



**Reaching,  
Restoring,  
Raising Up**

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**L.I.F.E. Group Questions**

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Share about your personal experience with alcohol—from your family of origin, or personally. How has your viewpoint of alcoholic beverage changed over the years?
2. Where have you seen the devastation of alcohol on a personal level?
3. In light of alcohol's devastating effects, why do you think our culture (including members of churches) is so committed to its continuance?
4. Talk about something new about your biblical understanding of alcohol from the sermon.
5. Discuss why the principle of love calls for us to completely abstain from the use of alcoholic beverage.
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

**We're on the Web!**

**Www. Celebrationnet.com**

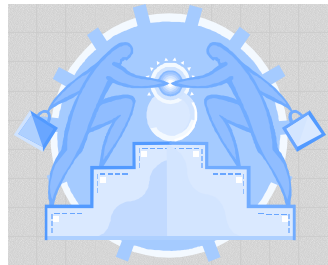
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find  
Yours Below and Join Us!**

**Adult Bible Fellowships**

**Locations, Times, Descriptions**

**9:00**

**10:45**



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS  
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

Rm104	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 104	Open—Bower-Chappell
Rm 112		Rm 112	Women—Byrum
Rm 201	30s-40s—Hixson	Rm 201	20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 202		Rm 202	30s—Tripp-Tripp
Rm 203	Young Singles —Franklin/Reynolds	Rm 203	Singles—Bentzel
Rm 204		Rm 204	30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205	Open—Regis-Anderson
Rm 206	Experiencing God—Graham	Rm 206	
Rm 207	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 207	How People Grow
Rm 208	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 208	Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker
		Gym	College—Ayres-Getchell

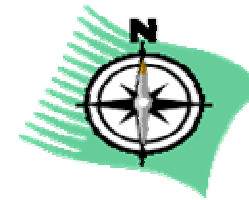
Sept 12, 2004

*Living Like a King*  
Fulfilling Our Call to Royalty from 1 & 2 Kings

**Celebration Fellowship**

**Swimming in the River**

A preview of Amos 4-6



Volume 3, Issue 2  
September 12, 2004

**Inside this issue:**

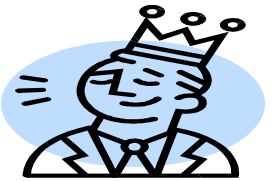
Introduction to Next Week's Study	1
Summary of Last Week's Study Questions	1-2
Study Guide	2-3
Life Group Questions	4

**The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life**

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

It is often said those in denial are "swimming in the river", referring to "de-Nile (de-nial) River in Egypt. At this point in Israel's history they were certainly "swimming in the river" of denial. As Amos 4-6 illustrates, Israel obviously thought that they were okay with God, when nothing could be further from the truth. Because they were bringing sacrifices and thank offerings to God every day, they assumed God was pleased with them. But He knew that their sacrifices were insincere, and that many were actually offered to false gods—

their version of substituting "religion" for true worship. This was obviously unacceptable, as were their many oppressive practices against the helpless that further angered God. Rather than abusing the helpless, He wanted their justice and righteousness to "roll down like a flooding river", so that it touched everything in its path. But they were so deeply in denial of God's displeasure that they actually looked forward to the Day of the Lord, when He would judge those who did evil. They failed to realize that God would judge



**We can live like kings when we follow the King, Jesus.**

not only their enemies who did evil, but them as well—meaning that they were ripe for His judgment. They could avoid this if they began to seek Him, and the good of their fellow man; but they thought they were okay. They were truly "swimming in the river."

