

1. There are seven questions in verses 3-8 that illustrate the interrelationship of cause and effect.
2. The questions in verses 3-5 expect the answer no. The questions in v. 6 still concern cause and effect, but both questions imply the answer yes.
3. The questions and implied answers of verses 3-6 prepare for Amos' conclusion in verses 7-8.
4. Each of the seven questions is designed to arouse his listeners to acknowledge the inescapable result to the cause.
5. The first question is the most difficult to understand. What is meant is that when two people are seen walking along a road together (the result) one can assume that this is so because of a prior decision to travel together (the cause).
6. But could the Lord and Israel be the "two" in the prophet's mind? Of course.
7. They had met (v. 2) and their walking together was a grave concern of the prophet.
8. But - their failure to walk together was the result of their sin (vv. 9-10) and would surely bring down the judgment of God upon them. (vv. 11-15)
9. The other questions are a little clearer. Why would a lion make such a roar (result)? Because the lion had just caught its prey (cause).
10. Why would a bird suddenly fall to the ground (result)? Because it has been caught in a snare (cause)! Why does a trap spring up? Because the trigger has been tripped!
11. Both questions in v. 4 concern the typical behavior of a lion when stalking and capturing prey.
12. The Hebrew words translated "roar" and "cry/growl" are the same words rendered "roars" and "utters/thunders" in 1:2.
13. Amos compared the lion's roar to the Lord speaking in 3:8. That is the point of the whole series of rhetorical questions.
14. As the lion's roar was to unsettle the prey, so was the Lord's speaking to unsettle Israel. The expected answer to the questions in v. 4 is no.
15. The lion does not roar unless he is about to attack, and he does not growl until the capture is made.
16. So - the Lord's roar from Zion (1:2) precedes His judgment on His people. As such, the rhetoric of judgment serves to prepare the prey for the capture.
17. The two questions in v. 5 concern the trapping of birds. The two questions illustrate clearly the prophet's principle that an action must have an adequate cause.

18. The significance of verse 6 is marked in four ways. First, while verses 3–5 have demanded the answer no, the questions in verse 6 demand the answer yes.
19. From experience Amos and his audience knew the significance of blowing a trumpet in a city. The trumpet blast signaled the approach of an enemy, causing residents in a city to tremble with fear.
20. No one in Amos's audience would have objected to his argument up to this point. All would have answered no to each rhetorical question in verses 3–5 and yes to the question in verse 6a.
21. The answer to the next question was not as straight-forward. Some people may not have been willing to answer yes to the idea that disaster in a city could be traced to the Lord.
22. The belief was that the Lord would not bring any misfortune upon His chosen people.
23. Apparently Amos sought agreement from his audience on the implications of the first six questions (vv. 3–6a).
24. Amos's main concern is that Israel recognize that God reveals Himself not only in matters of prosperity but also in terms of sin and judgment and to convince his audience that an unbroken relationship exists between their sins and a divinely inspired catastrophe.
25. God, the Sovereign Lord, is in control of this situation.
26. The words in v. 7 links the questions in vv. 3–6 with the declaration-question pattern in v. 8.
27. Again Amos used a series of seven, which his listeners would have expected to be complete, to prepare for his main point, which comes in an eighth member of the series.
28. The Lord can be the cause of disaster in a city (v. 6b); when he is, he reveals his plan to his servants the prophets. (v. 7-8)
29. The harsh message of judgment upon Israel (2:6–16) was the message Amos received in the council of God. God gave Amos a strong message to preach.
30. Amos now turned from hypothetical situations (vv. 3–6) to statements of fact.
31. Amos had heard the roar of the Lord's judgment upon Israel. That roar struck "fear" in Amos. He knew the lion's roar signaled judgment.
32. Amos did not enjoy his task of speaking unpleasant words. God would bring disaster on His people (v. 6b), and Amos must announce it.