

The Book of the Twelve

Micah

Interpreting the Text:

1. Micah, at least in its first few chapters, does not particularly distinguish itself from other 8th century BCE prophets such as Amos or Hosea. What similarities or differences do you see as you read Micah compared to these other prophetic books?
2. What do you think about the notion that originally there would have been separate, competing schools of prophets in the ancient world? How does one determine which prophets are “correct”?
3. Micah did not belong to a formal prophetic institution, nor do we know of any legitimizing prophetic message such as the kind Amos potentially had. How do you think Micah would have been received by those in power? How about by those in the general population?
4. In chapter 4, we suddenly see evidence of a later addition to the text, one that shifts from the standard 8th century BCE prophetic formula to one that appears to know the exile has happened already. Does this indicate a composite work? Why do you think a later community decided to add to the text of the Book of Micah specifically?

Applying the Text:

1. If you were to update a text like Micah to speak to your own community, what would it read like? What issues or conversations would you want a new addition to speak to?
2. Scholars don’t really know what ancient prophets would have been doing day-to-day – certainly, it is unlikely they were writing, but rather acting in their communities in some way. What do you imagine a prophet like Micah would be doing on any given day during his prophetic tenure?
3. Micah was particularly concerned with accountability for priests and prophets. How do you feel about accountability for pastors and faith leaders today? What kinds of guidance would Micah give them?