

LESSON 8

AMOS' CALL TO REPENTANCE



OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that the purpose of God's selection is to let others know God.
2. To remember that Israel's downfall is a warning to us.
3. To know that God desires that we repent of our sins and return to Him.

MEMORY VERSE

"Hate evil, love good;
establish justice in the gate."

(Amos 5:15a)

PRAYER

1. Thank You, God, for bringing us together on this holy Sabbath day to worship and praise You.
2. Thank You for giving us Your word so that we can know and practice what is good, just, and righteous.
3. We ask that You help us to worship You in truth and to be kind and fair towards others.



Overview

1. **The Sins of the Surrounding Nations**
2. **The Sins of Judah and Israel**
3. **Judgment Upon the People**
4. **Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs**—Salvation is given by the grace of God through faith.
5. **Life Application**—Do Others See Jesus in You?
6. **Activity**—Showing Kindness to Others



Background Knowledge for Teachers

A. Author

The author of this book is Amos, whose name means "one who bears heavy burden." Amos lived in a rustic town six miles south of Bethlehem in the southern kingdom of Judah, called Tekoa. Amos was not a professional prophet, but a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees by profession (Amos 1:1; 7:14). Although he was born in Judah, Amos was called by God to go to the northern kingdom of Israel to be His spokesman there (Amos 7:15).

B. Date

According to Amos 1:1, Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel. Amos ministered after the time of Joel and Jonah and just before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. At this time, Uzziah reigned over a prosperous and militarily successful Judah. In the north, Israel was ruled by the capable King Jeroboam II. Economical and military circumstances were almost ideal, but prosperity only increased immorality and injustice among the people.

C. Background

During this period, both Israel and Judah were enjoying prosperity as well as freedom from external threats. Egypt was in a period of decline, Assyria was also in a temporary decline, and Babylonia had not yet come on the scene as a major power. Both Israel and Judah squandered the wealth that this period of peace brought them. The rich were becoming richer at the expense of the poor, who were becoming poorer. But instead of using their wealth to serve the needy, the upper classes were deaf to their cries. Bribery and injustice permeated the courts and immorality multiplied. During this period of peace and prosperity, both nations were storing up for themselves God's righteous indignation.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Students in this age group may tend to be more reactive than proactive when it comes to social interactions, especially in the church or even in the family. In the school setting, they are expected to abide by certain standards of courtesy. However, in more casual surroundings, civility and generosity can be set on the back burner. Guide students to the concept that being just, honest, and kind is not simply something we only do in church, but something that should be an innate part of our character, regardless of the situation or surroundings we are in.



Opener

5 Minutes

Materials

- Clear drinking glass filled with one cup of water
- Fresh egg
- ¼ cup salt
- Permanent marker
- Tablespoon

[Carefully place the egg in the glass of water, and then say the following.]

Look at what happened to the egg when we placed it in the water. It sunk to the bottom. Have you ever had a friend or sibling who apologized to you for doing something you didn't like, but then turned around and did that exact thing again the next day? Or have you experienced a situation where you felt like someone was being unfair or treated you differently from everyone else?

How did you feel in such situations? [Allow students to respond.]

The egg can represent us when we are not being treated fairly. The egg's sinking to the bottom represents the sinking feeling someone who is left out or mistreated would feel. The person would feel sad, depressed, defeated, unappreciated, and unloved.

[Next, remove the egg from the water and set it aside.]

What are some ways that we can show fairness and kindness to others? [Allow students to respond. With each response, add a tablespoon of salt to the water and stir to dissolve.] The salt represents different ways we can show fairness to others. For example: following the rules when playing a game, taking turns and sharing, treating others with honesty and respect, making friends with those who are left out, and taking action to help someone being treated unfairly.

[After you have added all of the salt, put the egg back in the water. If you want, you can put a smiley face on the egg with the permanent marker. The egg will now float.]

This was how the Israelites were treating God; they were hurting and disappointing Him over and over again. Not only were they unfaithful and unfair to God, they were the same to one another also. God had now had enough. God sent his prophet Amos to tell them that if they did not change from their wicked ways, if they were not kind, fair, and honest to one another, then judgment would come upon them.



