

Amos

BIBLE STUDY

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(unless otherwise noted)



Jonesboro, Georgia

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Lesson One

Introduction to the Book of Amos



Day One

1. Begin working on memorizing Psalm 111:1 to recite next week. Write it out here. Keep it in mind as you read through Amos.

Our first lesson is always an overview. Try not to get bogged down in things you don't understand as you read. Seek overall impressions. We are not yet interpreting, just observing. Keep in mind that the Old Testament was Jesus' Bible when He walked the earth. He studied this book. He pondered, He disciplined Himself to read and consider. Stop now and ask the Lord to help you handle this unique book with care. Pray for insight. We are attempting to trace the mind of the Author by pure observation, and we need the Spirit of God to help us.

2. Read the book of Amos, preferably at one sitting, noting your initial impressions below. Put a question mark beside any verse you don't understand or would like to further research.

3. To whom is this book written? How do you know?
4. Who is the author? What are we told about him?
5. Why is he writing?
6. What kind of literature is this? Historical narrative? Poetry? Prophecy? A letter? Identify passages where there are transitions from one type of literature to another and note them below. Mark them in your text. You may draw lines between the verses (before the first verse and after the last one) where the changes occur and identify them in the left margin.

Do you know any special laws of hermeneutics (the laws of interpreting language) that apply to these kinds of literature?

Day Two

1. The Bible is an historically trustworthy book. It claims to be an historical document. What can you find out about the historical background to this book?
 - a. Who is mentioned? What individuals, people groups?

- b. What events can you identify? Can you estimate or research a date when these events are occurring?
2. What geographical locations are mentioned?
3. What are some repeated words or phrases?
4. Read over the book again and give a title to each chapter. These should be as closely related to the text as possible, not long, not yet interpretive, but just observational. Record your title on the chart below, and also on your text. (You may want to write on your text in pencil. As you study, you may change your titles).

CHAPTER	TITLE

5. Now try to outline the book and write it below. It should be simple, and once again, marked on your text in pencil, as you may change your mind with further study.

6. Can you begin to see threads of truth running through the book? What would you say are some of the themes? What is the major theme? (Put a star beside it.)

We chose Amos 4:12b for the title of our lessons. Would you choose another verse as the theme verse?

Day Three

1. How would you describe Israel's condition from the things you have observed in the text thus far?

2. The covenants God made with Israel are background to this book. We need to familiarize ourselves with the content of the covenants again.
 - a. What is a covenant? How does it change in significance when God is one of the parties of the covenant?

 - b. Look up the following and write out the major components of these covenants.
 - 1) Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18.

- 2) Mosaic Covenant. Exodus 19:5, 6

 - 3) Palestinian Covenant. Deuteronomy 28-30, especially 30:1-10.

 - 4) Davidic Covenant. II Samuel 7:12-16.

 - 5) New Covenant. Jeremiah 31:31-34.
3. On Page 6 you will find Psalm 111 printed out again. Read through it, and write out connections you see already to the Book of Amos. Begin exegesis of Psalm 111 if time allows.

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

1. What were your thoughts when you heard we were studying Amos?
2. Should ladies study Amos? Should ladies study theology? Why or why not?
3. Have you identified any cultural issues in the book with our current issues? These could be either secular or Christian.
4. To what extent should Christians involve themselves in social issues? Do you use current events to open up discussions with unbelievers or other believers? Name some. i.e., war in Iraq, environmentalism, media coverage of cruelty to animals.
5. What biblical principles are the basis for your opinions on these issues? I.e. man made in the image of God.

Psalm 111

Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart,
In the company of the upright and in the assembly.

2. Great are the works of the LORD;
They are studied by all who delight in them.
3. Splendid and majestic is His work;
And His righteousness endures forever.
4. He has made His wonders to be remembered;
The LORD is gracious and compassionate.
5. He has given food to those who fear Him;
He will remember His covenant forever.
6. He has made known to His people the power of His
works, In giving them the heritage of the nations.
7. The works of His hands are truth and
justice; All His precepts are sure.
8. They are upheld forever and ever;
They are performed in truth and uprightness.
9. He has sent redemption to His
people; He has ordained His
covenant forever; Holy and awesome
is His name.
10. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do His
commandments; His praise endures forever.

Lesson Two

Amos 1: God Sends An Earth-Shattering Message



Lesson One required of us to consider the book as a whole. Each subsequent lesson will cover one chapter each week. This week we will read and reread Amos 1 to trace the mind of the Author. Ask Him now for help in knowing Him better as you study.

Day One

1. Write out Psalm 111:1 below, and begin working on 111:2 to recite next week.

2. Compare Psalm 111:1, 2 with Amos 5:21-23. What lessons may we learn?

3. What was the role of the Old Testament prophet?

4. Look up Hebrews 1:1, 2 for background to Amos. What were some of the “*many ways*” by which God spoke to Amos? Why do you think Amos made little of the encounters?

5. Compare the first 4 words of Amos 1:3 with the first five words of Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39.

6. Read Amos 1 and write out some initial impressions.

7. Amos immediately describes himself as a “*shepherd*”.
 - a. What other shepherds can you list in the Scriptures? Note the social status of some of them.

 - b. From your reading of Amos, can you make any deductions as to his status?

 - c. What lessons do you think Amos learned in tending sheep that may have prepared him for his prophetic calling?

8. Read the summary of Figures of Speech. Scan the book and identify some below. Does this help us in understanding the man?

Day Two

1. Amos identifies himself as being from Tekoa. Circle it in red on the “Canaan in Old Testament Times” map given with this lesson. (Approximate boundaries have been drawn in from Ryrie Study Bible map, c. 925-842 B.C.) Why do you think Amos tells us where he is from?

2. Who was king in Judah when Amos prophesied? What can you find out about him from II Chronicles 26?
 - a. How old was he when he was made king?

 - b. How long did he reign?

 - c. What is the significance of his death in Isaiah 6:1?

- d. What do we know of his pursuit of God?
 - e. What were some of his accomplishments? What does that have to do with the message of Amos?

 - f. What was the turning point in his success?
 - g. Who confronted him in his sin? What was his response?

 - h. Describe his demise.
3. And the king in Israel? What do we know about him from II Kings 14:23-29?
4. Do some research concerning the “earthquake” mentioned in 1:1.
5. What is the significance of the language describing God’s voice as a “roar”?
6. What is the significance of God’s location when He roars?
7. Describe what is happening in 1:4-15.
8. On your “Canaan in Old Testament Times” map, mark the areas addressed in 1:4-15. Put a number beside the location on the map (according to its sequence in the text), and write in the reference.

