

Israel the Worst of All

Amos 1 – 6

by Don Falkos

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Israel was surrounded by nations whose behavior God found reprehensible. They committed cruel crimes; they ripped open pregnant women with their swords; they desecrated tombs; they turned against the Israelites and sold them into slavery in Edom. Esau and Jacob were brothers. So their descendants, the peoples of Edom and Israel were also brothers. But the Edomites relentlessly hunted down and killed the Israelites.

And yet, Israel was the worst of all. The wealthy perverted justice, ignored the needs of the poor, sold them into slavery, and denied them legal representation. The people committed sexual perversions and presented offerings to the Lord that had been purchased with stolen money.

Then the Lord sent Amos, a shepherd and fig tree farmer from Judah, who pronounced God's judgment at Bethel in Israel.

I chose you, Israel, from among all the families of the earth. But you have forgotten how to do what is right. You lie and steal; you oppress the poor; you are drunkards. Your sacrifices are meaningless because of your injustice. Your true devotion is to the idols you have made with your own hands.

Come back to me and live. Do what is good and run from evil. Let there be a flood of justice – a torrent of fairness.

Otherwise an enemy will come, plunder all your ill-gotten gain, and drag you away like a fish on a hook. I will send you into exile in a foreign land.