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Rebuked For Selfishness

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
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or Roget's Thesaurus - **June 21, 2015**

Amos 6:4-8, 11-14

Introduction: This chapter continues the further elaboration of the **prophetic doom** pronounced upon Israel at the conclusion of Amos 2. First, he uttered the **second WOE** over the **careless** and **indulgent leaders** of the nation, sunk in their raveling's and indifference (Amos 6:1-6). For them, he pronounced their destruction and the overthrow of their nation (Amos 6:7-11), emphasizing that they had acted perversely, **trusting in** their **own power** (Amos 6:12-14). The blunt reiteration of their doom in Amos 6:14 concludes this section of the prophecy.

In the first sub-section of the chapter (Amos 6:1-6), "The link word is first." They considered themselves **first** among the nations (Amos 6:1); they only used the finest oils (literally, first) (Amos 6:6); and then in the first line of the second section is revealed the fact that they shall also be first into captivity (Amos 6:7). The whole chapter is pointed squarely at the **over-confidence** and **conceit** of the nation, as exhibited in its **evil leaders**. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studydrive.org/com/bcc/)

Amos 6:1, *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!*

NOTE: This is the **second great woe**, the first being in Amos 5:18, where it is written. Woe unto you that desire the day of Jehovah! Zion here is the poetic name of Jerusalem, and some of the commentators would like to get it out of the text on the basis that, It would seem out of keeping with his habit of concentration upon the immediate situation for him; but such a view ignores one of the outstanding features of Amos, i.e., the fact that **Judah** is by no means left out of these prophecies of destruction, as in Amos 2:4,5; 3:1; 5:1,5, etc. To be sure Amos was sent particularly to the **Northern Kingdom**; but **Judah** is always in the back of his mind; for it is not the Northern Kingdom only, but, The whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt (Amos 3:1) which is under the **judgment** of God for **their sins**. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studydrive.org/com/bcc/)

Amos 6:2-4, *Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the **Philistines**: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? Ye that put far away the **evil day**, and cause the seat of violence to come near; That lie upon **beds of ivory**, and stretch themselves upon their **couches**, and eat the **lambs** out of the flock, and the **calves** out of the midst of the stall...*

NOTE: Military defeat and the near-total destruction of Israel's reservoir of fighting men are sternly indicated by this. This portion of Amos' **lament** continues in the

stylized 3 + 2 metre; and, "Some scholars have imagined that Amos actually put on the garb of a professional mourner and sang this song in Samaria and Bethel." **Seek ye me...** This does not mean, 'inquire about,' or 'search for' something or someone lost or inaccessible. When Yahweh is the object, the meaning is, '**turn to Yahweh,**' and '**hold to Yahweh**' as a way of life. Many have noted that this passage does not in any sense mean that the Lord is hiding from Israel, or even that he is not available to them. It must be understood as meaning, to seek out and observe God's commandments. W. R. Harper noted the audience-response type of thing which we mentioned in the chapter introduction; these words, suggest at once the question, 'Are we not zealously engaged in the worship of Yahweh? Why are we then to suffer?' Very well, Amos will respond to such a question, whether or not it was actually raised by any of his hearers. The answer is simple, and simply devastating: **Their religion is false!** We deplore the apparent **blindness** of so many who do not see in Amos' prophecy anything except the social injustice and oppression of the poor. Of course, those aspects of Israel's sins are courageously denounced in Amos, but no more so than are condemned the vanities of their religious system. To deny that God was also gravely concerned about that is to miss the principal relevance of this prophecy for modern man. Thorogood accurately observed the intention of this section of Amos when he declared that: The chief theme in Amos 5 and Amos 6 is the **contrast between true religion** and **false religion**. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Amos 6:5, That **chant** to the sound of the **viol (psaltery)**, and **invent** to themselves instruments of musick, like David...

NOTE: The people no doubt supposed that their frequenting the shrines at such places as Bethel, Beersheba and Gilgal would enable them to know God; but in this they were totally wrong. "God can only be sought and found through his revelation." It was impossible to find God at such places.

"Those were centers of **idolatry, false teaching, false worship**; they would find there only ruin, destruction and captivity, for that is what God had planned for those places."

