



Reading Biblical Prophecy¹

Overview:

This series will focus on how we got the Bible, why we can trust it, and what's most important as we study, interpret, and apply what we read. While the sermon series will be topical in nature, our weekly discussion and reflection guides will each center around a genre of scripture. As you learn about each genre, we'll provide sample texts that illustrate some of the uniquenesses about that genre. We hope this study helps you go deeper in your bible study skills and provides helpful context and application for the broader topics in the sermons.

Group Objectives:

Relationships and Life Transformation are the primary purpose of community groups

- Reflect on this week's texts and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- To reflect on the role of prophecy in the Bible and how it can guide us today.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We encounter the Father daily.* God the Father speaks to us through the Bible, and we commune with him through prayer.

Conversation Starters:

- What comes to mind first when you think about the future?
- What stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Listening to God

- Where did you see God at work last week? How were you able to join him?

Learning about God's word: Prophecy

As a scripture genre, prophecy refers to how God conveys messages to his people through human speakers or writers. Coming from unique contexts, they are sometimes difficult to understand. Prophets act as God's spokespersons and their concerns often centered on idolatry or social justice.

Prophets sometimes "fore-tell" coming events, but more often "forth-tell" (speak forth) God's assessment and/or God's judgment for God's people. When prophets shared God's plans, in most cases that future related to the nation of Israel or Judah, rather than our own. Prophets can speak powerfully to us today about our own character and godly behavior, and they also offer us insights into the character of God.

¹ This discussion guide was written by Rachel Vaughn, Karl Pagenkemper, and edited by Dawn Gentry.

Learning from God's Word: Bible Study Discussion

- **Read Amos 1:1-2, 3:1-7**
 - What do we learn about Amos? What context does it give?
 - See 2 Kings 14:21-29, 2 Chron. 26, and Isaiah 6:1
 - Why does this matter?
 - According to Amos, what is his purpose in writing? How does he view prophecy?
- **Read Amos 5**
 - What images from the passage stand out to you? Which ones still apply to our current culture? If you were writing this to a modern audience, what images would you use instead?
 - What does Amos rebuke? Where does he believe Israel has gone wrong?
 - What instructions does Amos give the people?
 - According to Amos, what is most important to God?

Leaning into Obedience:

- Amos gives practical steps to take in obedience. Which of them come most naturally to you? Which are more challenging? What is one way you can love good or seek justice this week?
- Does Amos fit the image you have of Biblical prophecy?
 - How might this shift how you approach studying prophecy in the future?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share requests.
- Ask members of the group to share specific areas in their life where they can serve the poor or promote justice. Then have another group member offer a prayer for a filling of the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power in taking their next step.

For further study:

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Westminster, 1996).

Davis, Ellen. *Biblical Prophecy: Perspectives for Christian Theology, Discipleship, and Ministry* (Interpretation Commentary series) (Westminster, 2014)

The Bible Project:

- <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/literary-styles-bible/>
- <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/the-prophets/>
- <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/amos/>