

Amos 4:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

Analysis

Amos addresses elite women: "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink." "Kine of Bashan" compares wealthy women to well-fed cattle from Bashan's fertile region—an insult highlighting their pampered, self-indulgent lifestyle. These women "oppress the poor" and "crush the needy"—actively participating in injustice, not just passively benefiting. The phrase "say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink" depicts demanding luxury while others suffer. Their husbands ("masters") oppressed the poor to fund wives' extravagance. This teaches that injustice isn't only a male problem—women participating in or demanding lifestyle funded by oppression share guilt. The Reformed doctrine of sin affirms all humans, regardless of gender, are fallen and capable of evil.

Historical Context

Samaria, Israel's capital, featured palatial estates and luxury goods (confirmed archaeologically—ivory furniture, fine pottery, imported items). The wealthy lived lavishly while the poor faced debt slavery and exploitation. Amos's ministry targeted this inequality ruthlessly. His denunciation of elite women would have been shocking—prophets typically addressed male rulers and priests, but Amos holds everyone accountable.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do we participate in or demand lifestyles funded by exploitation of others, even unwittingly?
2. What does it mean to examine whether our comforts come at others' expense?

Interlinear Text

אָשֶׁר בְּבָשָׂן פָּר וֹת הַזֶּבֶב רַשְׁמָעַ וְ

Hear this word H2088 ye kine of Bashan H834

H8085 H1697 H6510 H1316

בְּרֹצֶצֶת וְתַדְלִימַת שְׁמַר וְ

that are in the mountain of Samaria which oppress the poor which crush

H2022 H8111 H6231 H1800 H7533

וְנִשְׁתַּחַת: בְּאָמָר תְּלַאֲדִינָה מִן אָבִיוֹנִים יְמַ

the needy which say to their masters Bring and let us drink

H34 H559 H113 H935 H8354

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 22:12 (Parallel theme): Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

Amos 6:1 (Parallel theme): 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!

Amos 5:11 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

Ezekiel 39:18 (Parallel theme): Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 (Parallel theme): So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.