

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 11, Jonah, Amos

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This is Dr. Marv Wilson in his teaching on the prophets. This is session 11, the Conclusion of Jonah and the Beginning of Amos.

All right, I'm ready to begin.

Let's have a word of prayer, please. Lord, we thank you for your grace and mercy to us every day. We don't understand life.

You are wisdom. We confess the inability to comprehend all that goes on around us, but we thank you that we have faith in you as a living God. We don't take credit for that faith but acknowledge that you have come to us, you've revealed yourself to us, and we thank you that that gives us certainty about the most important things of life, that you're in charge, that you're taking us somewhere, that your word proves, again and again, to be true in our own experience.

And for that, we rejoice today, and as we walk with you this day and address our studies this week, we ask for your presence. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

I will post all grades for the course outside of 237 as a bulletin board, and I'll do that by final four digits of your ID number. I've done that all my life, and I'm going to continue to do that. If you want to discuss your progress with me or look at any of your exams, feel free to do that.

Now, I have a couple of final remarks to make on Jonah, and then we want to move on to Amos. That expression in the last chapter of Jonah, people who cannot tell the right hand from their left, that's an interesting expression, and some have attempted to take it literally, and I guess if you took it literally, it would mean, you know, you're just like a little kid who has to be taken by the hand because if somebody says turn left or right, you don't quite yet get it. There's confusion.

And so, some have tried to say that this 120,000 people who can't tell their right hand from their left, just are the kindergarten kids or below in age, which must have been a massive population for Nineveh. I prefer, and I think the writer indicates from putting all the evidence together, the archeological and this merism, left from right, indicates people are lost. That's what the expression means.

They may be adults physically, namely the people of Nineveh, but in character, they're sort of helpless, ignorant, lost, and in need of God's compassionate love. So, I

would take that as a figure of speech, not knowing their right hand from their left. The book of Jonah, then, is a book about God's mercy and God's universal love.

And I suspect if I were to quickly sum up some of the big themes of this book, that would certainly have to be the first one, that God has concern for not just His covenant people, Israel, but for all people. And He asks His servants to go and share with them the mercy and love of God. I think this book also reminds us of why we need the Old Testament.

Because we can relate to characters because we're just like them, human beings, in general, often have an obstinate nature. And when it comes to a difficult task, they would rather run, they would rather make an end run, they would rather avoid responsibility, they would rather walk away or go in a different direction.

And here God gave Jonah, of course, a second chance and recommissioned him after he had to come to grips with his own moral failure in that particular case. Also, I think this book is especially important when we move into the Gospels and Jesus because, again, it shows us who controls nature in the Old Testament. In a polytheistic world where nature was worshipped by the Canaanites and the Phoenicians, Baal was the weather god.

He brought fertility, germination of the crops, and the productivity of the soil and of the womb. Now we see the God of Israel controlling nature. He's not synonymous with it, but He's sovereign over it.

And we see this certainly in the fish, in the gourd, in the withering of the gourd, and in another few striking areas. Finally, another key theme of this book, which again thematically is picked up in many places of the Hebrew Bible, particularly the Psalms, is whether there is any place in the world where you can flee from His presence. The answer is no. God's omnipresence.

And as the psalmist says, even if you go all the way to Sheol, the grave, even there, God's hand is on one. So, this book is again an affront to what most of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations believed. They had gods that controlled particular bailiwicks of nature, controlled different aspects of life.

Or they were their national god and controlled or protected their turf. Now we have a universal God who isn't called Shemesh, Sun, Ureyach, Moon, Resheph, Plague, Mot, or Death. He's simply, and I think there's something intentional, Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh.

The One who is actively present. That's what the word means. He's everywhere.

His presence fills the universe. And He could actually be all the way over in Iraq, where Nineveh is, as well as on the home soil of Israel. He was not confined to the territory.

Control. God's omnipresence. Now, I'd like to move on to the book of Amos.

Do you have any comments on Jonah? Give you an opportunity. Have any questions? Let me move on to Amos. Big picture again.

There are three prophets in the Bible that put their primary emphasis on where they come out of the Northern Kingdom or Israel. Again, remember at Solomon's death, the kingdom split. The Northern Kingdom is not called the Northern Kingdom in the Bible.

It's simply called Israel, which involved the Northern tribes, and Judah, the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom would fall to what nation? Assyria. 722-721, Samaria falls.

