



Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 4 June 22, 2025

REBUKED FOR SELFISHNESS

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalms 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalms 119:105**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

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- Bible Basis: Amos 6:4-8, 11-14
- Bible Truth: God will dispossess the greedy and selfish and thus demonstrate God's justice
- Memory Verse: VERSE: "Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plow there with oxen? For ye have turned judgement into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock" (Amos 6:12).
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE God's response to injustice as recorded by Amos; REFLECT on ways people practice greed and selfishness; and UNCOVER and discover ways God does justice amid injustice and ways humans can join God in the fight against injustice.
- Background Scriptures: Amos 6; Psalm 119:31-38 - Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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Amos 6:4-8, 11-14, KJV

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joesph.

Amos 6:4-8, 11-14, KJV

7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

8 The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver us the city with all that is therein.

11 For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little houses with clefts.

Amos 6:4-8, 11-14, KJV

12 Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plow there with oxen? For ye have turned judgement into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock;

13 Ye which rejoice in a thing is nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

14 But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hermath unto the river of the wilderness.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Hamath was situated on the Orontes river and was the northern boundary of ancient Israel. Hamath represented the farthest north you could go before you ventured outside of Israel (Numbers 13:21). The river of wilderness was a desert wadi or brook that ran through the Arabah valley, which was a barren depression on the southern side of the Dead Sea. This brook flowed on the border of Moab, and Edom. The river of the wilderness represented the furthest southern border of the undivided Israel that could be inhabited. Thus the phrase “from Hamath to the river of the wilderness” encompassed the entirety of the undivided kingdom of Israel.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: Students will discuss that some people care only about accumulating lavish possessions for themselves and care nothing for those who possess little.

INTRODUCTION

Warning Of Judgement

Amos proclaims prophecies from God that convict leaders for a lack of social justice and warning them of the “day of the Lord” when judgement would come to Israel. He has opposed the nation’s sins and has encouraged them to repent for their evil and unjust ways. However, Israel has refused to turn away from their wickedness and remember the God they worshipped when they were in bondage. They are at risk for God’s divine punishment.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will affirm that true prosperity comes through obedience to God's commands.

I. A SELFISH LIFESTYLE

Loving Things Instead of God

Amos 6:4-8

The rich leaders of Samaria had completely turned all of their attention to their material wealth. They had become consumed with a lifestyle that was rich, elegant, exquisite, lavish, and excessive. They Were only concerned with a higher standard of living that required the finest and best. From dining selections, fine clothing, wild parties, extravagant celebrations, grand mansions and expensive skin creams, the influential people of Israel had grown accustomed to a lifestyle that only served an elite class. Their lifestyle had caused them to lose focus on the real-life issues around them. They were blind to the fact that as the elite became richer, the poor became poorer.

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Verse 4 continues the woe that was declared in verse 1. In essence, he is saying, "Woe to you who put far off the day of doom ... who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments ... who drink wine from bowls ... but are not grieved." Amos had earlier prophesied against the houses of ivory, and now, it was the beds overlaid with ivory that invoked judgment (Amos 3:15). The eating of meat (lambs) with any regularity was the privilege of the wealthy. "The general population lived on wheat and barley and whatever fruits and vegetables were at hand, and if they had meat at all, reserved it for times of high celebration. ... In contrast, Samaria's elite not only ate animals at random but also put their calves in special stalls to fatten them, undoubtedly on grain wrested from the poor" (Hubbard 193). Of course, Amos had earlier said that this luxury is obtained through robbery and violence against the poor (3:10).

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The reclining (or lying down) and sprawling in verses 4 and 7 depict not just comfort but drunken torpor – possibly of the religious kind like those mentioned in Isaiah 65:11 and Jeremiah 44:17. The traditional custom in Israel at the time was to eat while sitting on rugs or seats. The practice of reclining at meals that Amos describes here is foreign. The Hebrew *sarach* (sah-RAHKH), translated “sprawl” (NLT), means to “go free, unrestrained,” and is used in Arabic for camels left loose to pasture where they choose and of hair hanging loose (Snaith 112). Hubbard adds that it may also mean “free fall” from weakness or fatigue (Hubbarb 193). The word *parat* (Heb., par-RAHT), generally translated “to chant,” “to improvise,” or “to sing extemporaneously,” suggest a flow of trivial words in which the rhythm of words and music was everything but the sense and meaning nothing (Hubbarb 193).

