



[Amos 2:13-16](#)

(13) " Behold, I am weighed down by you,
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.
(14) Therefore flight shall perish from the swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;
(15) He shall not stand who handles the bow,
The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.
(16) The most courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in that day,"
Says the LORD.
New King James Version

The wording of verse 13 provides two possibilities. The first is that [God](#), in exasperation, refuses to carry His people any longer, as one might put down a burden that is too heavy. The second possibility pictures a heavily loaded cart with a broken wheel that carves deep ruts in the road and throws its occupants into ditches. The context implies that the heavy load is the crushing burden of sins that impede Israel from staying on "the straight and narrow" ([Matthew 7:14](#)).

This second meaning seems to fit the best, as He proceeds to foretell Israel's destruction. Israel had reached the end of her greatest period of prosperity since the time of Solomon. The nation was rich, powerful, and well-armed, proud in her might, abilities, [wisdom](#), wealth, strategic advantages, and courage. Who could stand against Israel? But God thunders the warning that all the nation's natural abilities ([Amos 2:14](#)), acquired skills (verse 15), and outstanding qualities (verse 16) would not help her.

Men see the strength of a nation in its wealth, population, armaments, technology, and knowledge. But where does God look? "Righteousness exalts a nation, but [sin](#) is a reproach to any people" ([Proverbs 14:34](#)). The Bible reveals that ***the cause of the rise***

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and fall of nations is moral and spiritual. As Amos shows, no nation can rely on its strength, power, and wealth to save it from the devastating effects of moral decay. Moral, ethical, and spiritual problems cannot be resolved by money, strength of arms, "Star Wars" projects, social programs, intelligence, or humanitarian goodwill.

Since Israel had forfeited her privileged status, God promised to destroy her as He destroyed the Amorites and the Egyptians ([Amos 2:9-10](#); [4:10](#), 12). The people of Israel had gone so far that God expected no [repentance](#) from them. Like Ecclesiastes 3, Amos shows there is a time of opportunity and a time when opportunity is gone. Evidently, Israel's opportunity to repent had faded away. It was too late!

As He had fought their battles *for* them in the past, now God would fight *against* them. Whatever their courage or expertise, nothing would go in their favor. The things that had formerly given Israel strength in war would be turned against them.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Prepare to Meet Your God! \(The Book of Amos\) \(Part One\)](#)

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