

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week # 9– Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

Notes – The Prophets

Nov. 4 & 5

Amos 1:1-2; 2:4-3:2, God Judges Judah and Israel

Amos 5:4-24, Repent!

Amos 7:1-17, Visions

Hosea 1:1-2:1, God's Message to Hosea

Hosea 6:1-6, Know the Lord

Hosea 11:1-11, God's Tender Love

Micah 6:1-8, What the Lord Requires

Isaiah 1:1-20, The Lord Says

Isaiah 5:1-7, The Vineyard

Isaiah 9:2-7, The Future Ruler

1. The messages delivered by the prophets were meant for a particular group of people at a specific time in history.
2. This prophetic task is not about predicting the future but about challenging the status quo and energizing people with hope
3. The two central roles of the prophet:
 - Criticism of the dominant consciousness:
 - Energizing a new consciousness:
4. The Old Testament prophet can be viewed as a revolutionary figure, an imaginative critic, and energizer who works to subvert the prevailing oppressive ideology and create a new future grounded in the justice and compassion of a free and dangerous God.
5. We can look at prophetic imagination as the spiritual engine for social justice.
6. There are key characteristics of "totalism" and the scriptures show how prophets work to unmask them:
 - Embracing scarcity
 - Resisting change
 - Prioritizing order over justice

7. After creating a space for authentic lament and grief over the status quo, the prophetic imagination moves to "energize" the community with a new vision of hope. This process directly leads to social justice by inspiring public, ethical acts.
8. The prophet engages in "futuring fantasy"—imagining a world as God intends it to be, where justice and righteousness prevail.
 - **Restoring the covenant:** Justice is defined by the biblical concept of covenant—the relationship between God and God's people, where they are to care for one another, especially the vulnerable.
 - **Motivating concrete action:** This reframing of reality moves beyond private belief to public action.
9. The OT prophets were firmly rooted in history, and this fact has important implications for understanding their theology
10. All the prophets knew the basic facts of Israel's history and shared the major elements of Israelite faith, but they understood these things in somewhat different ways and used different words to speak about them.
11. God's final word through the prophets was one of hope and promise.
12. A prophet's call from God did not guarantee a happy life. The prophets were generally very unpopular. They spoke the truth, and the truth uncovered sin.
13. **Amos** was not a professional prophet or from a prophetic lineage, but a herdsman and a "dresser of sycamore figs." His connection to the common people and his rural background informed his fierce passion for justice.

Amos 1:1–2 The prophecy begins with a powerful image of the Lord roaring like a lion from Zion and Jerusalem.

Amos 2:4–16: Judgment on Judah and Israel. This section shifts from condemning Israel's gentile neighbors to pronouncing judgment on its own people, emphasizing that God's justice is universal and applies to all who transgress.

Judgment against Judah - The sin: Judah is condemned for rejecting the law of the Lord and failing to keep his statutes.

Judgment against Israel (2:6–16) - The sins: Israel's guilt is laid out in great detail, focusing on social injustice and religious hypocrisy.

Amos 5:4-24, Repent! This is a divine call to the people of Israel to abandon their hypocritical worship and social injustice and instead pursue genuine righteousness.

Amos 7:1-17, Visions

- Vision of the locusts (Amos 7:1–3) Famine Amos intervenes, God relents
- Vision of the fire (Amos 7:4–6) Destroys the Land Amos intervenes, God relents
- Vision of the plumb line (Amos 7:7–9) Israel found to be crooked, Amos does not intervene

14. **Hosea** is the first of the twelve books known as the Minor Prophets, which are grouped together in the Old Testament because the books are shorter than those of the Major Prophets.

He was an 8th-century B.C. prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel, whose personal life served as a powerful allegory for Israel's unfaithful relationship with God.

As a prophet, Hosea preached during a time of great political and moral decay in Israel (Northern Kingdom), a period just before the northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire.

Hosea 1:1-2:1, God's Message to Hosea and Gomer's infidelity to Hosea reflects Israel's infidelity to God.

Hosea 6:1-6, Reveals Israel's superficial attempt at repentance and God's rejection of their insincere piety.

Hosea 11:1-11, Presents a powerful picture of God's internal struggle between divine justice and tender parental love for unfaithful Israel.

15. **Micah** was from Moresheth, a small farming village in the lowlands of Judah. His rural background gave him a unique perspective and a fierce passion for social justice, as he spoke out on behalf of the poor and oppressed. A contemporary of Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea, he preached a message of both judgment and restoration to the people of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah

Micah 6:1-8, This passage is a summary of a prophetic lawsuit in which God brings charges against the people of Israel for their injustice and lack of gratitude.

16. **Isaiah** was an Israelite prophet from the 8th century BCE who served the kingdom of Judah in Jerusalem during a time of immense political and social turmoil.

Isaiah 1:1-20, is an oracle where God delivers a strong indictment against the people of Judah and Jerusalem for their rebellion and hypocrisy, calling them to genuine repentance

Isaiah 5:1-7, Song of the Vineyard, Is a parable in which God, portrayed as a vineyard owner, condemns Israel and Judah for their unfaithfulness and injustice.

Isaiah 9:2-7, Is a well-known messianic prophecy describing the coming of a great king who will bring light, joy, and lasting peace.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Amos: This prophet famously declared, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

- What are the modern-day equivalents of the injustices Amos condemned, such as exploiting the poor and perverting justice?
- How does a focus on personal piety and religious rituals sometimes cause us to overlook the call for social justice in our own communities, as it did for the Israelites?

Micah: In his most famous passage, Micah asks, "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

- What is the difference between "justice" and "mercy," and how can we practice both in our daily lives?
- How does the modern church or society sometimes focus on one of these three requirements (justice, mercy, or humility) at the expense of the others?

Hosea: God commands Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman, Gomer, as a living parable for Israel's spiritual infidelity.

- In what ways does Hosea's story of painful, forgiving love reflect God's relationship with humanity?
- How does the knowledge of God's faithful and unwavering love, despite our own unfaithfulness, impact your perspective on suffering?

Isaiah: This prophet contrasts Israel's insincere religious practices with God's desire for a deep relationship and righteous living (Isaiah 1:10-17).

- How can we ensure our religious practices—attending services, praying, giving—are sincere and not just empty rituals?
- What does Isaiah's invitation, "Come now, let us reason together," teach us about God's desire for a personal relationship? (Isaiah 1:18)

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Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.