



Materials I Need:

Memory Work:

Learning the Old Testament books starting with Isaiah

The Prophet: Amos, a shepherd & a fig farmer

The People: The Northern Kingdom, Israelites who lived in Samaria
The Prophecy: Seek the Lord and Live.

The Principle: God Hates Greed, Cruelty & Stealing

Aim Questions:

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1. To whom did Amos speak most of his prophecies from God? What is the prophecy that he spoke? What is the principle that we took from Amos' words?
2. Tell about one of the visions that God gave to Amos. What was it, and what did it mean?
3. What is a plumb line, and how did it teach Israel about their sin?
4. Who was the king who confronted Amos, and what did he say to him?
5. How does your behavior measure up to God's Plumb line?
6. Will you "Seek the Lord and Live"?



Hook:

Visions. Begin this activity by explaining what visions are and are not. The visions that prophets had in the Old Testament are special messages that God gave to His people. We do not rely on visions today because God has given us His Son and His Word.

Hebrews 1:1&2 *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.*

- **Locust** Amos 7:1-3 - Bring a picture of a locust or a grasshopper. Locust plagues are recorded in the Bible in more than one place. Remember what the Locust did to Egypt? Exodus 10 - The meaning of this vision was God's destruction of Israel.
- **Fire** Amos 7:4-6 - Burn a candle or find a picture of a burning building. Maybe someone in your class has experienced an actual house fire. The meaning of this vision was God's judgment upon Israel.
- **Plumb line** Amos 7:7-9 - Bring in an actual example, or just tie a fishing weight onto the end of a string or some twine. Think about how plumb lines are used even today. Use it to measure the "perpendicularity" of something in your room. Israel had failed to be straight with God. The meaning of this vision was how Israel had failed to measure up to God's standard, His law.
- **Basket of Fruit** Amos 8:1-7 - Bring in some extremely ripe fruit to taste. God's judgment was ripe like fruit to be unleashed on Israel. A preview of this judgment would take place when the earth quaked.
- **God By The Altar.** Amos 9:1 ... God himself prophecies from beside the altar. God's own words declare destruction and judgment against Israel.

Situation Skits: These skits illustrate Israelis attitudes during the time of Amos



Book:

Presentation Ideas -



Please use the skit!

Bible Adventure

In our last story, we learned about the prophet Amos and what God said through him to His people. God was telling the Israelites that they were about to be judged, right along with the Gentile nations. Let's take a look again at the reasons God was about to judge His people.

Remember, Israel and Judah looked good from the outside. The people still went to the temples regularly and made their sacrifices to God, but on the inside they were greedy and cruel. Riches had become the most important things in life to them, even more important than God. They lied and cheated in order to gain more, and took advantage of the poor, so great was their greed. God had been watching them for some time, warning them that a time of judgment was coming, and still they continued on in their sin. God's time of waiting was at an end. He sent a vision to Amos, showing him what this judgment would be like. God planned to send a plague of locusts to Israel and Judah. This was a frightening picture because after the locusts came through and ate all the plant life, people would starve and eventually die. When Amos saw this vision he prayed to God and asked Him not to judge His people in this way. God heard Amos' prayer and promised He would not.

The next vision God gave to Amos was God's judgment of Israel by fire. The fire was so intense it dried up all the rivers and streams and burned up all the land. The vision was so terrible that Amos again prayed to God and asked Him not to use this judgment. Once more, God heard and said He would not.

Did this mean God had changed His mind about judging His people or that Amos was trying to talk Him out of it? Remember, God had already pointed out the sins of His people and their unwillingness to change through Amos. In Amos' next vision God makes plain to him the rightness of the judgment. He showed Amos a wall that had been built straight and true. God was holding a plumb line next to the wall. A plumb line is a cord with a lead weight attached to the end of it and is used by builders to make sure that walls are built straight up and down. God was showing Amos that the wall was straight or true to plumb. God then said to Amos, "Look, I am setting my plumb line among my people Israel. I will spare them no longer." The plumb line was God's standard or law. His people had been built according to those standards, but when tested fell far short of them. They were so badly out of plumb that God was now prepared to judge them. Like a faulty wall, they would be torn down. Amos prophesies that their high holy places and their sanctuaries would be destroyed, and that God would use His sword against Jereboam the king. To one of the people listening to Amos' prophecies, a priest named Amaziah, this did not sit well. Amaziah refused to believe that Amos' prophecies were from God. He challenged Amos, telling him to go back to Judah and do his prophesying there. Amos answered Amaziah by saying it was not his choice to be a prophet, but that God had chosen him and given him the words to speak. God had commanded Amos not only what to say but where to say it. God also had a word to say to Amaziah, who dared to forbid His prophet to speak. Because Amaziah rejected God's words, he would share in the full judgment against Israel. He would be taken captive and his family destroyed. He would lose his land and his priesthood. Israel's judgment is also revealed to Amos by God in Amos' next vision.

