

**THE BOOK OF AMOS**  
**Lesson 11, Chapter 6 continued 2**

We'll open today by continuing with our detour that re-examines the crucial biblical term *elohim*; a word that is typically...nearly universally... translated into English as God (singular) or gods (plural). Over the many years of study and teaching, I have come to the conclusion that translating *Elohim* as God or gods easily leads us off track, and that there is a better definition that can in a number of situations help to elucidate many biblical passages that are either glossed over when encountered, or a long-accepted explanation is given that, frankly, doesn't offer much help but it does allow for certain questionable manmade doctrines to remain intact and unchallenged.

Since what you're hearing from me on this subject is new to most of you, I want everyone first to be clear about what I am NOT saying. I am **not** saying that God...the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... is less than what we know He is. Nor does He have any rivals. Nor is there any being of any kind comparable to Him. I am **not** saying that we are to accept as valid the god-systems of the ancient-times pagans, nor of the Greeks or the Romans as being alternative systems of actual gods and goddesses that exist. I will also stipulate that by no means does my conclusion on the proper understanding of the word *elohim* have no other possible explanation nor is it the final word on the subject.

Fortunately, our body of knowledge about the biblical Hebrew language grows and grows not because the Bible changes, but at least partly because so many gifted people have become ancient language scholars and continue to discover how one language morphed over time into another, with certain words and their meanings following along from the older to the newer language with but minor modifications. The scholarly word for comparing words from 2 or more languages that were birthed from a common earlier language is called cognates. And, due to the many decades of excellent research, and the regular unearthing of newly discovered troves of ancient tablets and scrolls, this body of knowledge of what those words meant to the ancient Hebrews who wrote the Bible and to those Hebrews who read or heard them continues to expand and so the intended meanings of those original biblical words are being revealed with more nuance and precise definition.

For example: the nearly miraculous re-emergence of the Dead Sea Scrolls, after being buried in caves for 2000 years, gave us a nearly immediate 1000-year leap back in time from the earliest Old Testament manuscripts that had ever been found prior to that discovery. That is, the Old Testament translations we all carry around that are based on copies of the ancient Hebrew biblical manuscripts (as opposed to those based on the Greek Septuagint) are from no earlier than about 1000 A.D. The Dead Sea Scrolls, however, were written around the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. These far older texts have revealed so much to us primarily because they are the closest yet to the time the original scriptures were written...and by at least 1000 years... from what we ever had before that discovery. Imagine: we now have the same Old Testament in our possession that Jesus of Nazareth studied, read from, and knew. However, not as much of this new knowledge from the Dead Sea Scrolls (as it should have) has filtered down into the several existing Bible versions the Christian community has traditionally used for scores, even a few hundreds, of years. When we look into the incredible mosaic that the Bible...the Hebrew Tanakh... from Yeshua's time presents us with, it lends some much-needed help with restoring original understanding to some of the more difficult but important passages and words we have been faced with. One such word being ***elohim***.

What I *am* saying, then, is that within traditional Christianity the way the Hebrew term ***elohim*** has historically been understood and interpreted (as God and gods) actually has led us *away* from the much more vivid meaning that it held to the writers of the Bible and even to Christ and His disciples. We know this because of the study of cognate words from the earlier languages and because some of these words had been removed and replaced with different words by biblical editors sometime between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Because of the traditional way we automatically think of the English words God and gods we are left with a dilemma that is handled either by our ignoring the scriptural passages in which we find the word "gods", or alternatively, an implausible and biblically impossible explanation is offered in order to soothe us by bypassing a truth we'd rather not have to deal with.