Vocabulary

- treaty:** an official agreement that is made between two countries
- priority:** something that a person places above other things in importance
- ephah:** a unit of measure used for wheat and other goods (by making the ephah small, merchants were actually selling less grain than advertised)
- shekel:** the shekel was the weight by which silver was measured (by making the shekel great, the merchants were overcharging their customers)



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

Amos was an ordinary man with an extraordinary message. He was a shepherd and a fig farmer in a small town south of Judah called Tekoa. But God called him to be His prophet and sent him to deliver God's message to the Israelites living in northern Judea.

When Amos arrived in Israel, what were his first words to the people? Let's read Amos 1:2 and 3:8.

God roared like a lion!!! If you were one of the people living in Israel, what would your reaction be upon hearing those words? [Allow students to respond.]

Why did God roar like a lion? God roared like lion to show His anger and displeasure at the Israelites. God had waited for them to turn from their evil ways, but they had stubbornly refused to do so. Therefore, God opened His mouth to declare the disasters and judgment that would come upon the people.

FOR TEACHERS

Post a large map of Israel and the surrounding nations on the board or wall. As you speak, stick the names of the cities on the map.

A. The Sins of the Surrounding Nations

1. Damascus (Amos 1:3-5)

Damascus was one of Israel's great enemies and God was displeased with them because they killed the people of Gilead with implements of iron. Using iron instruments meant that they showed great brutality and no mercy towards the Gileadites.

2. Gaza (Amos 1:6-8)

God was to punish Gaza, a Philistine nation, because they sold the people of Israel as slaves to Edom.

3. Tyre (Amos 1:9-10)

In the past, the King of Tyre and King Solomon of Israel

had made treaties to help each other and promised that there would be peace between the two nations (1 Kgs 5:12). God was disappointed in Tyre because they had broken their treaty with Israel. They had attacked and conquered the nation and delivered the people as slaves to Edom.

4. Edom (Amos 1:11-12)

Isaac gave birth to twins; the older was Esau and the younger was Jacob. From these two brothers came the nations of Edom and Israel. But the people of Edom were never kind to their brother Israel. God was to punish Edom because they pursued Israel with the sword. They were always angry and unforgiving towards Israel.

5. Ammon (Amos 1:13-15)

When the people of Ammon tried to capture Gilead so that they could conquer more land for themselves, they ripped open the women who were with child and showed no mercy.

6. Moab (Amos 2:1-3)

The people of Moab were to be punished because they burned the bones of their enemy, king of Edom. By doing this, they showed no respect for the dead and completely humiliated their enemies.

Consequently, God punished each nation according to their sins. He would cause fire to destroy their land and palaces, and lead them into captivity.

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out Bible Discovery Worksheet #1. On the map, point out the surrounding nations that Amos spoke about. In the boxes around the map, write down each nation's wrongdoings.

B. The Sins of Judah and Israel

When Amos was pronouncing God's judgment upon the

enemy nations of Israel, what do you suppose the people of Israel were thinking? "Serves them right!" "Pagans! They should be destroyed!" They might have been cheering or nodding in agreement.

But then Amos turned to God's own people. Amos pointed out the sins of the people of Judah in the south and Israel in the north. God wanted them to know that they were no better than these other nations. They, too, had transgressed greatly against God and were no longer following His commands, and they, like these foreign nations, would also suffer punishment.

1. Judah (Amos 2:4-5)

The people of Judah had sinned again and again. They have looked down on the law of God and did not obey His commandments. They also followed their forefathers by worshipping pagan gods (Jer 16:19).

2. Israel (Amos 2:6-16)

God was tired and weighed down by the sins of Israel, and He was not going to tolerate this anymore. Amos was sent to tell them of their sins and the judgment that would befall them.

What sins did Israel commit?

a. They cheated people in their businesses.

