

STUDY

# Prophetic Justice Bible Study

*An 8-session small group Bible study connecting the Old Testament prophets to present-day issues of justice, poverty, race, and structural sin -- with study questions, cultural connections, and application challenges*

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*Equipping pastors and leaders to serve with excellence, integrity, and lasting Kingdom impact.*



# Study Overview: Eight Sessions, Eight Prophets

The Old Testament prophets are among the most neglected and most needed voices for the contemporary church. Neglected because they are difficult -- their historical context is distant, their imagery is often strange, and their demands are uncomfortable. Needed because they speak with extraordinary precision to the specific conditions of contemporary culture: economic exploitation, religious performance divorced from social concern, racial hierarchy, the suffering of the vulnerable, and the corruption of political and religious institutions. This 8-session study takes participants through eight prophetic texts in depth, with serious exegetical engagement and serious contemporary application.

## Study Overview: Eight Sessions, Eight Prophets

Session 1 -- Amos 5:21-24: The God who rejects worship disconnected from justice. The specific economic exploitation Amos addresses (false weights, selling the poor for sandals) and its contemporary equivalents. Session 2 -- Isaiah 58:1-7: The fast God chooses vs. the fast Israel practices. Religious performance as a substitute for covenantal faithfulness. The specific definition of justice in verse 6-7 and what it requires in practice. Session 3 -- Micah 6:1-8: The covenant lawsuit, the three demands of mishpat/hesed/walking humbly. The contemporary application of each imperative. Session 4 -- Ezekiel 34:1-16: The shepherds who exploit the flock. A prophetic text that addresses leadership accountability and the responsibility of the powerful toward the vulnerable. Contemporary application to church leadership, economic leadership, and political leadership.

## Sessions 5-8: Later Prophets and Contemporary Application

Session 5 -- Jeremiah 29:4-7: The theology of the common good -- "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile." The church's relationship to its geographic community and the theological basis for community engagement. Session 6 -- Zechariah 7:8-10: The four requirements repeated throughout the prophetic canon -- justice, kindness, no oppression of the vulnerable, no evil against your neighbor. Why these four appear together and what their combination demands. Session 7 -- Isaiah 61:1-11: The year of Jubilee and the Gospel. Jesus's claim in Luke 4 to be fulfilling this text. The implications of a Gospel that includes "good news for the poor," "release for captives," and "recovery of sight for the blind." Session 8 -- Amos 9:11-15; Isaiah 65:17-25: The prophetic vision of the restored creation. Justice not merely as a social program but as a dimension of eschatological hope. What it means to work for justice as a form of anticipating the Kingdom of God.

Each session includes: exegetical notes on the text's historical context; three to four discussion questions that move from observation to interpretation to application; a specific justice-related action challenge for the week; and a brief "contemporary witness" section connecting the text to specific contemporary issues (economic inequality, racial injustice, immigration, environmental stewardship, criminal justice). The study is designed for 90-minute sessions in small groups of 8-15 people.

## Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. What is the most personally significant insight from this resource for your specific ministry context right now?
2. Where is the greatest gap between the principles here and your current practice? What is one specific step to begin closing that gap?

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3. Who in your leadership community needs to engage with this material? How will you bring them into the conversation?
4. What accountability structure will you put in place to ensure the commitments you are making here are actually kept?

*The work described in this resource is not the extraordinary work of exceptionally gifted ministers. It is the ordinary, daily, faithful work of people who have decided to take their calling seriously -- to prepare, to pray, to show up, and to trust God with what only he can do. Do the ordinary things with extraordinary faithfulness. That is the whole of it.*

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