



Daily Bible Study Questions

Study Procedure: Read the Scripture references before answering questions. Unless otherwise instructed, use the Bible only in answering questions. Some questions may be more difficult than others but try to answer as many as you can. Pray for God's wisdom and understanding as you study and don't be discouraged if some answers are not obvious at first.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES:

(Amos 3:7) *"Surely the LORD GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."*

(Amos 5:24) *"But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."*

FIRST DAY: Review of Amos 1-4; Read Amos 5:1-3

1. What is the purpose of prophecy?
2. Give some examples of national sins that brought on God's judgment.
3. Give an example of something you learned last week or something that caused you to evaluate your own actions.
4. Read Amos 5:1-3. Amos spoke a lamentation or a song of mourning over the plight of Israel. How does he describe Israel to encourage sympathy from his hearers?
5. What percentage will survive in Israel after God's judgment falls on them?

SECOND DAY: Read Amos 5:4-27

6. Read Amos 5:4-15. What phrases were specific calls to repentance so that God's judgment might be escaped?

7. Amos gave another list of Israel's sins. Categorize them below.
 - (a) Sins against the poor

 - (b) Rebellion against authority

 - (c) Perversion of justice

8. Read Amos 5:16-20. This passage introduces a biblical concept that will be repeated often by the prophets. It is called the "*day of the LORD*" and was believed to be a series of end-time events in which God would "*pass through*" the earth for judgment. However, the Israelites of Amos' day thought that, as in the time of the exodus from Egypt, they would be "passed over" while only their enemies would be judged. What does Amos tell them to correct this thinking?

9. Read Amos 5:21-24. The Israelites at this time could be described as being very religious, constantly involved in religious activities. The problem was, however, that they had lost sight of the God they were to worship and improvised activities that appealed to their own senses and had no sanctifying effect on their relationships with others. What did God think of their activities?

10. What did He want from them instead?

11. Read Amos 5:25-27. They had a long history of disobedience. Where were they ultimately headed?

THIRD DAY: Read Amos 6 and 7

12. Read Amos 6:1-14. Amos spoke a series of “woes” to Israel. Who was in trouble and why?

13. Justice and righteousness are recurring themes in Amos. Review the following verses and then comment on why you think these things are so important to God:
(Amos 5:7) *“You who turn justice to wormwood, and lay righteousness to rest in the earth!”*
(Amos 5:12) *“For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: afflicting the just and taking bribes; diverting the poor from justice at the gate.”* (Note: Business was transacted and disputes were settled by the civic leaders at the city gate.)
(Amos 5:15) *“Hate evil, love good; establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”*
(Amos 5:24) *“But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”*
(Amos 6:12) *“Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood....”*

14. Read Amos 7:1-9. Name the first three visions of judgment on Israel.

15. Amos asked God not to send the first two. How would the third one be preferable to the first two?

16. Read Amos 7:10-17. The Holy Spirit created this pause in the pronouncements of the Lord through Amos to reveal a little bit of the persecution Amos faced as a prophet. The priest Amaziah would find that it was quite dangerous to try to stop God’s prophet from speaking out. What was to happen to Amaziah as a result of his improper interference?

FOURTH DAY: Read Amos 8

17. Read Amos 8:1-3. Explain the meaning of the fourth vision.

18. Read Amos 8:4-6. When a person is not right with God, he cannot be consistently right in his relationships with others. What new examples are given to illustrate this?
19. Read Amos 8:7-10. When God finally moves in judgment, how will the earth mirror His feelings? (You will notice as our study continues that other prophets will emphasize these same signs as those ushering in the “*day of the LORD.*”)
20. Read Amos 8:11-14. What kind of famine will hit the land in the future?

FIFTH DAY: Read Amos 9

21. This final vision is startling. Read Amos 9:1-10 carefully and then match the following:
- ____ (a) where Amos saw the Lord standing
 - ____ (b) what God called to be struck and shaken
 - ____ (c) what people will mistakenly think they can do to hide from God’s wrath
 - ____ (d) two sources of judgment at God’s disposal
 - ____ (e) examples of God’s unequalled power
 - ____ (f) what God will do to His sinful kingdom
 - ____ (g) what God will do to allow a remnant to be saved
1. at His touch the earth melts, layers are formed in the sky and strata in the earth, the sea pours forth on earth, the hosts of heaven obey Him as Lord
 2. dig into hell, climb into heaven, hide on top of Mount Carmel, hide in the bottom of the sea
 3. doorposts and thresholds
 4. sift the house of Israel as in a sieve, no real kernel will be allowed to perish
 5. serpents and swords
 6. by the altar
 7. destroy it but not utterly
22. Read Amos 9:13. Again Amos emphasized the way the earth accentuates God’s actions in the spirit realm. When the “*day of the LORD*” commences at the end of time and God re-establishes Israel with her full blessings during the Millennium, just how wonderfully productive will the earth be?

