Kingdom Divided

“Amos Part 1 – The Man”

Series Objective:

Students will learn:

* The Kingdom of Israel divided after Solomon’s death
* The story of Abijah
* The story of the Prophet Amos

Series Theme Verse: “Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” – Amos 5:23-24

Lesson Objective: For students to understand that God used Prophets like Amos to bring the two kingdoms back to worship of God and God chose some unlikely characters to be prophets.

Lesson Passage: Amos 7:12-15

Materials Needed: Bibles, Scrap Paper, Pens or Pencils, Series Theme Verse on poster

Lesson Plan:

\*Begin the lesson by having a conversation with your students. Ask them, “Who are some of the people that God has used to speak to you in your life?” Most likely, some will say you, others will say parents, teachers, preachers, etc. List as many as possible on the white board. Then ask, “What qualifies each person listed on the board to be God’s voice in your world?” There are many possible answers, that include, “Their faith in God,” “Their education,” “Their age and experience,” and so on.

\*Then ask students, “Are there any preachers or writers that have become the voice of God in your life that you may not personally know?” Some answers could be Beth Moore, Francis Chan, Andy Stanley, but most likely you will be the only one in the room with an influence in your life like one of these mentioned. Tell students who that person is for you and why they are qualified to be God’s voice in your life.

\*Explain that God used Prophets to speak to God’s people in the two Kingdoms (refer to the map you drew last week) to bring God’s people back to worship of God. In most cases, these prophets were not someone you might expect God to use as a “mouthpiece” for God.

\*A Prophet is not someone who predicts the future, but someone who speaks for God. Have students open their Bibles to the Table of Contents. Ask them to list the Prophets listed in their Bibles (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). Ask students if they know anything about any of the Prophets they just listed? Hopefully, they at least know that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. Add to their knowledge about the prophets by telling them any of these that are left off:

* Jonah was swallowed and vomited up by a great fish.
* Amos called the women he spoke God’s word to “Fat Cows.”
* Hosea married a prostitute because God told him to.
* Ezekiel talked of spinning wheels that some people say are UFO like.
* Joel talked of armies of locust.
* Jeremiah was known as “The Weeping Prophet”
* Isaiah prophesied about the virgin birth of Jesus
* Obadiah had the shortest prophecy recorded
* Micah was a Prophet at the same time as Isaiah, Hosea and Amos
* Nahum prophesied to Nineveh 100 years after Jonah
* Habakkuk had to tell the Southern Kingdom that it would be destroyed
* Malachi is the last person to speak as a Prophet of God until 400 years later when John the Baptist begins preaching...The period of silence from God to God’s people is longer than the time America has been a nation.

\*Help students see that there is no one way that God speaks, or one type of person that God speaks through. Today we will look at Amos and see the man that God chose to use to convey some of the harshest messages that God would send to the Northern kingdom Israel. Next week, we will look at the message of Amos.

Talking Points: Amos 7:12-15

* Amaziah was the king of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Why was he not a fan of Amos? (Amos was from the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he thought Amos was being a “professional” prophet for the money)
* Why would these things make the king dislike Amos? (Southern Kingdom and Northern Kingdoms were rivals, like Texas and Oklahoma, they didn’t like people from other Kingdoms telling them what to do or how they should live. Also, schools of prophets had formed during Amos’ time and these schools sometimes bred false prophets, ones God had not chosen to speak through.)
* What is Amos’ response to Amaziah, especially regarding his credentials to be a prophet of God? (I am not in a line or school of prophets. I am a shepherd. I am a sycamore tree tender)
* How does this qualify Amos to be a Prophet for God? (It doesn’t, it actually makes him an unlikely choice because neither of those careers are respected careers)
* Then what qualifies Amos to be a Prophet of God? (In verse 15, Amos says he is qualified because God chose him to speak to Israel for God)
* Amos acknowledges his background as unqualified to do God’s work, but what makes him qualified is the call of God on his life. There is a saying that “God does not call the qualified, God qualifies the called.” This is true in the life of Amos.

The Story Retold:

* It seems like a short lesson, but it is so important to understand that God has called each one of us to be God’s mouthpiece in the world.
* Have students take some time to write down on scrap paper the things they think hold them back from being used by God. This might include their family background, their past mistakes, whatever it is, write it down and fold it in half twice and write their name on the outside. These will not be read by anyone else.
* Have students hand you their papers. With each once, look at the student and as you tear the paper into tiny pieces, say, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, God knows what you wrote down and God sees past all of this to the perfect creation God made you to be. You are qualified because God called you.”
* This might seem odd or tedious, but some students in your group need to hear from someone they respect that their past does not define them; being created in the image of God and called by God give them value.
* Maybe end by telling the group that exact thing: “Your past does not define you, being created in the image of God and called by God makes you important.”

The Story and Me:

* Have the Series theme verse written on a poster or white board.
* Ask students what this verse means to them, especially now knowing the history behind the man who spoke the words.
* Ask students how this verse speaks to their lives and their daily life of worship.
* Say the verse together.