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AMOS

A 6-Week Group Bible Study

By Greg and Kayla Gibson

WEEK 1 OF 6 • GENERAL / MIXED GROUP EDITION

The LORD Roars — Amos 1:1–2:16

Scripture Scope: Amos 1:1–2:16 (ESV) • Session Length: 75–90 Minutes

PARTICIPANT STUDY EDITION

Synchronized Section-by-Section with the Leader Guide Edition · Includes Group Reflection Workspace

Amos — 6-Week Group Bible Study (Participant Study Edition)

Week 1: The LORD Roars (Amos 1:1–2:16)

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- **The title:** "The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa" (1:1). Amos was a livestock breeder/herdsman (Hebrew: noqed) and tender of sycamore figs from Tekoa in Judah—a man of livelihood rather than necessarily poverty—sent north to Israel in the days of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam II of Israel, two years before a remembered earthquake.
- **The voices:** The LORD speaks through Amos to the nations, to Judah, and above all to Israel. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, opposes him (7:10–17).
- **Its form:** Prophetic poetry and prose: oracles against nations, covenant lawsuits, woes, five visions, a confrontation, and a closing promise.
- **The structure:**
  - The LORD roars; judgment circles the nations and closes in on Judah and Israel (chapters 1–2).
  - Lawsuits, laments, and woes against a people at ease while the poor are crushed (chapters 3–6).
  - Five visions, the clash with Amaziah, the end of the sanctuary, and the raising of David's fallen booth (chapters 7–9).
- **Why it matters:** Amos speaks to a prosperous, religious people who had forgotten justice. The LORD who roars from Zion cares how the poor are treated at the gate and in the marketplace, and he will not accept worship that ignores them. Yet the book ends with a promise: "I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen."

How This 6-Week Study Works

You may notice this study is shorter than our usual eight weeks. Even though we are 8weekbiblestudy.com, stretching Amos to eight weeks would have left it thin on content, and we never want to trade quality for quantity.

Designed for weekly small groups, mini-churches, and community gatherings (75–90 minutes per session) rather than daily homework checklists, this study is six weeks rather than the series' usual eight. Amos has 146 verses in nine chapters. Six weeks follow the book's own turns (the roar against the nations; "you only have I known"; "seek me and live"; the woes, visions, and Amaziah; the basket of summer fruit; the fallen sanctuary and the raised booth of David) without padding. Each week invites you to justice, true worship, and hope in the LORD who roars from Zion together through six repeatable sections:

- **Section X.1 — Opening:** Sets the scene, the Week at a Glance, Head, Heart, and Hands objectives, the Opening Frame, and the Opening Entry Question.
- **Section X.2 — Historical & Literary Context:** Places the week's passage inside the structure of Amos and the ancient Near Eastern world.
- **Section X.3 — Movement 1:** The week's first guided passage: Guided Scripture Reading, Anchor Verses, Teaching Narrative, and Group Discussion Questions.
- **Section X.4 — Movement 2:** The week's second guided passage, following the same flow.
- **Section X.5 — Canonical Horizon:** Traces how the passage echoes across Scripture and finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

- **Section X.6 — Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer:** Moves the week's study into everyday life, previews next week, and closes in prayer.

Key anchor verses are printed in each section for quick reference. Longer focal passages are read aloud together from the ESV.

Choosing a Bible Translation: Top 5 Translations Compared

Every English Bible translation falls along a spectrum between two primary approaches: word-for-word translation (formal equivalence, which prioritizes literal accuracy to the original phrasing and sentence structure) and thought-for-thought translation (dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes immediate modern readability by translating idioms and ideas into natural contemporary expressions). Here is how five widely used English translations compare:

