

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 7, Interpreting the Prophets, Part 3, Introduction to Jonah Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 7, Interpreting the Prophets, Part 3, Introduction to Jonah, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's lecture focuses on hermeneutical principles for interpreting prophetic literature, specifically setting the stage for an examination of the Book of Jonah. He emphasizes the importance of direct engagement with scripture and knowing its content to build a strong foundation for theological reflection. **Wilson outlines key principles such as avoiding deterministic readings, recognizing multiple fulfillments of prophecies, and understanding the original message for its initial audience.** He cautions against over-systematizing interpretations of the end times and stresses that fulfillment, as seen in the New Testament, often enriches and deepens the meaning of Old Testament texts. **The lecture further addresses the international scope of God's love in the Old Testament and introduces Jonah as a Galilean prophet.**

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Prophetic Literature).



**Wilson_Prophets_S
ession07.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 7, Interpreting the Prophets, Part 3, Introduction to Jonah

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Wilson_Prophets_EN_Session07.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. Marv Wilson on Prophets and Hermeneutics

Date: October 26, 2024 (Based on the source, this would be the date of this particular session, but this could change if needed)

Source: Excerpts from "Wilson_Prophets_EN_Session07.pdf"

Subject: Hermeneutical Principles for Interpreting Prophetic Literature, Introduction to Jonah, and Course Exam Information

Overview: This session by Dr. Marv Wilson focuses on equipping students with essential hermeneutical principles for interpreting the prophetic books of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the original context of these writings and avoiding common pitfalls in their interpretation. He also introduces the book of Jonah, highlighting its key themes and significance. A significant portion of the session is dedicated to the upcoming exam on the six minor prophets being studied (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk).

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Emphasis on Direct Biblical Text Engagement:

- Dr. Wilson stresses the importance of directly engaging with the biblical text itself rather than relying solely on secondary sources like commentaries or summaries.
- He argues that knowing the scriptures firsthand is a critical foundation for deeper theological reflection and connecting biblical teachings to other disciplines.
- He sees this as essential for undergraduate education at Gordon and a prerequisite for seminary studies, where it is often assumed that students already know the Bible.
- **Quote:** *"The method for the madness is in part, so many people only know the Bible today based on secondary sources or reading secondary literature or summaries. They don't read the scriptures for themselves and that exercise itself is very important to be familiar with the scriptures themselves."*

1. Foundational Knowledge of Scripture:

- The session highlights the importance of knowing the "players," events, and the overall "lay of the land" within the biblical text as a foundation for proper interpretation.
- He encourages students to build a "frame of reference" which will enable them to engage in theological discussions later in their academic careers or for personal spiritual development.
- He stresses the benefit of knowing *where* things are located in the Bible and the respective emphases each book and author provide.
- **Quote:** *"You can't enter a biblical studies discussion unless you have a frame of reference."*

1. **Biblical Interpretation: Connections and Thematic Study:**

- Dr. Wilson encourages making connections between different parts of scripture and noticing unique phrases. For example, the angel of the Lord or other similar phrases, which lead to a better overall understanding of the Bible.
- He argues that this type of thematic study is crucial in the process of accumulating knowledge of the Bible for effective living, preaching and counseling.
- He shared the story of his father-in-law who was able to quote scripture on a wide variety of topics without using a concordance.

1. **Avoiding Deterministic Interpretation:**

- Wilson warns against interpreting the Bible deterministically, which can lead to justifying harmful actions.
- He specifically mentioned the misuse of scripture to justify military actions by saying: "The Word of God says Israel has a right to this land in the modern state of Jordan. Therefore, it justifies an intense military operation to clean that area out because the Bible says this land belongs to Israel. Not so fast."
- He emphasizes that eschatology (study of end times) should not annul justice, and the principle of *pikuach nephesh*, the saving of life, should always take precedence.
- **Quote:** *"Eschatology does not annul justice."*

1. **Multiple Progressive Fulfillment of Prophecy:**

- Dr. Wilson explains that some prophecies have multiple levels of fulfillment, citing Isaiah 7:14 as an example, which speaks of a child to be born as a sign of God's presence in Isaiah's day and again in the birth of Jesus.
- The professor says that the immediate local context and the ultimate fulfillment should both be considered when engaging with prophecy.
- **Quote:** *"It's not Isaiah 7:14 leaps over time and all of a sudden is prophetically fulfilled in Jesus. It had a local meaning and a local reference."*
- He uses the example of Jeremiah 31's prophecy of a new covenant, which has a partial fulfillment in Jesus' first coming, but might also have a physical fulfillment later for the physical descendants of Israel.
- He also talks about the Joel 2 prophecy and its multiple fulfillments.

