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A Prophet for Today / Celebration; Blessing and Cursing; Promises / Amos 9:11–15

In Amos 9:11-15, we learn about glorious promises that await the people of God in the future.

Introduction

Eighteen months ago, in September 2021, Marc Lore, former Walmart U.S. eCommerce president, announced a proposed new city that will be called Telosa. Telosa is derived from the Greek word “telos,” which means “purpose.”

Telosa is going to be built to have a target population of 5 million people by 2050. Lore hopes to have the first phase completed by 2030 with 50,000 residents.

Telosa is planned to be a 15-minute city, with workplaces, schools, and basic goods and services being within a 15-minute commute from residents' homes. Vehicles that are powered by fossil fuels will not be permitted within the city, with an emphasis instead being placed upon walkability and the use of scooters, bicycles, and autonomous electric vehicles.

A massive skyscraper, dubbed “Equitism Tower,” is conceived to serve as a “beacon for the city.” The skyscraper's projected features include space for water storage, aeroponic farms, and a photovoltaic roof.

Writing in [Timeout.com](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telosa) in September 2021, Ed Cunningham stated that “the blueprint designs are, depending on your taste, either dazzlingly utopian or unsettlingly dystopian. There’s plenty of innovative architecture on display, alongside futuristic visions of public transport and spaces filled with greenery and nature” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telosa>).

A utopia typically describes an imaginary community or society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities for its members. It was coined by Sir Thomas More for his 1516 book *Utopia*, describing a fictional island society in the New World. The word “utopia” comes from two Greek words: “ou,” which

means “no,” or “not” and “topos,” which means “place.” So, “utopia” means “no place.”

Interestingly, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary has three definitions for “utopia.” They are: “1: an imaginary and indefinitely remote place; 2 *often capitalized*: a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions; and 3: an impractical scheme for social improvement” (Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. [Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003]).

I would like to go out on a limb and say that Telosa will not achieve its utopian purpose. You young people need to keep that in mind because I will likely be long gone before my prediction comes true.

The reason I don’t believe Telosa will achieve its utopian purpose is that the founders are not considering fallen human nature. They are big into diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that are contrary to Biblical revelation. I could not find any reference on their website to any churches or even religious institutions.

Nevertheless, the fact is that people long for a utopian city and utopian living. That will only come to fruition when God’s Messiah Jesus sets up his eternal kingdom here on earth. And the residents of that New Jerusalem will all be perfect and there will be no sin and suffering and fallen human nature.

Today, we are going to conclude our study of Amos in a sermon series that I am calling, “A Prophet for Today.” Amos was sent by God from the kingdom of Judah in the south to the kingdom of Israel in the north. He was sent to warn the Jews in Israel about God’s coming judgment. He preached to Israel for between one and two years. His prophetic ministry was in about 760 BC.

Throughout the book of Amos, we have seen one warning after another about God’s impending judgment against Israel. Less than a generation after Amos’ ministry, in 722 BC, the kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. They were taken into captivity, never to return to their homeland.

But right at the end of his book, Amos shared with his listeners some of the glorious promises that await the people of God in the future. And it sounds a lot like the utopian city people long to live in.

Scripture

Let's read [Amos9:11-15](#):

¹¹ “In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen
and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins
and rebuild it as in the days of old,

¹² that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations who are called by my name,”
declares the LORD who does this.

¹³ “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when the plowman shall overtake the reaper
and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.

¹⁴ I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,
and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.

¹⁵ I will plant them on their land,
and they shall never again be uprooted
out of the land that I have given them,”
says the LORD your God.

Lesson

In [Amos 9:11-15](#), we learn about glorious promises that await the people of God in the future.

Let's use the following outline:

1. God Promises to Establish the Eternal Kingdom (9:11)
2. God Promises to Bless the Nations (9:12)
3. God Promises to End the Curse (9:13)
4. God Promises to Restore the Fortunes (9:14)
5. God Promises to Grant Enduring Security (9:15)

As we come to these final verses in the book of Amos, there have been two major ways in which these verses have been interpreted.

One way to interpret these verses is to see them as applying literally to the nation of Israel. Proponents of this view hold that God is going to return the Jews as a political nation to the land of Israel. God will return the land to the people of Israel. And toward the end of history, just before the return of Jesus, the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Moreover, there will be a major revival of religion in Israel and all the Jews will come to faith in Jesus.