2. What do the “I will’s” of 1:2-2:3 indicate?

3. Research the significance of some of the locations mentioned in 1:3-15 and record your findings below.
 - a. Kir is mentioned in 1:5. According to Amos 9:7c, what is the significance? Keep in mind that only God can accomplish such historical changes.

 - b. Read 1:11. Jacob was Israel’s ancestor. Edom descended from Esau. What was their history (Genesis 25:22, 23)?

4. What does “fire” express in Genesis 19:24 and Numbers 11:1-3?

5. Look back over the violations listed on your chart on page 10. What are some of the heart issues that lead to these sins?

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

- 1) What does Chapter 1 show us that God values?

- 2) What does Chapter 1 show us that brings displeasure to God?

- 3) In what ways can I show that I love what God loves, hate what He hates?

- 4) What are some pitfalls to living in a prosperous culture?

- 5) Discuss some specific ways to avoid those pitfalls.

Lesson Three

Amos 2: God's Justice Reaches His Own

God is circling, and the noose is tightening around Israel's neck. Most commentators think Israel was oblivious to what was to come when they heard the content of Chapter One. That is characteristic of a materialistic mindset. Ask the Lord now to give you a "forever" mindset as you study His word. Tell Him that you are not concerned with filling in blanks to keep up with others, but that you want to "in all your ways **acknowledge Him.**"

Day One

1. Write out Psalm 111:1, 2 below, and begin working on vs. 3. How does the eternity of God's righteousness address the problem of materialism?

2. Remember that the descendants of Edom, Ammon, and Moab are blood relatives of Israel. God's expression of wrath is coming nearer. Let's give a little more attention to the sins of Edom. List them again from 1:11, and then write out the opposite of each. How are you teaching your children to avoid the sins of Edom? And how are you learning them yourself?

3. Read Amos 2. Summarize the content and give your initial impressions.

4. On your “Canaan in Old Testament Times” map, mark the areas addressed in 2:1-8. Put a number beside the location on the map (according to its sequence in the text), and write in the reference. Describe the wisdom of God’s communication.

5. Fill in the blanks on the chart on page 10 with the information from 2:1-8, 12, 14-16.

6. Only one offence for Moab is given, and it is difficult to interpret. Compare it with some of those of the previous nations. Check a commentary to see what the interpretive options may be.

7. See what you can find out about the “Moabite Stone”. Does it help in understanding the nation’s sins?

8. What beautiful story is recorded in the Bible regarding a Moabite woman? What does it tell us about God’s desire and plan for Israel?

9. What is the first charge God brings to Judah (vs. 4)? What is being referred to? Mark the two references in this verse with the symbol from our chart of repetitions.

10. The heathen nations did not have this. Is it fair that they are judged by God so severely? Why or why not? Discuss the difference between the judgments of God’s people and the pagans.

11. What are “citadels”?
 - a. How often are they mentioned in the book? Mark them with your method of choice.

b. Why are citadels important to God's message through Amos?

12. There is not much description of God's judgment on Judah. Why is that not necessary?

Day Two

1. In 2:6, 7, what four categories of people are mentioned who are mistreated?
 - a. What does the mention of these categories tell you about God? See Jeremiah 22:16.
 - b. What lessons should we learn and teach our children as a result?
2. What location is referred to twice in 2:8?
 - a. Note Exodus 22:26 for an explanation of the mention of "garments". This was given in the Law, so should be marked as a "Covenant" reference.
 - b. What does vs. 8 indicate that their sin was?
3. Underline the pronouns in 2:8-13 (e.g. "they", "you") in green. Where does it change? Why?

4. With each of the nations addressed, God's edict was "I will not revoke his punishment." What do you think that means?

5. According to vs. 9, who was responsible for their conquest in Canaan? Did people die in those invasions? Who was responsible for those deaths? Were the innocent killed? Does that indicate injustice? Defend your answer.

6. The first of several references to Egypt is in 2:10. Either look in a concordance for each or scan the book. Mark each one and cross reference to create a "trail" through the book. How many references to Egypt are there in the book?
7. What reminders might God be addressing in bringing Egypt to their minds?
 - Psalm 111:2, 4, 6

 - Jeremiah 34:13

8. List the things in 2:9-11 that God is said to have done. What do they tell us about Him?

9. See if you can find out why God mentions the Amorites in 2:9, 10.

10. Who were Nazirites? Read Numbers 6:21 to refresh your memory. What do you think God was communicating in setting these men apart? Remember the culture into which they were moving.

11. Who was probably the most well-known Nazirite in the Old Testament? Did vows and rules make him successful? Did they change his heart?

Day Three

1. How is God counseling His people in 2:11b? “ ‘Is this not so, O sons of Israel?’ declares the Lord.”

2. God tells what He has done for His people in vss. 9-11. What is the first word in vs. 12?
 - a. What heart issues does the verse indicate?

 - b. See Jeremiah 5:12, 13 for another description of their disdain for God’s words.

3. How did Israel respond to the Nazirites according to vs. 12? How do you think they did that?

4. How did they respond to the prophets? What 5 things did they say to the prophets according to Isaiah 30:10, 11? Do you know anyone who is saying comparable things? Pray for that one now.

5. It is difficult to determine the antecedent of “I” in vs. 13. Some think Israel is speaking. Some think God is speaking. Do some research on the verse and give an interpretation.

6. Read vss. 14-16 and list the categories of people referred to. What is God’s opinion of the “strong”? Give some scriptural evidence to support your answer.

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

- 1) What are some ways we can learn to avoid the sins of Edom and teach them to our children?

- 2) What lessons should we teach our children regarding those who are mistreated?

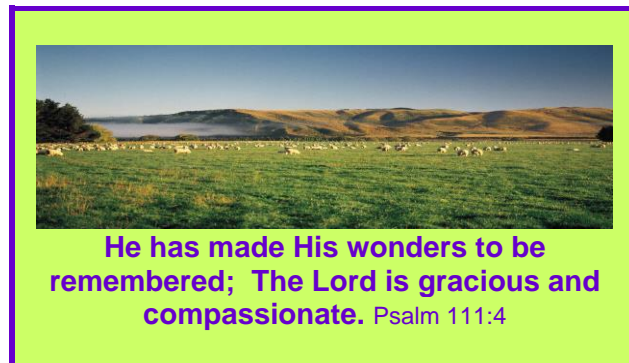
- 3) What self-counseling method is illustrated in the use of Egypt in the messages?