1. **Principle of Correspondence/Equivalency:**

- This principle suggests that some prophetic imagery or descriptions should be understood in terms of equivalency, given that times and cultures change over the years.
- He uses Isaiah 2.4 (swords into plowshares) and Isaiah 19 (highway between Egypt and Assyria) to illustrate the idea that ancient implements of war or political realities might represent modern ones.
- **Quote:** *"In the modern world, would you say Iraq instead of Assyria? It says, well, that's what the Living Bible does with it, projecting that idea and modernizing it."*

1. **Original Hearers and Context:**

- Wilson argues that prophetic messages were primarily intended for the original hearers and their contemporary context.
- He reminds that prophecy is about correction, rebuke and hope for the current generation, not *only* about predicting the future.
- He highlights the message of hope that has continued to be a part of the Jewish tradition which has allowed them to survive through history.

1. **Avoiding Rigid Systematic Approaches to End Times:**

- Wilson encourages caution when dealing with the end times and not over-systematizing understanding of the future.

- He states it is easy to *absolutize the relative* and that the Bible qualifies many things about the end times so caution should be employed when studying.

1. "Fulfill" as "Filling Full" (Sensus Plenior):

- The term "fulfill" in the New Testament, particularly in Matthew, often implies filling a concept to its fullest rather than a literal one-to-one correspondence with the prophecy.
- He uses the example of Hosea 11.1 (out of Egypt I called my son) to illustrate this idea, where Jesus' experience in Egypt is a fulfillment of the concept of a son being called out of Egypt, although the first son mentioned in Hosea was Israel.
- **Quote:** *"Fulfill often carries with it more the sense of filling full a particular idea. That is what scholars call the sensus plenior of Scripture. The fullest or deepest meaning of Scripture."*

1. Surprise Elements in Prophecy and the Kingdom of God:

- Wilson points out that there are often surprise moments in reading the Old Testament Prophets that come to light in the New Testament
- He talks about the Kingdom of God not being what many people expected and that Jesus was not a political figure.
- He highlights the fact that Jesus came to die and not to seize power.

1. Introduction to Jonah:

- Dr. Wilson shifts to the book of Jonah. He stresses it is a story about a big God more than it is a story about a big fish.
- He notes that Jonah highlights an international love for Yahweh and that God has sheep outside of the fold of Israel.
- He points out that the book demonstrates a universal love and concern from God for the people of Nineveh.
- The professor also noted the interesting connection between Jonah's hometown of Gath-Hepher which is in the same area of Galilee where Jesus grew up.
- He notes that Jonah is the first foreign missionary from the northern kingdom.

- **Quote:** *"The little book of Jonah tends to be remembered by a lot of people, sadly, because they trip all over the big fish. The book is far more a story about a big God than it is about a big fish."*

Exam Information:

- The upcoming test will be objective, consisting of approximately 100 questions.
- It will cover the six minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, and Habakkuk) thoroughly.
- The test will include multiple-choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.
- Students must be familiar with specific verses and the emphases of each prophet.
- The exam emphasizes knowing what the Bible says and what you can figure out with no notes or outside help, emphasizing the importance of direct biblical reading and not secondary sources.
- The NIV or NRSV versions are recommended due to the professor's sensitivity to those versions.
- Students are not permitted to use their Bibles during the exam.

Action Items:

- Students should review the content of the six minor prophets, paying close attention to the emphases and unique verses of each.
- Students should practice identifying verses and filling in key missing words to prepare for fill-in-the-blank questions.
- Students should focus on their direct knowledge of the biblical text rather than relying on outside resources.

Conclusion:

This session emphasizes the critical need for students to engage directly with the biblical text and to develop sound hermeneutical principles for interpretation. Dr. Wilson encourages a deep and thoughtful approach to scripture study, recognizing the layers of meaning and the importance of understanding the original context of the prophetic books. The introduction to Jonah provides a lens through which students can begin to see how many of these interpretive principles can be applied practically. The forthcoming exam serves to reinforce the key lessons of the course and promote careful, in-depth knowledge of the biblical text.

4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 7, Interpreting the Prophets, Part 3, Introduction to Jonah

Prophets Study Guide: Hermeneutical Principles & Introduction to Jonah

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. What is the primary focus of undergraduate biblical studies at Gordon College according to the lecture?
2. Why does the lecturer discourage relying solely on secondary sources for understanding the Bible?
3. What is *pikuach nephesh*, and what significance does it hold, according to the lecture?
4. Explain the concept of "multiple progressive fulfillment" as it relates to biblical prophecy, and provide an example from the text.
5. How does the lecturer suggest we should approach prophecies that use outdated terminology for nations or places?
6. What is the main point about prophecy being "first and foremost a message for the original hearers?"
7. Explain the concept of *sensus plenior* and how it applies to the interpretation of biblical texts.
8. According to the lecturer, how did the New Testament fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 (out of Egypt I called my son) demonstrate *sensus plenior*?
9. What does the lecturer say is the primary, overarching theme of the book of Jonah, contrary to popular focus on a specific element of the narrative?
10. What is significant about Jonah's hometown of Gath-Hepher, as it is mentioned in this lecture?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary focus is on knowing the scriptures themselves, understanding their content, and being familiar with the biblical text firsthand, rather than relying solely on secondary sources. This foundation is considered essential for later theological reflection and relating the Bible to other disciplines.

