

# Amos 5:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.

## Analysis

---

**That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress** (הַמְבָלִיג שֶׁד עַל־עַז וְשֶׁד עַל־מִבְצָר יָבוֹא), haMavlig shod al-az veshod al-mibtsar yavo)—this verse concludes the doxology (vv. 8-9) by celebrating God's power to reverse fortunes. The verb balag (בָּלָג, "flash forth/cause to shine") may describe sudden, unexpected action. "The spoiled" (shod, שׁוד) can mean "destruction" or "the despoiled/plundered one"—the victim of violence. "The strong" (az, עַז) means the mighty, powerful oppressor. God empowers the devastated victim to overcome the strong oppressor.

The phrase **so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress** means the formerly powerless victim will assault the fortified stronghold of the powerful. "Fortress" (mibtsar, מִבְצָר) represents defensive strength, military power, security. God can reverse any human power structure—making the weak strong and bringing down the mighty. This theme resonates throughout Scripture: Hannah's song celebrates how God "raises the poor from the dust" and "brings low the mighty" (1 Samuel 2:7-8). Mary's Magnificat echoes this: "He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree" (Luke 1:52). In context, Amos warns Israel's powerful elite: the God you've ignored can empower your victims to destroy you.

## Historical Context

---

Israel's wealthy oppressors felt secure in their fortified cities and military might. Archaeological excavations reveal impressive fortifications at Samaria and other Israelite cities—massive walls, elaborate palaces, stored goods suggesting wealth and security. Yet Amos declares these fortresses offer no protection against God's judgment. Historically, Assyria was God's instrument to "strengthen the spoiled against the strong"—the formerly insignificant Assyrian power grew mighty and conquered Israel's fortresses. The fall of Samaria (722 BC) after three-year siege proved no fortress withstands God's judgment. This principle applies to all history: God governs by His sovereign will, not human military or economic power. Empires rise and fall at His command.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

---

1. How does God's power to reverse fortunes (empowering victims against oppressors) relate to His justice?
2. What does this verse teach about the futility of trusting military strength and fortifications against divine judgment?
3. How should believers respond when seeing powerful oppressors seemingly secure in their fortresses?

## Interlinear Text

---

המְבָלִ יָג	וְשַׁ דָּעַל	עַל־צָרָעַל	וְשַׁ דָּעַל
That strengtheneth	so that the spoiled	against the strong	so that the spoiled
H1082	H7701	H5921	H5794
H7701	H4013	H935	

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)