- 4) Who is the “witness nation” today? Share some ideas on how to reach the “Moabite” women in our circles with the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.

- 5) What evidences of ingratitude can be found in your attitude and communication? What about your family?

Lesson Four

Amos 3: God, the Lion That Roared



The moral condition of Israel had been due to no lack of effort on God's part. He had led His people out of Egypt, driven out the Canaanites to give the land to her, given her teachers who would declare righteousness to her. But all His care had been without their heeding.

Day One

1. Write out Psalm 111:3 from memory, and begin working on 111:4.

2. How does Psalm 111:4 apply to the message of Amos?

3. Three different words are used in Psalm 111:2-4 for "works...wonders." Mark your text with the following and list a few that fascinate you, amaze you, humble you.
 - 111:2 "Great are the **works** of the LORD..." Lit. "*the things He has made*"

 - 111:3 "...majestic is His **work**..." Refers to "*His providential acts.*"

 - 111:4 "...**wonders** to be remembered..." Refers to "*the saving acts of God...*"

4. Chapter 2 verse 12 tells us that Israel told God's messengers to be quiet. According to Ezekiel 3:7, why did Israel not listen to the prophets? Does that remind you of anybody on your prayer list? Pray for that person right now.
5. Go back through chapters 1 and 2 and list some things God hates in the left column below. In the right column, list the opposite quality, that God must, then, love. Pray those things to Him and into your own soul.

Things from Amos God Hates	Things God Must Love

6. Read Amos 3. Record your questions and give your initial impressions.
7. What is the first word in the chapter? Does it remind you of a study we recently did? What was the meaning of the word in that book?
- a. Mark the occurrences of the word in Amos with an "ear" symbol, and write the upcoming reference above it, creating a "chain" through the book.
- 3:1, 13
 - 4:1
 - 5:1
 - 7:16
 - 8:4
- b. Now mark it in 5:23, and discuss the connection.
8. In 3:1, God addresses two groups of people. Who are they? Who is included?

9. As a reminder, why does He mention Egypt? Give two reasons from our study on Page 15, question 7.
10. Discuss the message of 3:2.
11. How many questions does God ask in vss. 3-6? Look for what they have in common to determine His purpose in asking them.
12. How do the questions build the argument for 3:2?

Day Two

1. Does 3:6b disturb you? What does it mean?
 - a. Read Isaiah 45:5-7 in this regard.

Does it apply to the bombings of the Twin Towers in New York on 9/11/2001?
Where was He that morning?

2. Mark a pink "W" on every communication word in 3:7-10. Now do it in Chapters 1-3 if you have not already done so.
3. What does 3:7 tell you about Amos?
What does it tell you about God?
4. What response is expected in v. 8? Were the people living like that? Should we? How?

5. Read 3:9. Where is Ashdod?
- Where is Samaria?
 - What is God saying in this verse?

 - How does Deuteronomy 17:6 relate?

 - What else might be involved? How may this verse relate to us?
6. To whom are the pronouns of verses 9-11 referring? Mark them with the proper color. How many times is "citadel" referred to? Let's put a brown box (unless you can draw a fortress!) around those occurrences, here and in the first three chapters.
7. Discuss the significance of v. 10. How did it happen? What had they been given so that they would know what is right? Mark it.

We and our children are being affected by the thinking of our culture. In what ways can we resist that? How do you distinguish between the things that are sinful and those that are innocuous?

8. What is the first word in v. 11? Mark it. When you see a "therefore" see what it's there for. What is the point?

Who is the enemy mentioned in v. 11?

9. What does the strange simile in v. 12 mean? (Mark it as a simile, "Just as...So...").

Day Three

1. What is Israel called in v. 13?
used?

What title for God is

What is the significance in God's choice of words?

2. Why is Bethel mentioned in 3:14 and throughout the book?

- a. Put an orange box around the word, (unless you can draw an altar!) around the following passages. Also note the references to create a chain.

- 3:14
- 4:4
- 5:5 (2 x's); 5:6
- 7:10, 13

- b. Trace the history of Bethel from the passages below.

- Genesis 13:3, 4
- Genesis 28:10-22
- Joshua 8:9, 12, 17
- Judges 4:5
- I Kings 12:29, 32-33
- II Kings 10:29
- Amos 7:13

- Jeremiah 48:13
- c. So what is the meaning of Amos 3:14?
3. Do some research on the descriptions of lifestyle in 3:12 and 3:15. Remember how they had obtained such opulent lifestyles and discuss the prophecy.

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

- 1) How can you teach your children to love the things God loves? (See chart on page 19).
- 2) God knows we have poor memory. That is why He reminds Israel what He did for them in the past. What command did He give at the first “Lord’s supper” that reverberates down to us? What are some practical ways to do that?
- 3) Discuss how you can teach your children to counteract the culture in which we live. Share your answers to Day Two, #7.
- 4) Discuss the place your house plays in your personal, family, and church life.

Lesson Five

*Amos 4: God Castigates the Cows**Kari Pizzini***He has given food to those who fear Him:****He will remember His covenant forever.**

Psalm 111:5

Day One

1. Work on memorizing Psalm 111:5. Write it out below for practice.
2. Read through Amos Chapter 4. See if you can see a connection to the memory verse above (see verse 6). Then go through and put a question mark by any verses you have questions on or any topics that you would like to learn more about.
3. According to vs. 1, who does this chapter address?
4. See what you can find out about Bashan? What is it known for and where is it located?
 - Ps. 22:12
 - Micah 7:14
 - Deut. 3:13

5. Keeping in mind what you have learned about Bashan, read verse 1 again. Who are the cows of Bashan and why would God use this description? Think about Israel's historical, economic and spiritual condition. (Note: The Hebrew word for cows is *parah*, the feminine plural noun for cow or heifer and not the word for bulls as in Psalm 22.)

6. What are God's specific complaints against the cows?

7. What are some of the ways that the poor and needy might be oppressed? Was this happening in Israel's culture? Does it happen in our own culture? (A few examples can be found in Deut. 24:14, Amos 2:6-7, Amos 5:11 and Lev. 19:10.) Once you have made a list, look back over it and list some of the sins involved. Might God have a complaint against us?