Ten tribes go into exile into the far recesses of the Assyrian Empire. Southern Kingdom falls to Babylon in 586. It is the most important date in Old Testament history.

Alright, so our prophets of the Northern Kingdom are obviously prophets pre-721. And the king of the Northern Kingdom we linked the name Jonah to in that 2 Kings 14 passage was? Jeroboam. So, we're talking about the first half of the 8th century BC.

Jonah was the foreign missionary from Gath-Hepher, if you will, up in Galilee. The second book we will consider will be Amos. Now, Amos was not from Israel, but he came to Israel to prophesy.

He came from this little town south of Jerusalem. Have you ever been to Tekoa Falls, Georgia? In Boston, we say Tekoa Falls, Georgia. And you say, what's the big idea? Okay, Tekoa.

A little town about 12 miles south of Jerusalem, 6 miles south of Bethlehem. Wheaton College in Illinois, for a number of years, was given archaeological privileges to excavate there. So, it is an actual town that modern Israeli archaeologists have found right in the sheep country.

And there was a shepherd boy from Bethlehem 6 miles away who made it big in the Bible. 6 miles north of there. The youngest son of Jesse.

Alright, so, this area is good for raising sheep. And there may just be a correlation between that and Amos' occupation. This fortified town of Tekoa, which is in the hill country of Judea, is about 3,000 feet high.

And the hill country reaches its peak in Hebron, which goes around 3,300. Hebron is one of the great grape-growing areas of the Bible, where they get an additional number of inches of rain every year from the dew at night because of the altitude. 3,300 feet.

Where Jerusalem, 25 miles to the north, is 2,600, 2,700 feet high. Amos is a herdsman, or a shepherd, according to 1:1. And he's one of the shepherds of Tekoa. Now again, the amazing thing about the Bible is the people that God uses.

Former tax collectors, physicians, leather workers, and herdsmen. A lot of them were herdsmen. Moses spent 40 years of his life chaperoning sheep for his father-in-law, Jethro.

Amos. A lot of the metaphors that will come out of Amos here come out of the pastoral life that Amos experienced out there with the sheep. And again, the human side of inspiration is very important because you see that in the New Testament.

Who talks about money more than any other Gospel writer? It's Levi or Matthew. Who talks about women more? It's Luke. Maybe as a physician he had more contact with women.

Paul talks about athletic contests more than anyone else because he came from modern-day Turkey, Tarsus, in the northwest corner or northeast corner of the Mediterranean. So, he was exposed to Roman games. So, he talks about running the race, receiving the prize, being crowned.

That's Pauline athletic language that the Holy Spirit uses for Paul to make the point. And even the Gordon College yearbook gets its name from that business. Huppert and Nicolmen.

Romans 8. 38 and 39. We are more than victorious. We are surpassing in our victory. Hypernicon. Through Him who loves us. Alright, so expect the pastoral metaphors related to the out of doors.

In 1:1 he numbers himself among the shepherds. And, of course, in the autobiographical section in chapter 7, when he's confronting Amaziah, the priest at Bethel. Amaziah says, go back to Judah.

You're up here in the northern country. Stay down there in Tekoa. Don't prophesy here.

Don't mess with us. And, of course, he had some pretty, pretty bad things to say about the rulership of the northern kingdom. He said, Jeroboam, that's Jeroboam number two, will die by the sword.

Israel will surely go into exile. And in fact, Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, says, your wife's going to become a prostitute. And your daughters will fall by the sword.

Now if anybody got outside the White House today and started saying those things about the current administration or any administration, you would not just be persona non grata. Freedom of speech would be taken a lot more seriously than that. As Abraham Heschel in *The Prophets* puts it in the book, hopefully, you will get to know fairly well this term.

He says the people brooked, that is tolerated prophets sometimes because their message did sting. They did appear at times to be seditious, undermining the government, and unpatriotic. And they just sort of let it fly.

I call it the way it is. So prophets make poor houseguests. They're very disturbing people.

They disturb the status quo. Amos exposes some of the corruption of the northern kingdom and his twin, who happened to grow up in the northern kingdom at that time, who was Hosea. I call him a twin in that Hosea prophesied at the same time as Amos.

And they were colleagues or twins at that time in terms of the prophetic ministry that they had. One complimented the other. And we learned something of the moral, religious, and political corruption in the northern kingdom during that time that both these prophets, Amos and Hosea, addressed.

The word Amos means burden. And, of course, prophets had bombs to drop. They had burdens to unload.