The merchants made the ephah small and the shekel large (8:5b), and they even sold wheat that was bad (8:6). The Israelites sold poor quality goods and changed the scales that they used to measure things on so that they cheated their customers.

b. They didn't worship God properly.

i. They did not put their hearts into worshipping God. When they worshipped, they wondered how long until the New Moon or the Sabbath was over so that they could go back to making money (8:5).

ii. They offered tithes and thanksgiving with the money that they earned from cheating others and oppressing the poor. God hated and despised their worship and utterly refused to accept their offerings. He asked them to take away the sacrifices and the singing because, in their daily lives, they walked in great wickedness and oppressed the poor.

iii. They did not care for God's word. The Israelites hated anyone who rebuked them for their wrong and who spoke the word of God (5:10; 2:11-12). When Amos was pointing out their sins, Amaziah the priest told Amos to return to Judah where he came from and prophesy there. The king and the people did not want to be bothered by his message of doom and visions.

c. They worshipped idols.

The people had turned to worshipping foreign gods (5:26).

d. They lived in great luxury but did not care for the suffering of the poor and the needy.

The rich lay in beds of ivory, ate rich foods, listened to music, drank wine from bowls, and anointed themselves with the best ointments, while the poor had very little and were sold as slaves in exchange for sandals. God was angry at their lack of compassion and mercy towards the poor.

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out Bible Discovery Worksheet #2. Give the students some time to fill in the verses based on what they have just learned. After the time is up, discuss the answers as a class. Refer to the Teacher Version for answers.

C. God's Judgement for Israel

In the past, God had used many different ways to remind the people of their sins.

Read Amos 4:1-13. From the passage, we learn that God warned the Israelites using famine, drought, blight, mildew, locusts, plagues, the sword, and fire. Despite all these warnings and disasters, the people still continued in sin and refused to return to God. What happens when God has given so many warnings and the people still refuse to change their ways? [Allow students to respond.] That's right. God's patience will run out. God's wrath will burn and His children will feel the sting of His rod coming down on them.

Read Amos 5:27 and 7:17. God declared that their land would be destroyed and they would be exiled from their homeland. They will be taken into captivity to a country beyond Damascus, to the land of Assyria.

Even though God was angry with the Israelites and pronounced judgment upon them, He still loved them. How did God show His unfailing love and mercy towards His children?

Read Amos 5:14-15, 24. God sent His prophet Amos to once again remind them to return to Him, to do good, and to hate evil. If they did what was good and just, they would live.

Read Amos 9:14. Amos comforted the Israelites by telling them that even though Assyria would destroy their land, they would be brought back from captivity if they turned back to God. They would once again return to their homeland to rebuild their homes, vineyards, and gardens.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

Salvation is given by the grace of God through faith.

Believers must rely on the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness, to honor God, and to love humanity by being just, honest, and kind.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

1. **What did Amos do before he was called to be a prophet?** He was a shepherd and fig farmer.
2. **Why did God roar like a lion?** God roared like a lion against the people of Israel because He was angry and displeased with them. God had waited patiently for them to turn from their sins, but they didn't. So, He declared judgment upon them.
3. **Name the other foreign nations that God pronounced judgment upon.** Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab.
4. **What sins did Israel commit?** They cheated people in their businesses. They didn't worship God properly. They worshipped idols. They lived in great luxury but did not care for the poor and the needy.
5. **Name some of the ways God used to remind the Israelites to return to Him.** Famine, drought, fire, plague, the sword, etc.
6. **What did Amaziah the priest say to Jonah?** Go back to Judah and prophesy there!
7. **How was God going to discipline Israel?** They would be taken captives to a foreign land.
8. **Why did God choose the Israelites and give them His laws?** God chose Israel to be His people and gave them His law so that the Israelites could tell all the other nations about God.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. Damascus; Gaza; Tyre; Edom; Ammon; Moab
2. C
3. A
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. Sickness/accidents
Warning from parents/teachers/friends
The word of God
Prayer
8. God chose Israel to be His people and gave them His law so that the Israelites could tell all the other nations about God.
9. Answers may vary.



Life Application

10 Minutes

DO OTHERS SEE JESUS IN YOU?

God chose Israel to be the people through whom all other nations of the world could know God. The Israelites did not have to do anything to be chosen; God gave them this special privilege because He wanted to, not because they were a great nation or deserved any special treatment. Sadly, the Israelites forgot about God's grace, and they became proud of their privileged position. They hardened their hearts to the word of God.