8. What is God's attitude toward the poor or concerning oppression of the poor?
 - Psalm 140:12

 - Jeremiah 5:26-29, esp. vs. 29 (a prophecy directed to Judah which concerns the same issues)

9. Look up the Hebrew word for husbands in vs. one. Why would the use of this term be significant? Does it have anything to say about how we should relate to our husbands?

10. Also look up the Hebrew word for drink. What is being requested by the women of Samaria? What is it that is inappropriate about their request? Does this passage teach against drinking alcoholic beverages?

Day Two

1. Amos 4:2 begins with God swearing by his holiness. Name a couple of occasions where people might swear an oath today. Why do people swear oaths? Why do you think God would choose to swear an oath and why would he choose to swear by his holiness? Consider what God says of Israel in Exodus 19:6.

2. In verse 2, what does God swear is coming?

3. The Bible makes reference to the Assyrian practice of leading away prisoners with ropes, sometimes fastened to a hook through the nose or lower lip. Assyrian carvings in stone were found in the 19th Century with battle scenes that depict prisoners being treated in this manner. Some of these are housed in the British Museum in London.
 - II Chron. 33:11

 - I Kings 19:28 (God is speaking against Sennacherib, King of Assyria)

4. Verse 3 continues to describe a punishment suitable for the cows. It states that they will go out through breaches in the walls, each one straight before her and be cast into Harmon. What happens in II Kings 17:5?

5. Now read verses 4 and 5. Our attention is turned to two new locations, Bethel and Gilgal. Quickly refresh yourself on the history of Bethel from last week's lesson. Some significant events also took place at Gilgal.

Skim the following:

- Joshua 5:1-10
 - Joshua 5:10-12
 - Joshua 10:6
 - I Sam 11:15
6. Both Bethel and Gilgal came to serve as centers for worship and sacrifice in Israel, and gained significance when the northern kingdom split from the south. Their history should have caused them to serve as memorials to God's work on behalf of Israel. However, in verse 4, what does God say to enter Bethel to do?
7. Look up the Hebrew word for transgress and summarize below.
8. Why would God say this? Is the problem with the sacrifices and the offerings? Fill in the missing columns in the chart describing the offerings mentioned in Amos 4:4-5.

Type of Offering	Reference	Description
1.	Exodus 29:38-42	Priests were to offer daily sacrifices
	Exodus 23:17	
2. Tithes Every 3 Days	Deut. 26:12	<p><i>(The word for days in verse four can mean days or years depending on usage. It could refer to the special tithe every three years or possibly to the practice of giving the regular tithe on the 3rd day after arriving at the place of worship.)</i></p> <p>What is the purpose of the special tithe?</p>
3.	Leviticus 7:11-16	Instructions given

color to mark the selected verses. Read the verses and mark the portions of the verses describing the discipline used (hunger, etc.). If you do not have colored pencils with you, you could mark the verses with an H for hunger, a D for drought, etc.

a. Hunger:

- Choose a color and Mark Amos 4:6, Deut. 28:17, 48 and Lev. 26:26, 29.
- Note the severity of this discipline. Where does it occur (vs. 6)?
- What is Israel's response?

b. Drought:

- Choose a second color and Mark Amos 4:7-8, Deut. 28:23-24, 48, Lev. 26:19.
- Note the severity. When does it occur (vs. 7)? Note that even the drinking water is scarce according to verse 8.
- What is Israel's response?

c. Blight and Mildew/Destruction of Crops:

- Mark Amos 4:9, Deut. 28:18, 22, 30, 39-40, Leviticus 26:20.
- Look up the definitions of blight and mildew in either a standard dictionary or bible dictionary.
- What is Israel's response?

d. Locusts/Pests:

- Mark Amos 4:9, Deut. 28:38, 42.
- Note the severity. What is destroyed (vs. 9)?

- What is Israel's response?

e. Plagues/Infirmities:

- Mark Amos 4:10, Deut. 28:21-22, 25, 27-28, 35, 59-61.
- The plague is said to be among you after the manner of Egypt. See Deut. 28:60.
- What is Israel's response?

f. The Sword/Military Defeat:

- Mark Amos 4:10, Deut. 28:25-26, 49-52, Lev. 26:17, 25, 33, 36-39.
- So many times in Israel's history, God had given them supernatural protection in battles, supernatural victories. Now he removes this blessing from them. He then destroys the things they have come to depend on in battle, young men and their horses. See Amos 2:15.
- What is Israel's response?

g. Being Overthrown:

- Read Amos 4:11. What was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah like according to Gen. 19:24-25?
- In Genesis, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are said to be grievous. Sexual perversion is one of the sins mentioned. According to Ezekiel 16:49-51, what is said to be the sin of Sodom? Does this sound familiar?
- Israel is said to be a firebrand snatched from a blaze because she faced much discipline but is preserved from complete destruction at this point. However, we know from history that captivity is coming. Read Deut. 29:23-28 (esp. 25-27). Notice the answer to why the judgment is so fierce?

3. Because Israel's response has repeatedly been to be unmoved (not to return to God), what is Israel told to do in verse 12?

4. Read verse Amos 4:13. Notice how God is described. Why is God being the Creator relevant to a passage on discipline and judgment?

5. Go back and read Amos 3:7. What has God been revealing to his prophet Amos?

6. What is the name given for God in verse 13? Why is this significant?

The curses for disobedience and blessings for obedience given in Deuteronomy were unique to Israel as a chosen nation. Not all trials are a direct discipline of specific sin. However, all trials are discipline in that God is sovereign over them and uses them to bring us to maturity. How do we respond to discipline and trials? Do we search our hearts, repent of any sins including those that the trial may have brought out in our lives and worship God? Or could God say of us, "yet you have not returned to me?"

Psalm 111:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

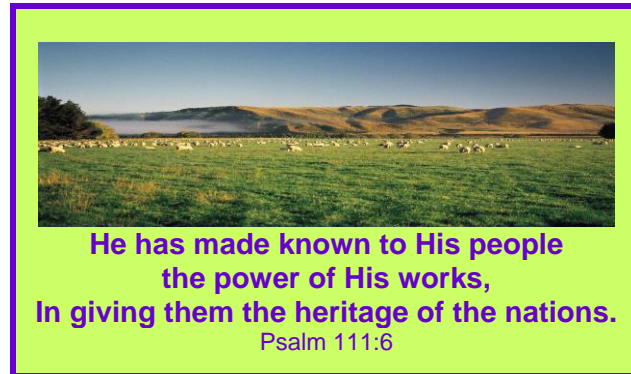
Questions for Small Group Discussion

- 1) Can you think of specific ways in which our culture oppresses the poor? How can we keep from being blind to these same sins in our lives?

