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A WORD FROM THE GLOW STAFF

Glow in the Dark™ is passionate about helping you know and pursue Jesus Christ above everything else in your life. We are committed to publishing material that is focused on exalting Christ through the study of His revealed, written Word. We believe that Christian teens truly desire to know and understand God's Word. However, many who read God's Word quickly become intimidated, discouraged, or lack the tools to grow. This study will guide you through Scripture so you not only understand what God is saying, but you also learn how to read and study the Bible for yourself.

To accomplish these goals, you will walk through the Bible piece by piece (chapters, paragraphs, verses, words). It is important that you let Scripture communicate for itself. This will take time and dedication, but you cannot mature your faith unless you earnestly seek God's Word and let it impact your life!

A GUIDE *to* STUDYING SCRIPTURE

Anyone taking a journey or expedition must at some point **embark**.

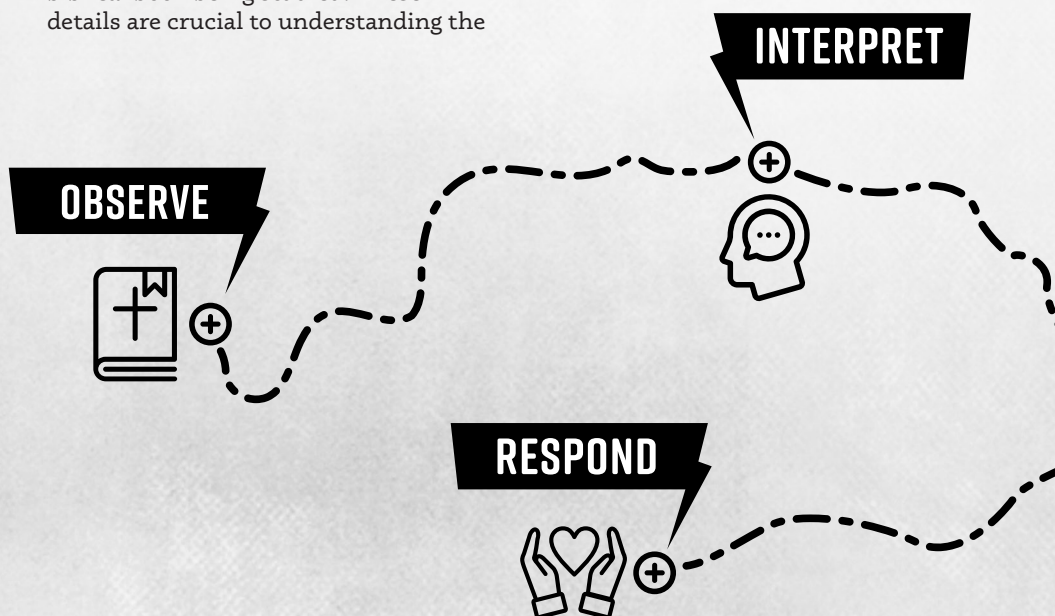
It is not enough to know that adventure and progress lay ahead, you must begin; you must embark!

This series is meant to help you get started on this incredible journey of growing in Christ through Bible reading and study. Understanding the tools and skills necessary for this adventure will prepare you for a life-long process of knowing and pursuing Jesus Christ through His Word.

Any journey you take must have a map. Each Embark book begins by looking at the background and context of the biblical book being studied. These details are crucial to understanding the

overall message of the biblical book and they help you see the course charted through the daily studies. Because of this, each day begins by focusing on a passage of Scripture. Over time, as you grow in the Word, you will find Bible study to be an exciting and joyful part of your spiritual journey.

When your course has been charted, there are also directions or steps that need to be followed. Although we do not take time in each daily study to highlight these steps, our goal is to model them. As you grow in God's Word, you will form right and healthy study habits. What is important at this point is to understand what these steps are, and in what order you must follow them. As you study, spend time in prayer and depend on the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and teach you.





OBSERVATION

This first step begins with what the text says. As you read a section of Scripture, observation seeks to answer the questions, "What does the text say?" and "What do I see?" At this step, the main concern is content, context, and facts.^[i] Observation also answers the simple questions of *who*, *what*, *when*, *where* and *how*? These observations are necessary to move in the right direction!



INTERPRETATION

This second step helps us understand to whom the text was written and why. This step does not focus first on us, but on them and then (who the book was written to and what was going on when it was written). In order to be confident that our understanding of the text is right, it is crucial that we remember that God's Word was first given to an original audience for a particular reason. Proper interpretation answers the questions "What truth is being communicated to the original hearers?" and "What is the meaning of this text?"