Another way to interpret these verses is to see them as applying to spiritual Israel. Proponents of this view do not believe that God is going to do anything special with geopolitical Israel. A large number of Jews may be converted to Christ. But the temple will not be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

My understanding is that of the second position. I will flesh some of that out as we work our way through the glorious promises that await the people of God in the future.

I. God Promises to Establish the Eternal Kingdom (9:11)

First, God promises to establish the eternal kingdom.

Amos wrote what God said to the people in the northern kingdom of Israel in verse 11, “In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old...”

The expression “in that day” or “on that day” is used five times in Amos (see 2:16; 8:3; 8:9; 8:13; and 9:11). It was a reminder to the people of “the day of the Lord.” The Israelites looked forward to “the day of the Lord.” They thought that it would be a day of blessing, but God meant for it to be a day of judgment.

But the day of judgment would be followed by a day of blessing. And that is what God was saying to the people here in verse 11. God said that on that day he would “raise up the booth of David that is fallen.” Commentators suggest that the “booth of David” represented the dynasty of King David. Remember that Amos ministered in the northern kingdom of Israel, and they had rejected the Davidic kingdom and set up their own king. As far as Amos was concerned, the Davidic kingdom was as good as fallen.

But God was going to raise up the booth of David. The dynasty of David will be continued. It would not be continued through the northern kingdom of Israel. About 40 years after Amos ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel, they were taken into exile by the Assyrians. And they never returned to Israel again.

So, how was God going to raise up the booth of David? In Jesus, the Greater Son of David, the booth of David was going to be raised up and rebuilt. And this is confirmed by James’ speech at the famous Jerusalem Council in [Acts 15](#), where James quoted [Amos 9:11](#) about Jesus and said, “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it” ([Acts 15:16](#)).

The kingdom of God that was started with King David has as its final and eternal king, Jesus Christ. He has established the eternal kingdom of God by his life, death, and resurrection. He is sitting at the right hand of God waiting for God to send him back to earth to establish the new Jerusalem on the new earth forever and ever.

So, first, God promises to establish the eternal kingdom.

II. God Promises to Bless the Nations (9:12)

Second, God promises to bless the nations.

God continued to say through Amos in verse 12, “ ‘... that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,’ declares the Lord who does this.”

You may recall that in chapter 1 of his book, Amos stated that Edom was among the nations that were going to be punished by God (see [Amos 1:11-12](#)). But why single out Edom? Some scholars suggest that it was because Edom (who were descendants of Jacob’s son Esau) were particularly vicious in their opposition to the people of God.

And yet a remnant of Edom will come into citizenship in the eternal kingdom of God. This is also confirmed in James’ speech at the Jerusalem Council, where he said in [Acts 15:17-18](#), “that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.”

But it is not only a remnant from Edom that will be saved. It includes “all the nations who are called by my name,” or as James put it, “all the Gentiles who are called by my name.” Do you see that this is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham in [Genesis 12:3](#), “... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Amos said that God was going to bless all the nations ([Amos 9:12](#)). This was confirmed by James in his speech at the Jerusalem Council ([Acts 15:16-18](#)).

Ever since the ascension of Jesus, the good news of the gospel has gone to all parts of the world. When the Bible uses the term “nations,” it does not mean a nation as we understand it as a political entity with geographical boundaries. The Bible uses the term “nations” to refer to a people group who have a common language and culture. So, for example, just in the United States of America there are many different “people groups.” In our English as a Second Language classes, there are probably half a dozen different people groups.

How many people groups are there in the world? Well, it depends on how you count a people group. It depends on the factors that are common to a people group. So, depending on how one counts a people group, there could be as many as 24,000 people groups in the entire world, of which about 8,000 of these people groups are still unreached with the gospel (see

https://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/how_many_people_groups_are_there).

As I understand the Bible, Jesus will not return again until there are some people who are Christians from each of the 24,000 people groups. That is why missions is so important. Let us do everything we can to get the gospel to the unreached people groups.

So, first, God promises to establish the eternal kingdom. And second, God promises to bless the nations.

III. God Promises to End the Curse (9:13)

Third, God promises to end the curse.