- 2) Has the prosperity in our culture led to complacency in our worship? How can we keep our personal and corporate worship from becoming ritualistic and empty?

- 3) How is the coming encounter with God described at the end of Amos Chapter 4 similar to Job's encounter with God and how is it different (Job 38-42)? How did Job respond? How do we respond to discipline and to trials in our lives?

Lesson Six

Amos 5: God Predicts the Death of a Nation

Last week in Chapter 4 we talked about lounging ladies. Next week we will again think about those who are “at ease”. A prosperous culture is often a wasteful culture. God has given human beings the responsibility to care for His creation. I believe Christians should be the best “environmentalists” in the proper sense of the word, respecting the physical world that has been entrusted to our care.

With that in mind, please note especially the ***Discussion Question for Small Groups*** that has to do with saving our resources. Would you write out your suggestions and give them to your Small Group Leader? We would like to compile them into a helpful tool to be handed out next week.

God has something to do with teaching children not to throw their wrappers on the ground, teens who drop beer cans out car windows, and housewives who are not thrifty. Let’s help each other learn responsibility through this assignment.

Day One

1. Write out Psalm 111:5 from last week and begin working on 111:6.
2. What events are being referred to in our memory verse for this week?
3. Scan Psalm 111 and list the characteristics of God that are stated or alluded to. Knowing what you do about the Israel’s condition, write just a sentence for each attribute that shows what Israel should have been remembering about Him.
4. Read Amos 5 and write out your impressions and questions.

5. What is a “dirge”?
 - When is it usually sung?
 - When does it appear to be sung here (5:2a)
 - Why?

6. What figure of speech is “the virgin Israel”? Mark it and identify it. So what does it mean here?

7. In vs. 3, “goes forth” indicates a military context (literally, “marching out”). So what is the message of this verse?

8. What future for Israel is referred to in vs. 4 that is the opposite of that referred to in 5:1?

Is this a call to individuals, the nation, or both? (Mark the cross-references in 5:1 and 5:4 (e.g., “cf. 5:4”).

9. The word “Seek” in vss. 4 and 6 in the Hebrew is “DARASH”. Write that over the word in both verses. “Do not resort...” in vs. 5 is also “DARASH”. Mark that. Look up the meaning of “DARASH”.

10. Can you find out what Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba have in common? (Mark “Bethel” if you haven’t already, 3 times in 2 verses (5:5, 6).

11. So what is He saying by the use of DARASH in these three instances?

Day Two

1. The center of this chapter is 5:8, 9, a hymn. The structure of the chapter is **chiastic**, with the hymn in the middle. (“In a **chiasm**, elements one and four in one or more verses are parallel in thought, and points two and three are parallel in thought.” Basis Bible Interpretation, by Roy Zuck). Let’s mark the text according to the chiasm below. (You may want to mark all the hymns in the book with a green parenthesis: 1:3 [a poem, so we are including it in the hymns], 4:13; 9:5, 6).

5:1-3	Lamentation
5:4-6	Exhortation
5:7	Accusation
5:8, 9	Hymn
5:10-13	Accusation and Judgment
5:14-15	Exhortation
5:16-17	Lamentation

Diagram by: The New American Commentary, by Billy K. Smith, Frank S. Page

2. “He who made...” OSEH, is used in Genesis 1 and 2, along with BARA, created”. Let’s write “Creator” beside vs. 7?

What are Pleiades and Orion?

- a. How did God reference Pleiades and Orion in Job 9:9?
 - b. And Job 38:31, 32?
3. Do some research regarding the reference to “the gate”, as seen in 5:12, 15. What happened there?
 - a. What was God’s direction for happenings at the gate in Deuteronomy 21:18-21? If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his Father or his mother...

- b. What happened in Ruth 4:1-12 at the gate?
 - c. The Lamentations describe Israel's losses under Babylonian captivity. What is one of the things they missed, according to Lamentations 5:14a? Why do you think that was?
4. There is much in this book regarding "justice", but few uses of the actual word. It is, however, a very important word in the Hebrew, MISHPAT. Research the word in the Hebrew. If you lack resources to do that, look up "justice" in an English dictionary.

MISHPAT occurs 3 times in Chapter 5 (5:7, 15, 24). Research each one to see the significance of justice in this chapter.

- a. 5:7 - What is "wormwood"? What is the significance in the verse?
 - b. 5:15 - What is the relationship between the first line of the verse and the second?

What is the relationship between the first two lines and the second two?
 - c. 5:24 - What figure of speech is used in this verse? What does it mean? Was it appropriate for Martin Luther King to use this verse in his civil rights messages? Why or why not?
5. Amos reiterates their cultural sins in vss. 11a and 12. Remember that these are "covenant violations." Write that beside the verses. Do you think the sunset of national integrity is an economic problem or a loss of character? Name some character qualities that build a strong society. Should you write a note, make a phone call, or talk to someone, expressing appreciation?

6. Do you think Amos is approving silence in the face of evil in vs. 13?
What does the verse mean?
7. Verse 15 is the first use of the word “remnant” in the book regarding Israel.
Where have we seen it alluded to previously? Start your chain of references.
8. Mark the expressions of grief in 5:16, 17. What is the reason according to 17b?

Day Three

1. One of the things that makes Amos unique is that his is the earliest mention of the “Day of the Lord”. Read 5:18-20 and mark the three places with a clock, or whatever method you use to identify time phrases.

The Day of the Lord is a broad term used by the Old Testament prophets to signify a time yet to come in which God would “actively intervene in history.”

- a. What do you think is meant by the first line in vs. 18?
- b. What is the meaning of 18-20?
- c. We will note just a few references from other prophets.
 - Jeremiah 46:1, 10
 - Isaiah 13:1, 6
 - Lamentations 1:3a; 2:22
 - Joel 3:18-20 (referred to here as “that day”).

2. List the verbs God uses to communicate His opinion of their worship in 5:21-23.

3. Underline the pronouns “you, your, yourselves.” What is the significance of those?

4. Underline in yellow the references in Chapter 5 to “the God of hosts.” How many are there? What is the significance? Are those “hosts” still with Him? What are they doing in our generation?