The high places mentioned in this verse had never been a proper place for seeking God; and what we have here is the total repudiation (REJECTION) of an entire system of **false religion**. Many commentators seem to be unaware of this. Some seem to have forgotten that the golden calf-idols installed by Jeroboam were the principal features of the so-called worship at **Bethel**; and that all of the shrines here mentioned were notorious for the debaucheries and immoralities that were carried on there.

Gilgal shall go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to naught... The scholars tell us that there is a play upon the words Gilgal and Bethel in the **Hebrew text**, incapable of being translated into English; but many approximations of it have been given. One of the most interesting is that of Wellhansen, as cited by Hammershaimb: Gilgal will go to the gallows, and Bethel will become the devil's.

Beersheba... It is a little surprising to find this place mentioned as one of the SHRINES frequented by the Israelites, since it was in the extreme southern part of Judah and quite a long distance from the Northern Kingdom. Barnes observed that: "**Jeroboam I** pretended that it was too much for Israel to go up to **Jerusalem**; and yet Israel thought it not too much to go to the extremest point of Judah toward Idumaea, perhaps **four times as far south** of Jerusalem, as Jerusalem lay from Bethel!" (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Amos 6:6, That drink **wine** in **bowls**, and **anoint themselves** with the **chief ointments**: but they are not grieved for the **affliction** of Joseph.

NOTE: "One view is that their offence consists in not being satisfied with drinking wine

in small quantities, but drinking it from the **bowl**; but the meaning is certainly that they have committed an offence by using sacrificial bowls, which it was not permissible to drink from."

"The Hebrew word for "**bowl**" in this place actually means "**the great bowl**" and is mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament only in connection with ritual procedures." The sin which Amos condemned here is therefore a **religious violation**, and not merely excessive drinking, further pointing up the truth that this whole passage deals primarily with perversion of God's worship, the particular thing here, being desecration of holy vessels. **And anoint themselves with the chief oils...** Hammershaimb assures us that the word for chief oils (or FIRST OILS) could also be taken with the meaning of **firstfruits**; their sin would then be that they have anointed themselves with the firstfruits which **belong to God**. Thus, it is seen that the religious factor is the dominating thought throughout these verses. Understanding the transgression in this light certainly clears up the problem with the other view, which would make it appear that Almighty God was concerned about the size of a wine-guzzler's goblet, bottle, or bowl. It was not drinking, as such, which was condemned here, but their drinking from bowls, evidently the **consecrated vessels** which had been **dedicated to God**.

An additional facet of the sin mentioned in these verses with regard to their anointing themselves with the "**first**" oils is seen in the fact that all anointing was suspended in time of **mourning** (1 Samuel 14:2); and, the sad state of Israel's **rebellion against God** should have led to widespread **mourning** and **prayer**, instead of the drinking and anointing evident here. That Amos probably had this in mind also, is manifest in the next clause which mentions "the affliction of Joseph." (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Thought 1. Now, let's look forward to what the Spirit of God said about the "Last days."

2 Timothy 3:1-7, This know also, that in the last days **perilous (dangerous)** times shall come. For men shall be **lovers** of their **own selves**, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, **disobedient** to parents, unthankful, unholy, **Without natural affection**, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are GOOD, Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers** of **pleasures** more than **lovers** of **God**; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, **Ever learning**, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Amos 6:7, Therefore now shall they **go captive** with the **first** that **go captive**, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

NOTE: As already indicated in this prophecy, and as will appear also in later passages, the whole system of justice had failed in Israel, even the judiciary being **corrupted**, leaving the poor and the humble with no protection whatever against the avarice and **oppression** of heartless ruling classes. **Justice to wormwood...** Wormwood was the name of a plant having an exceedingly BITTER TASTE; and this is a very effective figure for the perversion of justice. Any honest man seeking redress of his wrongs in the Israel of that day would have found justice turned into a very bitter pill for him.

Righteousness is represented as fallen and prostrate on the ground with no one to raise it up and support it. Those were horrible times indeed; and it seems incredible that the very people responsible for such gross wickedness should have fancied themselves to be the favored children of God! **How blind** is the **worshipper** of **false gods**! (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, But if our **gospel** be **hid** (veil), it is **hid** (veil) to them that are lost: In whom the **god** of this world hath **blinded** the MINDS of them which **believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should **shine** unto them.

