

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Sept. 23rd, 2012

Passage: Amos 3:1-15

Memory Passage: Romans 8:27-28

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 3:1-8 & Deut. 7:7-11.** For what reason did God change his words from “Thus says the LORD” as He spoke judgment in chapters 1 & 2 to “Hear this word” in chapter 3 (cf. 4:1 & 5:1)? Why does God emphasize His past act of deliverance as He identifies Israel (v. 1)?

(b) Why does God call Israel a “family” and refer to the rest of the inhabitants of the earth as “families?” What is God conveying about His relationship with Israel when He says, “You only have I known?” How should this fact have affected Israel’s response to God, both before this oracle and now that they have heard it?

(c) What is the cause & effect relationship found in v. 2 (i.e. “since _____ therefore _____”)? Does this seem contradictory to you? How does God’s intimate, loving, knowledge of Israel lead to/require His punishment? Would the people of Israel have expected God’s intimate knowledge of them to lead to punishment, or to something else? Does God still work this way? Explain your answer.

(d) *Family:* Have your Lego set ready as you **Read Ex. 14.** Have your family build this scene from Legos as you teach your family about this merciful and loving act of God on behalf of His people. Then, as they continue to build, **Read Amos 1:1-2** and discuss why God would call this act of deliverance to the minds of His people at the beginning of this oracle of warning, and why God’s intimate love for His people necessitated their punishment for disobedience (cf. Lev. 26).

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 3:1-8.** In verses 3-6 the LORD poses several questions through His prophet. What is the expected answer for each of these questions? Are they purely rhetorical or does each of them have a specific meaning Israel should understand?

(b) For each of the questions Amos asks on behalf of God, answer the following questions: (1) How does the scenario presented in the question describe Israel’s situation? (2) What are they to learn from the question and expected answer? (3) How should we apply these questions to our own life today in the 21st century church (be ready to discuss this in class!)?

(c) *Family:* Lead your family through (b). Emphasize the covenant between God and His people (the unity & agreement of two walking together), the immanence of God’s judgment (the lion roars when he pounces on his prey and the young lion crying out, lit. “thundering,” with satisfaction after his prey is caught), Israel’s sin of disobeying God (just as a bird only falls into a trap that is set and is lured there by bait, Israel has knowingly disobeyed God and has been caught in His righteous judgment because they have been enticed by the “bait” of sin,) God’s people should be fearful in light of this warning (just as a trumpet warning the city of an attack should make the city fearful), that God is in sovereign control of every calamity and disaster that a nation faces and the nation will find out in the rest of Amos’ prophecy the types of disaster they will face.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 3:1-8.** What are the “secrets” God reveals to His prophets? How are prophets God’s servants? How, specifically, is Amos a servant of God?

(b) What other Scriptures come to mind in which God revealed to His prophets what He was about to do? Why is this revelation beneficial to God’s people? What does it tell you about the character and work of God?

(c) What is the expected answer to the 2 questions in v. 8? How does God roar/speak today? How should we as Christians answer the two questions posed in v. 8? How have *you* been answering them by *your* daily life/actions (i.e. do you give evidence that as He speaks you are one who fears and prophecies?)? How does God’s voice motivate and inspire you to live a life of reverence before Him and to prophecy what you hear?

(d) *Family:* **Read Amos 3:7-8.** Ask, “What do these 2 verses mean?” Teach your family about God’s longsuffering as He sends prophets to warn His people that if they do not repent He will fulfill the promise of judgment, and that just as people would be fearful if they stood before a roaring lion they should also be fearful of our holy God when He is roaring His promise of judgment. Also, that when God speaks to us through His word it should compel us to teach others what it says, to warn others about the coming judgment, and how the Lion who roars is also the Lamb of God who redeems His people so that through repentance and faith in Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, we will escape judgment.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 3:9-15.** Why are the nations of Philistia (Ashdod, see 1:8) and Egypt called to the mountains of Samaria? What is surprising about them being called as witnesses? What are they told to witness? What is the Yahweh’s proclamation about Israel (v. 10)?

(b) To what does “strongholds” (or citadels, palaces, vs. 9 & 11) refer? Who will be this “adversary” that will surround and destroy Israel and when will this ultimately happen (the answer is not in the text, but you should know this!)?

(c) How do you think Amos’ listeners in Bethel would react to neighboring nations being called as witnesses against Israel? If God were to call witnesses against his church today, what things would He be unhappy with and instruct them to witness?

(d) What do you learn about the fierceness of this judgment in v. 12? What do you learn about the mercy of God even in the midst of this judgment in v. 12? What do you learn about the work and character of God by knowing God is both the Lion & Shepherd?

(e) *Family:* **Read Amos 3:9-11.** Explain these verses to your family (the nations of Philistia & Egypt are figuratively called as witnesses against the sin of Israel: they do not know how to do what is right and they oppress the poor and the rich get richer at the expense of the poor and they are not worshiping God but themselves; God will bring an adversary against them to destroy them). Then **Read 2 Kings 17** to show them how (Assyria took Israel into captivity) and why (they sinned against God) this prophecy was fulfilled.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Amos 3:9-15, 1 Kings 12:25-31, & 2 Kings 23:15.** What attribute(s) of Himself is God showing Israel when He instructs Amos to call Him “the God of Hosts?” How will you benefit this week from remembering that God is the God of Hosts?

(b) Why did God promise to destroy “the altars at Bethel?” When were these altars set up and why? What was He saying to Israel about their worship practices? When was this prophecy fulfilled?

(c) How would you describe the social status of the people of Israel after reading v. 15? What was God addressing by promising to destroy these houses? What specifics have you read in the rest of the book that this promise foreshadows?

(d) How does the church in America resemble the nation of Israel to whom Amos prophesied? How do *you* resemble the condition of the nation to whom Amos spoke? What ways can BCC hear The Lion’s Roar and adjust our course, both as individuals in the church and the church as a whole, so we might avoid God’s displeasure?

(d) *Family:* **Read 1 Kings 12:35-31** and teach your family how and why the altars at Bethel were set up. Then **Read Amos 3:13-15** and discuss with your family why God chose to pronounce judgment in these particular ways (the punishment of the altars showed His displeasure with the religious practices of His people; the multiple houses showed the excessive life styles of the ruling classes, and the rich oppressed the poor to gain such a luxurious standard of living, so God will bring judgment on them through these excesses). Then **Read 2 Kings 23:15** to show how the good King Josiah fulfilled this prophecy by destroying the altars in Bethel even after Assyria took Israel into captivity.

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Be Warned, The Lion Has Roared!