



## Bible Reading Plan : 40 Days on Justice

Day 26

### Cows of Bashan

**Read > Amos 3:13-4:1-13**

**Contemplate >** In today's language, Amos 3:15-4:1, is a picture of women living luxurious lives in big mansions, ordering their husbands around, expecting them to buy them all the things that "they deserve". What judgement does God pronounce on women, "cows of Bashan", whose lavish lives are supported by the oppression of the poor, the crushing of the needy and the domination of their husbands? Why does God say he inflicted Israel with famine, drought, locusts and pestilence? Does Israel repent in response to God's judgement? What can we learn from this passage about ostentatious living? When a cosmetics company, that has unethical business practises, advertises its products with the slogan "Because you're worth it", what should be our response? In what other ways is the fashion and beauty industry supported by injustice? What can you do about it?

Day 27

### Call to Repentance

**Read > Amos 5:1-27**

**Contemplate >** What injustices does God say his people have committed (verses 10-12)? What behaviour does God expect of his people instead (verses 14-15)? (In ancient times, the gate was the place where disputes and cases were heard). What issues of injustice in our legal system are you aware of? Does everybody get a fair hearing, even if they can't afford good legal advice? Are there situations where rich corporations run over small community groups? Are there situations where human rights are violated in our country with bipartisan support? What changes would suggest that our nation had repented? What can you do to affect change?

Day 28

### Oppression of the Poor I

**Read > Micah 2:1-5; 3:1-12**

**Contemplate >** What injustices are identified by Micah? What do you think Micah 3:2-3 might be metaphorical for? In what ways are people's skin and flesh metaphorically torn off? In what ways are people metaphorically eaten alive? What justice issues do you think Micah is talking about? What about in our world, are there cases where people are being metaphorically cannibalised? How do you think the sexualisation of children and the sex-trafficking industry enable people to "consume" the victims? What do you think God thinks about these things? What would justice look like in these situations? What can you do to affect change?



Day 29

### Oppression of the Poor II

**Read** > Micah 4:1-5; 6: 1-16

**Contemplate** > What vision does Micah cast of when people are taught by God to walk in his ways? How will beating swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks bring about justice? What could our world look like without war? How can we, as people who are being taught by God to walk in his ways, beat our swords into ploughshares? How can we help bring an end to the injustice of war? What does God specify as his requirements for us (Micah 6:8)? What examples of injustice are given in chapter 6? What is God's response to those injustices? What can we learn about fair trade from verses 10-12? In what ways are "dishonest scales" used in our economy? What business practices are you aware of that are exploitative and oppressive? Are you aware of violence that is used by the rich to exploit their workers? What do you think God might be calling you to do in response?

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### JESUS' KINGDOM

In Jesus, God has established and is expanding his kingdom on earth. As Christians we live in the kingdom now, but also await its consummation. In this section we will look at the topics of righteousness and justice as Jesus taught them as kingdom principles. We will also see how Jesus' death was a supreme act of injustice, and how in accepting that death, Jesus identified with all who suffer injustice. We will look at a few justice issues in the early church, and then we will also look at the final judgement of 'Babylon' which represents the unjust political and economic systems of the world. Keep an eye out for how important justice is as a New Testament theme.

Day 30

### The Sermon on the Mount

**Read** > Matthew 5:1-7:28

**Contemplate** > How does Jesus redefine righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount? Does he do away with the requirements of the Law or the Prophets? What do you think it means that Jesus fulfils the Law and the Prophets? How does the way Jesus talks about anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation and love for enemies etc extend and increase the Old Testament law? How do you think Christians are supposed to live, seeing that the Old Testament law was so strict, and that Jesus in this passage makes the requirements even stricter? Some people do not think that Jesus really expects us to live up to these requirements, after reading the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:24-28, what do you think?