God speaks of a flood of invaders coming into the land, killing many Israelites. God Himself would shake the earth, causing the temple to collapse. There would be no escape for the sinners among God's people. God says that those who boasted that they would outrun the disaster would meet their end. It is a great and terrible judgment, but it is not without hope. Amos' final words from God reveal that this is not the end for Israel. From the beginning of God's relationship with His people, He makes it clear that He will never reject those who truly belong to Him. Again, we see God's promise to eventually bring His people back to Israel. There will be a time of peace and prosperity when Christ will reign on earth. You may remember from our story last week that this period of time is called the Millennium, or the 1 000 Year Reign. Only those who accept and believe in God's Son will be a part of this special kingdom. God's plumb line exists today so that we can see our need for a Savior. What about you? How do you measure up to God's plumb line? Are you guilty of some of the same sins Israel was guilty of? Are you greedy, wanting your own way and all the best things for yourself? Are you cruel, puffing others down to make yourself look better? Are you a thief, robbing God of His glory and taking the credit for what you do and who you are? God's plumb line shows us where we are wrong. We can't cheat or fool Him. But

just as God has a plan for Israel to be restored, He also has a plan for us to be restored. It happens as we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ to make us "true to plumb" again. If you'd like to know more about how Jesus can do that for you, talk to one of your teachers before you leave today



Look:

PLUMB LINE. Make an origami plumb line. You will need the pattern on an overhead, card stock paper, tape, string & a paper clip. Create your origami piece together. Before you seal it with tape put a knot in your string and place it inside the paper piece. After the string is inside, seal it off with scotch tape. If your Bible students wish to decorate their origami, do it before you begin folding. Attach the paper clip to the opposite end of the string with a knot. Use your plumb line in the class room to find out if the pictures in the room are hung straight. How about bulletin boards? A plumb line is a line or cord having at one end a weight and serving to determine verticality. See if things in the room are true to plumb. **3AM005JR.GF1**

VISION MATCH. Match the visions and their meanings. **3AM006JR.GF2**

Introducing "Amos". Using the Prophet Flash Cards, introduce the book of Nahum. It will be important this year to review the four P's of each book so that students will be able to remember more than a list of strange names from the Old Testament.

The Prophet:	Amos
The People:	Israel the Northern Kingdom
The Prophecy:	Seek the Lord and live.
The Principle:	God hates greed, cruelty & stealing.



Took:

SIN, SIN, SIN. Cut the Sin Sheets into four pieces. Write something you need to ask God to forgive you for on the sin sheet. When the group (teachers too!) has completed the task, have the teachers pray about truly repentant hearts, thanking God that we are not guilty as charged, because of Christ dying on the cross and 3 days later rising from the dead. Although God forgives our sins, however, there could still be consequences. After you have prayed out loud and the Bible students silently pray, place a waste basket in the middle of the room. Wad the Sin Sheets up and try to slam your sins. **3AM005JR.GF3**

Prophet Page. This is a half page for the Bible students to fill out. This page will also help with memory work. If these pages are all saved the Bible students will have a booklet on the Old Testament prophets that they have put together themselves. [These pages will fit in a small binder. There are two prophet pages on each sheet] **3AMOOSJR.GF4**

