

The Book of the Twelve Amos

Interpreting the Text:

1. As you read through Amos, what is your first impression of the book? What motifs, imagery, or words stood out to you?
2. Before reading Amos, or going through the study guide, how would you have defined a “prophet”? How does the historical institution of prophets in the 8th century BCE, both professional and amateur, differ from your ideas of what a prophet is? How has your definition of a “prophet” changed based on your reading of Amos?
3. Like many prophetic books, Amos relies a lot on upending expectations to challenge the status-quo. How does the message of Amos challenge you? How might it have challenged early readers and leaders, used to court prophets who told kings what they wanted to hear?

Applying the Text:

1. Amos is especially concerned with the oppression of the poor by the wealthy and elite. Do you see any resonance of his message in our modern context? Why or why not?
2. Do you consider Amos a social justice advocate? How is his message still relevant for social justice movements today?
3. Is it surprising to hear that someone like Amos would have needed to legitimize himself in the ancient world? If Amos was prophesying in the modern day, how do you think you would react to his message? Would you believe him, or would you want proof that he really did speak for God?
4. Amos speaks often about the rote observation of faith, and how “correct” actions are nothing without justice. How does this resonate, or not, with you? Have you ever felt as though you were going through the motions, without seeing and caring for those around you?