God reminded the Israelites that, in the same way God brought them out of the land of Egypt, God also brought the Philistines from the land of Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir. God is a just God and He does not show favoritism. God blessed Israel; He also blessed the other nations. And even though God loved Israel, He would judge Israel if they did wrong, just as He would the foreign nations. The Israelites should not have thought that as God's special people they did not need to obey God's rules or that God would overlook their wicked deeds. God expected His people to know what was pleasing to Him because they had the laws of God.

Similarly, today we are blessed to be God's children. We are also blessed to have God's word, the Holy Bible. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us that we are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people." This means that our behavior, speech, and thinking need to be different from the people of the world. We should not conform to the ways of the world but allow others to see Jesus in us.

Read the following scenarios below, and then answer the questions that follow:

Scenario 1

Greg loved to read. He had finished reading many mystery and adventure series. Greg's parents were able to afford to buy whatever books he liked. One day, Greg's friend Harry who also loved books, came over to his house. Greg proudly showed off his book collection. Harry's eyes almost popped out when he saw all the books that he loved but had not been able to read. Unlike Greg's parents, Harry's parents could not afford to buy Harry many books. They told him that if he wanted those books, he would have to borrow them from the library. Usually, Harry had to wait until the library stocked the books and when they did, there was usually a long waiting list for the books because they were so popular. Harry browsed through the collection, and then pulled one from the shelf and asked Greg if he may borrow it. Greg took the book and put it back in the shelf. "I don't loan books," Greg said. "I may never get them back. Besides, you can ask your parents to buy them for you."

- Which of the Israelite's sins do Greg's actions remind you of?
- Why do you think Greg's behavior would not be pleasing to God?
- Suggest how Greg can be more caring towards his friend.

Scenario 2

Last year, Evan's cousins came to visit from abroad, and they had bought the latest video game for Evan. Evan was thrilled—it was exactly what he had wanted. After his cousins left, Evan spent many hours playing the game. He would come home from school, quickly do his homework, and then rush off to play games until dinnertime. When George, his good friend from next door, would call to ask if he wanted to do something together, Evan would reply that he was just too busy. Evan prayed only when his parents forced him to, and even then, he would just mumble the words because his mind was filled with images from the game. Evan had not felt this passionate about anything before. Each time he played, he felt excited when fighting battles and beating other players.

- Which of the Israelite's sins does Evan demonstrate?
- What priority did the video game have in Evan's life? Which actions tell us this?
- Why might Evan's thoughts and actions be wrong in God's sight?
- What could Evan do to prevent video games from taking over his life?

Scenario 3

Jimmy was getting impatient. His R.E. teacher was going on longer than usual and the class was already 15 minutes over time. Jimmy couldn't wait to go home, slip into his sports gear, and play basketball with his friends. Jimmy was daydreaming about all the fun things he would do afterwards when he felt his friend tap him. He realized that his teacher had just asked him a question.

- a. Which of the Israelite's sins do Jimmy's actions remind you of?
- b. Why were Jimmy's actions wrong in God's sight?
- c. How does God want us to worship Him?
- d. What things can Jimmy do so that his heart and mind are present during service and class?

Scenario 4

Helen had brought in her brand new set of colored pencils so that she could use them for her class project. As she was coloring, Maggie came and asked Helen if she may borrow a yellow colored pencil. Maggie was not very smart. When it came to picking teams, she was usually the last person to be picked. Maggie also seemed to wear the same clothes to school each day. Helen didn't really like Maggie too much. "No, you can't borrow it because I'm using it," Helen said. A few minutes later, Sarah came and asked if she may borrow her colored pencils. Helen smiled and said, "Of course, you can borrow any color you want."

- a. Which of the Israelite's sins do Helen's actions remind you of?
- b. Why did Helen refuse to lend her colored pencils to Maggie?
- c. Why did Helen agree to lend her colored pencils to Sarah?
- d. How does God want us to treat people?

**Activity****Showing Kindness to Others***10-15 Minutes*

Objective: To allow students to brainstorm ways they can show kindness to others.

