BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS


Memory Passage: Romans 8:31-32

Passage: Amos 5:18-27

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) **Read Amos 5:18-27.** How does this passage differ in its beginning compared to previous sections (i.e. cf. 3:1, 4:1 & 5:1 with 5:18, 6:1, & 6:4)? What does the word “woe” mean? Why does Amos start this passage with this word?

(b) Verse 18 infers that there were people in Amos’ day who were seeking the Day of the Lord. Given this observation, what do you think the people of Israel thought would happen on the Day of the Lord?

(c) Read the following verses (and you will need to check their context) and write down the events to which the Day of the Lord can refer (note that this is not an exhaustive list): Lam. 2:22, Obad. 15, Zeph. 1:7 & 14, Mal. 4:5, and 2 Pet. 3:10. To what does the Day of the Lord refer in Amos 5:18ff? Do you desire the Day of the Lord? If so, why, and if not, why not?

(d) **Family: Read Amos 5:18** and ask your family, “To what does Amos refer with the term, ‘Day of the Lord?’” After a discussion, assign the following Scriptures to be read: Lam. 2:22, Obad. 15, Zeph. 1:7, Mal. 4:5, and 2 Pet. 3:10. On your white board be ready to record the different events to which each reference refers. You will need to look at other verses to answer this, for example: Lam. 1:1, 7-8 show that what is lamented is the past destruction of Jerusalem; Obad. 1 shows the judgment will come on Edom; Zech. 1:1 reveals the prophecy is against Judah and her future destruction but also future restoration (3:14-20); Mal. 3:1 & 4:5 speak of John the Baptist heralding the arrival of Jesus and then the Day of the Lord will come, which let’s us know that this passage, as well as 2 Pet. 3:10, refer to the second coming of Christ and final judgment. Then return to Amos 5:27 and show that in Amos the Day of the Lord is the destruction of the northern kingdom, Israel, and their captivity by the Assyrians (“beyond Damascus” = Assyria, which is north of Syria, of which Damascus is the capital).

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) **Read Amos 5:18-27, 1 Thess. 5:1-11, and 2 Pet. 3:1-13.** How does Amos describe this Day in v. 18c and 20, and why will the Day be like this? What does the description of events in v. 19 tell us about the nature of the coming Day of the Lord?

(b) As you read the two NT passages, record what you learn about the final Day of the Lord. How is this Day similar to the Day when Assyria would overtake and destroy Israel? How is it different? For believers, how should our knowledge of this final Day of the Lord affect our behavior according to 1 Thessalonians 5 and 2 Peter 3? How should it affect our life in community with other believers? How and why should it be an encouragement to us?

(c) **Family: Read Amos 5:18-19.** Assign parts to different members of your family (the lion, bear, serpent, the person) and act out the scene depicted (I think this is one scene, the “or went into the house” should be “then went into the house”). You may even act it out several times letting different family members play different parts. Then begin a discussion about why Amos used this description of events (it was to show that the coming judgment was unavoidable).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) **Read Amos 5:18-27.** Write down the verbs that describe God’s actions in vs. 21-23 (you should have 6). Now write down the nouns that describe the people’s activities in vs. 21-23 (you should have 7). Now just to point out the obvious, what is the topic of these 3 verses?

(b) What caused God to utter such strong statements against their worship practices? How would you have felt if you were in Amos’ audience as he spoke God’s words (would you have been sad, angry, afraid, dismissive, or something else entirely)?

(c) Make a list of all the corporate worship practices you can think of in which you are involved, which should include some from Amos’ list. Beside each practice, find a Scripture passage that supports it as a command or precept from God (the Israelites, for example, would have put Lev. 1 beside the burnt offerings, Lev. 2 beside the grain offerings, and Lev. 3 beside the peace offerings to show that they were obeying God with these practices). What would cause God to reject your practices as He rejected Israel’s practices? If you are guilty of any of these things that might bring God’s rebuke of your worship, how will you repent and obey God more fully? If you are not, how will you avoid falling into these traps of false worship?

(d) **Family: Read Amos 5:21-23.** Lead your family through (a), (b), and (c) above. The following may help you as you lead your family: Remember that Israel’s worship at an altar that sported a golden calf violated the first 3 commandments as well as the laws concerning worship at the temple in Jerusalem, Levitical priests, prescribed feasts and their times of celebration, and according to 3:4-5, the types and frequency of their offerings. Also remind yourself of passages such as 1 Sam. 15:22-23, Hos. 6:6, Matt. 9:13 & 12:7, and John 4:22-25.
DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) Read Amos 5:18-27. What does the word “but” tell you about how verse 24 relates to v. 23? Though “justice” and “righteousness” are closely related, write a definition of both words and identify their similarities and differences.

(b) What is Amos saying with regard to the relationship between justice & righteousness and worship (since he says, in effect, “I reject your worship but desire you to let justice & righteousness flourish”)? Why does God demand these activities from His people (see, for instance, Zeph. 3:5, Deut. 32:3-4, Ps. 119:137)?

(c) Is God asking for justice to flow without ceasing (“ever-flowing”, v. 24) from the nation, individuals, or both? Describe what ever-flowing justice would look like today at the national, church, and individual levels. Now describe what ever-flowing righteousness would look like today at the national, church, and individual levels. Please take some time to think through this and be thorough in your answers. The implication in Amos is that God will reject our worship practices if our worship does not include the fruit of being a true follower of Christ, that is, the ever-flowing practice and pursuit of justice and righteousness! Be ready to discuss this in your class.

(d) Family: Read Amos 5:24. Explain that one reason God has rejected Israel’s worship was that their hearts and actions were not pursuing those things that God pursues, justice and righteousness. Read Zeph. 3:5, Deut. 32:3-4, and Ps. 119:137 to show that these two attributes mark God’s character, and discuss definitions for both words: To say God is just is to say that everything He does is done with equity, impartiality, and is right. To say that we act with justice (though imperfectly) means that we seek to act in equitable, impartial, and right ways, and fight for others to be treated and judged in the same way. To say the God is righteous means that He is perfect and right in His own character, and when He acts, His actions are always right (and therefore just). When we participate in righteousness we think and act in ways that are right and in line with and reflecting God’s character. Now make a list of all the ways we can participate, in our own lives and in the lives of others, in justice and righteousness “rolling down like waters . . . like an ever-flowing stream.”

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) Read Amos 5:18-27. Since Israel did in fact offer sacrifices during their 40 years in the wilderness (see, for example, Lev. 9:8-24), why did God accuse them of not doing this in v. 25 (keep in mind the context and what you have already learned about their worship)? Why does God, in v. 28, return with yet another accusation of idolatry (worshiping Assyrian deities)?

(b) What does v. 27 tell you about the specifics of the Day of the Lord? Explain this phrase, “the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts” and why it is important.

(c) Take a moment to re-read Amos 5:1-5:27, and as you read, write down specific truths and applications that have affected (or should have affected) your life thus far in our study of Amos, and be ready to share these in your class.

(d) Family: Prior to the lesson take a moment to develop 8-10 questions concerning what you have learned from your study of Amos thus far. Some examples: “Where was Amos from and what was his occupation?” “Name 3 of the other 7 nations over which Amos pronounced judgment in chap. 1-2.” “Name the animals Amos mentions and how he uses them.” “What are the main problems God has with Israel?” etc. Make the difficulty level appropriate for your kids’ ages, and let them use their Bibles to find the answers. Then as you answer each question as a group, use the time of discussion as a review.


PASSAGE: Amos 5:18-27

In Amos 5:18-27 we learn four characteristics of the Day of the Lord.