RESPONSE

This last step ends with how God's word will impact you today. Ultimately, the end of this journey is worship. For this reason, while you may be most familiar with the word "application," we have chosen to use the word "response." Some passages of Scripture include imperatives (commands to follow). However, every passage first draws our attention to God as great or man as needy and dependent on God. Because of this, we believe it is more helpful to consider how each text is calling us to respond by faith in worship. Worship will be seen in a life lived for God's glory.^[iii]

*Embark with us on this
spectacular journey
through God's Word!*

AMOS:

PERFECT JUSTICE, SHOCKING MERCY

When did Amos speak for God?

In (Amos 1:1), we see that Amos lived during the reign of Uzziah (king of Judah) and Jeroboam (king of Israel). It's safe to say that Amos spoke for God somewhere around 770-753 B.C. Israel had not yet been attacked by the Assyrians and taken into captivity. This was a part of the coming judgment Amos declared to Israel.

Who was this book written to?

Amos was written to Israel. At the time, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel (Northern Kingdom) and Judah (Southern Kingdom). This can be confusing because "Israel" can either mean all of God's chosen people or just the Northern Kingdom. We'll try to make this clear throughout the study.

Despite their many transgressions, Israel and Judah were both very prosperous during this era. Although Jeroboam was an ungodly king, God blessed Israel with military strength, economic security, and material abundance.

Roughly 50 years from the specific time, Israel would be attacked by Assyria, a neighboring nation who would slaughter many Israelites and

enslave countless more. This invasion was no accident. God used an outside agent, the Assyrians to administer His judgment on Israel. Israel continually ignored God's message of repentance. Judgment was coming!

What Kind of Literature Is This?

A Prophecy is a unique and special part of Scripture. People usually assume prophecy only gives a glimpse into the future. While prophecy does foretell future events, there is a bigger purpose for prophecy in Scripture. Consider this: many of the prophesied events we see in the Old Testament have already happened, yet we still have these prophets' books for our doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction (2 Tim. 3:16).

More than simply providing information about the future, prophecy functions much like the "jaws of life." It's dramatic literature that rips into hard and calloused hearts and exposes sin which has been overlooked and ignored. It then calls the hearer toward faith in God. This faith is characterized by repentance from sin and trust in the promises of God.

While a main theme of prophecy is judgment, it's just as important to note the sometimes subtle, yet

powerful, declaration that God will create a remnant. A remnant is a group of people who hear the plea of the prophet and exercise faith in God. This declaration of salvation is tremendously encouraging.

Active, genuine faith in an individual's life, produces clear outward differences that will be seen. Where sin once reigned, trust in God now dictates thoughts and actions. Many of the prophetic books include God's attitude toward specific sins in Israel's life. Faith in God changes their perspective on these sins, and they repent; they go a different direction.

What is this book all about?

God sent Amos to communicate the truth that He is completely just and equally full of grace and mercy. Despite all of Israel's wickedness, God's Word was meant to shock Israel out of its rebellion and back to God in repentance and worship. Judgment was coming through the Assyrian army, but God was going to save a remnant in Israel for His glory. This remnant would be characterized by genuine faith in God.



MAPPING *the* EXPEDITION

Introduction and Setting (*Amos 1:1-2*)

STUDY 1 – Amos: A Faithful Messenger (*Amos 1:1*)

STUDY 2 – God: Holy and Gracious (*Amos 1:2*)

STUDY 3 – Israel: In Covenant Relationship, Part 1 (*Amos 1:1-2*)

STUDY 4 – Israel: In Covenant Relationship, Part 2 (*Amos 1:1-2*)

God Will Judge the Nations (*Amos 1:3-2:3*)

STUDY 5 – Wicked Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus (*Amos 1:3-10*)

STUDY 6 – Wicked Edom, Ammon, Moab (*Amos 1:11-2:3*)

God Will Judge His People (*Amos 2:4-8*)

STUDY 7 – Wicked, Wandering Judah (*Amos 2:4-5*)

STUDY 8 – Israel Is Guilty, Too (*Amos 2:6-8*)

God Was Faithful; Israel was Unfaithful (*Amos 2:9-16*)

STUDY 9 – God Rescued Israel (*Amos 2:9-11*)

STUDY 10 – Israel Rejected God's Glory and Grace (*Amos 2:9-12*)

