



[Amos 6:7-8](#)

(7) Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed. (8) The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

King James Version

Here [God](#) exposes the root cause of Israel's problems: *Pride brought forth their self-pleasing religion, their overconfidence in their strength and their self-indulgent lifestyles.* Where were their trust and [faith](#) in God? Pride causes people to resist and reject Him.

God saw this unwarranted pride most acutely in Israel's leadership. Most of this chapter is aimed directly at the leaders, upon whose conduct the nation's destiny is largely dependent. God shows in the Bible that the leader of any institution—nation, church, business, family—can make or break it. If a leader because of righteousness comes under the blessing of God, then the people are also blessed. But if the leader is cursed by God because of his wickedness, his people likewise come under the curse.

When Judah had a good and righteous king like [Josiah](#) (I Chronicles 34—35), the nation prospered, but under evil Manasseh (I Chronicles 33), the nation declined. In this century, England experienced a year of turmoil in 1936 over the determination of Edward VIII to marry the American divorcée Wallis Simpson. Yet, his brother, George VI, refusing to leave London during World War II, rallied the nation during its darkest hour. This principle of leadership holds true in any enterprise from large to small.

We can also see this in the second commandment: "You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children" ([Exodus 20:5](#)). The fathers—the leaders—and the children *both* suffer. When the fathers are blessed or cursed by God, so are the children. The difference is only in the measure of responsibility that each bears.

In life, everyone is a leader as well as a follower, depending on the circumstance. Amos shows that a leader should never be complacent and content with the way things are because pride follows—and shortly after it, a fall ([Proverbs 16:18](#)). Leaders of nations bear a great responsibility because, if they allow morals to collapse, all their military prowess and vaunted technology will not save them. Above all else, the first consideration of a leader is to be moral.

But the Israelite leaders of Amos' day were people who first considered their own reputation and condition. They compared themselves with others instead of God ([II Corinthians 10:12](#)). In ignoring their spiritual health, they could neither lead and guide the nation, nor help and counsel others. Since they had failed so horribly in their duty, God says the leadership would be among the first to be led away as captives.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

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

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