And, of course, God's people were the people who received the direct blow of what they unloaded. Amos, as much as any prophet we will study this term, is the prophet of social justice. And while many of our prophets comment on aspects of social justice, Amos, probably more than any other, is really concerned in exposing the disparity between the rich and the poor.

The book, in a sense, is a commentary on what Jesus says is the second of the two prongs upon which everything hangs. There are 613 commandments in the first five books of the Bible. And one of them, Jesus says, the second concerns caring for others.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one, and you shall love Him with all your gut. And the second prong is to love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19:18 So Jesus couples those two commands to love God and love your fellow human beings.

And he says on those two mitzvot, those two entail commandments, hang all the law and the prophets. And so, Amos gives us some of the specifics of what it means to love your neighbor. By the way, it's not just Jesus in Matthew 19 that says love your neighbor as yourself.

But Paul in Romans 13, verse 9 speaks of loving the neighbor. Paul deals with high-octane theology, Romans 1-11. Then he launches into the practical, Romans 12-16.

There are 40 imperatives in the Greek in Romans chapter 12. Some are very, very practical. Be given to hospitality.

And he moves on to the very next chapter, chapter 13. He says love your neighbor as yourself. Pauline ethics, a lot of it is derived from Romans 12-16, including loving your neighbor as yourself.

The date 9-11, to a lot of people, marks a time when our country was under attack. It's one of those dates where sometimes people say, Where were you? Where were you for my generation when Kennedy was shot? I was actually in my first year teaching at Barrington College. The door flung open.

A student just interrupted the class and said, Kennedy's been shot. Of course, nobody would have heard it, saying I would say the rest of the hour anyway. So that was the end of the class.

9-11, I had one foot into an airplane where I was going to fly, and all of a sudden, all of the alarms went off in the airport, so I dropped my boarding pass and ran out of the airport. Because I saw a building burning in the bar on a big television screen where the gate, I had boarded the airplane. I'm glad I dropped the boarding pass and ran because that was not the time to be flying.

In fact, everything was grounded for several days. I mention this because, look at the way Amos connects things to an earthquake, which is fascinating.

The earthquake, which happened two years his prophesying happened two years before the earthquake when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam was king of Israel. So, he gives a pretty careful definition of when this was. Probably just around 765 B.C., when both those kings would have been prophesying.

So, probably, if he connects his own ministry and links it to the earthquake, which is like dating things from 9-11, that earthquake would take Amos' prophesying roughly 765 to 750. Those are approximately his dates, the middle of the 8th century. He, by way of occupation, is not only a shepherd, which may have taken him to the hills of Tekoa to work as a herdsman.

A herdsman could, at this time one herdsman cared for 90 or 100 sheep would be the maximum at one time. It may have also, after these sheep were typically washed before shearing, would have taken him to the wool markets of the northern kingdom. We know the northern kingdom was rich at this time because Samaria was a great emporium into which the goods of the ancient Near East poured.

We have a series of volumes published by Harvard University Press called The Ivories of Samaria. More than 100 years ago, ivories were excavated there, indicating there was a rich merchant class, probably involved with the end of the elephant trade for ivories in the upper Euphrates. We know they had elephants in the upper Euphrates until the 8th century.

And then everything stopped and all the ivory that came into Israel after the 8th century BC came out of Africa. But Amos talks about people who decorate their homes with ivory or people who lie on beds decorated with ivory. So, these little hints of the use of ivories at this time speak to us of this guy who rolled up under the stars at night simply in his mantle.

He was a shepherd out there taking care of his sheep. And he was aghast at this big gap between the rich and the poor of his day. He also had another seasonal profession related to horticulture.

And in 7:14, it says, I took care of sycamore fig trees. These were his words in defining himself before Amaziah. So, he probably supplemented his income by being a pincher or slitter of sycamore figs.

What do I mean by that? Well, figs were a major product in Bible times. And in order to make the fruit ripen, you had to puncture it. You could either do that by pinching each individual fig with your fingers or slitting the figs to allow the bitter juices to drain and the harmful insects to escape.

In addition to dealing with the fruit of the sycamore fig tree, he may have been involved in just some general tending to the trees, pruning them, and doing other things. So, he was an outdoors person. So, to sum up, then, Amos was from the southern kingdom, called by God to go to the northern kingdom to preach at one of the key places, the key cities of the northern kingdom, Bethel.