- **ESV (English Standard Version) — Word-for-Word**
  - Pros: Follows the wording and sentence structure of the original Hebrew and Greek closely while using modern English; well suited to close study.
  - Cons: Because it tracks the original sentence structure, some phrasing can feel more formal than everyday speech.
- **NIV (New International Version) — Balanced (Between Word-for-Word and Thought-for-Thought)**
  - Pros: Widely read; balances accuracy to the original languages with natural, everyday readability.
  - Cons: Because some idioms are rendered as modern expressions, a few literal wordplays or technical terms can be less visible.
- **NLT (New Living Translation) — Thought-for-Thought**
  - Pros: Warm and conversational; reads smoothly aloud and helps readers follow the big picture of long passages.
  - Cons: Because it prioritizes meaning over literal phrasing, it can be harder to use for close word study.
- **CSB (Christian Standard Bible) — Optimal Equivalence (Balanced)**
  - Pros: Stays close to the original words where possible while smoothing awkward phrasing into natural modern English.
  - Cons: Because it is a newer translation, some well-known verses may sound different from the wording many readers remember.
- **KJV / NKJV (King James Version & New King James Version) — Traditional Word-for-Word**
  - Pros: Historic cadence that shaped English literature and church history; the NKJV updates archaic pronouns ("thee/thou") while keeping the classic rhythm.
  - Cons: Often reads like older English poetry, with complex sentences and archaic or formal vocabulary that can be harder for modern readers to follow.

This study quotes the ESV.

Greg & Kayla's Recommended Study Bibles

Having a trusted study Bible on hand is one of the best ways to go deeper as you read through Amos:

- **Greg's Favorite Study Bible:** The MacArthur Study Bible (ESV), which contains extensive explanatory notes beneath almost every verse, ideal for detailed study.
- **Kayla's Favorite Study Bible:** The ESV Study Bible, containing over 20,000 study notes, articles, and explanations.

The 6-Week Amos Study at a Glance

Week	Title & Passage	Movement 1 / Movement 2	Canonical Horizon
1	**The LORD Roars** (1:1–2:16)	For Three Transgressions of the Nations (1:1–2:5) / For Three Transgressions of Israel (2:6–16)	The Lord who roars from Zion; judgment that begins with the household of God
2	**You Only Have I Known** (3:1–4:13)	The Lion Has Roared (3:1–15) / Yet You Did Not Return (4:1–13)	The responsibility of those God has known; the Lion of Judah; return
3	**Let Justice Roll Down** (5:1–27)	Seek Me and Live (5:1–17) / Let Justice Roll Down like Waters (5:18–27)	Seek the Lord and live; Christ the light of the day of the LORD
4	**Woe to Those at Ease** (6:1–7:17)	The Complacent in Zion (6:1–14) / Locusts, Fire, a Plumb Line, and Amaziah (7:1–17)	The plumb line and the tested stone; the prophet sent
5	**A Basket of Summer Fruit** (8:1–14)	The End Has Come (8:1–8) / A Famine of Hearing the Words of the LORD (8:9–14)	Hunger for the word; the Word made near
6	**I Will Raise Up the Booth of David** (9:1–15)	No Escape, and a Remnant (9:1–10) / The Booth of David and the Planted People (9:11–15)	David's booth raised in Christ; a planted people

WEEK 1 OF 6

WEEK 1 SESSION GUIDE · AMOS 1:1–2:16

Week 1: The LORD Roars

Scripture Scope: Amos 1:1–2:16 (ESV) • Focal Passages: Amos 1:1–2; 2:4–5; 2:6–8 (in brief); 2:9–12 • Session Length: 75–90 Minutes

Section 1.1

Opening: The LORD Roars (Amos 1:1–2:16)

Opening

Amos was not a professional prophet. He was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town in Judah, sent north to the kingdom of Israel in a season of wealth and confidence. His first words are a roar: "The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem." Then, oracle by oracle, Amos circles Israel's neighbors: Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Each hears the same refrain, "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment" (with each nation named in turn), for cruelty in war and broken loyalty.

Israel's listeners might have nodded along. Then the circle tightens to Judah, which rejected the law of the LORD, and finally to Israel itself, which sold the righteous, trampled the poor, and silenced the prophets the LORD had raised up. The judgment Israel expected for others has come home.

Week 1 At a Glance

Scripture Scope	Amos 1:1–2:16 (a shepherd from Tekoa, the LORD's roar from Zion, a circle of judgment on six nations for cruelty in war, Judah's rejection of the law, Israel's crushing of the poor, the LORD's past grace in the exodus and the land, the silencing of prophets and Nazirites, and a day when the strong cannot escape)
Focal Passages	Amos 1:1–2; 2:4–5; 2:6–8 (in brief); 2:9–12
Literary & Structural Anchor	The oracles form a tightening circle: the same refrain falls on six nations, then Judah, then Israel. "For three, and for four" means the measure is full, not a count of crimes. Israel's oracle is the longest and turns from charges (2:6–8) to remembered grace (2:9–11) and refusal (2:12).
Big Idea	The LORD who roars from Zion judges the nations, and his judgment comes closest to home for the people who have known his grace and still crush the poor and silence his word.