23. The wrong-thinking that Amos was called to correct in his own people was that even though they knew that God would one day judge all unrighteousness everywhere, they believed that their membership in the family of Israel exempted them from that final judgment. Discuss, if you can, what problems you have seen occur when a person confuses church membership or family heritage with an authentic relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. (See Romans 9:6.)

Amos 5-9

Amos' Third Sermon: Lament over Israel (Amos 5:1-9)

Amos changed imagery for his third sermon. The first one had appealed to human logic (Amos 3), while the second had compared the women of Israel to over-fed cows (Amos 4). Here he depicted the nation as a young girl, a virgin who had fallen down, helpless and friendless. This choice of imagery emphasized that up to now Israel, on the whole, had been protected from any brutal attack from outside nations. Like a virgin daughter, she had been carefully cherished in her father's household. But Amos now saw her as vulnerable to attack, with her father's protection withdrawn. How bad would things get for Israel? Amos prophesied that only ten percent of the people would survive the judgments that were going to fall! In a plea for Israel to turn and be saved, God said through Amos: "*Seek Me and live...*" (Amos 5:4) and then emphasized that her idolatrous worship at Bethel and Gilgal would not save the nation. Amos repeated the call to repentance, "*Seek the LORD and live...*" (verse 6) and then clarified that the God of Israel was no less than the Lord of all creation: "*He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning and makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth...*" (verse 8).

God Hates Injustice (Amos 5:10-17)

In Old Testament times, business was transacted and personal disputes were settled by the elders who sat at the city gates. (See examples in Deuteronomy 21:19, Deuteronomy 22:15, and Joshua 20:4.) God had directed through His laws that fairness, honesty, and justice were to characterize all the interactions of His people (Exodus 23). Amos voiced God's anger over what was happening in the city gates of Israel. Instead of respect for righteous decisions, people were actually angry when justice took place (Amos 5:10). They afflicted the godly leaders and, when in charge themselves, accepted bribes to rule against the poor (verse 12). Because of such abuse, Amos announced the rich would not be allowed to enjoy the fine stone homes they had built or the

wine from the lush vineyards they had planted (verse 11). God hated what they were doing to each other. God's people were to seek good and not evil. In fact, they were to hate evil and actively pursue good. The city gates were to be places of justice. If change did not occur soon, the proud and unscrupulous of Israel would be weeping and wailing over the trouble that the Lord would send.

The Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18)

Amos referred to the "*day of the LORD*" in this rebuke of Israel. The "*day of the LORD*" was a term used by many of the Old Testament prophets. It introduced and included a series of events which would occur at the end of time. As this year's study continues, we will examine various aspects of this. Here are some basic things that need to be understood about "*the day of the LORD*" right from the beginning:

1. God sets the date. Jesus told His disciples that only the Father knew the timing of these last events (Mark 13:32).
2. It will be preceded by universally-seen signs and wonders in the heavens (Joel 2:1,2; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-14).
3. It will usher in a series of judgments on all unrighteousness (Matthew 25:31-46; Jude 1:14,15; Revelation 20:11-15).
4. It will include a thousand-year reign of Christ and a literal kingdom on earth for Israel in which she shall fully enjoy every promise God has made to her (Isaiah 11:1-12; Revelation 20).
5. Those escaping the wrath of God will be those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Good works or being a descendant of Abraham will not save anyone. Those in the Old Testament were saved by faith in God's salvation which would come through Messiah (Genesis 15:4-6; Revelation 20:13-15); those living after the Cross are saved by faith in Messiah who has come (Acts 4:12).

Israel's Misconception of the Day of the Lord: Woe to the Ignorant! (Amos 5:18-27)

With this first “woe,” Amos boldly corrected Israel for her deadly misunderstanding of the “*day of the LORD*.” Many in Israel thought that since the promises to Israel were sure and certain, it was inevitable that they all would be blessed when the Lord finally put the world in proper order by coming in ultimate judgment. Amos assured his listeners that those practicing unrighteousness could not claim the promises. Paul, centuries later, had to explain the same thing to the Jews of his day: “...*they are not all Israel who are of Israel*” (Romans 9:6). The “*day of the LORD*” for those who clung to a religious heritage instead of right relationship with God would be a terrible time. It would be as bad as if in running to escape a lion, one ran into a bear!