One of the main centers for Israel's golden calf worship. Remember this guy, Jeroboam number one, who was an administrator under King Solomon? He did some offensive thing, and the Bible doesn't tell us what it was.

He got Solomon really upset, and so he had to flee for his life. Do you know where he ran? Down to Egypt. Down in Egypt, he probably learned about the worship of the bull and the calf and picked up this theme, which became, in the rabbi's mind, the worst and most heinous sin the Israelites ever had.

Maybe that's because annually it comes up in the Torah, when they pitched in all their earrings and so forth, and Aaron's golden calf, just a short time after they came out of Egypt, reflects again that pagan environment. So, here's Jeroboam down in Egypt. What's he doing? Places golden calves in Bethel as well as way up in the northern border, way up here in the Dan area, where you can go in and, archaeologically today, see probably the very site under Jeroboam the second, in this beautiful nature preserve in the foothills of Mount Hermon, which makes perfectly good sense if you want to be a polytheist, because you're going to involve yourself in nature worship.

The bull was a symbol of fertility. What was the epithet in Ugaritic literature for El, who is head of the pantheon in which Baal was one of the lesser members but gets most of the press in the Bible? His epithet is bull because he's the progenitor of the gods.

So, this is pagan worship in the northern kingdom. Amos' preaching aroused considerable antagonism, as he's up there in the north meddling from the viewpoint of the northern kingdom. As I indicated, many of the metaphors come from nature.

You don't need to write these down, but I'll just mention some of them as you go through the book. Iron sledges of the thresher, harvest carts, plowing of oxen, baskets of summer fruits, hooks and fishers netting, plowmen, reapers, grape treaders, gardens and vineyards, locusts, hurricanes, cedars, oaks, hungry lion roaring in the forest, a sneered bird, a shepherd rescuing a lamb, partial rain, the eclipse of the sun, Pleiades and Orion, stars, and the earthquake that opens the book when he prophesied. Everyone remembers the earthquake.

And in fact, Zechariah 14.5, two and a half centuries after Amos' day, it may be the same earthquake that was remembered. That whole area is part of a fault, by the way. And just so you get the big picture of the Bible lands, there's a fault that runs from up here right down through the Sea of Galilee into the Dead Sea all the way down to the Gulf of Aqaba and all the way to the Conserif Valley in Africa, which is one of the biggest holes in the earth.

And, of course, the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea were originally connected in the Jordan Valley when the glaciers receded and so forth. So today you have 43 species of fish in the Sea of Galilee known to ichthyologists only in the Sea of Galilee and nowhere else. The lowest spot on earth, of course, is the bottom of the Dead Sea, half a mile deep, about 2,600 feet to the bottom of the Dead Sea.

So, this whole area was prone to earthquakes, one of which may have been the means that God used for Israel to come into the Promised Land, right? Because the Jordan was dammed, and there have been a number of these in the history of Israel that have dammed the Jordan River. All right, so he's an out-of-doors person, and he draws on things from nature. He also, by the way, has a knowledge of history, as I will point out, where he knows such things as the Nazarites and mentions a number of other interesting things from the early stages of biblical history.

According to the text here, even the wilderness wanderings are part of his knowledge. In the Promised Land, some of the main centers for learning about Israel's earlier history were... where did Amos learn all this stuff? You could say from his parents. Well, that might be true.

But what were the main teaching venues for what people knew about, say, the patriarchal period, which was about a millennium before this? Does anyone have thoughts? The temple. Amos would have had access to the temple, but the guys up north wouldn't, not during this period of time. But there would have been some teaching associated with the temple.

But you're going in the right direction. One of the key things to remember, there were 48 teaching centers scattered among the 12 tribes. And when you read the book of Joshua gives you the names of these cities for the Levites to compensate for their loss of land.

There was no tribe called Levite. And the priests became a very important source for teaching. These were teaching centers.

And so the Levites passed some of this information on. Another source of learning would have been certainly the wisdom tradition. The sages, the Hacham of Israel, instructed Israelites, not so much in Israelite history, but in certain practical observations about life and in wrestling with some of the great existential philosophical issues of life.

Probably the greatest source of wisdom was the family oracle. Because every father in the home had to be a living bible of sorts, you couldn't depend on the written tradition.

There were not that many scrolls to go around. And so, people sat around campfires and the oral tradition instructed and taught. William Foxwell Albright, who is the greatest American, in fact he's called the dean of American biblical archaeologists in the 20th century, taught 31 years at the Johns Hopkins University.

