

# Amos 6:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:

## Analysis

**Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? (הירצוו בְּשָׁלָע)** (סוטים אַמְּתִּירֹשׁ בְּקָרִים, hayrutzun basela susim im-yacharosh bab'qarim)—two rhetorical questions about absurdities: horses can't gallop on rocky cliffs; oxen can't plow stone. Yet Israel's behavior is equally absurd: **for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock (פִּרְבַּכְתֶּם)** (ki-hafachtem l'rosh mishpat ufri tz'dakah l'la'anah)—they've inverted justice (רָאשׁ, mishpat) into poison (רָאשׁ, rosh, literally 'head,' meaning poisonous plant or gall), and righteousness's fruit (צְדָקָה, tz'dakah) into wormwood (לְעֵנָה, la'anah, bitter poison).

This indicts moral inversion: making justice serve oppression and perverting righteousness into wickedness. When legal systems meant to protect the vulnerable instead exploit them, society commits absurdity worse than horses running on rocks. Isaiah 5:20 pronounces woe on such moral confusion: 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.'

## Historical Context

Amos repeatedly attacks Israel's corrupt legal system (Amos 5:10-15). Courts that should have defended the poor instead took bribes and ruled for the powerful. This judicial corruption was systemic, not isolated—making judgment inevitable.

## Related Passages

## **Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds**

## **Romans 2:1 – Judging others**

## Study Questions

1. What modern legal or political systems pervert justice into oppression while claiming righteousness?
2. How do Christians sometimes invert biblical values—calling tolerance 'love,' compromise 'wisdom,' or comfort 'blessing'?
3. What does it mean to restore justice and righteousness when systems have become thoroughly corrupted?

## Interlinear Text

רַחֲצָה	בְּעֵד	אָמֵן	סְדָסִים	בְּשָׁלָע	וְעַל	בְּרִכָּה	וְעַל	בְּבָקָר	וְעַל	בְּבָקָר	וְעַל
run	upon the rock	Shall horses	H518	will one plow		there with oxen					
H7323	H5553	H5483		H2790		H1241					H3588

לעַנְהָ  
into hemlock  
H3939

## Additional Cross-References

**Amos 5:7** (Righteousness): Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,

**Hosea 10:4** (Judgment): They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