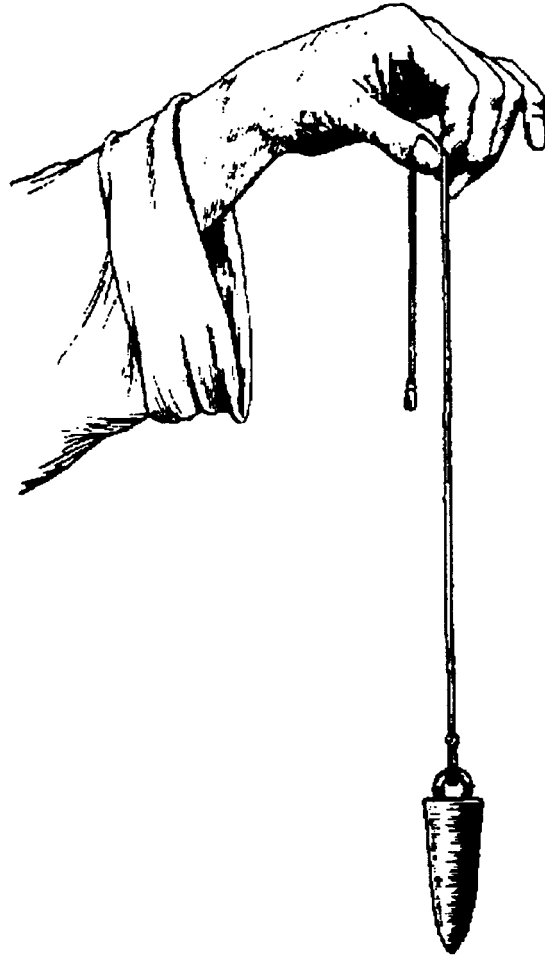
Jump Rope. The Prophets name is Amos
He's a shepherd and a fig farmer
The People, -- Samaritan Israelites
The Prophecy --- earthquake & Assyria destruction --- God's judgment.
The Principle --- God hates greed--cruelty and stealing.
These are the 4 P's
Got'em from Amos
Now it's time to jump out.

Family Fun Sheet. In this week's Family Fun Sheet there is reference to a chart titled 'Track The Prophets Chart'. You may wish to use an enlarged version of this chart as a teaching tool. Each prophet has a sticker that can be placed on the maps to help families know of where they spoke.

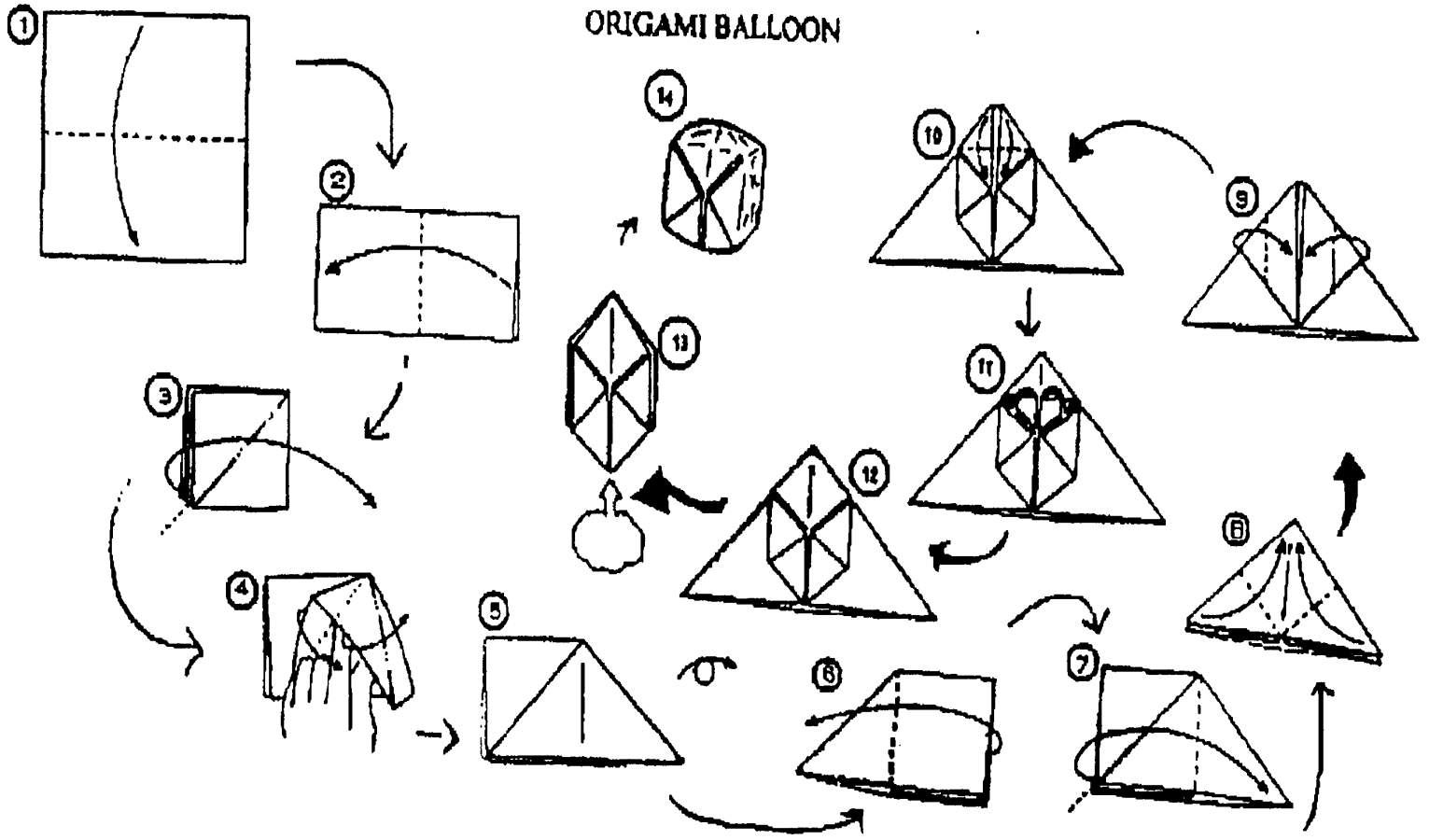
CHANGE/SAME. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Bring in copies of news magazines. Let's see how the USA compares with Israel during Amos' life. Look for pictures or phrases