**Caught in the Crosshairs**

The animal caught in the crosshairs of the hunter's scope has no idea of its immanent danger. Similarly, Israel, in the times of Jeroboam II's prosperous reign, was oblivious to their dire situation. God had Israel in the crosshairs of His judgment, and His rifle was Amos, a herder of sheep from Tekoa. The fact that Amos wasn't a "professional" prophet allowed him a "grass-roots" view of the social injustice being inflicted by the power brokers of Israel. As God spoke through him He described Himself as a roaring lion who was about to capture its prey. This judgment against them would be so hot that it would dry up the snow-capped peaks of Mt. Carmel, and cause the heat-parched pastures to mourn. His first target, Damascus, the capital of Aram, had threshed Gilead, in Israel, with a sledge of sharp iron. This pictured unnecessary cruelty which would lead to God's judgment, so that their king's palace and fortress

would be destroyed, the gates of the city torn down, and the people taken into exile. Next, God pronounced judgment on Gaza, in Philistia, and the seacoast city of Tyre. Gaza's deportation of an entire population as slave labor incurred God's displeasure, because they were treating people as "things" to be used for others' profit. The sin of Tyre included this, but was worsened by the fact that they had done this to blood relations. Such disloyalty was considered especially sinful by God. His judgment was that both Gaza's and Tyre's capital and fortresses would be destroyed, and Gaza would have their king and the inhabitants of various cities cut off. In a circle of judgment that spiraled towards Israel, Amos then focused on Edom, the descendents of Jacob's brother, and Ammon, a nation related to Abraham. Edom stifled their natural compassion toward their brother, and took revenge on Israel instead. This

**(Amos 1-3)**

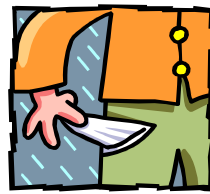
sin would be judged as their capital city and fortress were broken down. Ammon, who, while enlarging their borders, sinned by ripping open pregnant women in a show of heartless cruelty, would also have their capital and fortress dismantled, but also would be sent into exile. This shows that God's judgment will always fall on those who act against the compassion that we naturally feel towards family and those who are helpless. Next on God's "hit list" was Moab, who vengefully burned the bones of Edom's king to ashes, rather than giving him a respectful burial; their judgment for such disrespect would be a panic-filled destruction of their capital and fortress. Rounding out God's spiral of judgment was Judah, who violated their covenant with God. They had rejected the Law of God, had failed to keep His statutes, and had listened to the "lies" of their fathers (this probably referred to their idol worship passed on by their parents). Significantly, while their ac-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Amos 1-3 (continued from pg 1)

tions were primarily against God, they would be judged like the other nations, by the destruction of their capital and fortresses. Theirs would be destroyed by fire, which was literally fulfilled in 2 Kings 25:9. Their judgment shows that failure to adhere to our covenant with God is just as wrong in His eyes as sins against humanity. God's crowning target for judgment was Israel, to whom most of Amos' prophecy is devoted. Israel not only rejected God's Law, but also engaged in social injustice—they took bribes, of both money and property (giving one's sandal symbolized the transfer of property), perverted justice, and coveted the property of the helpless (like Ahab with Naboth's vineyard). They powered up on the humble, father and son had sex with the same girl, they kept the garment pledges of poor people overnight, and drank wine banned in the worship of God. These sins correspond to our taking advantage of others today for personal gain, when the vulnerable are the very ones we should protect. Israel's actions were a slap in God's face, who had destroyed the physically imposing Amorites for them, had delivered them from Egyptian slavery, had preserved them through the wilderness for forty years, and had even chosen some of their

sons to be prophets and Nazirites as His special servants. Yet Israel had caused the Nazirites to break their vows, and had caused the prophets to not speak, nullifying both of them. Their actions made God so "weary" that He disabled their ability to run, fight, or use their talents to avoid His judgment, leaving them with no defense. Amos then showed the certainty of God's judgment in a series of causes and effects. He chose them, therefore they would be punished, just as the cause of two men walking is that they have agreed to do so. Just as a lion roars when the prey is captured, so when the Lord reveals His counsel to His prophets, it is certain to happen. When God's prophecy is given, the effect should be trembling. But Israel



