

When God's Patience Runs Out

Amos



5pm/7pm Gatherings

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

i How to the get best value out of these studies...

Welcome to a series of Old Testament studies in the book of Amos.

This Bible Study Guide is designed in a three part format...

1. Opening questions to get you thinking are listed as ***Appetisers***.
2. Those which get you to investigate the text are contained in the ***Main Course***.
3. The ***Thinking It Through*** section prompts you to reflect on what you've looked at and consider how it will change you and those in your group.

If you're using this guide in a Small Group, it is vital that you have done preparatory work ***before*** you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

If you're doing these studies individually, make sure you let someone know you are doing so and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the Bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend a lot of money on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for quality titles that will result in money well spent.

We trust you'll find this guide helpful and we welcome any feedback you can give us as you use them.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recommended Commentary:

J A Motyer *The Message of Amos, The Bible Speaks Today*

Roy Clements *When God's Patience Runs Out, Living Word Series, IVP*

The Background to Amos...

The book of Amos is located squarely in the eighth century BC. We know this from the opening verse of prophecy, Amos 1: 1 "The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—what he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel."

Uzziah reigned in Judah from 790-740BC and Jeroboam II from about 793-753BC. Amos was an untaught man called by God. He came from Tekoa which was a village of little account in Judah near Jerusalem. However, his public ministry involved him travelling to the Northern Kingdom/Israel to preach for repentance.

It's important to know the background to this southern/northern split. The split occurred in the aftermath of Solomon's reign as king of the combined twelve tribes. This division occurred in 922BC.

There was a lot of animosity between the north and the south (check out 2 Kings 14 for a bit of background), yet Amos went from Judah to preach a message of repentance to Israel - a great missionary spirit!

In many ways the nation of Israel was experiencing good times in the eighth century BC. They were prosperous and relatively secure in terms of their national state. This had led to relaxed, self-confident smugness. They had retained the appearance of relationship with God, but it was all on the surface. God and his word no longer had any impact on their life as God's people.

Amos came with a word from God that His patience had run out and that He was about to judge them. Historically speaking, it was only 30 years later that God used Assyria to invade and conquer Israel (722BC).

The parallels with our own nation and the church in the west are obvious. The challenge for us as individuals is strong from Amos too. We live in a comfortable, well-off nation where it is easy to give lip service to God so long as it doesn't disadvantage us in any way or unsettle our relationships with unbelievers around us. Amos prophesies with relevance and power to our society and our church some 2,500 years later.

1 Do We Want God To Judge?

Amos 1-3

Preparation: *Given that we are doing a bit of a bird's eye view of Amos, it would be good to read through the whole book and jot down the major themes and ideas that come up. Also, note the things that don't necessarily make sense to you. Then when you get together in your Bible Study Group you might be able to help each other answer some of these issues.*

For the first study, it would be good to read through the first three chapters carefully.

Appetisers...

1. FHB Dillon was the Rector of Holy Trinity between 1946 and 1952. He became known as 'Hell, Fire and Brimstone' Dillon because of his preaching on the wrath of God, the coming judgement and the need for repentance. If our preaching at Holy Trinity strongly and regularly emphasised the judgement of God, how would people react?

2. Do you think that warning about hell should be essential for any sharing of the gospel, or will it just scare potential believers away?

3. Do you think we have a sufficient horror of sin? Why? Why not?

Main Course...

4. You might like to look at 2 Kings 14: 23 - 15: 7 to get some background on the time of the two kings mentioned in Amos 1: 1. What do you think is the tone set in Amos 1: 2 for the message that is about to be delivered?

2 Are You Ready To Meet God?

Amos 4

Appetisers...

1. When a natural disaster happens, what sort of reaction does it bring from people you have contact with? Do your non-Christian friends ever talk as if God is involved in any way?

2. Do you think God had any part in the twin towers disaster? If so, what?

Main Course...

3. What is the point in Amos 4: 1?

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7. What reaction does God have to people where they have a gap between their 'religion' and the outworking of it in their 'life'? (Amos 5: 23-24)

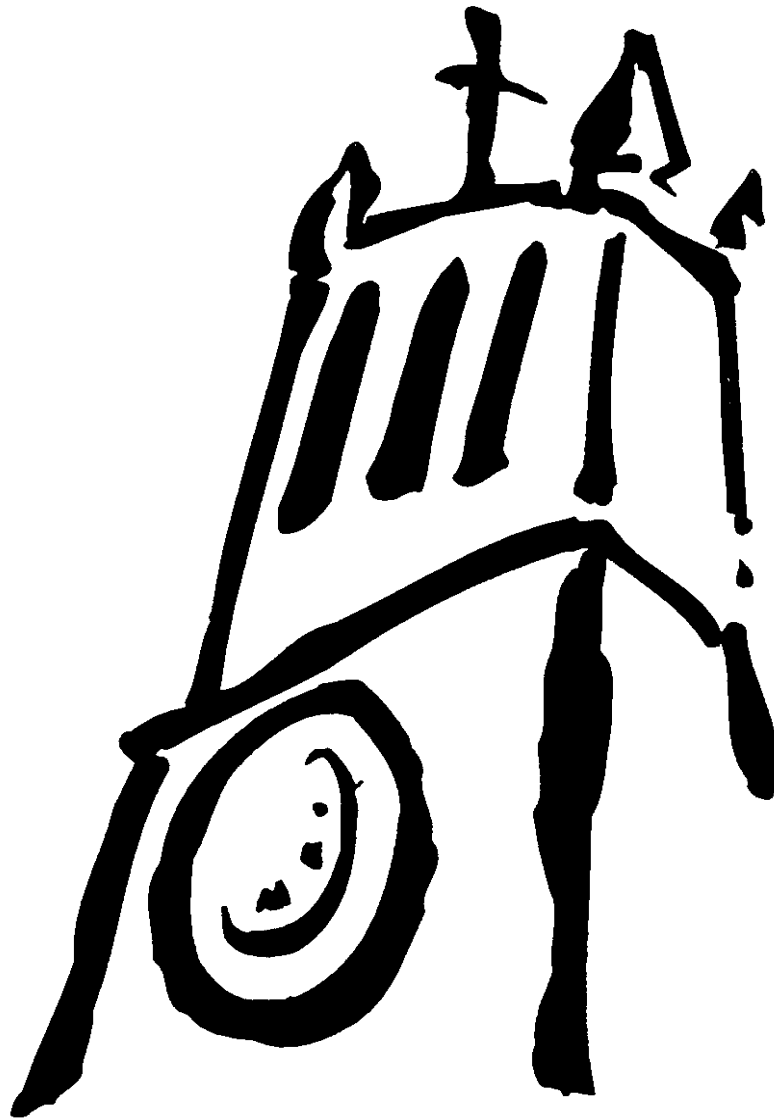
8. How does God respond to hypocrisy? How serious is it? (Amos 8: 9-12)

Thinking It Through...

9. Think through again where the 'gaps' are in your life. What do you need to do about them?

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Notes



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