

Lesson 4: Amos God's Plumb-line

AIM:

- General:** 1) To introduce the prophet Amos a shepherd from the South to look at the political situation at that time and how Amos prophesied
2) To look at the vision of the crooked wall and the plumb-line line, and examine the way in which the people had grown crooked the rich taking advantage of the poor.
3) To look at our own lives and see if we are guilty of this same injustice.
- Personal:** 1) To challenge the children to make changes in their lives- to think about and help those in need j and to live simpler lives.
2) To do all this for God as an act of worship.

STARTER: Tower Building Relay [10 mins]

Place 6 tumblers (plastic or thermacol glasses) and 6 hard-cover 100 page note books on the teacher's desk for each team. Ask for 5 volunteers from each half of the class. Instruct them as follows:-

- i. The 2 teams line up and face the teacher's table.
- ii. At the word 'GO', the first person from each team must run forward and place a tumbler on the table. They return and tip the next player who places a book on the top of it, the next player puts a tumbler and so on.
- iii. If the tower falls down, the next player begins building again.
- iv. The team that completes building all six tumblers and books is the winner.

After the game- (Ask the losers ✓)

- What do you think caused your 'downfall'? (the glasses were not centred properly- the balance was upset)
- Can you build a tall tower if the lower section is crooked? (No) So if you had been allowed, you would have removed the glasses and started again. Well we played this game to help you realise how God felt when He saw His people going wrong... They were like a tower that was being built crooked... Sooner or later, that tower would crash.

INPUT: (20 mins)

Let's find out something about the scene in Israel at this time- Israel [the Northern Kingdom] was enjoying a time of peace and prosperity at that time. Syria, their powerful enemy had been weakened by another powerful nation Assyria, and so Israel had been left alone for a while But when people have all they want, what happens? They forget God! They feel self-confident.

They were like a small boy who is being bullied by a big boy another big boy comes and frightens away the bully Now the small boy gets up and starts patting himself on the back 'How strong I am (*Draw on the black board / put up a chart / act this sequence*)

Into the picture came prophet Amos- Amos was a simple person from the South he was a shepherd and did not hail from the higher class of society yet God called him to speak to the wealthy people of the North.

Lets read about his call in his own words- Read Amos 7:10-15

- ⇒ How did God speak to Amos? Amos had a series of visions- like dreams through them he understood what God was saying
- ⇒ What were the visions? Look at your Bibles Amos Chapter 7. 8, 9 and just tell me in short-
 - a) locusts eating crops ...
 - b) a great fire ...
 - c) a plumb-line ...
 - d) a basket of fruit ...
 - e) the Lord at the altar (*chapter 9*)
- ⇒ Let's look at the vision of the plumb-line *Read 7:7-9*

A plumb-line is basically a string with a weight at the end of it -- When a mason builds a wall he checks out its straightness by holding the plumb-line near it.

what was the meaning of the vision? (*God was showing Amos that Israel had grown crooked and would ultimately crash ...just as your towers which were crooked automatically fell*)

ACTIVITY: (10mins)

(Give out activity sheets- 'Amos; God's Plumb-line' The students work in groups of 4 they look up the references and fill up the missing words They then discuss and jot down points as asked. They are given chance to share their ideas... Bring out-)

1. Amos was, in a way. God's plumb-line, i.e. by his words people could see that their lives were like a crooked wall.
2. Nowadays too, the poor are oppressed or put down by us. We too do not allow them to live decently by not paying them a decent wage. This boils down to 'cheating' them.
3. Many of us spend lavishly on new clothes, rich food, fancy gadgets (like the fat cows of Bashan] while the people around us are starving.

PRAYER: (10mins)

Settle down and come into God's presence... Today the Lord is asking each of us- Check your own life... You cannot carry on living only for yourself and forgetting about the poor...you must change or else you are bound to fall... now is your chance.

Say a short prayer of repentance to the Lord. Ask Him to help you to change and live a simpler life and to give justice to the poor.