STUDY 11 – Israel Was Unfaithful; God Is Faithful (*Amos 2:13-16*)

STUDY 12 – Responding to Amos Today (*Amos 1-2*)

God's Charges Against Israel (*Amos 3:1-4:3*)

STUDY 13 – This Judgment Really Is from God (*Amos 3:1-6*)

STUDY 14 – God is Gracious and Fierce (*Amos 3:7-8*)

STUDY 15 – Come and See Israel's Sin (*Amos 3:9-10*)

STUDY 16 – Tremendous Disaster; A Ray of Hope (*Amos 3:11-15*)

STUDY 17 – Exile Is Coming (*Amos 4:1-3*)

Israel Still Rejected God *(Amos 4:4-5:3)*

STUDY 18 - Complete Hypocrisy (Amos 4:4-5)

STUDY 19 - Israel Did Not Return to God (Amos 4:6-11)

STUDY 20 - O Israel, Prepare to Meet Your God (Amos 4:12-13)

STUDY 21 - Israel Has Fallen (Amos 5:1-3)

Let Justice Reign *(Amos 5:4-27)*

STUDY 22 - Seek the LORD and Live (Amos 5:4-9)

STUDY 23 - Injustice Reigned in Israel (Amos 5:10-13)

STUDY 24 - God's Makes a Remnant (Amos 5:14-15)

STUDY 25 - The Day of the Lord (Amos 5:16-20)

STUDY 26 - God Hates Israel's Worship (Amos 5:21-27)

STUDY 27 - Responding to Amos Today (Amos 3-5)

God Will Judge the Prosperous and Mighty *(Amos 6:1-14)*

STUDY 28 - God Will Judge the Prosperous (Amos 6:1-7)

STUDY 29 - God Will Judge the Mighty (Amos 6:8-14)

God's Visions to Amos *(Amos 7:1-9:10)*

STUDY 30 - The Locusts and Fire (Amos 7:1-6)

STUDY 31 - The Plumb Line (Amos 7:7-17)

STUDY 32 - The Summer Fruit (Amos 8:1-14)

STUDY 33 - The Complete Destruction of Israel (Amos 9:1-10)

God's Promise of Rescue *(Amos 9:11-15)*

STUDY 34 - The Tent of David (Amos 9:11-12)

STUDY 35 - Promised Restoration (Amos 9:13-15)

STUDY 36 - Responding to Amos Today (Amos 6-9)



STUDIES 1-4



Introduction and Setting

(Amos 1:1-2)



Amos: A Faithful Messenger

Read Amos 1 for context.

Amos was tasked with delivering a difficult message meant to expose Israel's sin, explain God's coming wrath (justice), and call them to repent (mercy). The fact that God revealed any of this to Amos, and ultimately Israel, is frankly astounding. God is longsuffering and full of grace!

Read Amos 1:1

Before Amos was a prophet, what was he? _____

The word used for “herdmen” is a different word than “shepherd” that is used at the end of verse 2. “Herdmen” can mean shepherd or sheep-breeder.^[iii] Amos may have either been a poor man who tended a flock of sheep, or it's possible he was a wealthy owner of many flocks of sheep. Regardless of his standing or wealth, Amos was an unexpected selection to be God's messenger. Amos had not planned to become a prophet before he received God's calling.

Does God only call people to serve Him if they have the “right stuff” (knowledge, ability, skills, training) for the job? _____

There are two people named in this verse who should have had the right stuff. They had the power and could have made people listen to them, but they were not the ones God was going to use to speak to Israel. Who were these two men? _____ & _____

Read Amos 1:2

Amos was different because he was faithful and willing to act as God commanded. The first three words of verse 2 tell us what Amos was faithful to do. What are the first three words of verse 2? _____

This took a great amount of faith. In what ways are you living by faith now? _____

Read verse one again. Very little information is given about Amos or the single credential he has while speaking to Israel. What was it (consider the phrase “The words of Amos...which he saw”)? The message was not from Amos. It was what he “saw.” _____ gave him this message!

God had revealed Himself and His message to Amos, and this changed him forever. He left what was comfortable for him and spoke courageously for God. What great truths about God have radically changed your life? What was changed? _____

Amos believed that the things God revealed to him were true. Therefore, by faith, Amos obeyed and communicated those truths to Israel. You and Amos are two, totally different people, but there is at least one thing you have in common: the call to live by faith (Rom. 14:23).

