

Amos Bible Study Guide

Series: Amos – “The Lion Roars, the Lamb Redeems”

Focus Passages: Amos 1–2; Luke 4 :16-21; Isaiah 61 :1-2

1. Opening

Read Amos 1 :1-2 aloud.

“The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds dry up and the top of Carmel withers.”

Tell the group:

“Today we’re letting clear, simple truth do its work. Amos speaks with a roar; Jesus answers with a cross. Let’s listen for both.”

2. Backdrop – Two Tradesmen Prophets

Amos introduces himself with a single Hebrew word: **nōqēd**—a flock-master. He isn’t a formally trained prophet; he’s a regional livestock manager from Tekoa, a dusty village south of Bethlehem. Picture a mid-level grazer: calloused hands, shrewd mind, trusted by both workers and merchants. His daily life is a balance of hard labour and ledgers—branding sheep at dawn, haggling wool prices by noon. That mix of earth and enterprise gives him a keen eye for injustice: he’s seen shearers underpaid, widows short-changed, and market scales tipped.

Seven centuries later we meet Jesus, introduced by His neighbours as **“the carpenter”**—more precisely a **tekton**, a builder who worked timber and stone. Like Amos, Jesus is not part of the religious elite. He earns credibility the long way: splinters, sweat and faithful obedience in a back-water town. Both men know what it costs to live on the margins and both understand the power dynamics that grind ordinary people.

Their callings converge:

- **Outsiders with insider knowledge.** Neither graduates from a prophetic academy or rabbinic school, yet both speak with unquestioned authority.
- **Tradesmen turned truth-tellers.** God chooses workers who smell of sawdust and sheep dip, so no-one can dismiss the message as ivory-tower theory.
- **Burden bearers.** Amos’ very name means “burdened one”, and Isaiah foretells a Servant who will carry the world’s sorrows. Jesus shoulders that burden all the way to Calvary.

By pairing these two voices Scripture drives home a lesson: *God's word often arrives wrapped in overalls, not robes*. When we honour only polished speakers we risk missing the roar that comes from the paddock—or the workshop.

3. Digging In

A. The Lion's Roar – Amos 1 :2

Narrative: Amos begins with shock-and-awe. A lion doesn't roar while stalking; it roars mid-leap. The image is arresting: judgement is already airborne, teeth bared, breath hot. Israel has seconds, not seasons, to respond.

Discussion Prompts

1. What emotions rise in you when God is pictured as a roaring lion rather than a gentle shepherd?
2. Where might God be “roaring” against modern injustices—locally or globally?
3. How can believers avoid becoming desensitised to that roar?

B. The Trap – Amos 1 :3 – 2 :5

Narrative: Amos circles his prey rhetorically. He denounces six pagan nations—Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab—then Judah. Every accusation is a cheer-line for the northern crowd. Then the prophet spins, points, and says, *“Israel, this is you.”* Listeners shift from smug to stunned in a heartbeat.

Discussion Prompts

1. Share a time you condemned “them” only to realise later the finger pointed at you.
2. Why is religious familiarity a breeding ground for blind-spots?
3. How does the Nathan-and-David story (2 Sam 12) mirror Amos' strategy?

C. Israel Indicted – Amos 2 :6-8

Narrative: Amos names economic exploitation, judicial corruption, sexual perversion and idolatrous worship—sins woven into everyday commerce and piety. One line jumps off the page: *“They sell the innocent for silver.”* Seven centuries later Jesus, the Innocent, is sold for silver pieces in the same land. Scripture ties the knots; injustice repeats unless redemption breaks the cycle.

Discussion Prompts

1. Rewrite each charge in twenty-first-century terms.

2. Where might our buying habits trample the poor?
3. How does the Judas parallel sharpen our view of transactional sin?

D. God's Track-Record Recalled – Amos 2 :9-12

Narrative: God rehearses His résumé: crushing the Amorites, rescuing from Egypt, providing prophets and Nazirites. Israel's response? Gag the prophets, corrupt the Nazirites. Grace forgotten becomes grace spurned.

Discussion Prompts

1. List personal graces God has shown you this year; how could forgetting them distort your ethics?
2. In what ways do we silence inconvenient voices God sends today?

E. The Crushing Verdict – Amos 2 :13-16

1. **Narrative:** Every human escape plan—speed, strength, skill, bravery—fails. Even the war-horse can't outrun the quake to come. Archaeologists suggest an 8-plus magnitude earthquake struck Israel c. 760 BC, leaving sediment layers and folklore that lingered for centuries. God's word shook the ground—literally.

Discussion Prompts

What modern "escape vehicles" do people trust (wealth, image, connections)?
How does the inevitability of judgement affect our proclamation of the gospel?

4. The Lamb's Response – Luke 4 :16-21

Read Jesus' Nazareth manifesto. Notice how every line answers an Amos accusation:

- **Good news to the poor** ↔ Israel's exploitation of the poor.
- **Freedom for prisoners** ↔ Israel's slave-trading.
- **Sight for the blind** ↔ Israel's moral blindness.
- **Freedom for the oppressed** ↔ Israel's trampling of the marginalised.
- **Year of the Lord's favour** ↔ Israel's year of the Lord's fury.

Discussion Prompts

1. Which line of Jesus' manifesto grips you most strongly today, and why?

2. How does Jesus absorb Amos' roar on the cross (cf. "*It is finished*")?
3. Identify one injustice Jesus' people in Sydney could tangibly confront this month.

5. Personal Reflection & Prayer

1. **Quiet inventory:** Ask the Spirit to reveal any area where you "sell the innocent" or "silence the word".
2. **Confession:** Read 1 John 1 :9 together; allow space for personal prayer.
3. **Commitment:** Each participant writes one concrete act of justice or mercy they will undertake this week—then prays for the courage to follow through.