NOTE: In John 12:31, he (*Satan*) is called "the prince of this world." In Eph. 2:2, he is called "the prince of the power of the air." And in Eph. 6:1,2, the same bad influence is referred to under the names of "principalities and powers," "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and "spiritual wickedness in high places." The name "**god**" is here given to him, not because he has any divine attributes, but because he actually has the homage (reverence) of the men of **this world** as their **god**, as the being who is really **worshipped**, or who has the affections of their hearts (MINDS) in the same way as it is given to **idols**.

(Source: Barnes' Notes on the New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bnn/)

Amos 6:8, The Lord GOD hath **SWORN** by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I **abhor** the **excellency** (**arrogancy, pride**) of Jacob, and **HATE** his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

NOTE: Because he could swear by no greater, (Hebrews 6:13); which shows the importance and certainty of the thing sworn to, and is as follows: **saith the Lord, the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob**; or, "the **PRIDE** of Jacob"; of Israel, of the ten tribes, remarkable for their pride; hence called the crown of pride, (Isaiah 28:3); it may include all that was glorious, valuable, and excellent among them, of which they were **proud**; their kingdom, riches, wealth, and strength, their fortified cities and towns: if Judah is comprehended in this, it may regard the temple, which was their excellency, and in which they gloried. So the Targum paraphrases it, "the house of the sanctuary of the house of Jacob;" and in like manner Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; **and hate his palaces**; the palaces of the king and nobles, and great men, which should fall into the enemy's hand, and be plundered and destroyed; which is meant by the Lord's abhorrence and hatred of them, this being an evidence of it; **therefore will I deliver up the city, with all that is therein**; or, "with its fulness"; with all its inhabitants and riches; according to Jarchi, the city of Jerusalem is meant; though rather the city of Samaria, unless both are intended, city for cities; since the chief men both of Israel and Judah seem to be addressed, (Amos 6:1). (Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/)

Proverbs 6:16-19, These **six** things doth the LORD **HATE**: yea, **seven** are an abomination unto him: A **proud look**, a **lying** tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh **lies**, and he that **soweth discord** among brethren.

Thought 1. As we look at the different things in the verses of this proverb, we must never forget that God **LOVES ALL people**, even his enemies, as well as ours. So, it's their **ACTIONS** he hates, not the people. Remember, a gauge to us in growing up to HIS maturity is being able to **LOVE** our enemies **LIKE** God our Father **LOVES** them, and **LIKE** our Lord Jesus.

Matthew 5:43-48, Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt **LOVE** thy neighbour, and **HATE** thine **enemy**. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, **DO** good to them that **HATE** you, and **PRAY** for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh

his sun to rise on the evil and on the **good**, and sendeth rain (*showers for growth of the plants, etc.*) on the JUST and on the UNJUST. For if ye LOVE them which LOVE you, **what REWARD** have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore **perfect (of full age)**, even AS your Father which is in heaven is **perfect**.

Amos 6:9-11, *And it shall come to pass, if there remain **ten men in one house**, that they shall die. And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is by the sides of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the **name** of the LORD. For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will **smite (PUNISH)** the great house with **breaches (ruin)**, and the little house with **clefts (fissure [crack])**.*

NOTE: ALL shall be cut off by the sword, or by captivity, or by famine. **Verse 10.** **A man's uncle shall take him up** Bp. Newcome says, this obscure verse seems to describe the effects of famine and pestilence during the siege of Samaria. The carcass shall be burnt, and the bones removed with no ceremony of funeral rites, and without the assistance of the nearest kinsman. Solitude shall reign in the house; and if one is left, he must be silent, (see Amos 8:3,) and retired, lest he be **plundered** of his scanty provision! *Burning the body*, and then collecting the *ashes*, and putting them into an urn, was deemed the most honourable mode of burial. **Verse 11. He will smote the great house with breaches** The great and small shall equally SUFFER; no distinction shall be made; RICH and POOR shall fall together; death has received his commission, and he will spare none. *Horace* has a sentiment precisely like this, *Carm. Lib. i., Od. iv., v. 13. Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum TABERNAS, Regumque TURRES.* With equal pace **impartial fate** Knocks at the **palace** as the **cottage** gate. But this may refer particularly to the houses of the poor in Eastern countries; their **mud walls** being frequently full of **clefts**; the earth of which they are built seldom adhering together because of its *sandiness*.
(Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/*)

Thought 1. I'm reminded of Jesus' words to Nicodemus where he said "whosoever." The physical status of the person has no bearing on a person receiving salvation or remaining in condemnation. The words "world" and "HE" speak of the rich and poor.