Those in Israel during the time Amos was prophesying were having a wonderful time going to the shrines they had set up in Bethel and Gilgal, singing their songs, offering their sacrifices, and enjoying their portions of the offered meat. However, because none of this was in accordance with God’s law, but was instead wholly their own invention or **improvisation**, God hated it all and would not bless any of it. Going through the motions of spiritual activity had never been at the heart of right worship. Israel had been loved by God even when she could not (or did not) worship properly in the wilderness (verse 25). The right spiritual condition of the heart, as evidenced in righteous actions toward the weak and poor, was what God desired: “*But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream*” (Amos 5:24). The people of Israel had failed to do this, and the Lord had come to a verdict: the whole nation would be taken into captivity beyond Damascus, Syria. Their future was bleak.

Woes Continue (Amos 6)

After pronouncing woe on the ignorant who thought the “*day of the LORD*” would be to their advantage, Amos spoke woe on the **indulgent**. Many continued to pamper themselves by lounging on beds of ivory and eating rich meats instead of paying attention to God’s judgment that had already

started on the unrighteous heathen around them. Not only were they self-indulgent, they were also insensitive to the needs of others (Amos 6:6), even those of their own nation. Common sense would advise against running horses or driving oxen over rock, yet common sense had not kept many in Israel from continuing to manipulate the justice system to abuse the poor while enriching themselves. God would soon show them how such injustice really felt, when He allowed them to be abused by merciless foreign invaders.

The First Three Visions of Amos (Amos 7:1-9)

A frequent way in which God communicated His messages to His prophets was by giving them visions of His planned actions. Amos began to reveal what God had shown him.

1. The first vision was of a plague of locusts that was to be let loose to consume the second and larger harvest of Israel’s farmers. The horror of the indiscriminate destruction of these hordes terrified Amos, and he begged God to relent because he knew such a plague would destroy little Israel. The Lord answered his request and did not send the locusts (Amos 7:1-3).

2. The second vision was of a consuming fire over the land and water sources. Again Amos interceded because of the complete devastation this would cause, and “*the LORD relented concerning this*” (Amos 7:4-6).

3. The third vision was of the Lord Himself standing on a straight wall, holding a plumb line. A plumb line was a string or cord to which a heavy object was attached. When held at the end with the weighted part allowed to hang freely, gravity would pull the weight downward and keep the cord perfectly perpendicular to the ground, providing a guideline for building something level or a visual standard for discerning the crookedness of something already erected. In this vision, God Himself did the judging of whether or not an individual was “level” or righteous, according to the plumb line of His holiness. His would not be an indiscriminate judgment, as with the locust or fire, but a righteous evaluation of whether each person

had come into conformity with His standard. Of course, the idolatrous places of the day would be condemned and idol-shrines doomed to destruction.

Interrupted by Amaziah (Amos 7:10-17)

This is the only historical and personal interlude in the prophecies of Amos. Foolishly Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, tried to stop the efforts of Amos by reporting him to King Jeroboam II. Inaccurately, according to the record of Amos' prophecies we have, Amaziah claimed Amos had prophesied the death of Jeroboam by sword. This did not occur (2 Kings 14:28,29), so was obviously not spoken by Amos because God's true prophets were always absolutely accurate (Deuteronomy 18:21,22). The direct quote from the prophecy of Amos was "*I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam*" (Amos 7:9). The prophecy was general, not personal.

Still today, those who oppose God's word or work often twist or change Scripture to incite others to react. Throughout the ages, religious leaders have been guilty of such interference with the true work of God. Jesus pronounced a woe on the leaders of His day for this: "*But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in*" (Matthew 23:13).

Using another tactic still common today when an unpopular message is being given, Amaziah attacked Amos personally, attempting to discredit his authority and his right to speak for God. It was true that Amos was not from a recognized school or family of prophets. He was a "*sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit*" when God called him out and entrusted him with these messages to Israel. Amos had obediently responded to God's call.

As punishment for his efforts to keep the Lord's warnings from Israel, Amaziah and his family would have some terrible experiences: "*Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; your land shall be divided by survey line; you shall die in a defiled land; and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land'*" (Amos 7:17). It is certainly dangerous

to be found opposing God or **disparaging** His messengers!

Fourth Vision: Ripened Fruit (Amos 8:1-3)

The Lord showed Amos a bowl of ripe summer fruit. Like Israel at the height of her present prosperity, nothing could be more appealing. However, the ripeness would very soon give away to a rottenness that would require disposal. God said that the end was coming and that He would not return to rescue Israel again. The worship songs of which they were so proud would soon be turned to howlings over the dead bodies that would fall permanently silent. The nearer judgment to which this refers was the captivity of Israel by Assyria. The judgments of the "*day of the LORD*" would come also but not until the distant future.

