

Judgment Against Israel

Key Verse: “*Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.*”
—Amos 5:24

Selected Scripture:
Amos 5:18-27

IN TODAY’S LESSON THE phrase, “The day of the LORD,” is used multiple times with reference to the impending trouble which was foretold to come upon Israel due to their lack of obedience to Jehovah. The nation of Israel is often used in the Scriptures as a general picture of the world of mankind in their present sinful state. In addition, “The day of the LORD” is used prophetically to speak of the period of time in which this “present evil world” comes to an end, to be supplanted by the Messianic kingdom of righteousness and peace.—Gal. 1:4; Isa. 9:6,7

The demolition of the present world’s evil systems and institutions is accompanied by much trouble. Satan, the ruler of this world, will continue to fight against God and his plans and purposes until he is bound, when he shall “deceive the nations no more.” (Rev. 20:1-3) The Prophet Amos in our lesson describes this day of trouble with these words: “Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him.

Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?”—Amos 5:18-20, *New American Standard Bible*

We note that Amos speaks of this period of trouble using the words “darkness” and “gloom with no brightness.” Such are the conditions which mark the closing scenes of the “nighttime” of sin and sorrow in contrast to the dawn of the morning of joy to follow. This same thought is expressed by the psalmist: “His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.” (Ps. 30:5, *NASB*) God’s anger is only for “a moment,” compared to the “lifetime” of favor to follow. The “night” of darkness and its resulting confusion and uncertainty will give way to a “morning” of light, in which truth and righteousness will be revealed to all. As a result, the “weeping” world of mankind will give a “shout of joy” for this glorious change of administration.

The trouble in the world during the present “day of the LORD” is a natural consequence of the transfer of authority and rulership from the Adversary, Satan, the “prince of this world,” to Christ Jesus, the Messiah, whose “right it is” to reign over the earth. (John 14:30; Ezek. 21:27) The Apostle Paul wrote concerning God’s appointment of the risen Lord to a position of high authority, stating that he “set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.”—Eph. 1:20,21

Daniel prophesied also of a great “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” but that during this time Michael—another name denoting Christ, the Messiah—would “stand up” in authority on behalf of all people to deliver them. (Dan. 12:1) Then, as stated in our Key Verse, perfect judgment and righteousness will “run down as waters, and ... as a mighty stream,” for the eternal benefit of all mankind. ■