

Comments on Amos 6

The Lord addresses their attitude of taking consolation in believing they are the most powerful and prosperous nation around. He will destroy them by bringing in a nation that is more powerful.

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! ² 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? ³ Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

v1-3 The Lord warns the wicked among Israel to not trust in the arm of flesh power they are presently enjoying (v. 1). Look at the nations around you, are you really any better than them (v. 2)? You think you are putting off the day of calamity by relying on the physical security that surrounds you, but you are in fact bringing the violence and destruction upon you faster because of your behavior (v. 3).

v1 "which are named chief of the nations", at this point in history, under king Jeroboam II, the nation of Israel is politically, economically and militarily powerful and chief among it's neighbors. However, that is going to come to an end.

⁴ 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; ⁵ That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; ⁶ That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. ⁷ Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

v4-7 The wealthy are comfortable, but they ignore the poor around them (v. 4-6). They will be taken captive, never to eat at a sprawling banquet again (v. 7).

⁸ The Lord God hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

⁹ And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

¹² Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock: ¹³ Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? ¹⁴ But, behold, I will raise 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.

v8-14 The Lord is disgusted with them, and their reliance on material wealth and worldly success, so He will take it away from them (v. 8). The destruction will be so great, there will not be enough people in any one house to bury their dead (v. 9), and they will fear the Lord's anger (v. 10) when He comes to smash house, great and small, into rubble and splinters (v. 11). Do you do things that are obviously non-sensical, perverting justice and righteousness (v. 12)? You have by rejoicing over their perceived military might (v. 13). The result is the Lord will bring a much more powerful nation to destroy them, to the full extent of their borders (v. 14).

v13 The KJV is an overly literal translation that fails to convey the intention of the text. The JPS rendering follows:

[Ah,] those who are so happy about Lo-dabar,
Who exult, "By our might
We have captured Karnaim"!

And the footnote explains:

Two towns east of the Jordan recovered for Israel by Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14.25). For Lo-dabar, cf. 2 Sam. 9.4, 5; 17.27; for Karnaim, cf. Gen. 14.5.

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