The Bible only seems irrational or illogical to us at times because of the many ways translators have chosen to interpret words and meanings, and this is

largely due to the many manmade doctrines that influenced those interpretations in the first place. The Bible doesn't present itself to us in camouflage. We need not fear what it says. It doesn't use hypothetical comparisons that in the end are impossible to occur or are essentially hollow and meaningless. The issue that causes most of our confusion when we read the Bible is not because the Bible is confusing; it is because we insist on filtering it through the lens of whatever modern culture we currently live in, and because we have accepted as true vast amounts of manmade doctrines in order to uphold well-entrenched Church and Synagogue agendas. We insert our modern notions of society, of justice and morals, of grace and mercy, and of the existence or non-existence of a spirit-world that in no way were what the writers of the Bible thought. We need to reorient our thinking; we need to humble ourselves to adjust our modern Enlightenment era mindsets to accept the biblically presented reality of a well-populated, complex, and highly structured spirit-world that God created BEFORE He created the physical Universe and populated it with physical creatures. A spirit-world that the ancients universally accepted, but in more modern times is rejected as but myth, fantasy and legend believed only by ignorant, primitive people. The Church, not wanting to be left behind, or to be seen as nuts or unintelligent by the secular world, has tended to modify our doctrines in order to be more in line with societal trends and beliefs. The results are that we have steadily diminished the realities and effects of the actual spirit-world and its creatures that the Bible tells us about in favor of something watered-down that is more palatable to a secular society that reveres science far more than faith. The Holy Scriptures tell us unequivocally that God **first** created a Heavenly society that would, in time, become the pattern for the earthly/human society that He also would create. The biblical reality is that there exists a dichotomy of God-created Heavenly and earthly societies that were structured in the same mold. Long ago I gave this dichotomy a name: the Reality of Duality.

I confess to you that over the 3 decades I have been teaching, I have changed my mind on a few things. Early on I gave too-little credence to a robust spiritual world, and did not challenge old Christian doctrines about certain troubling biblical passages that spoke of other gods, or sons of God, or fallen angels and their hybrid offspring called Nephilim, or of the reality of a Heavenly assembly of powers and princes that included a divine ruling council to which God delegated

tasks. I never noticed that many beings in Heaven disobeyed God and that God developed a plan to deal with them. Not all were cast to earth as was Satan. So, if you hear a few things a bit differently from what you heard in some of my teachings from many years ago, please allow that even an old man can continue to learn new things. If I can reformat my thinking on some serious biblical matters because that's where the truth leads, then so can you. What I ask of you all is to believe what the Bible actually says and not to dismiss that which you don't understand or troubles you, or to twist it's meaning because, as it is written, it doesn't fit what the modern world says or wants to believe.

When we read in the Bible about Heaven (and precious little is said to us about it), we find that there are a number of categories of spirit beings that reside there. There are angels, archangels, Seraphim, Cherubim, powers and principalities, princes, a divine council, and there is something called **elohim**. Without trying to precisely address every level of the Heavenly societal structure, it seems that the order of it puts the angels as possibly the lowest spirit-beings and Yehoveh as the highest, with all the others falling somewhere in between. Archangels clearly had authority over regular angels and likely greater power as well. Seraphim and Cherubim seem to be a higher class or special category of spirit-being that is either at the top of the scale for angels or perhaps they are a separate category altogether that is ranked slightly higher than angels. But the highest category of spirit-being seems to be the **elohim**, who as a group formed the divine council or at least some of them did. And, some of the **elohim** also became rulers over earthly nations other than Israel. Gentile nations had one or another of these **elohim** assigned to rule over them, while Israel was given the greatest, unprecedented privilege of having the Most-High **Elohim**, (God, Yehoveh) Himself as their spirit-ruler. Further, according to the Bible passages we read last week, the **elohim** were also the leading rulers over the entire structured society in Heaven. Yes, they received their marching orders from Yehoveh; but clearly the **elohim** had sufficient free-will that allowed them enough latitude and freedom in carrying out their orders, such that they could actually make wrong decisions and even to do wrong things that were against God's will. And they had the power and authority to carry out even the wrong things they intended to do. Doing these wrong things made them corrupted, and so Yehoveh judged those among the disobedient and rebellious **elohim** to forgo living as the eternal spirit-beings they were created to be, but instead they would die like mortal

humans. Is that not essentially what happened to Adam and Eve, and therefore to all mankind that followed? My friends, we humans were intended to be the earthly version of the Heavenly **elohim**. We were originally intended to live eternal lives and not to experience decay and death. Is that not what God's Word tells us? Let's go again to the Book of Genesis.