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

- 1) Prosperity lends itself to waste. Just because we have something does not mean we should mindlessly use it. Write out some ways you are attempting to save in the following and other areas:

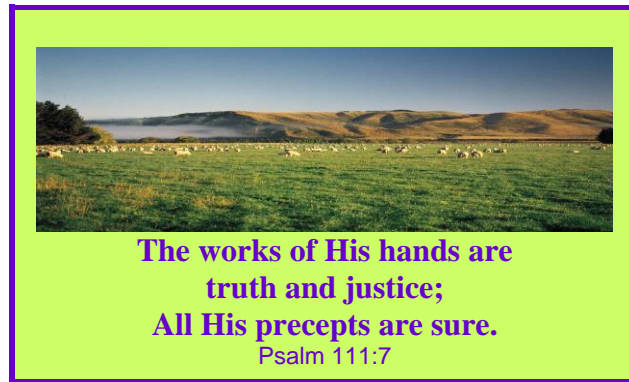
Water	Newspaper
Money	Cans
Gas	Plastic
Glass	Electricity

- 2) What does the message of Amos say to the woman who is taking medication for depression?

- 3) Do you think insurance companies and/or doctors oppress the poor?
 - What can we do about expensive and unjust health care?
 - Should illegal immigrants be allowed to get free medical care?
 - Is it the government’s responsibility to take over the health care industry?

- 4) Give a case study of justice or injustice in our society. Is there any way we can rectify the wrong and encourage the good in your illustration?

Lesson Seven

Amos 6: God's Anger against the Arrogant

God continues to speak through Amos to His people who were to have been a source of blessing to all men. They were, however, squandering their God-given resources, and became, instead, a source of harm to the vulnerable. In their arrogance, they believed they deserved His kindnesses. Let's ask God to make us grateful stewards of the bounty He has chosen to give. May we properly interpret His blessings, and seize them to honor Him.

Day One

1. Write out Psalm 111:6 from memory below, and begin working on Psalm 111:7.
2. How does v. 7 correspond to the message of Amos?
3. Read Amos 6 and write out any questions you may have from the text.
4. What are the first two descriptive phrases for Israel in 6:1? What do they mean?

5. How does their attitude contrast with Amos 3:8a?
6. Where is Zion? What is the significance of the reference to it?

Where is Samaria? What is the significance?

7. Look these up on a map, and write out the names of the ten tribes of Israel and the two of Judah.
8. What is the first word in the sentence? How do they contrast?
9. Other translations of the descriptive phrases regarding Israel in v. 1a, b are as follows: “to rest quietly,” “peace of mind,” “sit down in one’s heart,” “to have a song in the body,” “to be cool,” “to have a stomach which is smoothed.” These describe Israel’s feelings, but what was the truth? Discuss how feelings can be deceitful. Feelings are a gift of God. What goes into making them like the phrases above?

Day Two

1. Identify the cities in 6:2 and their significance.
2. “Put off” in 6:3 is used in only one other place (Isaiah 66:5), translated “exclude,” “reject,” meaning that they refused to think about the implications of their self-indulgence. Discuss their perspective and the things we may be putting out of our minds that **should** be considered or addressed.

3. Someone has said that every day we are bombarded by an “infinite number of distractions.” List the practices in Israel (from 6:6-8) that were distractions from thinking of eternal value, e.g. good food.

- Is there anything wrong with these in themselves?
- What is wrong according to 6:6c? See if you can find out the literal meaning of “grieved”.

4. Three times in Amos God is said to have “sworn.” Fill in the chart below, and then answer the questions below.

Passage	Swears by...	Promises to...
4:2		
6:8		
8:7		

- a. Why would God swear by anything?
- b. What does it tell us about Him?

5. What 3 verbs express God's attitude toward His people's religious activity in 6:8? What do they mean? Mark it "Rejected Worship" beside the verse.

6. Verse 8 says that the object of God's loathing is Jacob's arrogance. We have mentioned that the reference to Jacob was a reminder of their need for dependence, a reminder of Jacob's deception, his manipulative bent. What is another reason Jacob would be mentioned, perhaps even more important? See Genesis 35:9-12 for help.

7. Arrogance is another pitfall for a prosperous culture. Let's consider that sin now. Read Ezekiel 28:1-19 and discuss the predicted fall of Ittobaal, reigning king of Tyre during Ezekiel's day. His sense of self-importance was the springboard for revelation concerning the fall of Lucifer. What do you learn from this chapter?

8. "Pride is the sin that makes God irrelevant." Note the cultural sins below that are addressed in Ezekiel 28.
 - a. Self-sufficiency - 28:2, 6 (How do I know when I am making myself god?)

 - b. Technology - 28:3, 4

 - c. Wealth - 28:5

 - d. Beauty - 28:17a

9. God's wrath will be unleashed against their false trusts. What is described in the last of vs. 8 and vss. 9 and 10?

10. Verse 11 uses a figure of speech called a “merism.” Look up the meaning of that word and explain how it is used in vs. 11. Mark your text with that figure of speech. What should you note about God in this verse?

Day Three

1. The answer to both questions in 6:12 is what?
 - a. Describe those uses of horses and oxen and the likeness to sin, i.e., is this logical? Is sin? What is his message to them?
 - b. What is the point made in 6:12b? What did we find out that “wormwood” is in our last lesson? Note how sin is like that. What is the opposite of poison and wormwood? So what was God’s desire for them?
2. Research Lodebar and Karnaim as mentioned in v. 13.

What was Israel accused of that was as absurd as running horses over rocks?

3. What is the nation referred to in 6:14? What is being referred to? Who is in charge?

4. Locate Hamath and Arabah on a map, and draw a simple map in the margin of your text. What is being said? How does this show God's "Anger against the Arrogant"?

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

- 1) Discuss how feelings can be deceitful. How can we avoid being deceived by them?
- 2) Ours is a Bible church. In what ways may we have an inflated view of our spiritual pre-eminence?
- 3) What are some indicators of depending on our own strength?
- 4) Amos mentions wine several times. What does the message of Amos say to women who drink alcoholic beverages?

Lesson Eight

Amos 7: God Gives Vision and Courage

Kari Pizzini

**Day One**

1. See if you can recite Psalm 111:7 from memory. Work on memorizing Psalm 111:8. Write it out below for practice.
2. Read through Amos Chapter 7. Write down questions that you may have or things you want to find out more about.
3. Amos 7 begins with the first of a series of five visions. Mark all five visions in your text numbering them in order (Amos 7:1, 7:4, 7:7, 8:1 and 9:1). Why do you think God might have chosen to speak to Amos through the use of visions rather than simply in words?
4. According to Amos 7:2a and 4b, what is affected by the judgments of the first two visions? Why is this significant?
5. The first vision is of a locust swarm. What phrases in the text indicate the severity of the judgment?