that might be examples of Greed, Cruelty and Stealing. Glue them on to 'The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same'. Unfortunately the US has a lot in common with Israel.

[How do I measure up to God's plumb line. Am I guilty of some of the same sins of Israel? Am I greedy, wanting my way and my things first? Am I cruel, pushing others out of the way or putting them down to serve myself? Am I a thief, robbing God by putting all of my wants and desires ahead of His? Do I take things that are not rightfully mine to get what I want? God's standard shows where I am wrong. I cannot fool Him, or cheat on this test. God's plumb line did not go away with Israel. His word will not pass away. Luke 16:15] **3AM005JR.GFS**



ORIGAMI BALLOON



V

ISION MATCH

Draw five small pictures and match with the phrases below.

1. Plumb line
2. Basket of Fruit
3. Locust
4. Fire
5. God by the Altar

NO ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

God's Prophecy
Against His People

God's Judgment
was ripe

Israel's failure to be
straight with God.

God's Judgment of
Israel

3AMO05JR.GF2

BOOK: _____

PROPHET: _____

PROPHECY: _____

PRINCIPLE: _____

PEOPLE: _____

Notes.

BOOK: _____

PROPHET: _____

PROPHECY: _____

PRINCIPLE: _____

PEOPLE: _____

Notes.

The More Things Change...

the more
they
stay the
same

stealing

cruelty

greed

How do I measure up to God's plumb line? Am I guilty of some of the same sins of Israel? Am I greedy, wanting my way and my things first? Am I cruel, pushing others out of the way or putting them down to serve myself? Am I a thief, robbing God by putting all of my wants and desires ahead of His? Do I take things that are not rightfully mine to get what I want? God's standard shows where I am wrong. I cannot fool Him, or cheat on this test. God's plumb line did not go away with Israel.

LJ. Law
(Israel/Judah Law)

A typical courtroom scene in Israel or Judah during the time of Amos.

Characters:

Judge: rich & stem
Bailiff can be a woman
Farmer: poor but not ragged
Banker: rich & snooty
Man with Sandals: poor and ragged
Mr. Slush: rich & tipsy gentleman
Baker: poor but neat
Woman of Bashan: rich and overdone

Costumes: Costumes can be just head scarves and added jewelry for the rich people. Try for as much contrast as possible between the rich and the poor. A dark robe for the judge would be good. Maybe an apron for the baker. Poor people have no shoes except for man with sandals.

Props: Gavel (This could be a toy hammer or any wooden mallet)
Desk & Chair for Judge
Chair for witnesses
Bible

Bailiff: All rise. The 2nd District Court of Israel will now come to order; the honorable (*cough, cough* *ahem*) Judge Judah Whopper now presiding. (*Judge enters.*)

Judge: You may be seated. The court will now hear the case of “The Wheat Farmer versus the Wealthy Landlord.” Farmer, please take the stand. (*Farmer sits in witness chair and Bailiff approaches with a Bible.*)

Bailiff: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

Farmer: I do.

Judge: State your case.

Farmer: Your honor, I rent my farmland from a landlord and I pay him with a share of the harvest. When I planted the seeds in the spring my landlord agreed to take half of the wheat I harvested in return for letting me use his land, and I would keep half for doing all the work. Now it’s almost harvest time and he decided to raise his share to three-fourths of the harvest. That only leaves me with one fourth of the grain and I can’t feed my family for a whole year on that much grain. We don’t have any money either and now I won’t have any grain to sell.