Another Sermon (Amos 8:4-10)

In another effort to awaken his listeners to their need for repentance, Amos began to catalog more of their sins. Even though they superficially observed some of God's laws, like those for keeping Sabbath or observing the new moons, they were actually anxious to get the observances over so that they could continue in their dishonest trade practices. They used inaccurate scales to give less of their goods while demanding more from their customers in payment. They overcharged the needy and then added the sweepings from the ground to increase the appearance of the volume of wheat sold to them. God Himself was watching and remembering every dishonest act, and He called on earth and heaven to react against such wickedness (Amos 8:8,9). God would not allow the crooked merchants of Israel to benefit long from their dishonesty against the poor. He would soon turn their times of celebration into bitter days of mourning (verse 10).

A Different Kind of Famine (Amos 8:11-14)

The written word of God is a gift we too often underestimate. How could we know God if He had not left us this revelation of Himself? The Scriptures are our guide to knowing Him, pleasing him, and knowing what He has promised us. Yet in keeping with the modern axiom "use it or lose it," the

continual disregard for the written word of God will one day result in His removing it from the world altogether. Amos prophesied a time when people would be starving for it but would not be able to gain access to it. Today, as in the time of Amos, even supposedly religious people are not studying and obeying the Scriptures as they should. What will it be like when a Bible cannot be found at all?

The Vision of the Lord Dispensing Judgment (Amos 9:1-10)

The fifth vision Amos was shown was of God Himself standing upon the altar and commanding judgment to begin. Amos warned that at such a time there would be absolutely no place to escape. The earth itself would melt at God's touch (verse 5). He would sift the people carefully, in search of any kernel worthy of keeping, but would find none (verse 9). (The sifting device used at that time spun its contents to cause the chaff to cling to the sides so that whole kernels could fall to the ground.) However, though the destruction of Israel would be terrible, it would not be absolute. A **remnant** would remain (verse 8).

The idea of a remnant of Israel being reestablished in the end times to receive all the promises of the Scriptures to Israel is a recurring theme repeated by many of the prophets. That remnant will be the true Israel, those descendants of Abraham from all tribes who have repented of their sins and come to God in saving faith in His Messiah. God has never had a double standard. There has always been only one way of salvation, through faith in the blood of His Son Jesus. His people Israel will have to accept Him by faith individually just as the Gentiles will. But in the last days, when so many in Israel will have their eyes opened not only to see but to believe in Him "*whom they pierced,*" the result will be glorious! (See Zechariah 12:10, Romans 11:15, and Revelation 1:7.) God will then raise up the fallen "*tabernacle of David*" and "*will raise up its ruins.*"

The earth, which had so often echoed God's wrath with earthquakes, drought, and famine, will respond with unequaled productivity. The crops will be so large that farmers will not finish harvesting them before it is time to plant again.

Mountains and hills will literally drip with the juice of their abundant fruit. Unlike their wicked forefathers, who had been forced from their fine homes and vineyards before they enjoyed them, the returned inhabitants will fully enjoy everything: "*I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them*" (Amos 9:15).

Major Truths from a Minor Prophet

If someone had not carefully read or studied the writings of Amos, he might ignorantly remark about the probable unimportance of such a brief message. However, those who have studied the words of Amos must boldly declare the profound truths they have found in these nine chapters.

1. First, no matter how much a person participates in religious activities, the test of biblical righteousness is not in that but rather in how he treats others in everyday life, especially the weak and the poor. God hates injustice, insensitivity to the pain of others, self-centered greed and materialism, and false worship. Those who practice such are in the same **imminent** danger of judgment as the sinners of Amos' day because such actions indicate **unregenerate** hearts (Matthew 7:20).

2. Next, there will certainly come a "*day of the LORD*" in which God will judge swiftly and completely all ungodly people and all ungodly actions. None is righteous enough to stand level against the plumb line held by a holy God (Romans 3:10). None has hope of escaping eternal judgment except by repenting of all wickedness and appealing to God to apply the blood of His Lamb which alone can provide the necessary atonement for sin.

3. One last truth to be shared is that God has chosen Israel out of "*all the families of the earth*" (Amos 3:2) to hold a unique place in His prophetic plans. However, simply being born into the family of Abraham does not guarantee exemption from earthly accountability or eternal judgment. The true Israelite is one who has accepted God's way of salvation through Messiah. That one, if alive in the end-times, shall join with a righteous remnant to enjoy every blessing God has promised to Israel in an actual kingdom of God on earth for a thousand years.

Amos has introduced some very wonderful promises and convicting truths which we will see emphasized and enlarged upon by the prophets that followed him. God repeats His truths so that we will

not miss them—so that we will hear and obey them. What have you learned this week which you can begin to obey right now?

VOCABULARY

1. **disparaging:** being critical
2. **imminent:** about to happen
3. **improvisation:** a performance without preparation
4. **indulgent:** allowing oneself or another a special or excessive pleasure
5. **Pleiades and Orion:** constellations of stars
6. **remnant:** a small remaining group of people
7. **unregenerate:** unreformed spiritually or morally

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