6. What is Amos' plea? Look up the meaning of the Hebrew word for small.

7. How does this contrast with how Israel is described in the following verses?
 - Amos 6:1
 - Amos 6:8, 13
 - Amos 9:10

8. Mark the instances in Amos where the nation of Israel is called Jacob (3:13, 6:8, 7:2-5, 8:7, 9:8). Now look back on the history of Bethel from your lesson on Amos 3 on page 22, Day Three, Questions 1 and 26. Why might Amos have chosen to use this name for Israel?

9. Look back at Amos Chapters 1 and 2 in your text. Mark the references to "fire" in describing God's judgment on the nations surrounding Israel if you have not already done so. Now fire is upon Israel herself. In addition to the land, what is the fire said to consume in v. 4?

Use a bible dictionary or commentary to see what this might be referring to, or look up the meaning of the Hebrew word.

10. First, read Genesis 49:1 and 49:29-33. What is the context? Now read Genesis 49:22-26, especially noting vs. 25.

11. Moses quotes from this blessing when he blesses the Israelites before his death. See Deuteronomy 33:13.

12. What is Amos's reaction to this second vision?

Day Two

1. What is God's response to the pleas of Amos according to verses Amos 7:3 and 7:6?

2. Briefly describe what the following passages say about the character of God?
 - Malachi 3:6

 - I Sam. 15:29

 - Numbers 23:19

3. Compare those passages to what is said about God in the following:
 - Jonah 4:1-2

 - Jeremiah 18:7-8

 - Exodus 32:14

4. In order to help understand God's unchangeableness, consider how it relates to some of the other attributes of God. Several scripture references have been given to help stir your thinking on this.

Attribute of God	References	How it Relates to Being Immutable (Unchanging)
Omniscience	Isaiah 40:13-14 Prov. 21:2 Psalm 139:4	
Wisdom	Psalm 33:11 Romans 11:33	

Attribute of God	References	How it Relates to Being Immutable (Unchanging)
Sovereignty	Psalm 33:11 Amos 3:6	
Righteousness and Holiness	Hab 1:13a Psalm 33:5	

5. Can you think of other attributes of God that relate to his immutability (his unchanging nature)?

6. Look back to Amos 7:3. Considering what we have just seen of God's character, when God is said to change his mind, to relent or repent, what is it that changes? What does not change?

7. Israel does not repent of their sin? What causes God to relent (vss. 2 and 5)? Consider how prayer relates to the unchanging nature of God. Does prayer change things? What happens when we pray? Is prayer necessary? Does God change what he was going to do?

8. Read Amos 7:7-9, the third vision. What is a plumb line?

9. What is God testing with the plumb line?
measuring them against?

What standard would He be

10. What three places measured by the plumb line need to be torn down?

11. What are the high places and the sanctuaries referred to in verse 9? Which high places/sanctuaries are mentioned in Amos?

12. The third place to be destroyed is the house of Jeroboam, the political power in Israel. Look back at page 9, Question 3. What did we learn about Jeroboam II, the king of Israel in Amos' time in II Kings 14:23-29, esp. vs. 24?

13. According to I Kings 12:26-33, Jeroboam, son of Nebat (Jeroboam I) set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel, thus establishing false worship centers. Why did he do this? See vs. 26-27.

Day Three

1. Immediately following the vision is a real-life example of how both the religious and political systems of Israel failed the test of the plumb line (Amos 7:10-17). Amaziah, the chief priest of Bethel, confronts Amos concerning three issues. What are they?
 - #1 (vss. 10-11)

 - #2 (vs. 12)

 - #3 (vs. 13)

2. What did Amos say back in verses 8 and 9 of this chapter? Who is actually “conspiring” against the house of Jeroboam?

Questions for Small Group Discussion

- 1) Share some of your answers to Day One, Question 3 about why God might have chosen to use visions. What are some of the other methods of communication used in the book of Amos? Think about the different figures of speech used. How can we be more creative in our communication, more effective? How can we use more variety in teaching our children?
- 2) Why do you think God has chosen to use prayer as a means of accomplishing his purposes? Are you grateful for this privilege? Do you use it?
- 3) What are some areas in which our culture claims authority (whether for individuals or for groups) when authority really belongs to God? Think about what types of things are said to be our rights.
- 4) Contrast Amos with Amaziah. Although Amos had a unique role in speaking directly for God, what are some principles we can learn from Amos for handling opposition in a godly manner?

Lesson Nine

Amos 8: God Sends a Famine of His Word

Only two more chapters of this fascinating book! Israel has misinterpreted her prosperity as evidence of their right standing with Yahweh, proof of His favor. The problem with blind spots is that we are blind, with self-deception that we are deceived! God is reminding them that His goodness only increases their responsibility. Stop and pray now that the Holy Spirit will show you your “hidden faults”. Ask Him to show you ways of reflecting Him in a dark world.

Day One

1. Write out Psalm 111:1-8 from memory and begin working on 111:9.
2. Discuss how Psalm 111:9 connects with the themes of Amos.
3. Write out a summary sentence for Chapters 1-7.

4. Who was king in Israel when Amos preached? In Judah?
Why are they significant?
5. Amos is the earliest written prophet, one of how many minor prophets? Hosea is considered a companion prophet. If you are unfamiliar with the book of Hosea, read a summary of it, or look through your study Bible and read the introduction and chapter titles. Discuss the approaches Amos and Hosea take, and what each is trying to accomplish.
6. Amos' third vision is recorded in 8:1-2. What does the symbolism mean? Can you find out anything about the use of language in expression of the message?
7. The visions follow a pattern as follows:
- 1) Introductory statement of Source: *"This is what the LORD showed me..."* *"Thus the Lord GOD showed me..."*
 - 2) Content of the vision
 - 3) Dialogue between prophet and God.
- What is missing in this vision that was present in the previous two? (The same is true in the fourth vision in Chapter 9. Mark both of them accordingly). What is the difference between a prophet and a priest?
8. What does God's explanation of the vision in 8:2b mean? The "end" of what? "Spare" them of what?
9. This vision was probably used in Amos' message during the Feast of Tabernacles. Remind yourself of what it was like from Leviticus 24:33 ff.

10. Also during this time Israel would be celebrating Rosh Hashanah. Do some research on that holiday and discuss it below. Pray for an opportunity to talk with a Jewish friend, or make a new acquaintance to discuss what you are learning.