Judge: If you don’t like it, can’t you just find another farm to rent?

Farmer: Maybe I could do that next year, but I’ve already worked all year to raise this crop. If I leave now, we’ll have to start all over and work another year before we have a harvest. I’m just asking you to make my landlord stick to the deal we made at planting time.

Judge: Do you own any land?

Farmer: No, sir.

Judge: I didn’t think so, because if you did, you’d understand that a landowner can do anything he wants with his land. You have two choices. Either stay and be grateful for one-fourth of the harvest, or leave and find a farm that suits you better. (*Gavel comes down*) Next case! (*Farmers jaw drops and he leaves bewildered.*)

Judge: The court will now hear “The Rich Banker vs. The Poor Man with Sandals.” Mr. Banker will you please take the stand? (*Banker sits in witness chair and Bailiff approaches with Bible.*)

Bailiff: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

Banker: I most certainly do.

Judge: State your case.

Banker: Your honor, that shabby man over there owes me \$16 and is late paying it back. It’s a paltry sum, I know. Actually when he asked for the loan I just had to find out why he needed to borrow such a small amount of money. He said he needed it to buy

sandals! (*Banker chuckles*) He's a farmer and I guess the sharp stones were hurting his bare feet! It's too much. Well, anyway, he's in default. It's the principle of the thing. If I didn't take every deadbeat to court, no matter how small the loan, well, pretty soon I'd be out of business!

Judge: (*to man with sandals*) Do you wish to speak?

Man with Sandals: Yes, your honor. I'm terribly embarrassed by this whole thing. I've never been late with a payment before. You see, I am a farmer and I had planned to pay the loan with money from my grape harvest. But my crop was wiped out by blight and mildew. When that happened, I planned to sell some figs and olives when they were ready for harvest, but then locusts came and those grasshoppers ate everything! Now I have nothing at all--not even food for my family. I will pay my loan when I find a way, and the Bank can add interest until then. I always pay my debts and even though I am late, I will pay.

Judge: Can you pay by the end of the week--Let's see, with interest can you pay \$25?

Man with Sandals: I can't promise to pay so soon. I'll try, but I'm just not sure.

Judge: I have no alternative but to take care of this matter here and now. Mr. Banker, you may take this man as your slave in payment for the sandal money. Since you own him now, you can sell him if you'd rather have the cash. (*gavel goes down*) Next Case! (*Man tries to beg for mercy, but is hauled out by the bailiff Bunker also leaves looking satisfied.*)

Judge: The court will now hear "The Winedrinkers Club vs. the Nazarite Prophet." Does the winedrinker's club have a spokesman?

Mr. Slush: Yes, your honor, I can speak for the winedrinkers. My friends call me Slush.

Bailiff: Do you swear to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

Mr. Slush: I do.

Judge: State your case.

Mr. Slush: (*talking slowly*) We petition the court to silence the Nazarite.

I can't remember his name at the moment--he's a prophet, though. He keeps on saying all kinds of bad things to us, accusing us. He says we steal from the needy. I don't know when I've ever stolen anything. My vineyards are mine--and beautiful ones they are I might add. My house is mine--I'm talking about my winter house. Oh it's bee-utifftl--ivory decorations everywhere and such wonderful furnishings. My summer house is mine too. It's made of stone. The builder did such a bee-utiful job. I've never seen such fine craftsmanship. I should pay him sometime. Now where was I? Oh yes, the Nazarite. He keeps showing up at all our parties and preaching to us. He says Jehovah God is unhappy with us and all kinds of horrible things are going to happen. That's just so unfair. We make sure that Jehovah gets just as much attention as our other gods--maybe more! We make all our required sacrifices and go to the temple for every festival and more! We bring more free will offerings to God than any other club in the nation and we always say a prayer before we start a new bowl of wine. That's really a lot of prayers!! I think some wine would do that Nazarite good. We caught him and made him drink some once. He put up such a fuss you'd have thought we were trying to kill him. He said we made him break his promise. I don't know what promise that was. He really needs to relax. (*Close eyes and almost falls asleep*) Well, after that he really insulted us. We offered him a lot of money and a free lifetime membership if he would. just be quiet. He wouldn't even talk about it. We were so offended. The point is, he's invading our privacy and mining all our fun. You just have to make him leave us alone. He gives us a terrible headache.

Judge: Say no more. I hereby order the arrest of the Nazarite prophet. When he's found, charge him to keep quiet and send him out of

the country. He'll be sorry if he ever comes back with any more messages from God! (Mr. *Slush finds his way out.*)

Judge: The court will now hear the "Baker vs. the Wheat Merchant" Baker please take the stand. (*Baker fakes witness chair and Bailiff approaches*)

Bailiff: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

Baker: I do.