Amos wrote in verse 13, “ ‘Behold, the days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.’ ”

God promises to establish the eternal kingdom. He will do that when he sends Jesus back to the new earth to set up the new Jerusalem. But that will happen only after some from each of the nations has come to faith in Jesus Christ.

When Jesus sets up the eternal kingdom on earth, it will be the end of the curse. Do you remember what God said to Adam after Adam ate the forbidden fruit? God said in [Genesis 3:17-19](#),

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Instead of labor and struggle and toil and hardship, there will be a staggering abundance in the kingdom of God. A note in *The Reformation Study Bible* states, “The culmination of the Lord’s redemptive work through David’s greatest son, the Messiah, is portrayed in terms of endless cycles of fruitfulness that are reminiscent of Eden but surpass it (cf. [Joel 3:18](#))” (R. C. Sproul, ed., *The*

Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version [2015 Edition] [Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015], 1552).

You do know that we will work in the eternal kingdom, right? We will not be sitting on clouds and playing harps all the time. No, we will work and play and rest and worship in the perfect rhythm that God intended for us when he created Adam and Eve. We will find great delight and joy in our work. And everything that we do will have no sense of frustration. As the catechism tells us, “We will glorify God and enjoy him forever.”

So, God promises to establish the eternal kingdom, bless the nations, and end the curse.

IV. God Promises to Restore the Fortunes (9:14)

Fourth, God promises to restore the fortunes.

God continues to say through Amos verse 14, “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.”

This promise is a continuation of the previous one. There will not only be an abundance for the people of God, but they will be able to enjoy the fruit of their labors. They will build dwellings. They will plant vineyards and enjoy the wine from those vineyards. They will make gardens. And they will eat the fruit from the trees that they have planted.

When I was in elementary school my parents lived in a community of about 150 houses. The community was out in the country and there were only 150 houses near the factory where all the parents worked. The homes were nice and the yards were quite large. Most of the people had very nice gardens. Each year, there was a garden competition to see who had the prettiest garden. My parents had a beautiful garden and although they never won first place in the garden competition, they almost always placed second or third in the competition.

I think it was at that time that I disliked gardening. The reason is that my brother and I had to do the weeding. My parents had a beautiful lawn. But somehow the weeds still found places to grow in the lawn. And I had to go around and find every weed and pull it out. I hated it!

In the new kingdom that Jesus is going to establish on earth, I will love gardening because there will be no weeds to pull! Everything I do in the garden will be beautiful and produce fruit that I and others will enjoy.

So, God promises to establish the eternal kingdom, bless the nations, end the curse, and restore the fortunes.

V. God Promises to Grant Enduring Security (9:15)

And fifth, God promises to grant enduring security.

Amos wrote in verse 15, “ ‘I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,’ says the Lord your God.”

God promises lasting safety and security to those who belong to him.

The expression “the land that I have given to them” refers back to God’s covenant with Abraham in [Genesis 12:1](#), “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” Abraham went to the land that God showed him. Eventually, his descendants did settle in the land. But they lost it when they disobeyed God.

The promise here in verse 15 refers to the eternal kingdom and the new Jerusalem (see [Revelation 21:1-22:6](#)). It is the eternal kingdom that will be established by Jesus and in which his subjects will be blessed forever and ever.

So, God promises to establish the eternal kingdom, bless the nations, end the curse, restore the fortunes, and grant enduring security.

Conclusion

Therefore, because of God’s glorious promises to us, let us be sure that we will receive them.

As I mentioned at the outset, I am rather skeptical that Telosa will produce the utopian society that so many are hoping to achieve. However, I am looking forward to the new, eternal kingdom that Jesus is going to establish. That will be the true utopia that beats in every heart of every individual on earth.

How can you be sure that you will receive the blessings of the eternal kingdom?

First, make sure that you belong to Christ. Only those who are in Christ will enjoy the benefits of the eternal kingdom. You enter the kingdom by turning to Jesus in faith and repentance. Believe that Jesus is the one who paid the penalty for all your sins. And then turn from your sins and walk in obedience to Jesus.

And second, it seems to me that the better you know Jesus now, the more you will enjoy the blessings of the kingdom in the future. Grow in Jesus. Spend time in his word. Talk to Jesus in prayer. Get to know him. So that one day when you meet Jesus, it will be more like meeting a familiar friend than meeting a distant relative. Amen.