

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

שְׁמַע וְ	הַדָּבָר	הַזֶּה	כָּר וְ	הַבָּשָׁן	אֲשֶׁר
Hear	this word	H2088	ye kine	of Bashan	H834
H8085	H1697		H6510	H1316	
בְּהֵרֵם	שְׁמֵר וְ	הַעֲשֹׂק וְ	יְדֵלֵי יָם	הַרְצָצ וְ	
that are in the mountain	of Samaria	which oppress	the poor	which crush	
H2022	H8111	H6231	H1800	H7533	
אֲבִיוֹן יָם	הָאֹמְרֵם	לְאֲדֹנֵיהֶם	הֵב יָאֵה	וְנִשְׁתֵּה:	
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.

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