**"The vulnerable are the very ones we should protect."**

had no fear; they continued with and hoarded up chaotic violence and oppression to such an extent that even the pagan nations were amazed at it. Israel didn't know how to do right, due to their lack of familiarity with God's Word. Similarly, as murder, abortion, euphemism and abuse show, violence is rampant in America today. But, as Israel showed, this violence would be judged with such severity that the perpetrators would only survive with little handfuls they grabbed on the way out, like a shepherd who saves only the sheep's ear from the lion. God would also tear down Bethel's false altars with their horns, upon which the people relied for salvation, as well as their summer and winter houses that were their sources of security. These "safety nets" would all be removed when His judgment finally came. Israel's situation was like America's today. Thinking we are secure, we continue in the cruel abuse of abortion, the oppression of the poor through corporate greed, and the perversion of justice as we reject our Judeo-Christian heritage in the courts. All the while call ourselves a Christian nation because the majority claim some religious affiliation. But, just as Israel, we are in the crosshairs of God's scope of judgment.

## Study Questions for Amos 4-6

*In spite of God's continuing discipline of Israel, they lived under the assumption that He was still pleased with their actions.*

1. Read Amos 4:1-5. How were the women of Samaria described (v1) and what were they doing wrong (v1)? How were they covering it up (v4-5), and how would God respond (v2-3)? What does this show us?
2. From Amos 4:6-13 what disciplines had God already inflicted on Israel (v6,7-8, 9, 10, 11), and how did they respond (v6, 8, 9, 10, 11)? What would the consequence be (v12), and why was this serious (v13)?
3. Look at Amos 5:1-3. How does God describe Israel's present condition (v2), and what would illustrate this (v3)? What are Israel's fatal symptoms (v2), and why is this so sad?

4. In Amos 5:4-9 what choice did God call Israel to make (v4-5), and what would happen if they didn't (v6)? Who was God's particular target of discipline (v7), and why should they fear (v8-9)?

5. Using Amos 5:10-13 what had Israel done wrong (v11, 12), how did they react to being confronted with this truth (v10), and what was the effect on society (v13)? How would they be punished (v11)? Apply to us today.

6. Looking at Amos 5:14-15 what does God call Israel to do (v14, 15) and how might He respond (v14, 15)? Comparing this with 5:4 & 6, what is the connection between doing good to others and loving God?

7. Read Amos 5:16-20. How did Israel apparently view the impending "day of the Lord" (when He would come in judgment)? What would it be like instead (v16-17, 18-20)? What did they fail to realize?

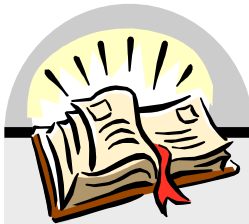
8. From Amos 5:21-27 what was Israel doing to appease God (v22-23, 25-26), what was His viewpoint of this (v21, 22, 25-26), and what would He do to them (v27)? What did He really want them to do (v24)?

9. Using Amos 6:1-7 describe the life and mind-set in Israel at that time (v1, 2, 4-6). How should they have been reacting (v6), and what was about to happen to them (v3, 7)? What can we learn from this?

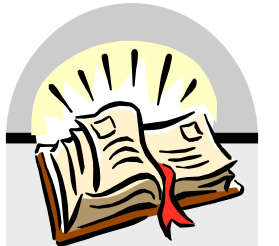
10. According to Amos 6:8-11 what did God detest about Israel (v8), and what would He do about it (v9, 11)? What would the effect on the people be (v10), and what point do you think He was making?

11. Looking at Amos 6:12-14 how had Israel become twisted in their thinking (v12, 13), and what would God do about it (v14)? What should they learn from this?

12. Summarize what Israel was doing wrong (4:1; 5:7, 10-12; 6:8, 12-13), the cover-ups they had in place (4:4-5; 5:5; 5:21-26); and the indicators that they were in denial about God's judgment (4:1; 4:6-11; 5:18, 20; 6:1, 4-6). What overall lessons can we learn here?



**"Similarly, as murder, abortion, euphemism and abuse show, violence is rampant in America today."**



## Memory Verse

**"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."**