John 3:14-18, And **AS** Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That **WHOSOEVER believeth** in him should not perish, but have **eternal life**. For God so loved the WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **WHOSOEVER believeth** in him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**. For God sent not his Son into the world to **condemn** the **world**; but that the world through him might be saved. **HE** that believeth on him is not condemned: but **HE** that **believeth not** is **condemned already**, Because **HE** hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Amos 6:12, *Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned **judgment (JUSTICE)** into **gall**, and the fruit of righteousness into **hemlock**:*

NOTE: The meaning of this verse was thus summarized by Schultz: "There is a spiritual and moral order in the universe that is just as impossible to ignore as the **natural order**. It is as senseless to **pervert justice** as it is to expect **horses** to run on the rocks, or for oxen to plow on rock." Translators have difficulty with this verse, some of them rendering it "horses to run up a cliff... or plow in the sea with oxen"; but such renditions, even if allowed, would not change the essential meaning of the passage.

"It is easier to change the course of nature, or the use of things of nature, than the course of God's providence or the laws of his **just** retribution." As Keil said, "These verses show the **moral perversity** of the unrighteous conduct of the **wicked**." (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Amos 6:13, *Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us **horns (power)** by OUR own strength?*

NOTE: ...rejoice in a thing of nought In their wealth and riches, which are things that are not, because of the uncertainty of them; and, in comparison of true riches, have no solidity and substance in them, (Proverbs 23:5) ; or in **any** of the **things of this world**, the lusts of it, the honours of it, human wisdom or strength; all are things of nought, of no worth, give no satisfaction, and are of no continuance, and not to be gloried in, (Jer. 9:23); or in their **idols**, for an **idol** is **nothing** in the world, (1Cor. 8:4); and yet they rejoiced in them, (Acts 7:41)

...taken to us horns by our own strength? by which we have pushed our enemies, got victory over them, and **obtained power**, dominion, and **authority**; all which horns are an emblem of. So Sanchoniatho says, **Astarte** put upon her own head a bull's head, as an ensign of royalty, or a mark of sovereignty; by which, as Bishop Cumberland thinks, is plainly meant the bull's horns, since it is certain that a horn, in the eastern languages, is an emblem or expression noting **royal power**, as in (1 Sam. 2:10) ; and in other places; see (Daniel 7:24) ; thus the kings of Egypt wore horns, as Diodorus relates; and perhaps for the same reason the Egyptians adorned Isis with horns.

(Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/)

Amos 6:14, *But, behold, I will **raise up (wake up, stir up)** against you a **nation**, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall **afflict you** from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness.*

NOTE: Both the Sacred Scriptures and the testimony of the archeologist testify to the overwhelming **destruction** of **Israel** within some **thirty years** after Amos wrote this prophecy.

"The kingdom of **Israel** was **destroyed** in the **year 722** by **Sargon** in the first month of his reign when Samaria was taken after a siege which was begun by his predecessor, **Shalmanezar IV**, and had lasted **three years**."

Excavations made about **1843** revealed the old palace of **Sargon II** and the so-called "Display Inscription" at Khorsabad, in which Sargon II described the **humiliation** of **Samaria** in his own words:

"I besieged and **captured Samaria**, carrying off **27,290** of the **people** who dwelt therein. Fifty chariots I gathered from among them. I caused others to take their portion (of the deported inhabitants). I set my officers over them and imposed upon them the tribute of the former king."

From the entrance of Hamath, unto the brook of Arabah... This expression stands for the northern boundary of the kingdom and the southern boundary of Canaan, thus including the southern kingdom of **Judah** also, a recurring theme in Amos.

"Hamath is the pass between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, the northern limit of Israelite territory. The Arabah is the deep valley in which the Dead Sea lies." The most extended borders of Jewish dominion in the days of **Solomon** were encompassed in these limits; and, although they had for a brief season been restored under **Jeroboam II**, it was but for a little time. **All** was **swept away** by the **Assyrian invasion**, except that Jerusalem and the southern kingdom remained about 150 years until they were carried away to **Babylon**. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)