

# Amos 5:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

## Analysis

**I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins**—God's comprehensive knowledge (yada' rabim pish'eikhem va'atsumim chatoteikhem, יְדֻעַ רַבִּים פִשְׁעֵיכֶם וְעַצְמִים חֲטֹאתֵיכֶם) uses two words for sin: pesha' (פְשָׁע, "transgression/rebellion") denotes willful covenant violation, while chatta't (חֲטֹאת, "sin") means missing the mark. "Manifold" (rabim, רַבִּים, "many") and "mighty" (atsumim, עַצְמִים, "strong/numerous") emphasize both quantity and severity of their guilt.

Three specific crimes follow: **they afflict the just** (tsorerim tsaddiq, צְרָרִים צַדִּיק, oppressing righteous people; **they take a bribe** (loqhei kofer, לֹקְחֵי כּוֹפֵר—kofer is ransom or bribe money that perverts justice; **they turn aside the poor in the gate** (ve'evyonim bash-sha'ar hittu, וְאֶבְיוֹנִים בָשָׁעָר הַטּוֹ) —denying the poor (evyon, אֶבְיוֹן, their legal rights. The gate was where justice should be administered, but Israel's courts sold verdicts to the wealthy. This triad—oppressing the righteous, accepting bribes, denying the poor justice—summarizes systemic corruption that violates Torah repeatedly (Exodus 23:6-8; Deuteronomy 16:19, 27:19).

## Historical Context

During Jeroboam II's prosperous reign (793-753 BC), Israel experienced territorial expansion and economic growth, but wealth concentrated among elites who built it on exploitation. Archaeological evidence from Samaria reveals massive inequality

—ivory palaces for the rich, while debt slavery enslaved the poor. Courts that should have protected the vulnerable instead sold justice. God's detailed knowledge of their crimes ("I know") meant no secret sin escaped divine notice—accountability was coming.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How do wealth and power corrupt justice systems even in societies with formal legal protections?
2. What does it mean that God knows not just our actions but the "manifold" and "mighty" nature of our sins?

## Interlinear Text

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חִטְאָתִיךְ מִלְּעָצָם יְמִינְךְ כִּי  
H3588 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins  
H3045 H7227 H6588 H6099 H2403

בְּשֵׁעָר אֶבְיוֹנָם כִּפְרַת לְקֹחַ צְדִיקָן צְרָרָה  
they afflict the just they take a bribe the poor in the gate  
H6887 H6662 H3947 H3724 H34 H8179

הַטּוֹבָה

and they turn aside

H5186

## Additional Cross-References

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**Amos 5:10** (Parallel theme): They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

**Isaiah 1:23** (Parallel theme): Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

**Malachi 3:5** (Parallel theme): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

**1 Samuel 8:3** (Parallel theme): And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

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