

Gospel Vision Overcomes Division

Study Questions | 04.14.24

Brett McBride | Amos 9



Consider

Discuss: Share some of your favourite or most obvious *cultural expressions* of worship and church life. For Example: I come from an English heritage, and I LOVE their sacred choral tradition as an expression of worship. What are some of yours? Listen to each other's answers!

Let's Examine

Setting the stage: Amos 9:11-15

Read Amos 9:11-15 Brett introduces these verses with: *The Lord has done everything He can to call them back – but sin has overtaken them: They are deaf to His voice. And hostile to His commands. But then – all of a sudden – it shifts! In a quick turn – Amos is given **a vision!** A glimpse of what God wanted His people to become all along.*

- **Discuss:** What does God say, "I will" do and what will the people do "In that Day"? Did the actions or attitudes or beliefs of the people have anything to do with initiative God took to restore? Talk about how this is an expression of *covenant faithfulness* on the part of God?
- **Discuss:** When is "in that day"? To understand this more, watch *The Bible Project AMOS* video (found by searching on RightNow Media or Youtube). They talk about the last few verses as being 'super important'. Having heard from Brett and the video, how would you explain what the vision is about? And why is this vision important for us today in 2024?
- **Discuss:** Brett talked about how this vision is "now and not yet". What of this vision has already taken place? What are we still waiting for?

Read Acts 15 making note to find the quote of Amos 9:11-12

- **Discuss:** Explain the background to this story using Acts 10 and Galatians 2:11-21.
- **Discuss:** Read Peter's words in vv. 7-10. There was a caustic division between the two different people groups – the Jews and the Gentiles (everyone else) - as the Jews felt they needed to be separate to be followers of God. Also, the Jews had an understanding and love for the Rules/Regulations and practices God had given them through Moses which guided them to be right in the eyes of God. Everything about their lives (and their ancestors' lives) up until this point had been about making a distinction between them and others who were not followers of Yahweh. Given these two realities, why is this statement by Peter (a Jew!!) so extraordinary?
- **Discuss:** To understand what is going on in Acts 15, it is vital to understand what the Jewish Christians were asking the new believers to do. Spend some time discussing this until everyone in your group seems to have a clear idea.

- **Discuss:** What does this statement about ‘no distinction’ have relevance to us today as we share the Good News of Jesus to others who are not of the same culture as us?
- **Discuss:** What, according to Acts 15 & Galatians 2:11-21, needs to stay the same about the Gospel? Unpack this statement from Brett: *Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!*
- **Discuss:** How did James use Amos to support his conclusion about what should be expected of new believers in Jesus?

Church history: a very brief summary

Discuss: Discuss how the churches in Canada required cultural assimilation as part of the Gospel when they required the children of our First Nations families, under the *Indian Act* of 1920, to be removed to the residential schools.

Discuss: Brett said: *The final prophecy in Amos provides us with one of the most important lessons necessary for cross-cultural ministry and global mission work. It calls us to careful consideration of what is Gospel – and what is cultural. It calls us to discern God’s activity among cultural groups – and the missional discernment of how the Spirit is reflecting the image and likeness of God through someone’s cultural heritage. Where does the Gospel affirm the culture – and where does the Gospels challenge the culture.*

- **Discuss:** What does sharing the Gospel of Jesus while at the same time respecting culture look like?

Let’s Apply

Group Discussion: What do you imagine when you read Revelation 7:9-10, and Revelation 21:4? What are your responses to these images of the future? How do you see the human race and culture represented? How do you think this is related to how we approach sharing the gospel cross-culturally?

Personal Reflection: Brett ended with these statements. Read each one with a prayerful heart and ask the Lord if there is something He wants to speak to you about. As a follower of Jesus, a Christian and a *The People Church* person who is part of a church whose mission is to **Grow the body of Christ for God’s global mission**, what do these mean to YOU? (Maybe change the ‘we’ to an ‘I’ as you consider yourself a part of the ‘we’)

- *May we listen to the voice of our Saviour – and live into the vision of Amos!*
- *May we be Gospel-centered in our love for others – and not walk through this world with an ‘us’ and ‘them’ posture.*
- *May we not discriminate – and add our cultural preferences to His Gospel!*
- *May we not make it so hard for those who are trying to turn to God.*
- *May we not put on them a yoke of culture – or ancestry – but simply yoke people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!*

Let’s Pray

- **Spend time praising God:** That the Gospel of Jesus is for everyone, and one day we will all stand before Him and worship – every nation, tribe, people and language (Rev 7:9) (NIV)
- **Confess** (silently or out loud) when you value cultural expression over the simple Gospel of Jesus

- **Ask the Holy Spirit** to empower each person in your group represent Jesus well as we share the Gospel.
- **Continue to pray** for the church around the world; that we will share the Gospel as Jesus intended with grace, no distinction and celebrating the people who are hearing the Gospel.