Week 1 Learning Objectives (Head, Heart, Hands)

HEAD **Hear the Roar:** Learn how Amos's oracles circle the nations and close in on Judah and Israel, who had been shown the LORD's grace.

HEART **See Christ the Just One:** See that Christ is the Lord who roars, who brings good news to the poor, and whose judgment begins with his own household.

HANDS **Let the Word Land at Home:** Take one step to let God's word search your own life and to treat the poor and vulnerable justly.

Opening Frame: The LORD Roars

Joel ended with "The LORD roars from Zion" and the promise that the LORD is a refuge for his people. Amos opens with the same words, but now the roar falls on God's own people as well as the nations. Amos was a shepherd and a tender of sycamore figs from Tekoa in Judah, sent north to Israel in a time of prosperity under King Jeroboam II. His book moves from oracles against the nations, to the LORD's case against Israel, to five visions, and finally to a promise that the fallen booth of David will be raised. This is a 6–week study. This week the circle of judgment tightens from the surrounding nations to Judah and finally to Israel, and the hardest scenes of wartime cruelty will be told only in brief. The question for this week: what happens when God's searching word turns from others to us? Before we read together, take a moment to share with the group:

Opening Entry Question (Icebreaker)

> **1.1 Q1 (Opening Entry Question):** When you were growing up, what was a rule you were sure applied to your siblings, classmates, or friends more than to you?

Section 1.2

Historical & Literary Context: A Shepherd Sent North (Amos 1:1–2:16)

Entering the World of the Roar from Zion

1. Historical Background

Under Jeroboam II, Israel enjoyed relative stability, expanded borders, and busy shrines at Bethel and Gilgal. While specific economic details are reconstructed cautiously from limited records and prophetic critique, Amos indicts a prosperous elite whose luxury rested on crushing debts, lost land, and bribed courts that favored the wealthy.

2. Cultural Setting

Debt could lead to selling a person or family into servitude. A cloak taken as a pledge was to be returned at night (Exodus 22:26–27). Nazirites took a vow that included no wine (Numbers 6:1–4).

3. Literary Structure of Amos 1:1–2:16

- **Title and roar** (1:1–2)
- **Oracles against Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab** (1:3–2:3)
- **Judah** (2:4–5)
- **Israel's charges (2:6–8), remembered grace (2:9–11), refusal (2:12), and a judgment no one can outrun** (2:13–16)

4. Key Themes

The LORD's roar; judgment of the nations; covenant responsibility; justice for the poor; remembered grace; silencing the word.

5. Theological Considerations

The nations are judged for cruelty that any conscience can recognize; Judah and Israel are judged by the law they received. Greater knowledge brings greater responsibility. The roar is real, yet the book ends in hope (9:11–15).

6. Relevant Scholarly Insights

The oracles may echo a known form of announcing judgment on enemies, with Amos's twist: the circle ends on his own audience. Amos 1:2 shares its opening words with Joel 3:16.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.2)

1.2 Q1: Amos was a shepherd, not a professional prophet. Why might God choose someone from outside the religious establishment to speak to Israel?

1.2 Q2: Israel was prosperous and religious, yet Amos says it crushed the poor. How can wealth and religious activity hide injustice?

1.2 Q3: Amos lists the nations' sins before Israel's. Why do you think he saved Israel for last?

Section 1.3

Movement 1: For Three Transgressions of the Nations (Amos 1:1–2:5)

Guided Scripture Reading

Read aloud in this order, with brief connecting summaries between readings:

- **Reader 1: Amos 1:1–2** (focal passage) — The words of Amos, a shepherd of Tekoa, two years before the earthquake: the LORD roars from Zion, and the pastures mourn and Carmel withers.
- **Summary of Amos 1:3–2:3** — For three transgressions and for four, the LORD will not revoke the punishment of Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, for brutality in war, selling whole communities as slaves, breaking a covenant of brotherhood, pursuing a brother with the sword, and desecrating the dead; fire will devour their strongholds.
- **Reader 2: Amos 2:4–5** (focal passage) — For three transgressions of Judah and for four, the LORD will not revoke the punishment, because they rejected his law and were led astray by lies; fire will devour Jerusalem's strongholds.

