

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Oct. 21, 2012

Passage: Amos 6:1-14

Memory Passage: Romans 8:33-34

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 6:1-14.** As you read this chapter, write down/take note of: 1) any repeated words or phrases and their significance, 2) how many sections are in this chapter and with which verse each section begins, 3) all verbs that describe God's actions, 4) themes reiterated from the previous 5 chapters of Amos, and 5) any questions you have about the text.

(b) To what city does Zion refer, and why should her mention grab our attention? Why would people feel "at ease" there? Why would people feel "secure" on the mountain of Samaria, and are their reasons valid (i.e. is their security real)?

(c) Explain the phrase, "the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes!" Are these notable men the same men or different men than have already been mentioned in v. 1 and how do you know?

(d) In what ways are you "at ease" & "secure" in the church? In what ways is our church "at ease" and "secure?" Write down several examples for each question so you are ready to discuss this question in class.

(e) *Family: Read Amos 6:1-3* and ask your family to act out what they think the word "woe" means. If their actions are close to the meaning (a condition of suffering, grief, affliction), then ask them to read to themselves Amos 6:1 and identify the people to whom Amos pronounces the woe (those who are at ease in Zion, feel secure on the mountain of Samaria, and are the notable men of the first of the nations, all describing the same people: God's people). Explain that Zion is Jerusalem, and upon the Mountain of Samaria was a fortress that was almost impenetrable. Now lead in a discussion of why they should not be at ease (v. 3—they may think disaster is far away but in reality God is about to judge) and why they should not feel secure (v. 2—just as these cities were strong yet fallen, so will Jerusalem and especially Samaria). Inform your family that this week we will examine the 2nd & 3rd "woe oracles" that Amos pronounces over Israel.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 6:1-14.** What is the expected answer to the question Amos poses in v. 2? What is the question's rhetorical point? Is the statement Amos makes about the people in v. 3 a positive or negative statement? How do you know?

(b) Summarize in one sentence what Amos is saying about Israel in vs. 4-6. Now summarize it in one word. Now explain what Amos specifically means with each statement (see Gen. 37:12ff for help with the last statement). Is God against beds, couches, singing, eating, and drinking, or is He saying something else through Amos?

(c) Would Amos' words be applicable to the 21st century church? If so, how, and if not, why not? In what ways do these statements describe *you*? How might the body life of BCC (which includes your personal life) be lived in order to avoid God's describing us in the way He describes Israel through Amos. Be ready to discuss in detail your answer with your class.

(d) *Family: Read Amos 6:4-6.* Explain that these words describe a people who had become extravagant, decadent, spoiled, and lazy. They describe people who have taken God's blessings and abused them to the point where God is going to judge them. Have your family draw pictures of each scene represented, and then take time for everyone to explain their pictures. Use this time as a discussion to point out in great detail how the rich were living. Then remind them of verses such as 1:6-7a, 4:1, 5:7, 10-12, & 24 and ask how the pictures they drew illustrate their oppression of the poor and lack of justice & righteousness.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 6:1-14.** How does the "therefore" that begins v. 7 connect what precedes with what follows? To what does "the pride of Jacob" refer, and why does God "abhor" it? Why does God "hate" her "strongholds?"

(b) The situation described in vs. 9-10 is difficult to understand, but don't let that deter you! Ask God to give you understanding, read it through several times, meditate upon the words, and write down what you think it means. Then, write down several ways that these verses apply to you as a 21st century Christian.

(c) How would you respond to this question if posed by a new believer whom you are discipling: "I don't like reading that God hates or abhors something. It makes me feel like God is not nice or loving. How should I understand these verses?"

(d) *Family: Read Amos 6:8.* Ask, "What do you think of when you read that God hates something?" Prod some discussion to gain an understanding of what your kids are thinking/feeling. Then explain that God's hating sin and sinners is a direct consequence of His holiness and righteousness. Also explain that it is not right for humans to hate, because our hate is driven by sin, not righteousness and holiness. So thinking of God hating in the same way as we hate is not correct. Then remind your family that God is also love by reading 1 John 4:7-21, and read Rom. 5:6-8 to show that God showed His love for us by sending Christ to the cross to die for us while we were yet sinners. Both love and hate are found perfectly in God's character.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Amos 6:1-14.** What do you learn in v. 11 about the people who will be judged (i.e. rich, poor, both)? What is the expected answer for the questions in v. 12a, and how do these question set up the indictment in 12b?
- (b) Compare 6:12b with 5:7. What differences do you see, and are these differences intended to convey different thoughts or just another way of saying the same thing?
- (c) Amos mentions two real towns in v. 13: Lo-debar means “nothing” and Karnaim means “horns.” How does knowing these meanings help you understand what Amos is saying? What is the main indictment against Israel in v. 13? Does this indictment describe the 21st century church as well? Why or why not?
- (d) What nation will God raise up against Israel (cf. 2 Kings 17:6) and when will this happen ☺?
- (e) *Family: Read Amos 6:13.* Ask your family to describe what would happen if a horse tried to gallop on rocks, or if a farmer tried to plow a rocky field (and remind them that there were no John Deere tractors in Amos’s day!). Then ask what answer Amos expects to these questions (“No, horses don’t run on rocks and farmers don’t plow rocky fields with oxen!”). Now draw their attention to the “but” in the middle of the verse and ask, “What do these questions have to do with the second half of the verse?” (Just as horses should not run on rocks and farmers plow with oxen on rocky ground, so also Israel should not have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.) Finish by reviewing what you have learned about justice & righteousness so far in Amos, and how the rich people in Israel have angered God in this area.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Deut. 8:1-20 & Amos 6:1-14.** What similarities are there between these two chapters? What should Israel have learned from Deut. 8 to avoid the judgment that Amos prophesies?
- (b) There is a constant call to “remember” or “not forget” in Deut. 8. What were God’s people to remember? What would they be reminding themselves about the character of God when they remembered these acts? How can remembering these characteristics of God’s character help *you* avoid God’s judgment/discipline in your own life?
- (c) Write down at least 5 instances from your life in which God has acted in a way that manifests His character, and how remembering these acts will help you trust Him better in the future (i.e. in what situations might remembering help you be faithful?). Be ready to share these in your class to encourage other believers in their walk.
- (d) *Family:* Lead your family through (a)-(c) above. Be ready to share instances from your own life to teach your children about God’s past faithfulness and how His past faithfulness helps you better trust Him both now and in the future.

DATE: Oct. 21st, 2012**PASSAGE: Amos 6:1-14***The Pride of Jacob*