

# Amos 6:1-14

## Amos 6:1-7

**6:1 – “Woe to those who are at ease in Zion,  
and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria,  
the notable men of the first of the nations,  
to whom the house of Israel comes!”**

1. Zion is Jerusalem the capital of Judah. Mountain of Samaria is Samaria the capital of Northern Israel.
2. Amos announces the extreme irony.
  - a. Those who are at ease and feel secure are the ones who will face woe.
  - b. The leaders (“notable men”, the “first of the nations”, “to whom Israel comes”) will not be notable, first or sought out. They will have woe.
3. This chapter is addressing Israel’s confidence in their own strength:
  - a. Military strength
  - b. National strength
  - c. Financial strength
4. What could go wrong?

**6:2-3 – “Pass over to Calneh, and see,  
and from there go to Hamath the great;  
then go down to Gath of the Philistines.**

**Are you better than these kingdoms?**

**Or is their territory greater than your territory,**

**O you who put far away the day of disaster  
and bring near the seat of violence?”**

1. Amos provides three examples (see map)
  - a. Calneh, a city in the far north in the land of Assyria conquered by the current king Jeroboam II
  - b. Hamath, a city north of Israel in the land of Aram conquered by Jeroboam II
  - c. Gath, a city to the south on the coast in the land of the Philistines
2. All three of these cities had been subdued:
  - a. Calneh was suffering the collapse of Assyria
  - b. Hamath and the nation of Aram had been contained by Israel
  - c. Gath had been taken by Judah
  - d. Israel? When the time was right would not be able to stand against the LORD.
    - i. Israel does not have a better nation (“kingdom”)
    - ii. Israel does not have better location or resources (“territory”)
3. Israel is denying the future day of judgment they are being warned about. They are instead continuing a pursuit of a more violent culture of oppression for temporal gains.

**6:4-6 – “Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory  
and stretch themselves out on their couches,  
and eat lambs from the flock  
and calves from the midst of the stall,**

**who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp  
and like David invent for themselves instruments of music,  
who drink wine in bowls  
and anoint themselves with the finest oils,  
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!”**

1. Those who are secure and at ease are pursuing violence in their culture to produce for themselves more temporal luxuries with plenty of time to enjoy and pursue these things:
  - a. Beds of ivory
  - b. Couches
  - c. Fresh meat from the field
  - d. Fresh meat from the stall
  - e. Music merely for entertainment
  - f. Creative ways of producing sounds (better sound systems and more instruments)
  - g. Wine
  - h. Oils
  - i. Ignore problems and block out warning of ruin
2. The collapse of “Joseph” (northern Israel) is obviously a real problem, but Israel is numbing themselves with comfort and pleasure telling themselves they are secure because of their military, their nation and their wealth

**6:7 – “Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile,  
and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away.”**

1. The first to go into exile will be the most comfortable, the wealthiest, the most secure, and the notable leaders the people look to.
2. With these people gone this revelry listed above will suddenly end.

**Amos 6:8-11**

**6:8 and 6:11 – “The Lord God has sworn by himself, declares the Lord, the God of hosts:  
“I abhor the pride of Jacob  
and hate his strongholds,  
and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it.” . . .**

**. . . “For behold, the Lord commands,  
and the great house shall be struck down into fragments,  
and the little house into bits.”**

1. Verse 6:8 and 6:11 are a continuation of a thought that is interrupted by 6:9-10 which provides a window of insight into the people of Israel’s lack of understanding and poor theology.
2. 6:8 is a solemn divine oath sworn by the LORD he hates/abhors:
  - a. The pride of these people (Jacob = Israel, the northern kingdom)
  - b. The strongholds (the military and their fortresses) that these people trust in place of trusting and obeying him.
  - c. Result: Samaria and everything in it will be lost to the invaders
3. 6:11 is the command the LORD has made concerning northern Israel:
  - a. The great house will be struck into fragments
  - b. The little house will be struck into bits

**6:9-10 – “And if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. And when one's relative, the one who anoints him for burial, shall take him up to bring the bones out of the house, and shall say to him who is in the innermost parts of the house,**

**“Is there still anyone with you?”**

**he shall say,**

**“No”;**

**and he shall say,**

**“Silence! We must not mention the name of the LORD.”**

1. This situation likely describes the survivors left in Samaria and Israel after the deportation and after the war.
2. The bare minimum of men, 10, will be left. It is the smallest military unit. It is the least amount needed to form an Israelite worship center. They are in one house because the other houses are in broken fragments and bits. The 10 remaining men are in the only standing house.
3. The conversation is not about the same 10 men and is not in the same one house. It is about the nearest relative coming to bury a lone surviving man. The significance is in their fear and misunderstanding of what kind of judgment just took place.
  - a. The few survivors know it was the LORD who destroyed them
  - b. Yahweh is their foe, not their God.
  - c. The survivors want nothing to do with the LORD and fear the mention of his name will cause him to return.
  - d. The survivors will fear the LORD will finish the curse of Deuteronomy and Leviticus where it says he will chase them into exile and hunt down the last one of them to destroy them.