Anchor Verses (ESV)

Amos 1:1: The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Amos 1:2: And he said: “The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.”

> **Amos 2:4–5:** Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked. So I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem.”

Teaching Narrative: For Three Transgressions of the Nations

1. A Shepherd's Words (Amos 1:1)

The prophet and the time.

2. The LORD Roars (Amos 1:2)

The voice from Zion that withers the land.

3. Damascus, Gaza, and Tyre (Amos 1:3–10)

Retold briefly. Cruelty in war and people sold.

4. Edom, Ammon, and Moab (Amos 1:11–2:3)

Retold briefly. A brother pursued; atrocity; the dead desecrated.

5. Judah (Amos 2:4–5)

Rejecting the LORD's law.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.3)

1.3 Q1: "The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa" (1:1). What encouragement is there in knowing that God spoke through an ordinary working man?

1.3 Q2: "The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem" (1:2). What does the image of a lion's roar suggest about how seriously we should take God's word?

1.3 Q3: The nations are judged for cruelty in war, selling people, and breaking covenants of brotherhood (1:6, 9, 11). What does this teach about God's concern for how all people are treated, even outside his covenant people?

1.3 Q4: Judah is judged "because they have rejected the law of the LORD" (2:4). Why is rejecting God's word a serious sin even when outward cruelty is absent?

1.3 Q5: Judah was "led astray" by lies "after which their fathers walked" (2:4). How can false beliefs be passed down in families or communities, and how can that pattern be broken?

Section 1.4

Movement 2: For Three Transgressions of Israel (Amos 2:6–16)

Guided Scripture Reading

Read aloud in this order, with brief connecting summaries between readings:

- **Summary of Amos 2:6–8** — For three transgressions of Israel and for four, the LORD will not revoke the punishment: they sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, trample the poor and push the afflicted aside, sexually exploit the vulnerable and profane his holy name, and lie down beside altars on garments taken in pledge, drinking wine paid as fines in the house of their God.
- **Reader 1: Amos 2:9–12** (focal passage) — Yet the LORD destroyed the mighty Amorite before them, brought them out of Egypt, led them forty years in the wilderness, and raised up prophets and Nazirites from their sons; but they made the Nazirites drink wine and told the prophets not to prophesy.
- **Summary of Amos 2:13–16** — The LORD will press them down like a loaded cart; the swift, the strong, the archer, and the rider will not escape, and the bravest warrior will flee naked in that day.

Anchor Verses (ESV)

Amos 2:9: “Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars and who was as strong as the oaks; I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath.

Amos 2:10: Also it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

Amos 2:11: And I raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?” declares the LORD.

Amos 2:12: “But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, ‘You shall not prophesy.’

Teaching Narrative: For Three Transgressions of Israel

1. The Poor Sold and Trampled (Amos 2:6–7)

Retold briefly. Injustice among God's own people.

2. The Name Profaned (Amos 2:7–8)

Retold briefly. Exploitation and worship side by side.

3. Grace Remembered (Amos 2:9–11)

The Amorite defeated, the exodus, the wilderness, prophets and Nazirites.

4. The Word Silenced (Amos 2:12)

"You shall not prophesy."

5. No Escape (Amos 2:13–16)

Retold briefly. The strong cannot outrun the LORD.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.4)

1.4 Q1: Israel sold "the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals" (2:6). What does it reveal about a society when people are valued less than money or possessions?

1.4 Q2: "Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them" (2:9). Why does God remind Israel of what he has done for them before announcing judgment?

1.4 Q3: "Also it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt" (2:10). How should remembering God's rescue shape the way his people treat the poor and vulnerable?

1.4 Q4: God "raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazirites" (2:11). What gifts has God given his people to keep them close to him, and how do we treat those gifts?