He says in his book, *From Stone Age to Christianity*, that the written text in Old Testament times was not a substitute for memory. It was a guide to memory. Albright's point is that it was very much an oral culture.

And we don't want to forget that. The written text, where it was available, could serve as a guide to your memory. But as the Talmud says, who is the greatest learner? Not the one who can repeat back his lesson to the rabbi a hundred times or to the sage a hundred times by memory, but the one who can repeat it back a hundred and one times.

So, the oral tradition, which we capture in that one word, Mishnah. Mishnah means to say it again. That's what it means. Do it a second time. Mishnah. Two times. Repeat it. Repetition. That's how people learned.

A well-trained and attentive memory is very important. My mom was part of that tradition in the public school systems here in Massachusetts, where kids would go to grammar school they'd have to learn long poems by heart and great political speeches by heart. That was part of the tradition, which we have more and more in past years.

All right. So, I indicated at this time in the Northern Kingdom several things are going on. The wealthy are getting more wealthy.

Riches are controlled by a few people who are constantly seeking to improve their status of living. 3:10 of Amos speaks of those who hoard and plunder and loot in their fortresses. 3:12 talks about beds and couches.

Beds and couches? Yeah, you can go to Huntington Avenue in Boston and see the pharaohs had beds. The average person rolled themselves up in a sheep's skin, even if it was cold, or a cloak, and slept on the ground every night. That's how the average family in Bible times lived.

People did not have mattresses, beds, and Amos, of course, was like that. So the comparisons here to those who have winter houses and summer houses and adorn their houses with ivory and their mansions. 3.15, this is the concern of Amos.

Not because money is wrong, but it's because people are spending all their time pursuing riches and are so individually focused the people around them are suffering. And that selfishness, that tight-fistedness, that lack of philanthropy, which in the

Gospels Jesus commends. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, Have an ayin tova.

That's what you have. Now, ayin is a Hebrew word for eye, and tova means good. Jesus says, give with a good eye.

That means not being tight-fisted but being open, free, liberal, and generous. In modern Israel, when they collect money today for the Cancer Society, and they're knocking on a door, they will say in Hebrew, if they're holding out a can for you to make a donation, give with a good eye. Well, that Hebraic idiom is found in the Gospels, which is one of the reasons we need to read the Gospels against its Hebraic background in that expression.

And this was one of the concerns of Amos. People were not living with a good eye. It has nothing to do with eyesight or going to an optometrist.

To give with a good eye means the opposite of giving with a bad eye. An ayin ra'ah. A bad eye means holding your fist tight.

Hold clutch on to your money. Be tight-fisted. There's one of the values.

What are we teaching students in a liberal arts education? How do we teach people to be generous people, to be kind and sharing and compassionate? You can pass exams without being compassionate. When I teach about the Holocaust, I often point out that Hitler's infamous SS people were outstanding fathers when they came home at night and served the Eucharist and the Lord's Supper in their German churches over the weekend as outstanding churchmen, but during the week they were killers, and they compartmentalized their lives. It was a dualistic kind of life.

How do you teach people to be humane and compassionate? You can go through the motions of religion, and I think that's precisely what Amos was concerned about. While the rich people were not physically killing people, they were draining them because they were so narcissistic, so self-scented, so focused on their own personal possessions and their own life of luxury and ease that wealth created within them a different spirit. And many of those wealthy people got their wealth by oppressing the poor.

We've seen that story in Latin America and the origin of liberation theology, where a few people can drain an entire area with people working for virtually nothing so that the rich get richer at the expense of people who are not paid fair wages. So, religion was not being neglected in Amos' day. It was more being perverted.

And so, Amos, like Jesus, is a quintessential reformer, going for the attitudes of the heart in seeking to bring reform so that when people go through the ritual, the

ceremony, their inward heart would be in sync with that. You'll notice in the outline that I gave you the first main chunk of material for Amos is chapters one and two which deals with prophecies against the nations. After he is introduced, he links his prophecy two years before the earthquake, and then he moves into a zoomorphism in 1:2.

Amos had seen plenty of lions in his day. They love lambs. And so, he speaks of God.

God is king. King coming as judge. The Lord roars from Zion to describe the roar of a lion as he leaps upon his prey.

Probably here is a metaphor, as I say, a zoomorphism using an animal and attributing an animal's likeness to what God is about to do. God is about to roar from his palace, his temple in Jerusalem. It's too late to rescue a sheep.