**CJB Genesis 1:26** *Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in the likeness of ourselves; and let them rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the animals, and over all the earth, and over every crawling creature that crawls on the earth."*

In Heaven, the **elohim** (who formed Yehoveh's divine council) were to rule over God's Heavenly sphere. On earth, humans (who were formed in similar likeness of purpose to the divine council of **elohim**) were to rule over God's earthly sphere. God is above the **elohim** and above mankind. The **elohim** and we humans were *meant* to rule over all the other creatures God created, within our similar but separate dominions. The creatures we were to rule over were created lesser than we are in status and ability, whether spirit-beings in the Heavenly sphere or physical beings in the earthly sphere. Nevertheless, these lesser creatures are also valuable and loved by God. Unfortunately, many of those God-created **elohim** that were meant to rule over the Heavenly sphere instead rebelled (we read that in Psalm 82). The same thing happened on earth when Adam and Eve... who God had created to rule over the lesser creatures on the earthly sphere... rebelled. And so, they were thrown-out of Eden and left as corrupted rulers. I'll say again: the Bible tells us that the rule of at least *some* of the **elohim** had become corrupted and so did the rule of humans become corrupted. Now what? In one sense, the Bible is all about God working to restore this disaster. On earth, it is all about restoring Eden.

This comparison I just made between Heaven and earth and the creatures that inhabit each is not fantasy nor is it metaphor; it is real. Real enough that Christ made this statement that is simply not discernable if we don't first understand and accept the reality, as well as the true role and nature, of the **elohim**...those spirit-beings that our English Bibles call gods but rather ought to be called **divine beings**.

**CJB John 10:31-36** <sup>31</sup> *Once again the Judeans picked up rocks in order to stone him.* <sup>32</sup> *Yeshua answered them, "You have seen me do many good deeds that reflect the Father's power; for which one of these deeds are you stoning me?"* <sup>33</sup> *The Judeans replied, "We are not stoning you for any good deed, but for blasphemy- because you, who are only a man, are making yourself out to be God <N1>."* <sup>34</sup> *Yeshua answered them, "Isn't it written in your Torah, 'I have said, "You people are Elohim' "?* <sup>35</sup> *If he called 'elohim' the people to whom the word of Elohim was addressed (and the Tanakh cannot be broken),* <sup>36</sup> *then are you telling the one whom the Father set apart as holy and sent into the world, 'You are committing blasphemy,' just because I said, 'I am a son of Elohim'?*

Most English Bibles say: "Isn't it written in your Law: 'I have said you are gods'?" Isn't that a little startling to hear? Yeshua says He is quoting what has already been written; He is quoting scripture. What does He mean by saying "you are gods"? In the New Testament gods is an English word that is translated from the Greek word **theos**. A standard Greek lexicon will explain that **theos** is a general name for all manner of deities and divinities. Yet, even though the oldest Gospel manuscripts that we have are all written in Greek, we must remember that while Greek was the language used, it was nonetheless Jewish cultural mindset, history, and theology that was being expressed. Since we know that Jesus was quoting Psalm 82 then we also know that what He actually said to the Judeans who were about to stone Him was: "I have said that you are **elohim**". He certainly didn't mean "gods" in the way Christianity and most of the world thinks of that term. If we remove the concept of "gods" from our minds, and instead think of the **elohim** as a special high class of spirit-being, then the point He was making was that just as in Heaven the **elohim** were to be the ruling class over all Heavenly spirit beings, so on earth humans were to be the ruling class of physical beings... humans as earthly **elohim**, if you would...ruling over all the other classes of lesser physical creatures (the animal kingdom).

