

THE BOOK OF

Amos

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES FOR SMALL GROUPS

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

CREATED BY STEVE CASE

That's Enough

OPENING QUESTION

When have you been stopped for doing something wrong?

READ Amos 1:1–2:3.

1. What authority did Amos have to give his prophetic messages?

- A. God called him to be a prophet.
- B. God gave him a message to share with others.
- C. Anyone who wants to can claim, “God told me . . .”
- D. He was a shepherd, like King David.
- E. He was a fig farmer (*Amos 7:14*).
- F. His name means “to load” or “to carry” (*Ps 68:19; Isaiah 46:3-4*).
- G. He had a charisma that made lots of people follow him.
- H. He trained in the school of the prophets (*Amos 7:14-15*).
- I. Other.

2. What was the message to the people of Damascus/Syria (*vs 3-5*)?

- A. You're doing great!
- B. I can forgive you three times, but four is too many.
- C. Not a literal number, but saying, “You keep doing it and won't stop.”
- D. Enough! I'm going to put a stop to this by judging you now.
- E. You repeatedly thrashed my people in their own land.
- F. Acknowledge Yahweh as God.
- G. Your dynasty and capital are ruined; your people will become slaves.
- H. The nation of Israel will rule over you.
- I. Other.

3. What was the message to Gaza/Philistia (*vs 6-8*)?

- A. You're doing great!
- B. I won't forgive you 70 x 7.
- C. You sold Israelites as slaves to their relatives the Edomites.
- D. It's Judgment Day for you.
- E. I will completely wipe you out.
- F. You're falling apart.
- G. Repent.
- H. Where are your giants now?
- I. Other.

4. What was the message to Tyre/Phoenicia (vs 9-10)?

- A. You're doing great!
- B. Your riches from your sea trade will soon rot.
- C. You were allies with Israel, but you changed (*1 Kings 5:1, 7-11*).
- D. The way you treated my people is the way you will be treated.
- E. Turn to Yahweh.
- F. You sold my people as slaves to their relatives.
- G. Get ready for fire.
- H. Other.

5. What was the message to Edom, Ammon, and Moab (1:11-2:3)?

- A. You're doing great!
- B. Don't treat your relatives like this!
- C. Ripping open pregnant women—not okay!
- D. This calls for a divine intervention of judgment.
- E. The way you treat people calls for an immediate stop.
- F. Fire!
- G. Return to worshipping Yahweh.
- H. Other.

6. Why did Amos have messages for Israel's enemies?

- A. An enemy of Israel is an enemy of God.
- B. The whole world belongs to God; he communicates to everyone.
- C. How people treat others matters a great deal to God.
- D. God's patience and mercy have limits.
- E. The message for Israel comes next in Amos.
- F. One day you will meet God in some manner.
- G. Everyone needs to worship Yahweh.
- H. Everyone needs to treat others well.
- I. Other.

7. When is judgment a good thing? When is it a bad thing?

8. What does this portion of Amos tell you about God?

Covenant Consequences

OPENING QUESTION

Who got in trouble a lot in your family? What about in your school?

READ Amos 2:4–3:15.

1. Why did God pronounce judgment on his covenant people (vs 4-8)?

- A. They consistently broke their covenant with God.
- B. They broke the same covenant in the same way as their ancestors.
- C. They refused to stop breaking the covenant.
- D. Instead of living by the covenant, they rebelled against it.
- E. Judgment would change their bad behavior.
- F. Judgment would change their hard hearts.
- G. God decided it was time for judgment.
- H. The people's actions and attitudes brought on this judgment.
- I. Other.

2. What did God's people do that broke their covenant with God?

- A. They worshipped pagan gods.
- B. They failed to worship at the religious festivals God gave them.
- C. They sold their fellow countrymen as slaves.
- D. Enriching the rich at the expense of the poor.
- E. Sexual infidelity.
- F. Breaking the Sabbath command.
- G. No justice.
- H. No mercy.
- I. Other.