The immediacy of judgment, this dwelling place of the Lord from which his voice will be heard. He thunders from Jerusalem. The pastures of the shepherds dry up.

See, now he links himself with his fellow shepherds. Where you're running around looking for watering rights and fertile valleys like the Jezreel Valley, the Esdraelon Valley, and the Megiddo Valley. And when you look down upon the breadbasket of Israel, the God-sows valley, that's what Jezreel means: you're standing up there on Mount Carmel.

Mount Carmel is the best place to watch a Mediterranean sunset. Mount Carmel looks down on a beautiful building that the Baha'i people have made below, which is an offshoot of Islam. Up until 1948, the major harbor along the coast of Israel, which is not given to many major places where ports can easily be had, it was Haifa.

Today the leading port in Israel is down here at Ashdod, where cars and other things are unloaded, but Haifa used to be the main capital and up for bringing things by ocean or the Mediterranean Sea. Carmel, a very important word. Kerem means orchard or vineyard in Hebrew, and El of course in the end, Daniel, Michael, Bethel, vineyard of God or garden of God.

The idea of Kerem is fruitfulness. And of course, Mount Carmel, because it was the highest place along the Mediterranean coast in the land of Israel, trapped the prevailing winds coming off the Mediterranean and therefore, Mount Carmel got many more inches of rain every year because of its outstanding position and became, as it were, a garden land because of its fertility. And so, it says, the pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.

You want to have a showdown with the God of nature, the God of the weather, Baal. Where did Elijah go? Right to the middle, dab, smack, center of where Baal was

worshipped, up there on Mount Carmel, overlooking the breadbasket of Israel, the largest fertile valley in the north, as well as the slopes of Carmel that were rich and verdant where shepherds could bring their flocks. So, if Carmel is to wither through drought, what other pastures are going to be left in the land? So basically, he opens his salvo here with a call for a drought coming to the northern kingdom.

And again, God controls everything. That's the notion of Scripture. Everything is theological.

God brings rain, and God withholds rain. Now, these eight nations, which are going to be called out by the prophet, He does so, introducing in a set formula, for three sins of Damascus, even for four. And so each of them begins with that formula.

For three transgressions, yes, even for four. We don't take that specifically as a statement of arithmetic, but rather, this is a literary device to build by a kind of building to a climactic conclusion by raising the number by one. If I said, there are three reasons why I love you, yes, four, for which I would go anywhere on earth for you.

That sounds a little more effective than there are four reasons why I love you. When you add one to the number, stylistically, it's for climactic effect. The effect of this is for crime upon crime.

For many crimes against humanity. In other words, the measure was full, and this climactic effect as He introduced each of these judgments upon these eight nations. You have this same kind of literary effect, by the way, in ancient Near Eastern literature.

You have this in Homer. Homer describes loudness as when 9,000 warriors or 10,000 cry in battle. Iliad chapter 5. In Canaanite literature, it speaks about how he took 66 towns, yes, 77 cities.

Where again, you raise the digit. In Hittite literature, I slew 77. Yea, I slew 88. And if you're familiar with these common ancient Near Eastern literary devices, you know how they penetrate even the book of Proverbs.

When you read Proverbs 30, there are three things that are never satisfied. Four that never say enough. Proverbs 30, verse 15.

Verse 18 says there are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I don't understand, and two other places after that.

That is found in Proverbs 30. Another example from the wisdom literature, Proverbs 6.16. There are six things the Lord hates. Seven are detestable to Him.

Okay. We're appreciating the Bible from a literary point of view. It's more effective to raise the digit.

And so, God is up to here. There are three transgressions, yes, even four. To express the fullness of why He is upset with these nations.

Secondly, you'll notice in each of these burdens, the symbol of judgment is fire. And the most destructive of all elements, probably a symbol of war. And the final thing that I've done today is in each case except the last two, which are Israel and Judah, which are not foreign nations, but they're included among the eight.

In each case, the sin is inhumanity. It's civil or human rights violations. That's what it is.

Human rights violations are among the cruelties against other people God is citing in these opening two chapters. So, believers should be concerned about human rights and treat people who are created in God's image as human beings with due respect.

Even in modern warfare, there are certain rules for the game, such as how to treat enemies. Hopefully, we've made some progress in some of these areas.

I'll pick up here on Wednesday.

This is Dr. Marv Wilson in his teaching on the prophets. This is session 11, the Conclusion of Jonah and the Beginning of Amos.