Judge: State your case.

Baker: At yesterdays market the wheat merchant sold me less wheat then the amount I paid for. He had a special price yesterday, so I bought twenty pounds of wheat--usually I **buy** only ten. His scale said ten pounds so he filled it twice to make 20. When I got back to my bakery and began to measure the wheat for my bread, I know something wasn't right. So I weighed it all on my scale. I had only 16 pounds--not 20. His scale that was marked ten pounds really only measured 8 pounds each time.

Judge: This merchant has been doing business longer than you have. Maybe you are mistaken. What makes you so sure he cheated you?

Baker: One reason is that he has done it before only not for such a big amount. Your honor, everybody cheats in the market place all the time. Being a merchant myself, I can spot a lot of dishonest dealings. Sometimes when the customer isn't looking, a shopkeeper will pack up less than what was measured. Sometimes he will charge a higher price when he thinks he can get away with it. And you can never trust the weight measured on a scale in any store. I've even seen this man pour the sweepings off the floor, out of the dust pan into the wheat before it's measured.

Judge: And you never cheat your customers? Surely you do when you know they're not smart enough to catch you. If people are stupid, maybe they deserve to be cheated.

Baker: I don't think so. Sometimes I feel like I'm all alone. I might be the only honest merchant left in the whole market place. You should see them on the Sabbath just waiting for it to be over so they can make more money. I can hardly stay in business it's hard to compete.

Judge: Maybe you need to be a little smarter and do business the modern way like everybody else.

Baker: But the law says that God hates these things. He hates dishonest scales and any kind of a lie.

Judge: Are you telling me what the law says? In my courtroom, I make the laws. I don't want to hear any more about Gods laws. I'm finding you in contempt of court. I'm fining you \$100.

Baker: If I was a little wiser, I would have kept my mouth shut and stayed home today.

Judge: Make that \$200. (*gavel comes down*)

Judge: (*Judge is weary*) I will only hear one more case. "Woman of Bashon vs. the Starving Family" Madam, please take the stand. (*Bailiff approaches the stand*)

Bailiff: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Woman: I do.

Judge: State your case.

Woman: (*whining, pouting and fanning herself*) This is so upsetting, I hope I can talk about it. I've been harassed by these starving people--you just can't imagine what I've been through.

Judge: Try to get through it. Start at the beginning.

Woman: Well, I was sitting on my couch with my feet up. They were tired so I'd just put some lotion on them. I'd asked my husband to be a dear and get me something to drink. He went to pour the wine and check the lamb cooking on the fire. It smelled fabulous. The servants were playing some music and I was just beginning to relax when there was this awful racket outside in the street. We don't have close neighbors, so I was startled and a little frightened. I told my husband to come immediately and be

quick about it. But I should have known better because he didn't think to put my drink down first. When he came running in, I probably don't have to tell you, he tripped and spilled wine all over my feet and my beautiful white couch. Then, while I was waiting for him to get a towel, I heard it again, these, these people calling from the street. I couldn't understand them, what with their children chiming in and the baby crying. I told my husband to go out and make them be quiet while I cleaned up the mess. I felt so invaded. The children never did quiet down.

Judge: What did they want?

Woman: When my husband came back in, he told me they were asking for water to drink and maybe a little food. There had been no rain in their area and they were going from town to town looking for water. Why they had to come to our town is beyond me. They were dirty and skinny and their clothes were a mess. Imagine children in nothing but rags. I told my husband to make them go away before they got any closer, but then I thought of something. If I gave them water, they would then spread the word around that there is water here, well, first thing you know, every thirsty, raggedy little family for miles around would come here and we wouldn't want to let that happen. So then I told my husband to run for the officials and have them arrested. I stayed away from the windows and had the servants play their music even louder until the authorities could come and haul them away. It was so traumatic. I was afraid they would come right in and steal my beautiful white sofa with the small wine stain.

Judge: Did they at any time try to force their way into your home?

Woman: No, they just stayed in the street making all that pitiful noise and looking at our home.

Judge: I know how traumatic that must have been, but I don't want them brought into this courtroom. They might have something contagious. I will instruct the guards to send them on their way-- out of our town. We'll set up guards on the road, so no one can get into our district and ask for our food and water again!(*gavel comes down*)

Bailiff: All rise. (*judge leaves*) Court is adjourned.