Yeshua furthers His argument by saying that if God says to certain divine beings that they are sons of God (sons of the Most-High **Elohim**), and these Judeans berating Jesus seem to have no trouble with that concept, then why do they have a problem with Yeshua saying that He is a son of the Most-High **Elohim**? That is, it is the Father (Yehoveh) who determines such status of His created creatures, and not mere men nor even other Heavenly beings. The implication that can

bypass us is that it was a given that the Jews understood and accepted that the **elohim** were sons of God in Heaven and of course they were real and existed. Therefore, all that being true, if the Father sent Yeshua as a son of **Elohim** to earth, then what cause do they have for saying He must be blaspheming?

There is so much more we could go into concerning this matter of understanding the term **elohim** and the reasons for accepting the robust spirit-world that began its existence prior to the Creation of the Universe, but we need to stop and return to Amos. The conclusion of the discussion to this point, then, is: if we're going to take the Bible seriously and not try to rationalize it to make it fit our modern enlightened scientific mindset, or to try to pound it into the mold of manmade Church doctrines that cannot possibly tolerate a robust spirit-world full of various levels and kinds of divine beings, then we'll never understand the meaning and intentions of the people who wrote the Bible...because they DID believe in such a world and wrote within that context. The writers of the Bible were not wrong in what they believed; we are wrong when we dismiss it. Merely delving into the true meaning of the word **elohim** opens a new realm for us to explore that gives us wonderful new insights and deepens our faith, if we'll only be open to it.

Armed with this new knowledge about the term **elohim**, let's move back to Amos chapter 6, and resume at verse 8. We'll start by rereading the passage.

### **RE-READ AMOS CHAPTER 6:8 – end**

This literary unit that concludes chapter 6 is all about a devastating military defeat that Israel is going to suffer in the near term. It opens with the Hebrew expression "Yehoveh has sworn". This expression is used 3 times in the Bible; and every time it is used to pronounce judgment over a disobedient people or nation. The way this verse ought to be translated into English, a way that most captures its image and intent that the ancients would have heard and understood, is something like this: *The Lord Yehoveh has sworn by Himself, Yehoveh Most-High divine being of hosts has declared: "I loathe the arrogance of Jacob, And I detest his citadels; Therefore, I will deliver up the city and all it contains."*

Recalling what we learned earlier today, while the other nations had other **elohim** assigned to rule over them, the Most-High **Elohim** (Yehoveh) personally ruled

over Israel. Israel was Yehoveh's special project through which restoration of the world...the return of Eden... would occur. He did not trust this most important of tasks to any other than Himself. And now that Israel has rebelled against Him, Yehoveh will deal with them in a way that both punishes Israel as well as kicking the ball further towards the goal of restoration.

When Yehoveh says that He loathes the pride of Jacob, this is referring to the arrogance of the people who defy Yehoveh by believing so strongly in their military to defend them, because at the moment their economic condition was one of great abundance. In other words, Israel believes it is by their own brilliant economic strategies that they are a wealthy nation, and therefore it will be by their own equally brilliant military strategies and defensive fortresses that makes them nearly invincible from attack. This attitude has developed over many decades of their moving away from the Torah, and into developing new manmade doctrines to live by and to worship by. They feel like they've had nothing but success, so how could they possibly be wrong in their beliefs and behavior?

Let me put this in perspective. In 1996 the American Federal Reserve Chairman Allan Greenspan looked at a looming economic disaster (then called the "dot com bubble"), wondering why the financial world was acting like it was not there, as obvious as it was to any clear thinker. He termed this mass obliviousness of investors and bankers and corporate executives to the oncoming trainwreck as "irrational exuberance". Our financial system was riding high, money was flowing like an endless river, people were getting richer, this new thing called The Internet was spawning new and successful businesses daily, and it seemed that our entire financial and economic system had hit some never-before-seen level of human-devised brilliance and acumen that defied all logic. Greenspan did his best to warn people that it was all a mirage; disaster was near. He warned folks that the joy over their good fortune, and the reasons for it, and their decisions going forward to keep doing the same things, were "irrational" with the reality. He, of course, was right-on because it was so obvious. This is what God was saying that Israel was doing. Jacob's pride was Israel's era of irrational exuberance.

