

God Hates the Proud at Heart

A Sermon on Amos 6

by
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1. Introduction

2. The Inflated Sense of Self-Confidence (vv. 1-3).

a. Woe to the rulers recklessly at ease in Zion and the mountains of Samaria (v. 1).

i. The prophet opens up this section with another oracle of judgment upon the rulers of Israel.

1. Notice that he yet again pronounces woe upon them, which is a word designed to cut them to the heart.

2. Yet this woe holds a particular focus, and that's these people Amos identifies as those who are carefree in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria.

a. Zion refers to Jerusalem, which is the capitol city of the Southern Kingdom of Israel. Samaria refers to the capitol city of the Northern Kingdom.

b. He then tells us these people are the dignitaries of the foremost of nations, meaning Israel, to whom the house of Israel comes.

ii. This ruling class is made up of the "carefree" and those "who feel secure."

1. While these are two different terms in the Hebrew, they both speak to a sense of arrogance and entitlement these rulers have.

a. The "carefree" people of Jerusalem go about their lives with a careless presumption of peace.

- b. The “secure” people of Samaria go about their lives with a careless presumption of confidence and hope in their defenses.
 - 2. In reality, all of Israel rulers are guilty of falling into the same sin of pride.
 - a. It may look slightly different from region to region, but they both operate out of presumption.
 - b. They presume that because of who they are and where they live, they have peace, stability, and security.
- b. *Look upon your fate and see the Day of Judgment hastens (vv. 2-3).*
- i. In response to the prideful rulers of Israel, the prophet commands them to examine three, now conquered regions under the control of Israel (v. 2).
 - 1. He commands them to go and look upon Calneh, Hamath, and Gath of the Philistines.
 - a. He then asks them the rhetorical question: are they greater than these three kingdoms?
 - b. All three of these regions were larger than Samaria, so there’s a bit of irony being drawn out here by Amos.
 - 2. “Are you postponing the day of disaster, and would you bring near the seat of violence?”
 - a. These rulers simply reject the idea that an evil day of wrath was coming for them.
 - b. They fail to see though that this is the very thing bringing that day upon them with incredible speed.
 - ii. At this point, the Israelites have already heard over and again that God is poised as a lion, waiting to devour His prey, which is them.
 - 1. God has declared that Israel, with all its pomp and circumstance, with all its religious hypocrisy and vain idolatry, is already dead.

- a. God has told them that all the wailing in the world won't be enough to convey the grief over the judgment to come.
 - b. After all of this, these high class rulers *still* believe that Amos is full of it.
2. This same type of attitude is present in the various scandals that have rocked the Evangelical world.
- a. Many believe they are too big to fall, they are beyond correction, and they are on God's side.
 - b. And yet at the same time, how many of us give a wink to sin in our own lives?

3. The Inordinate Love of Self-Indulgence (vv. 4-7).

a. The decadence of a nation beyond the point of no-return (vv. 4-6).

- i. An important thing to remember about the prophet Amos is that he is a poor, Tekoan shepherd.
 - 1. Because of his work, he traveled into the main cities of Israel quite often to deliver produce.
 - 2. He sees all the ins and outs of the elites and knows them to be utter gluttons whose god is their belly.
 - a. We tend to think of gluttony as the sin of over-eating, but in reality, gluttony is simply over-indulgence in anything.
 - b. It could be food, drink, items, money, or whatever else one desires so badly that they constantly cry out for more of what they already have an abundance of.
- ii. In this next section, Amos is simply describing a people who are all about this life of pleasure.
 - 1. In v. 4 we find he describes their revelry in leisure and food.
 - a. They made sure their beds were the most expensive in the land.

- b. They drunkenly sprawled out on these couches that were made only for this purpose.
 - c. They ate the best, most tender meat of the land whenever they desired.
 - 2. In v. 5 Amos speaks towards their revelry in recreation.
 - a. As they're fattening themselves on choice meats and lounging about, they're strumming away on the harp and composing music.
 - b. What's interesting about it is that they arrogantly fancy themselves to be like the great psalmist David.
 - 3. In v. 6 then, we finally see their revelry in drunkenness and pampering.
 - a. They ditch the common goblet—that's far too small a cup to enjoy the amount of wine they have planned to drink.
 - b. Then notice at the end of v. 6 that they do all of this while anointing themselves with the finest of oils.
 - c. Yet look at what he tells them they should have be doing rather than filling up their own cup, so to speak: "...they have not grieved over the collapse of Joseph."
- b. *The ruler's prominence to sin and opulence will be matched by their prominence in judgment (v.7).*
 - i. "Therefore, they will now go into exile at the head of the head of the exiles, and the revelry of those who lounge around will come to an end.
 - 1. Israel's leaders prided themselves on being in their lofty positions, where they could eat, drink, sing, and anoint themselves to their heart's content, but all of that would be swiftly coming to an end.
 - a. You miss it entirely in the English, but the word the NASB translates as revelry, others translate it as "feasting" or

“banqueting” is actually closer to what the NET bible translates it as, which is “religious banquets.”

