

AMOS: GOD'S URGENT CALL TO REPENT
IX: God's Punishment Of Proud Self-Indulgence
(Amos 6:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. When God needed a messenger to the Kingdom of Israel as it was at the height of its rebellion against Him, the Lord sent Amos, a layman from Judah, to go north to Israel to voice severe judgment against that nation.
- B. Our attitudes are very important to God, for they affect what we do, and one attitude that is very evil in God's estimation is proud self-indulgence. Israel was guilty of this sin, and we view God's critique of it in Amos 6:1-14 for our insight, application, and edification (as follows):

II. God's Punishment Of Proud Self-Indulgence, Amos 6:1-14.

- A. The Hebrew word rendered "at ease" in Amos 6:1a is *sha'anan*, "at ease," and it is used here of a careless, excessive, arrogant attitude of proud self-indulgence. (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 983)
- B. Since not only Israel but also Judah was guilty of this vice, God pronounced a "Woe" to those who were self-indulgent in Zion of Judah and in Samaria of Israel, Amos 6:1a; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1442.
- C. However, the rest of Amos chapter six addresses this sin only in Israel (as follows), Amos 6:1b-14:
 - 1. The leaders of Israel viewed themselves as great men of a great nation, militarily and economically strong with all of their subjects looking to them for guidance and governing of the nation's affairs, Amos 6:1b.
 - 2. God directed these proud, self-indulgent leaders to visit cities that once considered themselves great and learn from their fall – places like the city-states of Calneh and Hamath in northern Aram and Gath in Philistia, Amos 6:2a. The Lord then asked Israel's leaders if their nation was any more capable of defending themselves from the defeat that these other great cities suffered, Amos 6:2b.
 - 3. Instead of humbly realizing their need for God, Israel's leaders "scornfully dismissed any thought of coming calamity" while their "sinful actions" led them to an "approaching reign of terror," what refers to the latter years of Israel's history shortly before its fall to Assyria, Amos 6:3; *Ibid.*, p. 1443.
 - 4. Israel's leaders paid no attention to the warnings of God's prophets to repent, but "instead gave themselves to decadent hedonism," *Ibid.* They "stretched" themselves (*sarah*), what implies "a sprawled stupor of satiation and drunkenness, with arms and legs hanging over the side" of extravagant couches, they ate gourmet foods of choice lamb and fattened calves and considered themselves great musicians like David as they improvised music at their parties, drinking wine in bowls and anointing themselves with expensive ointments, Amos 6:4-6a; *Ibid.* In all this, they did not grieve over their nation's coming fall, Amos 6:6b.
 - 5. In judgment, these men would be the first to go into exile, ending their proud self-sufficiency, Amos 6:7.
 - 6. God despised Israel's boastings of her cities and palaces, so He would deliver up the capital of Samaria and all its contents to destruction, Amos 6:8; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Amos 6:8. "Many not killed in battle would die from resulting pestilences, and those who would bury the bodies would fear to mention the name of the Lord, lest additional judgment fall on them," *Ibid.*, fn. to Amos 6:9-10.
 - 7. The conquering invader would then destroy the dwellings of both the rich and the poor, leaving the once proud capital of Israel's complacent leaders a mere field of debris, Amos 6:11.
 - 8. God illustrated the terrible actions of Israel's leaders with two grotesque pictures, that of horses running on rocky crags and a plowman plowing perpendicular cliffs with oxen: in the same way, these leaders had hideously turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness, Amos 6:12 NIV.
 - 9. Israel's leaders considered themselves immune to disaster (Amos 6:13a) since under Jeroboam II they had experienced many military victories and recovered all their formerly seized lands east of the Jordan River, *Ibid.*, p. 1443-1444. However, in mentioning Israel's recovery of the retrieved city of Lo Debar, Amos intentionally mispronounced it as "Lo Dabar," meaning "nothing," and he stressed another retrieved city of "Karnaim," meaning "horns," a symbol of the "strength" of a bull, to imply that they were rejoicing over "nothing" in trusting in their own strength instead of relying on the Lord, Amos 6:13b; *Ibid.*, p. 1444.
 - 10. In the end, God would stir up a strong Gentile nation to oppress Israel from its northern frontier in Lebo Hamath to its southern border of the Arabah down near the Dead Sea, Amos 6:14; *Ibid.*

Lesson: *For the proud self-indulgence of the nation as exemplified in its leaders, Israel was doomed to face God's severe punishment, and her leaders to be the first in humiliation to go into captivity.*

Application: *May we avoid proud self-indulgence and humbly rely on the Lord with composed, quiet lifestyles.*