

# Telling the truth

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ogy we could say that people don't want honest judges or witnesses (compare Proverbs 24:23-25; Isaiah 29:12).

Apparently it was now time to stop being gentle with the people and give the God's warning in more outspoken ways.

2. What was so important about the city gates, and what was happening to there in Israel at that time? The city gates were the place where many business and legal proceedings took place. Judges met to arbitrate for the people at the city gates. Examples are recorded in Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Ruth 4:1-11. Unfortunately, the city gates were the place where the most injustices in Israel had become most common, for the judges had become corrupt. No one dared to stand up for what is right since the fabric of justice was so thoroughly destroyed. Those who dared to stand up for righteousness were hated and were

even put in dangerous situations. This indicates the depth of evil in Israel. "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5:10). Amos was not a very popular person in Israel.

3. What was one of the most common serious injustices being committed then? (v. 11)

The Lord commands all to take care of the poor (Deut 15:7-8). The people were not following this commandment. The rights of the poor were exploited by the rich. The rights of the poor were being trampled on, especially through the levying of excessive taxes. Some of which were the grain taxes, which reduced their already meager food supply. It is likely that the poor leased land from those who were rich, and the percentage that the poor had to give were exorbitant. Thus, the poor were denied the opportunities to better themselves, and their role was reduced to

increasing the wealth of those who were already wealthy.

All this allowed the rich to build homes of hewn stones instead of the usual sun-dried bricks. But God said they were not going to live in and enjoy their fancy homes and pleasant vineyards. Justice demanded that He bring punishment upon them. Amos warned that it was coming. The ancient curse of Deuteronomy 28:30 is about to be fulfilled!

4. What were the leaders doing about the situation? (v. 12-13)

The leaders were promoting injustice in Israel. The judges were accepting bribes from the rich. The rich were allowed to have their way and increase their wealth at the expense of the poor. Thus, the judges were denying justice to poor people. The leaders punished those who spoke out against the injustice. The leaders had no concern for obeying God's commandments.

# Farrakhan speaks to Catholics

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
CHICAGO—Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan on Friday told a predominantly black Catholic church on the city's South Side that people who believe in God need not be divided, delivering a message of religious unity that has marked his recent addresses.

Speaking with a strong voice and gesturing firmly from the pulpit as he addressed a crowd of about 1,100 at St. Sabina Catholic Church, Farrakhan looked and sounded little like a man recovering from illness.

"I feel very honored to stand in this place," he said. "I feel very honored by the media being struck by my being in a Catholic church with a white pastor."

St. Sabina's Rev. Michael L. Pfeiffer told his predominantly black congregation that Farrakhan's presence at the church is "only strange to people who don't know Minister Louis Farrakhan."

"He's spoken here many times and St. Sabina is a

home for Louis Farrakhan," said Pfeiffer, who called Farrakhan "a gift from God to a sick, sick world."

Farrakhan, who ceded leadership of the Nation of Islam last year to an executive board while recovering from complications of prostate cancer, slowly has been making his way back

into the public eye. The 74-year-old made what he called his final public address Feb. 25, when he delivered a two-hour speech to tens of thousands in Detroit in observance of the Nation of Islam's annual Saviour's Day.

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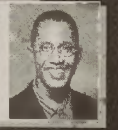
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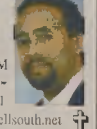
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