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Overall, scholars have concluded that this might have been a cultic banquet that was associated with specific deities and met periodically to celebrate with food and drink, and some-times with sacred sexual orgies (Hubbard 192). These feasts were practiced for centuries across the Mediterranean basin and were known for their lavish consumption (Dunn 694). Mizraq (Heb., miz-RAHK) suggests that they used special bowls or basins for their wine-drinking, not ordinary cups. However we understand Amos' imagery, their parties featured extreme extravagance and careless ease.

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The whole chapter pictures an upper class too self-centered and intent on its own pleasure as to find Amos' prediction of catastrophe credible. We see their apathy expressed in the clause, "they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," i.e., their own Northern Kingdom. Hubbard interprets this to say they have been sick for the wrong reasons: their drunken-ness and their mourning of the dead (6:9-10). As they enjoyed all their luxuries, they had not even the slightest concern for the broken down state of the nation of Israel. Much like today, selfishness and greed caused people to only look for their own comfort, often at the expense of the needy.

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I. A SELFISH LIFESTYLE

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Amos 6:4-8

7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed. 8 The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver us the city with all that is therein.

The prophet's "therefore" begins to conclude the rebuke. Everything-all their drunken gluttonous orgies-will come to an end. Just as He rejects the sound of their worship (Amos 5:21-24), God also finds the noise of their amusement nauseous. These careless leaders of today will tomorrow lead the pitiful column of captives who go into exile. Thus, with tragic irony, Amos declares that they will be first to the bitter end. These notables of the "first of nations" (v. 1) who used "first quality oils" (v.6) are now to be "first of the exiles." Where revelry filled the air, there shall remain only ominous silence (Mays 117). This prophecy emphasizes the unusually strong announcement of judgment that Amos also gives in 4:2 and 8:7, "The Lord has sworn by himself." Mays observes, "That Yahweh takes oath on his own person (as in Jeremiah 22:5, 49:13, 51:14) makes the decree more final, because the total force of Yahweh's integrity is invested in this solemn oath-the ancient Near East's most binding form of commitment" (Mays 118).

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The language used here is "the strongest possible language God used to express wrath ... The language of abhorrence, hatred and chiasm"(Hubbard 195). The Lord abhors the "pride of Jacob." This pride of Jacob-which might actually be the city of Samaria (Dunn 694)-speaks of Israel's national self-confidence, which meant their displacement of Yahweh as the foundation of their national existence. However, God was about to judge their pride by sending an army that would bring them low. In addition, God hates the strongholds of Jacob-the strongholds that gave Israel a sense of self-sufficiency and security but were filled with the spoils of robbery and violence. They were like a monument before God as constant reminders of the pride of the rich and the plight of the poor. Mays adds, "The city and its strongholds ...enshrines the worst of Israel's guilt. The powerful rich may think themselves invulnerable against any foe, but when Yahweh is against them, their strength is useless and their defenses already breached (Mays 119). This chapter concludes with the promise that God will raise up a nation against Israel to afflict them (v. 14). Assyria defeated Israel in 721/722 B.C., during the reign of King Hoshea of Israel.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Israelites Forgot About God

Often when we experience an increase of wealth, we forget about God and the plight of others. The elite of Israel had only used their wealth for selfish and luxurious needs, forsaking those who were suffering among them. Amos declares an oath from the Sovereign Lord that God is angry at their conceited and arrogant way of living. God holds the wealthy accountable for the use of their resources and whether they use it for the blessing of others instead of selfishness.

II. PUNISHMENT FOR THE SELF-INDLUGENT

Disobedience and Destruction

Amos 6:11-14

The Lord has promised to enact severe punishment on Israel because of their refusal to repent. God will not only punish individuals, but plans to completely destroy their houses and buildings.

II. PUNISHMENT FOR THE SELF-INDLUGENT

Disobedience and Destruction

Amos 6:11-14

11 For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little houses with clefts.

In judgment, God will smite the great house with breaches and the small house with clefts. Some scholars have said that the great house stands for Israel and the small house is Judah. For instance, Jerome interprets the former being reduced to branches or ruins, literally, "small drops"; the latter, though injured with "clefts" or rents, which threaten its fall, is still permitted to stand (Mays 120). Other scholars believe that "great house" and "small house" have nothing to do with Israel and Judah. This is because Amos primarily prophesied to the former and not the latter, and there is no other evidence of these terms being used for Israel and Judah. A better interpretation of the verse is that the judgment would come to both wealthy and poor. Why? Because rich and poor alike were guilty of turning away from Jehovah to serve their appetites. Destruction and death did not spare anyone.

