



Amos and the Plumb Line

Amos 4:12b-13, 5:14, 7:7-8

Woodstock stared at the piles of paperwork, projects, and prophet profiles stacked around him. “Handsone,” he said to the hand lounging against the desk next to him, “meeting all of these prophets is pretty groovy, dude, but there’s no way I can study all of them and run this submarine at the same time. I’ve got to come up with a solution.”

Handsone disappeared and returned moments later waving a newspaper. “Handsone! You’re a genius! You put a Want Ad in the 1969 newspaper for a helper? Great idea!”

Just then, the computer announced, “Time Travel Alert! Time Travel Alert! We have a time travel visitor in 3-2-1!”

“Whoa! That’s fast service!” Woodstock exclaimed, as he watched a long-haired young man in a blue and yellow tie-dye t-shirt and bellbottom jeans slide down the Time Travel tube.

“Wow! Uncle Woody? Like crazy, man! This place is psychedelic!” the young man greeted him.

Woodstock gasped. “Shiloh? Is that you?”

“Hi-five, Handsone!” Shiloh slapped the hand in a friendly greeting and then looked around. “So, like, where am I?”

“You’re aboard the Love Sub,” Woodstock explained.

“Whoa, dude!” Shiloh exclaimed while running his hand across the Time Travel tube. “Is this that time travel submarine you were working on?”

“You got it, dude,” Woodstock confirmed. “I finished it and splashed down in the year 2012.”

“2012?!” Shiloh grinned. “Whoa, I’m like in a whole new century! Radical!”

Woodstock nodded. “Pretty righteous, huh? Now that you’re here, you can help me, man.”

“Groovy baby, what do you want me to do?” Shiloh asked.

“Well, for starters, you can hold this plumb line,” Woodstock replied.

"Cool, I love to eat plums!" Shiloh said.

"It's not the fruit kind of plum. A plumb line is a tool builders use to measure if something is straight," Woodstock explained. He put the end of the thin cord in Shiloh's hand.

Shiloh looked at the cone-shaped piece of heavy wood hanging from the other end of the cord. "Oh, so if I hold this up it will tell me if this pole is straight?" He lifted the cord so it was next to the pole. The cord and the pole were perfectly straight.

Woodstock nodded. "That's right, man. It's just like the one God showed to Amos."

"You mean Famous Amos?! Cool, I love his cookies!" Shiloh exclaimed.

Woodstock shook his head. "Who is Famous Amos?"

"He's this dude who is famous for his awesome chocolate chip cookies," said Shiloh.

Woodstock held up his hand to stop him. "Whoa, dude, it's not that Amos! This Amos was a shepherd and a prophet. God showed him a plumb line like this one and He told Amos to tell the people to straighten up!" He opened the porthole and removed the Bible. "Now, Amos was a prophet that God sent to the nations."

"Which nations?" Shiloh asked as he put the plumb line down on the table.

"The nation of Israel and the other nations around it. Amos was different because God sent him to the people," Woodstock answered.

Shiloh replied, "Well, who else would he send him to, man? The squirrels?"

"No dude, that would be nuts!" Woodstock stopped and laughed at his own joke. "Some prophets brought their messages to leaders and kings, but Amos went to the people, especially the ones with nice homes and plenty of stuff."

"And is that when he brought them chocolate chip cookies?" Shiloh interrupted.

"No, man!" laughed Woodstock. "He didn't bring any cookies. He brought God's plan!"

"So, did he warn them about a flood, or a war, or a swarm of locusts?" Shiloh asked.

"No man, he warned the rich people to treat others fairly. Plus, the people had gotten too comfortable and were following false gods. God sent Amos to warn them to return to God and follow Him." Woodstock put the Bible on the table in front of Shiloh. "Here, read what he said in Amos 4:12b."

Shiloh read, "Amos said, 'Prepare to meet your God, oh Israel!'" He spun around on his stool when a loud alarm sounded and red lights flashed. "Dude, it's the fuzz!" he yelled.

"Chill, Shiloh! You gotta take a chill pill, man," Woodstock rested his hand on Shiloh's arm as the alarm ended. "That's just the warning lights. They point out the prophet's warning."

"Oh, he was warning them to prepare their hearts?" Shiloh asked, still looking around.

"You got it, bro. It's like the song!" Woodstock cleared his throat and sang, "Prepare to meet your God, oh Israel. Prepare to meet your God, oh Israel!"

Shiloh bobbed his head to the beat. "Groovy tune, man! So ... did they prepare?"

"Well, prophets usually gave a warning, a choice, and a promise," Woodstock explained.

"Cool, so where's the choice?" Shiloh asked.

Woodstock sat down at the table and pulled the Bible to himself. "It's Amos 5:14a. 'Seek good, not evil, that you may live.'" A bell rang and red and green lights flashed.

Shiloh looked up at the flashing lights. "You found the choice, Uncle Woodstock! God wanted them to do what's right! So, we got the warning and the choice. Is that it?"

"Nope. There's one more thing. We need the promise," Woodstock said.

"What if there was no promise?" Shiloh asked.

Woodstock thought about that. "I don't know, man, there was almost always a promise."

Shiloh grinned. "Maybe the promise was God would give us plums and cookies!"

Woodstock rolled his eyes. "Would you stop bringing up plums and cookies? You're thinking with your stomach, man. Besides, I don't think we're going to find the promise in a cookie jar!"

"Let's look in the Bible," Shiloh laughed. He reached for the Bible. He noticed Amos 5:14b and read, "Then, the Lord God Almighty will be with you, just as you say He is." The sound of people clapping echoed through the room and a green light flashed over their heads. "I got one! I got one!" Shiloh cheered.

"Out of sight, Shiloh! You nailed it, man!" Woodstock congratulated him. "And you know, if we choose to follow Jesus, His Holy Spirit will always be with us."

"That's totally groovy. We couldn't do what's right without God's help," Shiloh noted.

Woodstock held up the plumb line. "Yeah, it's like God's Word is the plumb line next to our life and His Holy Spirit helps us straighten things up and get right with God."

"Man, that Amos is far out!" Shiloh exclaimed.

Woodstock grinned. "Yeah, Amos rocks and so does God! In fact, no matter where you are in time, God is good all the time!"

"That's true!" Shiloh nodded. "So Uncle, what can I help you do next?"