

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Sept. 2, 2012

Passage: Amos 1:1-2

Memory Passage: Romans 8:1-23 (Review)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Deut. 13:1-5 & 18:15-22.** According to 13:1-2 what 2 things must be evaluated when assessing a prophet and his message and why were these things important? Could there be prophets who gave a sign or wonder that comes to pass but who is not speaking for/from God (see, for example, Ex. 7:20-22)? What were God's people to do if the prophet failed either test?
- (b) How were these false prophets who failed these tests used by God in the life of His people (v. 3)? How would their response to false prophets prove their love for God?
- (c) According to 18:15-22, how long should God's people listen to what His prophets say? Who is this ultimate Prophet (cf. Acts 3:22-24 & 7:37)? What are the requirements a prophesy must meet to be considered from God?
- (d) *Family:* Inform your family that we are beginning Amos as we begin a study of the Minor Prophets. We will return to Romans in January, and visit more Minor Prophets in upcoming breaks from Romans. Spend time tonight memorizing the order of the 12 Minor Prophets. You can make this fun by making up your own acrostic to aid in memorizing, such as: "Hosea's Jaguar Ate Orange Jello Men! Now He Zaps Happy Zebra's Mom!" Or make up a song that includes all the books.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Amos 1:1 & 7:12-15.** These verses contain all we know about Amos. Where did Amos live? In what country is Tekoa (see a map in your Bible or look here: http://www.bible-history.com/maps/israel_judah_kings.html.) In what city and country did he prophesy? What is significant about where he was sent considering where he was from?
- (b) Why does Amos say, "I was no prophet nor a prophet's son" and why is this important? How do you think this fact affected the reception of his prophecy (cf. 7:10)? What was Amos doing when God called him? What were his professions?
- (c) Given what you know about Amos, write a paragraph describing his daily life prior to being called by God. (Some details that might help: Fig trees did not grow in Tekoa, and figs were usually consumed by poor people. Also, think of all Amos would do as a shepherd/herdsman.) What was significant about him that caused God to call him?
- (d) *Family:* Prior to the lesson print the map at the link in (a). Begin by reviewing your memorization of the order of the Minor Prophets. **Read Amos 1:1.** Point out Tekoa on the map and note that it is only 10 miles from Jerusalem and 5 miles from Bethlehem. Ask, "What did Amos do for his job?" Then **Read Amos 7:14-15** and ask, "What else did Amos do?" Write these professions on your white board. Then ask, "What was Amos NOT, and why is this important?" (Not a prophet or a prophet's son; he had no experience as a prophet nor was anyone in his family a prophet to give advice or teach him, so he was not prophesying for money or fame, but God called him anyway for His own glory.)

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Amos 1:1 & 2 Chron. 26:1-15.** Amos prophesied during the reigns of what kings? How old was Uzziah when he came to the throne and how long did he reign? According to 2 Chron. 26:4-5, what is the Scripture's assessment of his reign?
- (b) Describe the three other areas of prosperity in Uzziah's reign (in addition to spiritual prosperity) about which you learn in vs. 6-8 & 11-14, vs. 9-10, and v. 15.
- (c) Why would the prosperity of Judah be of importance as we contemplate Amos' prophecy? How would this prosperity have affected the life of Amos, both prior to and after his call?
- (d) *Family:* **Read 2 Chron. 26:1-15**, and as you read have your family draw pictures of what they see in their mind's eye. Stop your reading periodically to allow them to draw and to discuss what King Uzziah accomplished under his reign. You might also read the sections out of order, such as vs. 1-5, (stop and discuss while they draw), then vs. 6-8 & 11-14 which both deal with military prosperity (then stop and discuss while they draw), then vs. 9-10 (stop) and finally v. 15. Each of these areas deals with different types of national prosperity (spiritual, military, economic, agricultural, and technological). Then have each person show their art and describe what they have drawn. **Read Amos 1:1** and explain that Amos lived in Judah and was called to prophesy to Israel during King Uzziah's reign in Judah (as well as King Jeroboam II's reign in Israel, app. 760 B.C.).

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Amos 1:1, 2 Kings 14:23-15:7, & 2 Chron. 26:16-23.** How long did Jeroboam II reign in Israel (2 Kings 14:23)? What did Jeroboam accomplish during his reign (14:25 & 28)? In spite of this expanding of Israel's borders, how did God assess his reign and what reason was given (14:24)?

(b) Given the expansion of Israel's borders under King Jeroboam's reign, in what condition do you think the nation was in (think about the same categories as you examined yesterday concerning Judah under King Uzziah's reign)? What affect would this have on Amos, his prophecy, and its reception?

(c) Judah's King Uzziah (whom you studied yesterday) was also known as Azariah. In spite of his commendation from the Lord as a king who "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" (15:2), what displeasing thing did this king do (15:4)? According to 2 Chron. 26:16-23 what precipitated this judgment?

(d) Consider for a moment the life of King Uzziah of Judah. Uzziah "did what was right in the sight of the LORD" and yet "when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction." Take stock of your life and consider whether or not you are becoming proud in your strength. What ways can you avoid becoming a person who does not obey God or depend on God? Also, in what ways can you avoid the pride that comes with prosperity and strength (remember that you are living in prosperity compared to much of the world)?

(e) *Family: Read 2 Kings 15:1-7.* Explain that King Azariah and King Uzziah are different names for the same king. Lead in a discussion of what might have happened to King Uzziah to have both the commendation (v. 3) and the condemnation (vs. 4-5) from the Lord. Then **Read 2 Chron. 26:16-23** to fill in the blanks of what happened. Then lead in a discussion about how important it is to stay focused on being faithful & obedient to the Lord, staying humble even when He blesses us with prosperity and things are going well.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 1:1-9:15.** Really, all of it! It is only 146 verses ☺. As you read, write down (1) any questions you have, (2) what you find to be the most encouraging, (3) what you find to be the most sobering, (4) themes you observe, and (5) anything you notice about the structure of the book (i.e. how many judgments do you see, how many oracles do you see ["Hear . . ."], how many visions do you see ["This is what the Lord showed me . . ." or "I saw . . ."], how does the book end, who speaks other than Amos/God, etc.).

(b) Given what you learned this week and your reading today of the entire book, do you think Amos is relevant for us today in 21st century Cabot AR, USA? Is it relevant for you, personally, living in the 21st century? Write down at least 4 areas of relevancy and be ready to discuss them in your class on Sunday.

(c) *Family: Read Amos 1:1.* Start a discussion about what it must have been like for Amos to be shepherding his flock, minding his own business, and then to be called by God to go to another country to speak judgment on His behalf. Would they have gone? Would they have been scared? Would they have felt unqualified? Would they be concerned about what their friends and neighbors would say? Etc. Then emphasize that we must live our lives being faithful to what God has called us to do (Amos was faithfully serving as a shepherd and a businessman) and be ready to go whenever and wherever God calls us. God calls regular, normal, everyday people to serve Him in the advancement of His kingdom.

DATE: Sept. 2, 2012

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An Introduction to Amos

In Amos 1:1-2a we find 6 facts about the man Amos.