Materials

- Sheets of white cardboard
- Color crayons, color pencils and markers

Instructions

Draw a picture of something you have learned from today's story. For example, you may have learned about how the poor in Amos' time were sold for a pair of sandals. You can therefore draw a pair of sandals. You may have learned about how the merchants used false scales to cheat others. In which case, you can draw a scale. Or, you can draw a lion roaring because you learned that God was angry with the Israelites.

Next, write down some of the ways you can show kindness and fairness to others, and some ways you will worship God truthfully.

Post the completed pictures on the class bulletin board.

THE SINS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Fill in the blanks.

Judah

They have despised the law of God and have not kept His commandments. They have also followed their forefathers by worshipping false gods (Jer 16:19).

Israel

1. They cheated people in their businesses.

The merchants made the ephah small and the shekel large (8:5b) and they even sold bad wheat (8:6).

2. They didn't worship God properly.

- a. They did not put their hearts into worshipping God.
- b. They offered tithes and thanksgiving to God but in their daily lives they walked in great wickedness and oppressed the poor.
- c. They did not care for God's word. The Israelites hated anyone who rebuked them for their wrongs and who spoke the word of God (5:10). They told Amos to go back to Judah (7:12).

3. They worshipped idols.

The people made and worshipped foreign gods (5:26).

4. They lived in great luxury but did not care for the suffering of the poor and the needy.

The rich lay in beds of ivory, ate rich foods, listened to music, drank wine from bowls and anointed themselves with best ointments (6:4-6). The poor were sold as slaves in exchange for a pair of sandals.

God's Judgment for Israel

"Therefore thus says the LORD: [...] You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land" (7:17).

God's Mercy on Israel

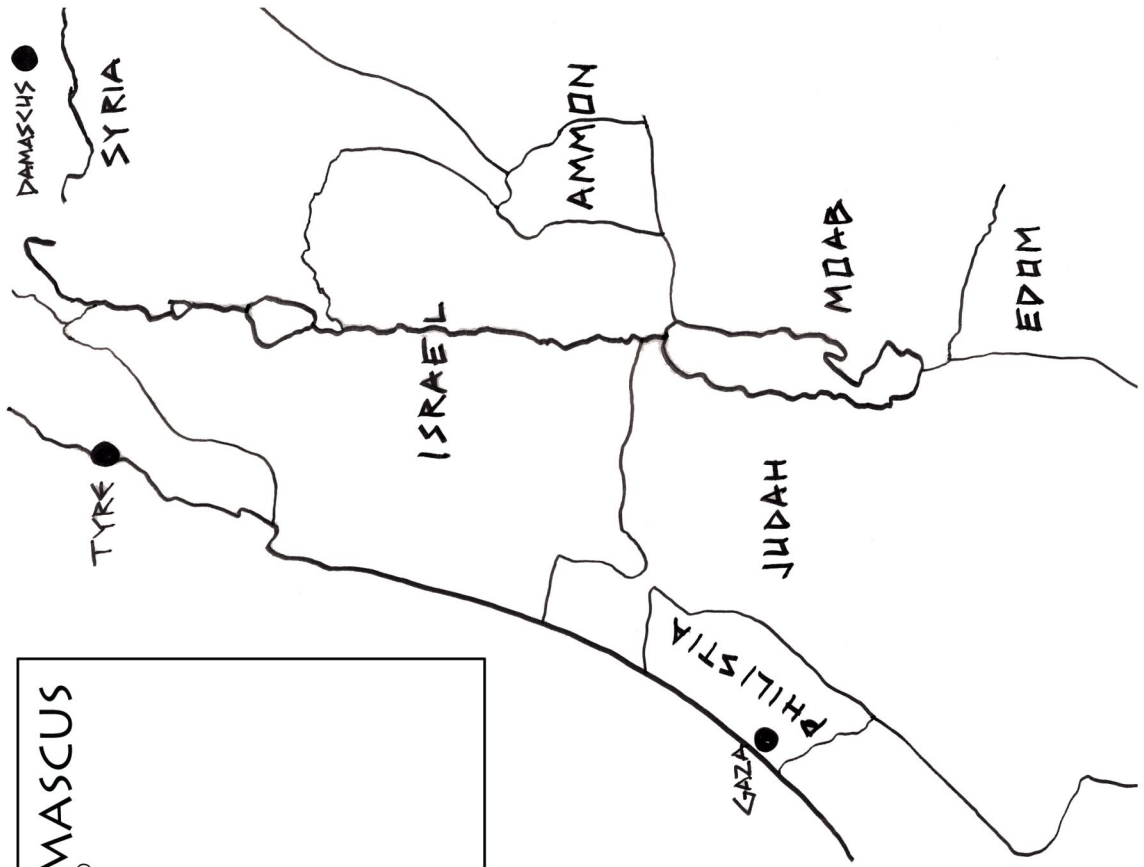
Seek good and not evil, that you may live (5:14).