II. PUNISHMENT FOR THE SELF-INDLUGENT

Disobedience and Destruction

Amos 6:11-14

12 Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plow there with oxen? For ye have turned judgement into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock; 13 Ye which rejoice in a thing is nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

Horses do not run on cliffs like mountain goats, nor can one plough through boulders with an ox. These are both absurd scenarios. In turning "justice into poison, and ... righteousness into wormwood" (or hemlock, which is bitter and noxious), the Israelites were acting perversely. Thus, as horses and oxen are useless on a rock, so the Israelites are making justice poisonous. The absurd is happening in Israel. Arnold Schultz interprets this verse as saying, "There is a spiritual and moral order in the universe that is just as impossible to ignore as the natural order. It is as senseless to pervert justice as it is to expect horses to run on the rocks, or for oxen to plow on rock"(835). It is, thus, easier to change the course of nature than the course of God's providence or the laws of His just retribution.

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The national leaders felt proud and confident because under Jeroboam, Israel had recaptured some territory that it had formerly lost to Aram (2 Kings 14:25). These recaptured lands included the town of Lodebar in Transjordan (2 Samuel 9:4, 17:27). Amos, however, cleverly made light of this feat by deliberately misspelling the city's name as "Lo-debar," which means "not a thing" (Mays 122). They had taken nothing of much value. The people were also claiming that they had taken the town of Karnaim (whose name means "a pair of horns," symbols of strength) by their own strength. It was not they but Yahweh, however, who had strengthened them to achieve this victory over a symbolically strong town. Therefore, Israel's leaders celebrate the capture of nothing and think they have captured it by their own strength (Mays 122).

II. PUNISHMENT FOR THE SELF-INDLUGENT

Disobedience and Destruction

Amos 6:11-14

14 But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hermath unto the river of the wilderness.

Archaeological reports suggest that the capture was exactly and terribly fulfilled just as God had promised. Less than forty years after Amos wrote this prophecy, the Northern Kingdom was destroyed by Sargon of Assyria. "Behold" indicates God's resolute emphasis, as Yahweh had sworn by Himself (v. 8). God, through His power and sovereignty, raises up Sargon and the Assyrian empire to defeat and oppress the nation of Israel. "With power, he identifies himself as the Lord of all armies and with specificity, he directs his announcement to the whole house of Israel" (Hubbard 200). Selfishness, greed, and pride do not only affect the leaders of the nation; they affect everyone. The influence of Israel's leaders has corrupted the nation. Thus, the whole house of Israel is doomed to disaster by the complacency and corruption of their leaders.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Twisted Justice

The prophet explains that God will punish them because they twisted justice into a poison doing more harm than good. God mocks Israel for their prideful celebration over smaller cities that they had successfully conquered. Finally, their ultimate judgment is given as God announces that another force will be raised up against them to return the oppression that they have afflicted on others. Selfishness always ends with judgement; the selfish can expect to reap the fruits of what they have sown.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will acknowledge that people of faith, responding to God's desire for justice, examine our ways of life.

BIBLE APPLICATION

In many places around the world, people are living in underserved and impoverished areas. They are suffering from lack of clean water, fresh produce, safe living conditions, and other resources that affect their everyday lives. There is not an equal distribution of wealth in our world. The powerful will continue to get rich, while the poor and working class will continue to suffer. The issue with wealth that is mentioned in this text is not the possession of wealth, but the dangers of being selfish, prideful, and sinful in the ways we use it. If we choose to ignore the injustices of the poor and needy, then we are at risk of God's punishment.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: Students will discover that people of faith grieve and repent when God's people live unjustly.

STUDENT RESPONSES

We are tempted to ignore injustice because we are wealthy and comfortable. To combat this tendency, we can show solidarity with those who are disadvantaged. As a class, make a commitment to eat only one meal a day as an act of solidarity with those who live in hunger. While you are doing that, research ways in which you as a class can help fight global hunger. You can find many resources for this at the Bread for the World website (<http://www.bread.org/help>).

Prayer

Lord,

We do not always choose to love good, seek justice, and walk humbly before you. Thank You for another chance to love good, seek justice, and walk humbly before You.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

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Next Sunday
June 2, 2025
Lesson 5
God Will Never Forget
Amos 8:1-6, 9-10