It's also important to understand Amos wasn't obeying God for personal gain. In fact, Amos was obeying because of the truth he had already received.

What generally motivates your obedience? _____

Do you believe obedience should guarantee a reward from God, or do you live by faith, as Amos did? To live by faith, you must trust God's will and live in response to the undeserved grace God has already given you. Spend some time in prayer and ask God to open your eyes to the truth of His Word. Thank Him for the book of Amos and how He will use this book to change your life.



To live by faith, you must trust God's will and live in response to the underserved grace God has already given you.



God: Holy and Gracious

Read Amos 1 for context.

The first two verses serve as an introduction with a lot of names (Amos, Uzziah, and Jeroboam) and details (herdmen, kings, and an earthquake), but there's a lot of truth flowing out of these verses. I encourage you to read these verses several more times.

Read Amos 1:2

While verse one introduces us to Amos, and gives us the context of the book, verse two summarizes what Amos saw from the Lord and what he was going to say to Israel. Ultimately, whose words did Israel need to hear? _____

God is the main character in the book of Amos. We will learn much about Israel, the surrounding nations, ourselves, and even the culture we live in today. Before we understand these in a biblical way, we first need a clear view of God.

In verse 2a (the first half of the verse), Amos said God would do what two things?

1 _____

2 _____

This helps us understand something very specific and powerful about God. What do we learn about God knowing He will “utter his voice” (speak)? _____

Is God obligated to reveal Himself or communicate to anyone? _____

Do sinners deserve to hear anything from God? _____

What does this teach you about God? _____

It's important to see the grace of God and His desire to be known. God doesn't have to tell Amos, Israel, or us anything, but He does. God is gracious beyond our imagination, but He is also dangerously holy!

“Dangerously holy?” This may be a difficult phrase and can easily be misunderstood. This illustration might help. Consider the sun. I love the warmth, brightness, and life it brings. If I am having a picnic, I want to be in the sunlight, but I don't want my picnic on the sun. It would consume me! As sinners, we cannot approach God, who is perfectly holy. It's too dangerous! Ultimately, this kind of holiness is a really good thing.

Look at the beginning of verse 2. What verb is used to help us understand what it would be like when God speaks to Israel? _____

What image does this bring to mind? _____

What does this teach us about God? _____

The word for “roar” means to rumble (as in thunder) or mightily roar.^[iv] In other words, God was going to catch everyone's attention. He would not be ignored! This description helps us understand God's superior authority, unmatched power, and complete uniqueness (holiness). God is drawing near in judgment.

In verse 2, when God speaks, what would the results be?

1 _____

2 _____

What we have considered today is a small picture of the entire book of Amos as well as the Bible. God is perfectly holy, yet He is amazingly gracious and good in revealing Himself, and His will, to us.

Without God's Word to guide us, it's impossible to understand God, who is perfectly good yet full of wrath and judgment. It doesn't seem to make sense. In fact, Amos is 8 ½ chapters of sin, wrath, and coming judgment, while only the last half of chapter nine clearly demonstrates mercy. This may be difficult to swallow, but it's alright. Without a clear understanding of God's holiness, mercy will always appear shallow and weaker than it really is. However, when you understand the depth of God's purity, and the weight of sin, mercy is seen to be what it really is – shocking and glorious! Spend a few minutes in prayer asking God to help you clearly see what He is revealing about Himself in this verse. Be thankful that God reveals His holy and gracious nature within the first two verses.



Covenant Relationship, Part 1

Read Exodus 19:1-8 for context.

Don't let the title of today's study scare you. A covenant relationship is not difficult to understand, and it's absolutely crucial to understanding Amos's message from God.

Read Amos 1:1-2

So far, two of the book's three major characters have been introduced. List the two characters we have seen so far:

-Character #1 _____ (found in Study 1)

-Character #2 _____ (found in Study 2)

Although there are important kings mentioned in verse 1, the third character is not one of these kings or even a person. The third character is a group of people, a nation. Fill in the blank from verse 1, "the words of Amos...which he saw concerning _____."

God was in a covenant relationship with Israel. A simple way to understand a covenant is an official agreement. God entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and promised a nation (Israel) would come from Him.¹ Then, God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt.² After all of this, God entered into a national-covenant relationship, or agreement, with Israel in Exodus 19:3-8 called the Mosaic Covenant. This is the covenant relationship we must understand to fully grasp the message of Amos.