3. What had God done for his covenant people?

- A. Not much.
- B. A lot.
- C. Taken them out of Egyptian slavery.
- D. Provided God's laws, not just human laws.
- E. Financial blessings.
- F. He gave them the land of Canaan as promised.
- G. His presence in the sanctuary.
- H. Prophets with current messages from God.
- I. Other.

4. Why did God punish his covenant people?

- A. It wasn't punishment; it was discipline.
- B. God didn't punish his people; he only threatened punishment.
- C. They no longer lived like they were in covenant with Yahweh.
- D. God seems vindictive to me.
- E. God's people seem rebellious to me.
- F. Broken covenants result in consequences like this.
- G. Instead of a shepherd, God became a lion, hunter, and enemy.
- H. Other.

5. Why did/does God send warning messages before he acts (3:7)?

- A. God doesn't always do this.
- B. God consistently does this throughout Scripture.
- C. That's part of living in a covenant relationship.
- D. God hopes his people will respond to these messages.
- E. God communicates all the time.
- F. Special messages come through prophets.
- G. Specific messages come through prophets.
- H. The message is usually the same, but it comes in a new voice.
- I. Other.

6. What is God's prophetic message to his people today?

- A. Christ is coming!
- B. I love you.
- C. The earth is about to end—Judgment Day.
- D. Live like you're in a covenant relationship with me.
- E. I will destroy covenant breakers.
- F. Be just.
- G. Be merciful.
- H. Other.

7. What has God done for you? What has been your response?

8. When have you sensed a need to be more faithful or serious about your covenant relationship with God?

You've Been Bad

OPENING QUESTION

When have you been bad, but oblivious to it at the time?

READ Amos 4:1–13.

1. Who were the “fat cows” of Bashan (vs 1)?

- A. Literal fat cows in the fertile area of Bashan in Northern Israel.
- B. Cows ready to be slaughtered.
- C. Rich people in Israel.
- D. Females in the Israelite aristocracy.
- E. Alcoholics.
- F. The rich who oppressed the poor so the rich could stay rich.
- G. Religious leaders in Israel.
- H. Ladies who wore fish hooks for jewelry.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Amos tell them to offer sacrifices at Bethel and Gilgal (vs 4)?

- A. God had identified these two places for sacrificial offerings.
- B. That's where the people already offered their sacrifices.
- C. Amos wasn't being serious.
- D. There's more than one acceptable way to worship.
- E. As long as a person worships, where or how they do it doesn't matter.
- F. This illustrates willful disobedience.
- G. This explains why judgment was imminent.
- H. This makes no sense to me.
- I. Other.

3. Put an “X” by what God's people did right; a “✓” by what they did wrong.

RIGHT

- A. Offering sacrifices.
- B. Worshipping.
- C. Giving offerings.
- D. Daily devotions.
- E. Repenting.
- F. Treating people fairly.
- G. Treating people with love.
- H. Other.

WRONG

4. How did God try to get the attention of his wayward people?

- A. Famine.
- B. Drought.
- C. Blessings.
- D. Crops destroyed by blight and mildew.
- E. Locusts.
- F. Plagues.
- G. Enemy invasion.
- H. Death of Israel's soldiers.
- I. Other.

5. How does God try to get your attention?

- A. Punishment.
- B. Blessings.
- C. Lack of blessings.
- D. Warnings.
- E. Prophetic messages.
- F. Protection from harm.
- G. Crises.
- H. Other.

6. How would you describe the God of *Amos 4*?

- A. Loving.
- B. Patient.
- C. Hurt.
- D. Angry.
- E. Unpredictable.
- F. Jealous.
- G. Forgiving.
- H. Other.

7. How would you compare your understanding of God to what Amos revealed?

8. What would God's message through Amos be to you today?

Judgment Day— Good News or Bad News?

OPENING QUESTION

Do you fear judgment, seek judgment, or hardly think about it?

READ Read Amos 5:1–27.

1. Why does God sing a funeral song (vs 1)?

- A. His people left him.
- B. His people won't return to him.
- C. His people can't return to him.
- D. His people act religious, but they don't live it in practical ways.
- E. The Israelites continued to worship pagan gods at pagan altars.
- F. Justice gets twisted in favor of the rich and powerful.
- G. Funeral songs are God's most common genre of music.
- H. God is just another thing to people instead of the primary thing.
- I. Other.