1.4 Q5: Israel "commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy'" (2:12). In what ways do people today try to silence God's word when it confronts them?

Section 1.5

Canonical Horizon: The Lord Who Roars from Zion; Judgment That Begins with the Household of God

Tracing the Thread Across Scripture

Amos's tightening circle of judgment resonates canonically with Peter's warning that judgment begins at the household of God (1 Peter 4:17), and the Lord who roars from Zion resonates across Scripture in Jesus' ministry—bringing good news to the poor (Luke 4:18), fulfilling the law Judah rejected (Matthew 5:17), and speaking as the Prophet like Moses whom his people must hear (Acts 3:22–23). Turn to each passage as the connections are traced.

1. Judgment Begins with God's Household (1 Peter 4:17)

Peter writes that judgment begins at the household of God. Like Amos's tightening circle, the gospel first searches God's own people.

2. The Law Fulfilled (Matthew 5:17; Galatians 3:13)

Judah rejected the law; Christ came to fulfill it and bore the curse of the broken law for his people.

3. Good News to the Poor (Luke 4:18; Matthew 12:20)

Israel crushed the poor; Jesus announced good news to the poor and would not break a bruised reed.

4. The Prophet Like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22–23)

Israel silenced the prophets; Jesus is the Prophet God promised, and his people are called to listen to him.

Anchor Verse (ESV)

> **Amos 1:2:** And he said: “The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.”

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.5)

1.5 Q1: Peter writes, "For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God" (1 Peter 4:17). How does this echo Amos's tightening circle, and how should it shape the church?

1.5 Q2: Jesus read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). How does Jesus answer the injustice Amos condemned?

1.5 Q3: Peter applies Moses' words to Jesus: "You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you" (Acts 3:22). How is listening to Jesus the opposite of Israel's "You shall not prophesy"?

Personal & Group Application (Head, Heart, Hands)

HEAD	Amos shows the LORD's judgment circling the nations and closing in on Judah and Israel, who had received his grace and still crushed the poor and silenced his word.
HEART	Jesus is the Lord who roars and the one who brings good news to the poor; his judgment begins with his own household.
HANDS	Faith lets God's word search our own lives first and treats the poor and vulnerable with justice.

Section 1.6

Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer

Application

Take a few minutes to move this week's study into everyday life. Discuss these three questions together and write down what you want to remember:

1.6 Q1: Why is it easier to cheer God's judgment on distant wrongs than to let his searching word examine our own hearts and communities—and what posture helps believers receive God's correction humbly this week? (Personal reflection may remain private.)

1.6 Q2: Who are the poor or vulnerable people near you, and what is one way you could treat them with justice or kindness this week?

1.6 Q3: Is there a part of God's word you have been quietly resisting or silencing? What would it look like to listen?

Looking Ahead to Next Week

Recap: In Week 1, we heard the LORD roar from Zion, watched his judgment circle the nations and close in on Judah and Israel, and saw how Israel refused the grace and the prophets God had given.

Transition: Next week the LORD reminds Israel that he chose them alone among the families of the earth, and he warns them that privilege brings responsibility.

Week 2 Overview — You Only Have I Known (Amos 3:1–4:13): Movement 1, The Lion Has Roared (3:1–15), covers God's choosing of Israel, the prophet who must speak, and judgment on Samaria's fortresses and Bethel's altars. Movement 2, Yet You Did Not Return (4:1–13), covers the oppressors of Samaria, empty worship, and the refrain "yet you did not return to me." The Canonical Horizon traces the responsibility of those God has known, the Lion of Judah, and the call to return.

Focal Readings to Preview

- Amos 3:1–8
- Amos 4:6
- Amos 4:11–13

My One Concrete Step for the Week Ahead

Write down or name aloud the specific rhythm, boundary, or conversation you want to practice before next week's gathering:

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by inviting each person to share a one-sentence takeaway or prayer request, then pray together along these lines:

> **Closing Group Prayer**
>
> LORD, you roar from Zion, and you see how every person is treated. We confess that we are quick to see the sins of others and slow to see our own. We pray for the poor, the exploited, and the vulnerable; defend them and use us to care for them. Thank you for Jesus, who brought good news to the poor and fulfilled your law. Help us to listen to your word and to do justice. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.