Read Exodus 19:1-8

Soon, we'll consider the covenant's purpose. For now, it would be helpful to read about this covenant in Exodus 19:1-8. As you read, consider how amazing it is that mankind (Israel in this case) can have a relationship with a radically holy God.

¹ Read Genesis 12 & 15 for more information about God's covenant with Abraham.

² Read Exodus 11 & 12 for more information about Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt.

Select which of the following events came first.

- ☐ God and Israel agreed on this new covenant.
- ☐ God redeemed His people from slavery in Egypt.

In what verse do you see the word “covenant”? _____

This covenant is often referred to as the “Mosaic Covenant,” because Moses was the mediator (middle-man) between God and Israel.

It’s crucial for you to understand how this covenant impacted the relationship between God and Israel. Why is it crucial to know this covenant/agreement came after Israel was delivered from Egypt? What might we tend to think if this covenant came before Israel was delivered? _____

Whose idea was it to have this covenant? (Ex. 19:3-6) _____

What was the agreement? (Ex. 19:5) _____

How did Israel respond to this agreement? (Ex. 19:7-8) _____

A covenant is an agreement involving at least two people or parties. In the case of the Mosaic Covenant, the two parties are God and Israel. This covenant was agreed upon by both God, who initiated it, and Israel, who accepted it. In this agreement, Israel would have certain obligations/responsibilities. The whole reason we have the book of Amos is that Israel had broken this agreement.

Jeremiah 11:7-11 - For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not. And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.



Covenant Relationship, Part 2

Read Deuteronomy 28:1-20 for context.

Remember, Amos is speaking to Israel who is in a covenant relationship or agreement with God. Today we want to focus on the purpose of this covenant – the Mosaic Covenant.

This covenant relationship was a special and unique agreement that involved only God and the nation of Israel. It's necessary to know the covenant did not begin Israel's relationship with God. They were already in a relationship with God through the Abrahamic Covenant (a previous agreement). The Mosaic Covenant was intended to help them enjoy and delight in God. This specific covenant involved blessings for faith. Genuine faith is demonstrated by obedience to God's law. Failure to keep covenant included curses for unbelief. Unbelief is demonstrated by disobedience to God's law.

Read Deuteronomy 28:1-20

Amos will not make sense if you do not understand, at least in a general way, the terms of the Mosaic Covenant Israel agreed to. As you read this chapter, what do the terms appear to be? (Deut. 28:1-2 and 15) _____

What is your first response as you read the terms of this covenant relationship in Deuteronomy 28? _____

Regardless of how you may feel about this agreement, God offered the terms and Israel accepted. I asked you for your response, because we typically view this kind of covenant, and particularly the law, in a cold, negative way. But, was this really the way it was intended to be viewed? What did David say about the law in Psalm 119?

Look at the following verses and write what is said about God's law.

-Verses 16-18 _____

-Verse 70 _____

-Verse 97 _____

Have you ever considered God's law as a joy, love, and delight? _____

If you have never considered God's law as a joy and a delight, why do you think that is? _____

Read Amos 1:1-2

Jump back to Amos. Israel broke their part of the Mosaic Covenant by their sin of inward unbelief demonstrated through outward disobedience. For this reason, God is sending Amos to Israel to speak on His behalf.

What will happen to those who live in the "habitation of the shepherds?" _____

What will happen to the top of mount Carmel? _____

King Uzziah and Jeroboam are mentioned, which helps us date what is going on. The mention of these kings serves another purpose.

If Amos was sent to give a message to Israel, in what way are these two kings failing Israel? _____

These kings had the responsibility to lead Israel. They failed, and now a shepherd is being sent to speak for God. Do you think Uzziah and Jeroboam's kingly titles will protect them from God's judgment? _____

If everyone between the plains and the mountain tops, including the two kings, will face God's coming judgment, what does that teach us about God's judgment? _____

This is perfect justice and shocking mercy. Mercy is shocking because of the depth and weight of God's perfect justice. Press on! The book of Amos will introduce us to God's shocking mercy in due time.



Tyrus

Damascus

ISRAEL

*Northern
Kingdom*

Ammon

Gaza

JUDAH

*Southern
Kingdom*

Moab

Edom



Israel is Guilty Too

Read Amos 2:6-16 for context.

Spend some time in prayer before you begin. Ask God to open your heart and reveal His truth as you spend time in study. Finally, read the context verses of Amos 2:6-16.