2. What hope does God hold out for Israel?

- A. None.
- B. Little.
- C. A lot.
- D. They are still his people.
- E. Continuing to offer hope is one of God's weaknesses.
- F. The power of God can change any hopeless situation.
- G. Some will respond to his call and his prophetic messages.
- H. Some will turn from evil and start doing good.
- I. Other.

3. Why do you want God to come to earth?

- A. Set things right—bring about some justice.
- B. End the sorrow and pain on earth.
- C. Take me to heaven.
- D. I have something I'd like to finish first, and then Jesus could come.
- E. I don't think about this much.
- F. To be reunited with someone I lost to death.
- G. I'm a Christian.
- H. I'm not counting on this happening during my lifetime.
- I. Other.

4. What hypocrisy could God reveal about you when Christ returns?

- A. Going to church (but why?).
- B. Giving donations (but why?).
- C. Lots of church activity (but why?).
- D. Asking for grace but not giving it.
- E. Lots of God-talk but limited God-action.
- F. Saying/Acting like you believe in God, but you actually don't.
- G. Inconsistency.
- H. Living for God only one day a week.
- I. Other.

5. Why does God claim he hates the religious practices of his people?

- A. It wastes too many resources.
- B. Worship isn't that important to God.
- C. They are just going through the motions.
- D. For God, worship isn't as important as justice.
- E. It's all a show.
- F. He gets tired of praise music.
- G. It doesn't come from the heart.
- H. The quality of the worship performance is shoddy.
- I. Other.

6. What does justice look like from God's perspective?

- A. Helping poor people.
- B. Changing systems that make and keep people poor.
- C. Diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- D. Ending impunity for law-breakers.
- E. No bribes or kickbacks.
- F. Stopping what's wrong.
- G. No favoritism.
- H. Other.

7. In what ways is your experience similar to that of God's people during their 40 years of wandering in the desert? How is it different?

8. Why would God send people into exile? Why would He send you into exile?

Too Great To Fail

OPENING QUESTION

When have you felt strong and secure?

READ Amos 6:1-14.

1. Why were God's people unresponsive to Amos's warnings (vs 1)?

- A. They were doing too well to fail.
- B. As God's people, they couldn't fail.
- C. The Assyrians had conquered pagans, not the Israelites.
- D. Samaria and Jerusalem had great walls of protection.
- E. Amos was always crying, "Wolf! Wolf!"
- F. Their military remained top-notch.
- G. The rich were rich—no need to change that.
- H. The poor were just happy to be part of God's people.
- I. Other.

2. Why had Calneh, Hamath, and Gath been destroyed?

- A. Wickedness.
- B. Pride.
- C. Pagan worship.
- D. They ran out of giants to protect them.
- E. They weren't as great as they thought they were.
- F. Being overconfident, they had thought they were too great to fail.
- G. They were strong cities, but not as strong as Assyria.
- H. Good King Uzziah of Judah had destroyed the Philistine city of Gath.
- I. Other.

3. What were the Israelites doing wrong?

- A. Nothing.
- B. Everything.
- C. Some things.
- D. Financial security usually erodes spiritual security.
- E. Making money at the expense of the poor.
- F. They were just too busy.
- G. Making their religion cultural rather than personal and primary.
- H. Too much partying, like when Babylon would later fall (*Daniel 5*).
- I. Other.

4. What's wrong with being prosperous and having an easy life?

- A. Nothing.
- B. Money is the root of all evil (*1 Tim 6:10*).
- C. Prosperity comes from God.
- D. Prosperity for some means scarcity for others.
- E. We live in difficult times.
- F. That would be the ideal retirement.
- G. It ignores most people's reality.
- H. This was the opposite of Amos's life—he couldn't relate (*7:14*).
- I. Other.