### **Amos 6:12-14**

**6:12 – “Do horses run on rocks?**

**Does one plow there with oxen?**

**But you have turned justice into poison**

**and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood”**

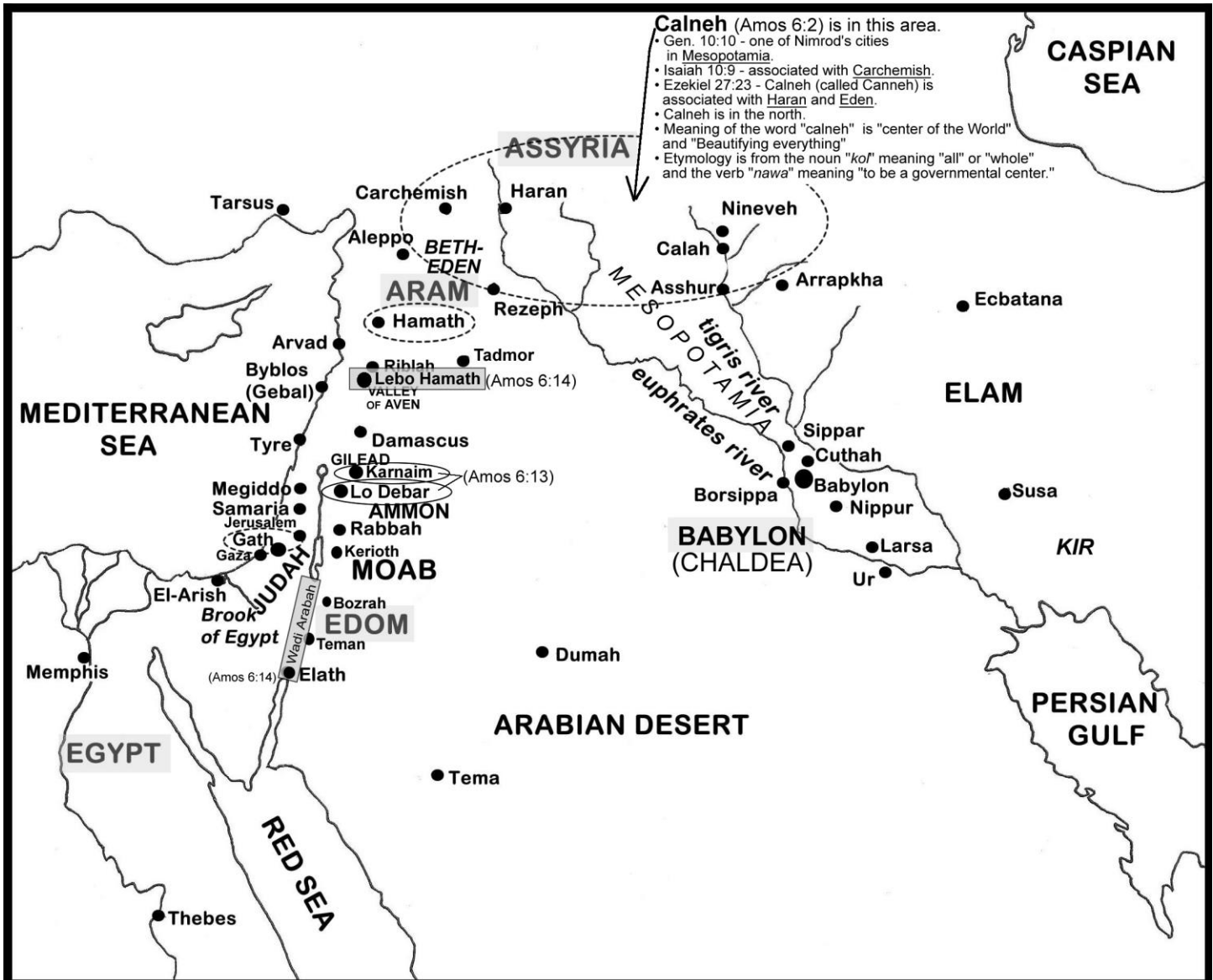
1. The answer to the rhetorical questions about horses on rocks and oxen plowing rocks is “NO.”
2. Yet Israel has done something as ridiculous and as fruitless:
  - a. Justice which should be a benefit has become a form of social poison (unjust)
  - b. Righteousness which should be a fruit has become uneatable (unrighteousness)

**6:13 – “you who rejoice in Lo-debar,  
who say, “Have we not by our own strength  
captured Karnaim for ourselves?”**

1. Lo-debar and Karnaim are in the land of Gilead.
2. Israel and Aram fought over these cities and their trade routes
3. Jeroboam II had secured the land of Gilead and these were Israelite trading centers at this time which added to Israel’s wealth.
4. This contemporary fact was a source of pride, security and confidence for Israel who claimed their nation and their military had secured these cities for Israel.

**6:14 – “For behold, I will raise up against you a nation,  
O house of Israel,” declares the Lord, the God of hosts;  
“and they shall oppress you from Lebo-hamath  
to the Brook of the Arabah.”**

1. The nation that will be raised up is Assyria in 745 BC with the ascension of Tiglath-Pileser III.
2. Lebo-hamath (see map) is the furthest north Israel had advanced into Aramean territory under Jeroboam II.
3. Wadi of Arabah (see map) is the wadi (dry river bed) that connects the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba (northeast extension of Red Sea)



- In Amos' day (762 BC) and in the later years of Jeroboam II (765-753) Assyria, Egypt, Aram, Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon were powerless militarily with no ability to advance any productive diplomacy. Israel stood alone as the military power and the master of the trade routes.
- By 745 Tiglath-pileser III would begin rebuilding Assyria and would soon begin interfering with Israel as a nation and as a trade power.
- By 723 BC Samaria would be under Assyrian siege.
- By 721/720 BC Samaria and northern Israel would be ruined and exiled to never rise again.