Imagine you're an Israelite (in the Northern Kingdom) listening to Amos communicating God's Word. Until now, you're thankful, perhaps encouraged, in God's justice. He's going to judge the oppressive and criminal nations surrounding you. What good news...right? Everything said so far has worked towards one goal. We will consider this today.

The structure of Amos 1:3-2:8 is making three points.

Read Amos 2:6-8

Amos's geographical point

Take a minute to look at the map of Israel on page 30. What shape do the foreign nations make around Israel? _____

God is pointing out Israel's sin, but why make this geographical circle? Imagine a big target painted on the floor with Israel standing in the bullseye. As Israel looks around the circle, they see everyone else's sin. This is very easy to do. Damascus - guilty! Gaza - guilty! Tyrus - guilty! The judgment of these nations continues around the circle, but Amos isn't going to stop at everyone else's sin. Eventually, the circle is complete, but the finger is still pointing, and Israel is the only one left to be dealt with.

It's likely those listening to Amos could hear a pin drop. All of a sudden someone shouts, "What did Amos just say?" "Did he just tell us that we are guilty, too?" a woman cries out. "Would God really judge us?" a child asks his father as he tugs on his clothing. Every member of the Northern Kingdom had to acknowledge the reality of their own sin. God wasn't just concerned with other people, but with the obedience of His own people as well.

Amos's literary point

Look back at the section on Damascus (1:3), Gaza (1:6), Tyrus (1:9), Edom (1:11), Ammon (1:13), Moab (2:1), and Judah (2:4). How many more verses does Amos spend talking about Israel's "transgressions" compared to the others? _____

After seeing God's long indictment³ of Israel, what do you think is the point Amos has been working toward? _____

In a general way, we could say that Israel was guilty of simply transgressing God's law, much like Judah was guilty of rejecting God's law, breaking it, and wandering. Unlike Judah, Amos was specific about how Israel had broken God's law. Today, we will briefly consider these sins. See if you can fill in the verse number with the particular sin (some may be mentioned more than once).

1. Slavery _____
2. Abuse of the needy _____
3. Sexual Immorality _____
4. Exploitation and Corruption _____
5. Idol Worship _____

We could be more specific, and consider each of these things in turn, but Amos doesn't, so we won't either. It's helpful to discuss these issues, and it's helpful to know the Bible declares them sin. As we go further into Amos, we'll have more opportunity to consider these things, but for today, know Israel is guilty! This brings us to Amos's theological point.

Amos's theological point

Everyone was guilty before God. No exceptions!

Sometimes, the hardest sin to see is the sin in our own hearts. I can tell you about everyone else's sin. If you have any connection to news outlets or any social media, stop and consider how often you see people making judgments about other peoples' actions. Even people who don't believe in absolute truth will passionately talk about actions they consider absolutely wrong.

Israel didn't see her sin. Many times, we don't see our sin either. It's hard to ignore sin in your life when you just cried out for justice, because someone else just committed the same sin. For example, it's difficult to ignore greed in your own heart when crying out for justice because someone else's greed has hurt you. Similarly, it's difficult to ignore how you take advantage of others when crying out for justice because someone has taken advantage of you. (2 Sam. 12:7)

After everything we've seen, would you consider yourself a sinner? _____

Is it easy or hard to admit you are a sinner? Why? _____

Are some sins harder to admit? Why? _____

What sin might there be in your life right now that you are uncomfortable to admit? (You might not write them down, but will you at least recognize and consider them?) _____

Consider this: Are there any areas or actions in your life that you haven't recognized as sin but should? Be honest with yourself. Maybe your family, school, or culture doesn't consider that specific thing as sin, but there is something about this particular area of your life that bothers you. You may even feel like you're wandering spiritually in life. Spend some time asking God to show you the hidden parts of your heart you may be ignoring. Will you recognize your sin today?



*Everyone
is guilty
before God!*



God is completely just and equally full of grace and mercy. Despite all of Israel's wickedness, the book of Amos was meant to shock Israel out of its rebellion and back to God in repentance and worship. Judgment was coming, but God was going to save a remnant in Israel for His glory. This remnant would be characterized by genuine faith in God.

OBSERVE



INTERPRET



RESPOND



A GUIDE TO STUDYING SCRIPTURE

The Embark series is designed to help you engage in Bible study by taking an in-depth look at Scripture. It is our desire to encourage a complete journey through the context of Bible books and passages. We passionately believe this will help readers mature spiritually. It is vital for believers to meditate on the depth and beauty of the knowledge of God.

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