By using the term "Jacob", Yehoveh is indicating that all 12 tribes of Israel are guilty. Although Amos has been aimed squarely at the 10 tribes of Ephraim/Israel, the 2 tribes of Judah are now added to the mix. The timing of the coming calamity is not discussed, but we know from history that first Ephraim fell to the Assyrians in 723 B.C., and then around 130 years later, Judah would fall to the Babylonians.

Verse 9 is essentially an expression of the completeness of the devastation that Israel will experience. The notion about the 10 people in one house has sometimes been said to be about a *minyan* (the smallest Jewish prayer group allowed), or that it was the smallest unit of an army organization. I think that's a stretch. Rather the idea is that even though after the brunt of the invasion has been faced, and the city walls breached, should even 10 people (survivors) huddle together in a single house, the enemy will discover them and kill them all. No one should hold out any hope of survival because if they decide to stay, the invader's killing machine will be ruthlessly efficient.

Verse 10 peels the onion back yet another layer. While verse 9 talked about 10 survivors, verse 10 drills down to the single individual level. A fictional narrative, kind of a short story, is given to make God's point. The kin of a deceased person comes to take care of the corpse, even if only to burn the body up without all the usual burial and mourning rituals, because of the extenuating circumstances. While looking through the rubble of the house where the body was found, he calls out "is anyone here that is alive?" He hears a single voice, and asks that voice "is there anyone else?". The survivor says "no". Next, the man who had come to fetch his kin's body says something in response that can be puzzling. He tells the survivor to be quiet because the name of Yehoveh should not be spoken. There are a few different ways this story can be looked at, some more plausible than others. One popular way in the Jewish world...which has to do with anointing a corpse with resin (that is, not burning it up)... is trying to read back into Amos something that was written about such situations in the Mishnaic era. The Mishnaic era runs from around the time of Christ to about 220 A.D. Since this prophecy in Amos was written around 800 or more years earlier than that, I find it not plausible to apply arcane rules taken from the Mishna (Rabbinic Law) as though it would have been in effect in Amos's era. I think it is more likely that those words mean that once this horrible disaster finally does happen, and

people of now-decimated Israel get it that Yehoveh did exactly what He said He'd do, then Yehoveh needed to be feared more as a deadly enemy than as the formerly benevolent God He used to be. Therefore, in the midst of all this misery and death, the kin who is combing through the ruins of his nephew's house, tells the lone survivor to stop talking in fear of attracting Yehoveh's attention. Everything considered, no Israelite in their right mind ought to be "calling on the name of Yehoveh" because He just might hear, and come and finish him off! Survivors would be wiser to stay away from a clearly angry Yehoveh for now.

Verse 11 essentially completes describing the panoramic scale of the calamity that leaves nothing and no one untouched. It refers to the individual houses of the cities of Ephraim themselves. The great houses (the mansions of the rich) as well as the little houses (the small, plain residences of the ordinary citizens) will all be destroyed. And, as the beginning of the verse continues to hammer away, it is indeed Yehoveh, Israel's *Elohim*, that is commanding and overseeing this catastrophe... every element of it.

Verse 12 begins a passage that speaks to the moral outrage that Israel has become. The opening words are a rhetorical question that common sense begs the answer "NO!" to, but yet Israel responds with such lack of common sense that perhaps they believe the answer should be "YES!". The 2 questions are intended to be absurd in the extreme in order to emphasize the complete foolishness of Israel's behavior towards Yehoveh; how warped their minds have become. God asks, can a horse gallop across a bare rock formation? Can you connect a pair of oxen to a plough, and cut furrows through solid rock? The obvious answer is that it would be laughable for anyone to think, let alone attempt, such inherently stupid things. Yet, in similar stupidity and foolishness, Israel took God's precisely devised divine justice system and re-formed it into their own mold with the result that they essentially turned something that protected life into something deadly. They turned God's perfect moral system of delightful righteousness into something flawed, wicked, harsh and bitter (wormwood) by perverting it with their own thoughts of justice, mercy and morality. It is all so obvious, yet Israel has become so deeply deceived that they can't see what they have done, nor can they acknowledge the disastrous results of their manmade doctrines that essentially gutted the Law of Moses. But worse, the road back to sanity sits right before them and they refuse to get on it.