- b. The word in the Hebrew means that it is a cultic celebration, or more plainly put: it is a religious celebration.
2. Amos shows them that as they delighted in putting themselves first among the people of Israel, they would be first among the captives.
 - a. They would lead the line of exiles and slaves, and their time of laziness and gluttony would come to a swift end.
 - b. In other words: their prideful love of self finds an equal and opposite reaction from God Himself.
 - ii. One of the key symptoms of a prideful heart is a person who is characterized by a love of self, and this is precisely what Amos draws out about these rulers of the Northern Kingdom.
 1. A love of self is more than just a love of pleasure though; it is an attitude of indifference, or even a calculated hatred, towards others.
 - a. The mentality of the leaders was that they would get the best of the best, while the poor could content themselves with the scraps.
 - b. Ultimately, they had a false religion of consumerism; it was always driven by what they could get out of life for their maximum pleasure.
 2. We are constantly inundated with this same message of “me-first” in our culture.
 - a. You have self-worth, self-esteem, self-love, self-care, self-sufficiency, self-whatever-it-is-that-can-bring-the-

attention-back-on-me, because at the end of the day, that's what it's all about, isn't it?

- b. We constantly have to keep the correcting Words of Scripture in our mind with these things.

4. The Incessant Arrogance of Self-Reliance (vv. 8-14).

a. The total destruction of Jacob (v. 8-11)

- i. Amos now turns his focus back to Samaria (Jacob) to foretell of her complete destruction.
 - 1. "The Lord God has sworn by Himself, the Lord God of armies has declared: I loathe the arrogance of Jacob, and detest his citadels; therefore I will give up the city and all it contains."
 - a. Here we find the most solemn of declarations against the Northern Kingdom.
 - b. God has sworn by Himself, there is no higher authority, and therefore, there is no greater assurance of their destruction.
 - 2. Why? He finds the arrogance of Jacob repulsive; He hates his citadels.
 - a. In this, he's not referring to their individual state of being as a prideful people, but Samaria.
 - b. We know this simply because of the way the sentence structure refers to the city and all it contains being the object of God's wrath, which brings us all the way back to verse 1.
- ii. He then continues in v. 9 to describe the calamity that is coming their way.
 - 1. Even if a small band of men manage to hide themselves in one house to try and fend off the onslaught of the Assyrians, they will still die.

- a. The slaughter of those in Samaria will be so great that if one's blood-relative or an undertaker, there will be an abject fear of the Lord because His wrath was so severe.
 - b. The picture being given here is that the relative and the one who goes with him to dispose of the bodies are wandering through all the nooks and crannies of the house.
 - 2. One will cry out to the other to see if anyone is left alive amidst the carnage and heaps of bodies, and the reply will be, "No one."
 - a. He will then urge them to keep quiet, for fear that they too will be swept up in God's wrath.
 - b. The very houses the men of Samaria hid themselves in will be utterly destroyed.
- b. *The futility of Jacob's pride and self-reliance (vv. 12-14)*
 - i. Amos poses another two rhetorical questions to draw out the utter foolishness of all that they have done.
 - 1. He asks, "Do horses run on rocks, or does one plow them (speaking of rocks again) with oxen?"
 - a. The obvious answer is no; it is unnatural and counter-productive for one to do either of these things, just as they well know.
 - b. Yet he uses these rhetorical questions to draw out how they've done much the same in their perversion of justice and righteousness.
 - 2. The leaders were also very proud of themselves for recapturing some territory they had lost, which includes two cities he calls by the names of Lodebar and Karnaim.

- a. You can see the arrogance dripping off of them with how they ask the prophet, “Have we not by our own strength taken Karnaim for ourselves?”
 - b. Yet Amos, ever-mocking them for their pride, cleverly dismisses their sense of accomplishment.
- ii. “For behold, I am going to raise up a nation against you, house of Israel,” declares the Lord God of armies, “and they will torment you from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of the Arabah.”
 - 1. In essence, the Lord is promising them that the Israelites would be afflicted throughout all the nation.
 - a. The ultimate act of pride and futility is that Israel has come up against God Himself.
 - b. No matter how much they relied upon their own strength, they would be revealed as utter weaklings.
 - 2. This provides us with an incredibly sobering warning, because much like self-confidence, and self-indulgence, we are a culture that prides itself on self-reliance.
 - a. We look upon virtually everything as if we have built it, we have earned it, we have sustained it, and we are the masters of our fate.
 - b. We boast of tomorrow as if that day is guaranteed to us, and we do without a second thought.
 - c. What I want to do then with the rest of our time is bring you to James 4 because it really does a wonderful job giving a New Testament example of what we’ve seen in Amos 6.

5. Conclusion: God Opposes the Proud but Gives Grace to the Humble

- a. *The Inordinate Love of Self-Indulgence (vv. 1-3).*

- i. James opens up in v. 1 to reveal the source of their conflicts, and he does so much in the same way Amos does.
 - ii. He moves on in the following verses to describe precisely what that looks like for them.
- b. *The Inflated Sense of Self-Confidence (vv. 4-6).*
 - i. James continues on in v. 4 and calls them adulteresses, and here he is alluding to Old Testament language that would have been very familiar to them.
 - ii. God describes those who are ruled by their pleasures as those who have committed spiritual adultery against Himself, and He draws this out by way of rhetorical questions.
- c. *The Antidote to a Prideful Heart (vv. 6-10).*
 - i. But God gives a greater grace. In other words: God sets the bar impossibly high, yet supplies our every need to meet that standard. All it takes is humility.
 - ii. In light of this, James calls them to a rapid series of ten commands, which if they obey, will eradicate their symptoms of pride through the antidote of humility.

Small Group Questions:

1. What areas of pride in your own life that you need to address?
2. What does genuine humility look like (think of a lifelong application of James 4:6-10)?
3. Do you know godly men and/or women who serve as an example in humility? What is stopping you from being disciplined by them?
4. If you are a man/woman who exhibits genuine humility, what is stopping you from disciplining others?