their faithfulness to Jehovah, but to the presence of a material building, their temple. So Amos said that without a return to Jehovah Himself the same fate that awaited Israel would be that of Judah also.

Second, Amos speaks of Israel trusting in the mountain of Samaria. Their capital city, Samaria, was located on a high mountain which could be approached only from the east. Wisely located, it was an almost impregnable fortress against an invading army. As a matter of fact it took three years for the Assyrian army to take it in 721 B.C. Thus as the people of Judah were at ease because of the presence of the temple, the nobles of Israel were complacent because they were strong militarily. In both cases they trusted in material things rather than in a vital, living faith in the Lord. "It can't happen here," said they. But it did...is.

CHURCH DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN FAITH

And the same condition exists in our nation today. We look at our towering cities filled with church buildings, and think somehow that their presence are a charm against national calamity. But, beloved, these are but buildings. They could be used to store fodder as well as for places of worship. Churches are made up of people, not buildings. And if the lives of the people belie their professed faith in the Lord, the church edifices are empty in meaning. They may even be a mockery to the God in whose name they were erected. Unless Christ lives and reigns in the hearts of the people, they certainly cannot claim immunity from God's wrath and judgment.

MILITARY MIGHT IS NOTHING (WEAK) BEFORE GOD

Likewise, our nation points with pride and confidence to its military might. But that within itself is a puny thing before the aroused wrath of a God who is despised and ignored by the nation's people. A nation cannot be made Christian by a vote of Congress. It cannot be called Godly simply because it prints on its currency "In God We Trust."

God is looking into our hearts. And unless they be pure and dedicated to Him, our pious phrases are little less than blasphemy before Him. So we may well say to America, "*Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria!*"

Furthermore, Amos accused the leaders of Israel of wasting their nation's resources as they lived in unbridled luxury, saying all the while that judgment of their nation was not at hand.

Hear his indictment. "*Ye that put faraway the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant [or sing silly songs] to the sound of the viol... that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph*" (Amos 6:3-6).

Now let us analyze these charges. The rich leaders of Israel, by ignoring the approaching judgment upon their nation, only brought it nearer and made it more certain by their indulgent living. They slept in their comfortable beds of inlaid ivory. Stretching out on their banquet couches they ate not mutton, which poor people could scarcely afford once a week, but the tender, succulent meat of lambs taken from the flock. Also they ate, not beef, but the veal of calves which were fattened in stalls to make the meat tenderer. Thus to eat lambs and calves meant that they were eating up their future source of meat.

Furthermore, they chanted silly songs as they drank wine, not from cups but from bowls. So given were they to alcohol that they gulped it down by the bowls-ful. And they used the most expensive cosmetics to beautify bodies which harbored ugly souls.

Yet they were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph or Israel. The Hebrew word rendered "affliction" conveys the idea of one who is *mortally wounded beyond all hope of recovery*. Their nation had already

received its death wound. Yet they plunged deeper and deeper into sin. Has that wound already been inflicted upon our nation? We pray not. But who can tell?

AMOS' WORDS HAVE MODERN PARALLELS

You know, so apropos to modern life are these words of Amos that they hardly need comment. But let me mention a few modern parallels:

- * Industries which cater to our vanity run into billions of dollars annually. We are so careful to preen our outward appearance to impress men and women. But we care little as to how we appear before God.
- * The consumption of alcohol in America has reached astronomical proportions.
- * The silly songs of today but speak to the emptiness of our souls.
- * We are a satiated people, feeding upon delicacies in the midst of hunger among millions, as we dig premature graves with our teeth.
- * For our own false prosperity we have placed an impossible mortgage upon future generations.
- * The waste of our natural resources is a scandal. We seem willing to go to any lengths in such to escape any inconvenience in our luxurious living.
- * Our morals have hit the bottom. If God does not judge America and her churches, He may repent to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Last October (1973) when we were told of an impending fuel shortage, it was actually proposed that we tap the naval petroleum reserves held in readiness for national defense. Endanger the future of our nation – anything rather than to deprive our own selfish desires!

I do not doubt that many who hear my messages on Amos label me an alarmist. Like Israel of old many say that the evil day of judgment will not come to our nation. But in so doing, you are making it all the more certain – and perhaps hastening its coming. For, dear friend, *it can happen here!*

It is later than you. . . we think! And only God's grace and mercy have held back the judgment we so greatly deserve. If we do not change our ways *it will happen here.*

The lessons of history, to say nothing of the Bible, cry out in warning. The pattern of nations has been one of hardship, frugality, conquest, prosperity, luxury, waste, decay, and fall. Our nation is in the stages of prosperity, luxury, waste, and decay. Who can tell how near we are to the fall?

PRIVILEGE AND PROSPERITY HAS RESPONSIBILITY

Amos says, "Therefore," and there is that word again which a few weeks ago we said weighs a ton. It expresses the peril of privilege and prosperity. "*Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed*" (v. 7).

When Israel fell, the first to be led away into captivity were these affluent people that had prostituted their privilege and wealth. And the very banquet halls where they had gorged their bodies, gulped their wine, and sung their silly songs were left silent – the silence of death.

Should our nation fall, the first to be decimated would be the top echelon in government and industry. Those who have enjoyed the greatest privilege would receive the first punishment. This is all the more reason why such should take the initiative in leading our people back to God.

In verses 8 -11, Jehovah took an oath by Himself that it would be so. The ruin described defies description. They said it could not happen to Israel. But it did. We say it cannot happen here. But it can. And it most surely will, if there is not a massive turning to the Lord. He who is infinite in mercy can be terrible in His wrath – when that mercy is scorned.

Now I am not talking about a God who is a fiend. I am talking about the God of love. But it is a holy, righteous love. He is a God who loves good and hates evil. Being holy He cannot ignore sin. Being righteous He cannot let evil go unpunished. Still, He extends His hands in proffered mercy and grace. But if we spurn them, we do but invite His wrath – His abiding opposition to evil.

There is time yet for us to turn from evil to God. As our nation begins preparation for celebrating its bicentennial, let us prepare our hearts that our nation may truly be "one nation under God." Only thus will it be that it will not happen here.

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My Friends, It is happening here, in the year of our Lord, 2007! God's judgment is on America.

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Abortion was legal in the USA almost from her founding. During the 1880's, states began passing laws making abortion illegal. Legal opinions for abortion laws varied from state to state; and abortion was legal in the U.S. from the time earliest settlers arrived. At the time the Constitution was adopted, abortions were advertised and usually performed. Then, in 1973, the year just before the above radio broadcast was made, the Supreme Court Case Row V. Wade determined abortion to be legal in every state in the U.S.

From 1973 through the re-election of President Barak Obama, our people have seen serious crimes against the U.S. Constitution, laws against Patriots and Christians; against laws governing public nudity, porn, firearms, drugs, daily slayings of children.