Day Two

1. The “songs” in verse 3 probably refer to joyous, celebrative sounds of the holidays.
 - a. How would they have looked to each other during these festivals?
 - b. Fill in below how they looked to God, even before it happened.

“The _____ of the palace will turn to _____...Many will be the _____; in every place they will cast them forth in _____.”
 - c. Mark the word “will” in this chapter in gold, as God’s promises are as good as gold. How many are there?
2. The “new moon” and “Sabbath” were days off from work. God had made very clear His desires regarding misuse of the Sabbath. Note Exodus 31:12-17.
 - a. Why did God set aside the Sabbath according to vs. 13?
 - b. Why did they probably not work on the Sabbath? Note vs. 14.
3. Where have we seen the call to “Hear” before in the book? Mark them if you haven’t already done so (3:1; 4:1; 5:1). What were God’s accusations in 8:4, 5? (There is also one in 8:6. Discuss it here as well.)
 - a. What were the merchants’ true goals according to 8:5? Mark “that” twice. These are purpose clauses. (The word “saying” in the verse could be translated, “*muttering to themselves*,” “*saying in secret*.” Make a note of that in your text.) What were their true gods?

- b. See what you can find out about their way of doing business. The “bushel” referred to is literally, “ *to make small the ephah.*” Look up “ephah” and “shekel” and try to get the picture.
4. Israel’s treatment of the “helpless” and the “needy” have been a theme in Amos. God is merciful, and they were presenting a caricature. Tim Lane and Paul Tripp give the following definitions of mercy. “(1) Mercy is the kind, sympathetic, and forgiving treatment of others that works to relieve their distress and cancel their debt. Or (2) mercy is compassion combined with forbearance and action” (Relationships, A Mess Worth Making). Do a brief word study from the Scriptures on “mercy,” or summarize the chapter on “Mercy” from the above book.
5. God has called them to “hear,” but HE has heard what they are saying as well. We are known by our words, and He remembers them all. One of His ways of defending His “covenant lawsuit” in this book is to make them listen to themselves. Note the quotes He has heard, remembered, and rehearses to them.
- 2:12
 - 4:1
 - 6:10b
 - 6:13b
 - 8:5, 6 (Summarize)

Day Three

1. What does the reference “sworn by the pride of Jacob” mean in vs. 7?

2. What do we learn about God in 8:7-9?

3. Discuss the reference to “the land” in vs. 8. Is it literal? What about the reference to the sun in vs. 9? When will these occur? Mark the references to time with a clock.

4. What is the first word in vs. 11? What does it signal?
 - a. What kind of famine is God describing in vs. 11?
 - 1) What are “food” and “water” to man physically?

 - 2) What does He mean?

 - b. Who is the force behind the famine? Mark that pronoun in vs. 11.

 - c. How does it relate to the commands of 3:1, 4:1, 5:1, and 8:4?

 - d. How does it relate to the uniqueness of the third and fourth visions? What did you find was different (Day One, question #7)?

 - e. How does this relate to what Jesus quoted in Matthew 4:4?

 - g. What had Israel (2:12) and Amaziah (7:12, 13) asked for?

5. Discuss the results of this famine in 8:12, 13.
 - a. What does “sea to sea...north...east...” refer to? .
 - b. “Stagger” in vs. 12 indicates a “famished condition, unsteady and aimless in movements”. How does this contrast with the two sets of people referred to in vs. 13?

6. Some think that the “guilt of Samaria” refers to the false god of Samaria, Eshima.
 - a. What is swearing of this kind? What is being referred to in this verse?
 - b. Look up Dan and Beersheba on the map included with this lesson. What is the point?

Discussion Questions for Small Groups

- 1) List three reasons you attend worship services and consider how God may react to each of these reasons.
- 2) “Those who focus intently on what they will do after worship is over are not apt to be engaged in true worship...” What are some distractions for you?
- 3) Do you think loan companies that charge exorbitant interest are guilty of the sins of Israel?
- 4) Are you still working on living out “mercy” toward those in your home? Toward your husband? Training your children? How?

3. Choose a key verse for each of the chapters of Amos.

4. Read Amos 9 and write out your questions and initial observations.

5. How many visions in Amos all together? How does the one in Amos 9 compare to the others?

6. What is the theme of 9:1-4?

7. Do we know specifically where the “altar” referred to is?
 - a. What does the LORD “standing” beside it possibly communicate?
 - b. What does the altar communicate?

8. To whom do you think God is speaking in vs. 1, “Smite the capitals...”

9. What are the “capitals” of a building?

10. What are the “thresholds”?

11. Some think this is a reference to the sanctuary. So what would happen to it?

12. Who would then be referred to by “the heads of them all”?
13. So when is the sanctuary not a safe place to be?

Day Two

1. Read 9:2-4 and list the contrasts in these verses. Write them out in the right margin of your text.
2. Now list the hiding places referred to and the significance of each.

Note contrast of Romans 8:38, 39

3. What does “My hand” refer to in 9:2?

What figure of speech is that?

4. Compare Amos 5:14 and 9:4b.
5. So what is the message of 9:2-4?

6. Who has been speaking in vss. 1-4? Who is speaking in vss. 7-15?
So what has happened in the text?

7. Verses 5 and 6 are another hymn or portion of a hymn. Mark it with a green parenthesis if you have not already done so, along with 4:13; 5:8,9. Who is the subject according to 9:5a?

8. What is the message of the hymn?

9. Since we are in a drought, it is good to remember what is being said in 9:6.

10. The three final statements of judgment in Amos are in 9:8-10. There is, however, a huge pivotal word in vs. 8 regarding Israel's future. What is it?

What is the point?

11. Another hint is given in vs. 9. What is it?
 - a. What remains in the sieve when grain is shaken?

 - b. Who would those be according to Amos 5:4-6?

 - c. Notice also the possibility of 5:15 in this regard.

Day Three

1. Let's enjoy the final message of Amos. Read 9:11-15. Summarize what is being described.

Has there ever been a time in Israel's history that these things have all been accomplished?

2. Compare 9:6a with 9:11.
3. An interesting study of Israel's future is found in tracing the future of the Twelve Tribes. Let's notice some specifics. If there is yet a future for them, what must be happening even now for that to be accomplished?
 - a. Ezekiel 46:1
 - b. Ezekiel 48:1-7; 48:23-29
 - c. Ezekiel 48:30-35

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