5. Why not say the name "LORD" to those who carry out dead bodies?

- A. The LORD brought on this judgment.
- B. God wouldn't listen to them anymore.
- C. God couldn't listen to them anymore.
- D. They no longer believed in the LORD.
- E. Keep quiet or more condemnation might follow.
- F. It's too late after judgment has already been passed.
- G. In secular settings it's better not to mention God at all.
- H. Other.

6. Where do you see the conditions of Amos in the world today?

- A. Nowhere.
- B. Everywhere.
- C. America.
- D. Russia.
- E. China.
- F. Israel.
- G. Africa.
- H. Me or my family.
- I. Other.

7. How would you respond to another harangue from Amos?

8. Do changes in your life usually happen suddenly or gradually?

A Question of Survival

OPENING QUESTION

Have you ever been in a situation where your survival was in question?

READ Amos 7:1-17.

1. Why did God give Amos a vision of destructive locusts?

- A. Another severe warning to the Israelites.
- B. An attempt for them to change their ways.
- C. This reminded them of the 8th plague on the Egyptians (*Exodus 10*).
- D. This matched Joel's prophecy (*Joel 1*).
- E. God knew the people would repent and turn to him.
- F. God hoped the people would repent and turn to him.
- G. The problem was with the common people, not the king.
- H. The king had taken all of the first fruits of the harvest.
- I. Other.

2. Why did God give Amos a vision of a devastating fire?

- A. This vision didn't come from God.
- B. Another severe warning to the Israelites.
- C. An attempt for them to change their ways.
- D. This reminded them of Mount Sinai (*Exodus 19:18*).
- E. This matched Joel's prophecy (*Joel 2*).
- F. This reminded them of Elijah going to heaven (*2 Kings 2:11*).
- G. This foretold the cleansing of the earth by fire (*Rev 20:13-15*).
- H. It's an exaggeration—there's no fire at the bottom of the sea.
- I. Other.

3. Why did God give Amos a vision of a plumb line?

- A. God is ready to judge his people.
- B. God doesn't judge people, and neither should we.
- C. God has a standard he uses to judge.
- D. The people had no idea that what they were doing was so wrong.
- E. Comparing yourself to others can make you look good.
- F. Comparing yourself to God shows your need of God.
- G. God should have used the plumb line earlier.
- H. It's pointless; God won't ever do anything about it anyway.
- I. Other.

4. What plumb line does God use today?

- A. God doesn't judge or use plumb lines.
- B. The 10 commandments.
- C. The Sabbath.
- D. *Micah 6:8*.
- E. The Beatitudes.
- F. The entire Bible.
- G. The still, small voice of the Holy Spirit.
- H. How you treat "the least of these" (*Matthew 25:31-46*).
- I. The Church.
- J. Other.

5. Why did God hold back from sending the locusts and fire?

- A. He didn't.
- B. It was just a delay.
- C. Sometimes God changes his mind.
- D. Sometimes people change their ways.
- E. Amos interceded for the people.
- F. Prayer changes things.
- G. God's people would have been completely destroyed.
- H. Other.

6. What are messages you don't want to hear right now?

- A. The end is near.
- B. The end is a long time from now.
- C. Things are getting worse.
- D. Things are getting better.
- E. Repent.
- F. Change.
- G. Forgive.
- H. Other.

7. Has God given you any message(s) to share? If so, what?

8. Why are God's messages often shocking, especially to those in positions of power or leadership?

The End Brings Change

OPENING QUESTION

When has something good come after something bad in your life?

READ Amos 8:1-14.

1. What do the four visions (locusts, fire, plumb line, ripe figs) tell you?

- A. They all give the same basic message.
- B. Each has a unique message.
- C. They seem unrelated to each other.
- D. All of them contain bad news.
- E. All of them contain good news.
- F. What really matters is the response to these visions.
- G. God will judge.
- H. God will destroy Israel.
- I. Other.

2. What does the vision of the ripe fruit communicate?

- A. God provides crops for his people.
- B. It's time for a fig feast.
- C. The figs will now rot.
- D. It's a play on the Hebrew words *qayis* (summer fruit) and *qes* (end).
- E. The agricultural cycle continues year after year.
- F. Judgment has come.
- G. Things are going to start to stink real soon.
- H. It's too late.
- I. Other.

