

Amos 6:8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/amos/amos-6/amos-68/>

Through the oracle of Amos, the LORD swears by Himself that He will deliver up the city of Samaria and all it contains because He detests the arrogance of Jacob and detests his citadels.

Having warned the preeminent leaders of Israel of impending judgment and provided a detailed description of their luxurious lifestyle and their self-indulgence which would come to an end (6:4–7), Amos now explained what *the LORD of hosts* had *declared*. He told his audience that *the Lord GOD has sworn by Himself*.

The book of Amos contains three instances of the LORD taking an oath to declare judgment on His people. In the first instance, He swore “by His holiness” or His own moral character that He would surely bring curses on the women of Samaria who oppressed the poor and crushed the needy (4:2). In this section (6:8), *the LORD* swore *by Himself* (literally, by His soul). Then, the LORD swore by the pride of Jacob (8:7).

As *the LORD* swore *by Himself*—that is, by His own person—He displayed His attitude toward the guilt of the nation Israel: *I loathe the arrogance of Jacob*. The verb to *loathe* means to “make repulsive” or “to abhor.” The word for *arrogance* can also be translated as pride and refers to an excessive self-esteem, an improper view of oneself. Pride or *arrogance* is the opposite of humility, which is the proper behavior people should display in relation to the LORD. The noun *Jacob* is used here to represent the northern kingdom of Israel.

The Israelites were filled with pride in Amos’s days. They boasted of themselves because they were prosperous under King Jeroboam II. They thought they were the favored people of God because of the covenant relationship they had with Him. But “God is opposed to the proud” because proud people are an abomination to Him (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Therefore, God swore to judge Israel for their disobedience and pride.

The *LORD* not only *loathed the arrogance of Jacob* but also *detested his citadels*. The verb to *detest* here is literally “to hate.” Amos used the verb in the previous chapter to explain how God hated Israel’s pilgrim festivals since the people of Israel did not really worship Him in spirit and in truth during those events (Amos 5:21). In this passage, the LORD declared that He was not impressed by Israel’s *citadels* or fortresses because they were built at the expense of the poor (Amos 3:9–10). These fortifications were the direct result of greed and injustice practiced by the nobles of Samaria.

The LORD’s judgment was unavoidable, as He declared, *Therefore I will deliver up the city and all it contains*. God would hand the city of Samaria and all that was in it over to an enemy nation. While the nation of Israel was at the peak of her prosperity, she would be destroyed because of her pride and arrogance.

The writer of Proverbs often establishes a sharp contrast between pride and humility to explain the way that leads to life: “When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2). Similarly, he says, “An arrogant man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper” (Proverbs 28:25). Proverbs makes it clear that “the Lord will tear down the house of the proud, but He will establish the boundary of the widow” (Proverbs 15:25). This shows that there are negative consequences for pride or arrogance. God expects His people to give allegiance to Him and to serve Him with true and repentant hearts.

It is noteworthy that Jeroboam II under whom Amos prophesied is thought to have reigned until around 746 BC, and Israel/Samaria was captured and taken into captivity in 722 BC, roughly twenty five years after the time of Jeroboam. Amos 1:1 tells us that Amos spoke the words of this prophecy “two years before the earthquake” which is believed to have occurred in 760 BC. Therefore Amos spoke this doom upon Israel, but God delayed His judgement for almost forty more years.

Further, there is a great irony in that the prophet Jonah also prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, along with Amos. Jonah was instrumental in God sparing Nineveh of judgement and destruction for its wickedness. So God spoke to Israel through Amos, and it did not repent. Thus Israel was destroyed by Assyria, who was spared judgement because it did repent (Jonah 3:5-9).

Biblical Text

**⁸The Lord God has sworn by Himself, the Lord God of hosts has declared:
“I loathe the arrogance of Jacob,
And detest his citadels;
Therefore I will deliver up *the* city and all it contains.”**