Perhaps the primary reason I decided to teach a series on the Minor Prophets was because they offer a good platform to recognize the condition of our world today, and an illustration of what we can reasonably expect God to do in response. But the one thing the Prophets didn't have to deal with was people who didn't believe in any god at all. You know, there are many fine, brave Believers who take the time to debate with Atheists in hope they might save one. I am not one of those folks. I have no patience for it. The notion that there is no God and that the Universe, humanity, animal life, and consciousness are purely accidental and random is so overtly absurd and blatantly foolish in itself indicates a complete intellectual and spiritual barrier to anything anyone could offer to persuade them otherwise. I just can't bring myself to waste my time talking to the intentionally and perpetually dumb who seriously believe such nonsense, when there are so many who are seeking God but don't know where to look. It's like Paul said:

**CJB Romans 1:20** *For ever since the creation of the universe his invisible qualities- both his eternal power and his divine nature- have been clearly seen, because they can be understood from what he has made. Therefore, they have no excuse.*

Long before Paul, we read in Psalm 19 the same obvious conclusion that all rational thinking people ought to arrive at:

**CJB Psalm 19:2** *The heavens declare the glory of God, the dome of the sky speaks the work of his hands.*

Today, we are dealing with another issue the Prophets didn't have to contend with. It is the latest (and maybe the worst) moral outrage of mankind; it's the thing called gender identity, which includes the ideas that there are several more genders than only male and female and that whatever gender we think we are, or decide to be, is legitimately what we are. The reality of gender as fixed from the womb and consisting of but 2 has been so basic, self-evident and obvious since the time of Adam and Eve... until about 20 years ago... that anyone who might have even brought it up would have been laughed out of the building (as they should have been). But suddenly, some self-absorbed, so-called intellectuals have decided that humanity and God (should they believe one exists)

have been wrong until now, and they know better. The defining biology that stares them in the face every time they look down in the shower means nothing to them. We even have a sitting Supreme Court justice that honestly said and meant that since she isn't a professional biologist, she doesn't know how to tell if a person is a woman!

This deviant mindset is exactly what God is describing to open verse 12. What is ludicrous, preposterous, and ultimately self-destructive is actually and sincerely believed to be true by some because those who believe it have lost their common sense along with their morality. Those who believe such wildly irrational things also can't compartmentalize it to just one area of their lives or their thoughts; it radiates outward like an exploding star; affecting and infecting everything they encounter and do. God taught truth, He gave proofs of it, He pled, He warned and He threatened; He tried everything to get Israel to pull-off the blinders of deception they had willingly placed over their own eyes. They refused to heed Him and instead doubled-down in their rebellion.

Folks, when someone gets to the point of immorality that even God-given gender is no longer considered as discernable or absolute, it gets no more degrading and wicked. They have sunk to the bottom of the pit. I acknowledge that enough damage has been done by those godless who proclaim this nonsense that it may already be too late, still it's time that God's people woke up and spoke up against this outrage. We need to stand up and not be afraid. We need to quit thinking that good followers of Christ should not openly speak out or take action to oppose it. That meekness of silence that so many Believers are proud of and think it Godly, I contend is either a profound misunderstanding of Scripture, or just as likely is really only a front for personal cowardice. For any of us....Pastor, Rabbi, or layman... to be silent in the face of the worst immorality our nation has ever known is unacceptable. Is the Word of God not clear enough on what happens to those who **can** do something to fight immorality but instead sit on their hands, thinking it more Godly to do nothing? That same silence has opened wide a formerly protected door that has allowed even the Church to become deeply infected with the same spirit of immorality and evil that is infecting the entire planet. Church split after Church split is happening over these asinine issues that are so clearly spoken about in God's Word, as if God has given every Believer an option to choose however he or she prefers. We should not... and I will not...