3. How can religious people treat other people so poorly (vs 4-6)?

- A. It's quite easy.
- B. Everybody does it.
- C. It's just cultural.
- D. Greed—charge more and give less.
- E. Compartmentalized lives—religious times; then regular times.
- F. Perfected hypocrisy.
- G. Religious people don't expect God to do anything; they do it all.
- H. It happens gradually, like the "frog boiling in the kettle."
- I. Other.

4. Why does the earth react to God's judgments (vs 8-9)?

- A. Nature responds to God better than humans do.
- B. God brings judgments on nature, too.
- C. God brings judgments through nature.
- D. This illustrates how things are way out of whack.
- E. This illustrates God will upset everything (earthquake).
- F. This illustrates God will cleanse everything (flood).
- G. This illustrates God will start over (heavens undone).
- H. Other.

5. What does a "famine for the words of the LORD" look like (vs 11)?

- A. No more messages from God.
- B. No more listening to messages from God.
- C. Lack of access to the Bible.
- D. Only dead prophets—no more living ones.
- E. A lot like a famine of food.
- F. Crisis.
- G. People will be more likely to turn to God.
- H. People will be more likely to turn away from God.
- I. Other.

6. What seems most hopeless to you right now?

- A. The way God is acting.
- B. The way God isn't acting.
- C. The condition of my country.
- D. The condition of my church.
- E. The condition of my family.
- F. The condition of me.
- G. Things are getting worse.
- H. Other.

7. When do religious practices like Sabbath, personal devotions, and practicing justice cut into your regular living?

8. When does your daily life edge out your religious practices like Sabbath, personal devotions, and practicing justice?

Depths and Heights

OPENING QUESTION

How extreme are the highs and lows in your life?

READ Read Amos 9:1-15.

1. Why is God standing at the altar (*vs 1*)?

- A. That's where God always is.
- B. Standing puts him in a higher position to pass judgment.
- C. This is the sanctuary in heaven.
- D. This is the sanctuary on earth.
- E. It's the altar of burnt offering.
- F. It's the altar of incense where prayers ascend to heaven.
- G. This is the pagan altar in Bethel.
- H. This temple will now be destroyed.
- I. Other.

2. What do you find if you compare *vs 1-4* with *Psalms 139:7-9*?

- A. They say the same thing.
- B. They say the opposite thing.
- C. It's a different God.
- D. It's the same God.
- E. It's a message to different people.
- F. It's a message to the same people.
- G. God is "good news" to some people.
- H. God is "bad news" to some people.
- I. Other.

3. Pick one thing you think makes the LORD so awesome.

- A. Power.
- B. Love.
- C. Justice.
- D. Mercy.
- E. Control of nature.
- F. Eternal.
- G. Greatness—transcendence.
- H. Personal Intimacy.
- I. Other.

4. When will God destroy his own people?

- A. God will never do that.
- B. God already did this.
- C. Each time the temple gets destroyed his people are destroyed.
- D. Each time his people turn to other gods.
- E. When God's people claim to follow God but their actions deny it.
- F. God sifts out his true people to reveal his remnant.
- G. At the final judgment.
- H. Other.

5. When will God restore his people?

- A. It will never happen.
- B. It has already happened.
- C. When God creates a new heaven and a new earth.
- D. When Israel occupies all of the Holy Land.
- E. This describes America now.
- F. God has people in all nations.
- G. When God restores the remnant from all nations (*vs 12*).
- H. Other.

6. What hope does God provide through Amos' messages?

- A. None.
- B. Restoration.
- C. The best days are ahead.
- D. A return to the "good ol' days."
- E. Blessings galore.
- F. Peace and security.
- G. Dominion over others.
- H. Other.

7. Which part(s) of Amos stand out for you? Will you quote any of the verses like James, the brother of Jesus, quoted at the Jerusalem Council (*Acts 15:16-17*)?

8. When will you read Amos again? With whom will you share these Biblical messages?

