

Study Series: Amos

Discussion Questions about the Overall Message of Amos

Perhaps more than any other Old Testament prophet, the words of Amos challenge us to carry out the prophetic role in today's world. Amos was not content to settle for the status quo but was always ready—at God's initiative—to question the most revered social and religious systems of his day. As contemporary readers, we need to internalize the preaching of Amos and address such issues as injustice, intolerance, inequity, empty rituals, and misguided promises. Use these discussion questions to prompt your thinking.

1. Amos had a lot to say his audience about justice. Where do you see examples of true justice in today's world? Where do you see injustice? What can you do about it?
2. What were some of the major themes of the preaching of Amos? How can you continue that prophetic role in your own world?
3. Reread Amos 5.21-24. In light of these concerns, what do you think Amos might say to the Church today? What can you do to help the Church hear these challenges?
4. Has your understanding of God changed by reading the book of Amos? If so, how? Name two new things you have learned while reading and studying Amos? In what way are these things important for you?

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Questions about Amos 1.1—6.14

1. What does 1.1 tell you about the person of Amos? What was Amos supposed to do with what the Lord gave him? What was unusual about Amos being chosen by the Lord? Some additional information about Amos is given in 7.12-15. How does this add to your understanding of who Amos was?
2. For what reasons did the Lord judge many of the nations bordering Israel? (1.3—2.3)
3. What was the relationship between Israel and Judah at the time of Amos' preaching?
4. Why did Amos preach the Lord's words of judgment against Israel? (2.6—6.14) How would Israel be punished?
5. How does the following statement connect with Amos' message to the people of Israel: "Being chosen means being judged"? Which of the following words do you think is closest to the idea of being chosen—privilege, task, or commitment? Why?
6. After reading the first six chapters of Amos, how would you define the kind of "justice" the Lord wants? How do you visualize this kind of justice?

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Questions about Amos 7.1—9.15

1. What did Amos see in the first four visions of the Lord's judgment against Israel? (7.1—8.3) How did the first two visions differ from the last two visions?
2. Who was Amaziah, and why did he tell Amos to stop preaching in Israel? (7.10-13) How did Amos respond to Amaziah's request? (7.14-17)
3. Why were the rich grain merchants impatient during the Sabbath and New Moon Festival? (8.4-6) What effect did their dishonest business practices have on their country and its people? How did the Lord respond to these practices? (8.7-14; 9.1-4)
4. What, if anything, is surprising about the last verses of the book? (9.11-15) Why is it difficult to live without hope?