

Understanding the Prophets: Fierce Indignation Over Social Injustice

In an attempt to understand the Old Testament prophets' fierce indignation (and our indifference) over social injustice, I have been working through Abraham Heschel's *The Prophets*. Here is an excerpt of what I found striking:

What manner of man is the prophet? A student of philosophy who turns from the discourse of the great metaphysicians to the orations of the prophets may feel as if he were going from the realm of the sublime to an area of trivialities. Instead of dealing with the timeless issues of being and becoming, of matter and form, of definitions and demonstrations, he is thrown into orations about widows and orphans, about the corruption of judges and affairs of the market place. Instead of showing us a way through the elegant mansions of the mind, the prophets take us to the slums. The world is a proud place, full of beauty, but the prophets are scandalized, and rave as if the whole world were a slum. They make much ado about paltry things, lavishing excessive language upon trifling subjects. What if somewhere in ancient Palestine poor people have not been treated properly by the rich? So what is some old women found pleasure and edification in worshipping "the Queen of Heaven"? Why such immoderate excitement? Why such intense indignation?

The things that horrified the prophets are even now daily occurrences all over the world. There is no society to which Amos' words would not apply (p. 3).

In His Matchless Grace,
Pastor Don.