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God (9:14-15).

In the boxes, briefly describe each nation's wrongdoings.

TYRE (AMOS 1:9)	DAMASCUS (AMOS 1:3)
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AMMON (AMOS 1:13)	MOAB (AMOS 2:1)	EDOM (AMOS 1:11)
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GAZA (AMOS 1:6)

THE SINS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Fill in the blanks.

Judah

They have despised the law of God and have not kept His _____. They have also followed their forefathers by worshipping _____.

Israel

1. They cheated people in their businesses.

The merchants made the _____ and the _____ and they even sold bad wheat (8:6).

2. They didn't worship God properly.

a. They did not put their _____ into _____ God.

b. They offered tithes and thanksgiving to God but in their daily lives they walked in great _____ and oppressed the _____.

c. They did not care for God's word. The Israelites hated anyone who rebuked them for their wrongs and who _____ the word of God (5:10). They told Amos to go back to _____.

3. They worshipped idols.

The people _____ and _____ foreign _____.

4. They lived in great luxury but did not care for the suffering of the poor and the needy.

The rich lay in _____ of _____, ate rich _____, listened to _____, drank _____ from bowls and anointed themselves with _____. The poor were sold as _____ in exchange for a pair of _____.

God's Judgment for Israel

"Therefore thus says the LORD: [...] You shall _____ in a _____ land; And Israel shall surely be led away _____ from his _____."

God's Mercy on Israel

_____ and not _____, that you may _____.

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall _____ vineyards and _____ wine from them; They shall also make _____ and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be _____ from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.

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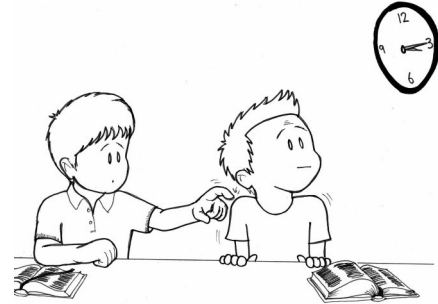
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Scenario 4

Helen had brought in her brand new set of colored pencils so that she could use them for her class project. As she was coloring, Maggie came and asked Helen if she may borrow a yellow colored pencil. Maggie was not very smart. When it came to picking teams, she was usually the last person to be picked. Maggie also seemed to wear the same clothes to school each day. Helen didn't really like Maggie too much. "No, you can't borrow it because I'm using it," Helen said. A few minutes later, Sarah came and asked if she may borrow her colored pencils. Helen smiled and said, "Of course, you can borrow any color you want."

- Which of the Israelite's sins do Helen's actions remind you of?
- Why did Helen refuse to lend her colored pencils to Maggie?
- Why did Helen agree to lend her colored pencils to Sarah?
- How does God want us to treat people?

E2 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 8—Amos' Call to Repentance

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (Amos 5:15a)

1. Circle the six foreign nations that God pronounced judgment upon.

Damascus

Babylon

Edom

Gaza

Tyre

Ammon

Nineveh

Moab

Egypt

Multiple Choice

2. _____ : Before Amos was called to be a prophet, he was a _____.

- a. Fisherman
- b. Potter
- c. Shepherd and fig farmer
- d. Priest

3. _____ : How was God going to punish Israel?

- a. They would be captives in a foreign land.
- b. They would all die from famine.
- c. They would be burned by fire.
- d. They would die from a plague.

