

Amos 9:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say,
The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

Analysis

All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword (בְּחֶרֶב יָמוּתוּ כָּל חַטָּאֵי עַמִּי)—the sifting process (v. 9) has a grim conclusion for the unrepentant. The chatta'ei ammi (חַטָּאֵי עַמִּי, sinners of my people) are distinguished from the faithful remnant—they're in covenant community but not of it, professing externally but unregenerate internally. The cherev (חֶרֶב, sword) represents both Assyrian conquest and divine judgment. **Which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us** (הָאֲמָרִים לֹא־תִגִּשׁ וְתִקְדִּים בְּעֵדֵינוּ הָרָעָה)—the verbs nagash (נָגַשׁ, overtake/draw near) and qadam (קָדַם, confront/prevent) describe evil coming toward them. They confidently declare: evil won't reach us.

This is the sin of presumption—false security based on covenant privilege without covenant obedience. They assumed election guaranteed immunity: "We're God's people; He wouldn't judge us." Amos has systematically demolished this illusion (3:2, 5:18-20, 6:1-3, 8:2). Their complacent presumption mirrors Jesus's warning in Matthew 3:9: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Externalism—trusting ritual, heritage, or religious affiliation rather than heart-obedience—marks false professors. The New Testament repeatedly warns: not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" enters the kingdom (Matthew 7:21-23); many churches contain wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30); the sieve of judgment separates false from true (1 John 2:19).

Historical Context

When Assyria besieged Samaria (725-722 BC), many Israelites likely clung to false hope: "God won't let His people be destroyed." Prophets like Amos warned otherwise, but religious leaders and people preferred comforting lies to harsh truth (Amos 7:10-13). After Jerusalem fell to Babylon (586 BC), survivors in Egypt made similar presumptuous claims (Jeremiah 44:15-18), insisting their idolatry brought prosperity. Both northern and southern kingdoms demonstrate the danger of presuming God's patience means approval. Within the New Covenant, the same warning applies: visible church membership doesn't guarantee salvation; genuine faith produces obedience (James 2:14-26).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What modern forms of presumption parallel the Israelites' false confidence that 'evil shall not overtake us'—church membership, family heritage, moral comparison to others?
2. How does the sifting/sieve imagery (v. 9) connected to the sword's judgment (v. 10) show that genuine versus false faith is ultimately revealed in crisis and trial?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	הָאֹמְרִים	עַמִּי	חַטָּאִי	כֹּל	יָמ וְתוֹ	בְּחֶרֶב
	by the sword	shall die	H3605	All the sinners	of my people	which say
	H2719	H4191	H2400	H5971	H3808	
הָרָעָה:	בְּעֵד יָנוּ	וְתִקְדֶּי יָם	תֵּג יֵשׁ			
	shall not overtake	nor prevent	H5704	The evil		
	H5066	H6923	H7451			

Additional Cross-References

Amos 6:3 (Evil): Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

Isaiah 33:14 (Sin): The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

Isaiah 5:19 (Parallel theme): That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!

Isaiah 56:12 (Parallel theme): Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

Psalms 10:11 (Parallel theme): He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

Jeremiah 18:18 (Word): Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (Evil): Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Amos 6:1 (Parallel theme): Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

Malachi 4:1 (Evil): For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Malachi 3:15 (Evil): And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.