tolerate such blatant rebellion against God in my family, my community, my congregation, or my nation, by remaining silent. And no, I also will not spend my time seeking out swine in order to cast them pearls. I will not spend energy to try to persuade a fully and happily deceived adult person who mocks God in such a way that they *are* deceived, because they have no excuse for it. They have willfully chosen to accept lies over truth; immorality over morality. Will I pray that those who are deceived have their eyes opened? Will I gladly speak life to young impressionable people and try to persuade them against adopting the gender confusion that so much of our population now celebrates as intelligent and good? Most assuredly. But **our** duty is to speak God's truth to those whose ears are open to hearing it; and not trying to convince those who are closed. It is also our duty to speak truth in love, and to not allow such reckless immorality into our lives, or into our families or community according to some worldly sense of manmade-designed mercy and justice and love and choice that is completely counter to God's.

We have essentially the same things going on right now, before our eyes, and for the same reasons, that Amos is prophesying about more than 2700 years ago. Let's move on.

The background for verse 13 is 2Kings14.

**CJB 2 Kings 14: 25** *He recovered the territory of Isra'el between the entrance of Hamat and the sea of the 'Aravah, in keeping with the word of ADONAI the God of Isra'el, which he spoke through his servant Yonah the son of Amitai, the prophet from Gat-Hefer.*

This is speaking about King Jeroboam's attack of territory on the east side of the Jordan River. A better translation of Amos 6:13 is:

**NAS Amos 6:13** *You who rejoice in Lodebar, And say, "Have we not by our own strength taken Karnaim for ourselves?"*

It seems that for Amos, Jeroboam's conquest of these 2 cities had nothing to do with what God wanted. Therefore, Jeroboam and his people looked upon their joyful military victory and promptly patted themselves on their backs for their

brilliance, and gave God no glory or credit for it at all. That is, this is all about exposing Ephraim/Israel's history of pride, self-confidence, and ignoring Yehoveh all the while offering a phony piousness. Amos was not impressed and neither was Yehoveh.

So, despite how wonderful and intelligent and self-reliant Israel might think themselves, verse 14 has Yehoveh telling them that He is going to rise up a nation that will invade them and that the invaders will succeed. This unnamed conqueror will offset any territorial gains Israel has made in the past. Israel will not be allowed to retain that territory which God had not determined for them to have.

The place of Hamath was the boundary of Israel's northernmost territory at this time, while the Wadi Arabah was the southernmost boundary. So, the mention of these 2 places is to make it clear that Ephraim will lose **all** of its territory including the territory God allocated to them long ago when Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land; nothing of Ephraim/Israel will remain.

I want to close out Amos chapter 6 with this thought. Over a few decades Israel had completely destroyed the God-ordained order and morality they had been taught to live by. Chaos and confusion resulted but to the Israelites everything seemed fine and the people felt confident and self-satisfied. Yet to Yehoveh, everything was wrong with Israelite society; their values, their virtues, their customs and habits had all changed for the worse. Underlying it all was that the people of Israel forgot that they had made a covenant with Yehoveh, the Most-High **Elohim**. They turned their backs on that covenant by refusing to comply with its agreed-to terms and yet fully expected that God would carry through with His end of the bargain despite their bad behavior. Despite their blatant apostasy and rebellion, still they raised their hands towards Heaven and claimed that they were obedient and loyal to Yehoveh. God said no, you're not, and now you'll be treated as enemies.

As Believers, we must not forget that when we turned to Yeshua we each made a covenant...or better, through Yeshua joined Israel's covenant... with Yehoveh, God of Israel. Now that each of us are joined to that covenant, we are individually obligated to its terms and there are consequences for breaking those terms. Are

you being obedient to the covenant? Because if you're not, even though you claim loyalty to Yehoveh, why wouldn't you expect to hear from the Lord the same thing Israel heard: "No, you're not"?

We'll take up chapter 7 next time.