

Bring on the Famine!

Have you heard the phrase, “You made your bed, now lie in it”? The phrase involves the consequences associated with life, and of making bad choices and/or decisions.

The making of a bad decision may simply be the result of doing nothing. Solomon dealt extensively with the consequences of such actions. The term “sluggard” is used fourteen times (in the American Standard Version, and “slothful” in the King James), and all by Solomon, saying, “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Prov. 24:30-34). Sluggard (slothful) is defined as “indolent, sluggish.” Indolent is “Disinclined to exert oneself; habitually lazy.”

Another term we want to consider is “famine.” Famine is well defined in Acts 7:11, saying, “Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance:” the lack of sustenance. A famine may be the result of a lack of rain, “Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (Jam. 5:17-18), or it may be the result of making a bad decision, “But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!” (Lk. 15:17): the term “hunger” is the same term elsewhere translated “famine” (Vine's).

The term famine was used by Amos to denote a condition that would come upon the northern tribes of Israel. It was during the reign of Jeroboam II. For approximately 172 years, Israel had been walking in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat (2 Kgs. 15:28).

Amos was dispatched out of Judah to go and speak against Jeroboam II and Israel: his target audience (Amos 7:10). Concerning Israel, Jehovah said through Amos, “I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Jehovah. And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest” (Amos 4:6-7). Five times the Lord said about Israel, “yet have ye not returned unto me.” Therefore, “Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12).

But there would be a greater famine to come upon them: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst.” (Amos 8:11-13).

Recall the words of Hosea, a contemporary of Amos, saying, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children” (Hos. 4:6).

How important is yours and your family's spiritual education? Ross