

BE READY FOR HIS COMING

When the people of Israel were crying out because of their misery in Egypt, the Lord told Moses, “I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians” (Exodus 3:8). Believing Israelites knew that the Lord would come again to save His people. He gave them that hope by promising them a Saviour. From our First Reading today in Amos, it is clear that many Israelites in his time are looking forward to the Lord’s coming. They call the time when he will come “the day of the LORD” (see also Joel 3:14; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:1–5). They anticipate the dawn of that day because then God will deliver His people from every evil.

But what will the Lord’s coming mean for an impenitent people who have forsaken Him and broken His covenant? Then His coming to His people can only mean judgment, not deliverance. Amos warns, “That day will be darkness, and not light” (verse 18). When they experience any kind of trouble, the Israelites might say, “It looks dark now, but just wait! The day of the Lord will come!” The prophet has a blunt warning for them: if they continue in impenitence, the Lord’s coming will mean trouble worse than any they have ever seen. It will mean “out of the frying pan and into the fire.” Amos says the Israelites are like a man who runs away from a lion (their present troubles) only to meet a more dangerous bear (the day of the Lord), or like someone who thinks that going home (the day of the Lord) means safety at last, but then a snake (his holy judgment) strikes him. For people who have broken a covenant with their God, the “day of the Lord” will be pitch-dark indeed. He is coming to bring down the curtain and turn out the lights on the history of the Northern Kingdom.

We New Testament believers also look forward to the coming day of the Lord. “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him” (Hebrews 9:28). That day, we know, will mean the end of all sorrow and trouble for God’s people. Whenever the Bible speaks to us of that day, it emphasises not only deliverance from evil but also readiness for judgment. “Be always on the watch,” Jesus said (Luke 21:36). Being ready for His coming means daily repentance, faith in Him, and living by constant trust in His promises. “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this [day of the Lord], make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him” (2 Peter 3:14).