2. The lecturer believes that many people rely on secondary sources or summaries and don't read the scriptures for themselves. Reading the text itself is important to become familiar with it and for it to begin to master the reader.
3. *Pikuach nephesh* is the principle in Judaism that the saving of life takes precedence over any other commandment. This principle emphasizes the importance of preserving life, even if it means breaking other religious laws.
4. Multiple progressive fulfillment refers to prophecies that have an initial, local fulfillment, followed by a later, more complete fulfillment. An example is Isaiah 7:14, which had a local fulfillment in Isaiah's day, but its ultimate fulfillment is in the virgin birth of Jesus.
5. The lecturer advises that we should interpret such prophecies in terms of their equivalency, considering the intended message. Rather than focusing on specific names or items, one should consider what the prophetic intention is in terms of modern day equivalencies.
6. The lecture emphasized the point that prophecy is primarily a message for the people who first heard it, addressing their immediate needs and concerns. It is a moral message of rebuke and correction, rather than being exclusively a reference to the future.
7. *Sensus plenior* is the concept of the fullest or deepest meaning of Scripture, often realized in the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This means that the fulfillment is not just a one-to-one match, but a filling out or expanding on the original meaning.
8. The New Testament applied Hosea 11:1 to Jesus, the ultimate Son of God. The original reference was to Israel being called out of Egypt, but the fulfillment in Jesus represents the *sensus plenior*, as his calling out of Egypt is on a much grander scale than the original.
9. The lecturer states that the main theme is not the fish but the big God and his concerns in the world. This highlights God's international love and care for all people, not just the Israelites.
10. Jonah's hometown of Gath-Hepher was located in Galilee, the same territory where Jesus grew up. This links the two prophets from the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of studying the Bible itself, as opposed to relying solely on secondary sources, according to the lecture. How does the lecturer argue that direct engagement with the text is crucial for a proper understanding of theology and its application?
2. Explain and analyze the concept of "multiple progressive fulfillment" in biblical prophecy. Using examples from the lecture, illustrate how this approach can enhance our understanding of both Old Testament texts and their New Testament fulfillments.
3. Critically evaluate the lecture's argument that eschatology should not annul justice. How does the lecturer employ the principle of *pikuach nephesh* to support this idea, and what are the implications of this view for contemporary interpretations of biblical prophecy?
4. Explore the lecturer's hermeneutical principles for reading Old Testament prophecies, including concepts such as the original audience, the *sensus plenior*, and the principle of equivalency. Explain how applying these principles can help avoid misinterpretations of Scripture.
5. Analyze the lecturer's remarks about the book of Jonah. What does the lecturer say is the central theme of the book, and how does this challenge popular perceptions of the story? Discuss how the book of Jonah illustrates God's international concern and challenges narrow, parochial views of His love.

Glossary of Key Terms

Deterministically: Interpreting the Bible in a way that believes events are preordained and inevitable, thus justifying actions based on a perceived divine plan.

Eschatology: The study of end times or last things, often related to the culmination of God's plan in history.

Hermeneutical Principles: The rules or guidelines for interpreting texts, particularly biblical texts, to understand their original meaning and application.

Inshallah: An Arabic phrase meaning "God willing," often used to express a belief that events are ultimately in God's control.

Multiple Progressive Fulfillment: A concept in biblical prophecy where a prophecy has an initial, local fulfillment and a subsequent, greater or more complete fulfillment.

Pikuach Nephesh: A Jewish principle that the saving of life takes precedence over any other commandment.

Sensus Plenior: The fuller or deeper meaning of a text, often found in its New Testament fulfillment.

Synoptics: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share similar content and perspective on the life of Jesus.

Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement in Judaism, a holy day of fasting and repentance.

Malach Yahweh: Hebrew term meaning "angel of the Lord," which some theologians interpret as a pre-incarnate appearance of God.

5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 7, Interpreting the Prophets, Part 3, Introduction to Jonah, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Biblical Interpretation and the Prophets

1. **Why is it so important to study the Bible directly, without relying solely on secondary sources?**
2. Direct engagement with the biblical text is essential for establishing a foundational understanding of scripture. Many people today primarily learn about the Bible through summaries or interpretations, rather than through personal reading. By studying the text directly, you gain first-hand knowledge of the content, the characters, and the events. This foundational understanding is crucial before moving on to theological reflection or applying biblical principles to other disciplines. The aim is to master the text and allow it to, in turn, master us, leading to a deeper and more authentic understanding of its message.
3. **What does the instructor mean by "Eschatology does not annul justice?"**
4. This principle emphasizes that even when interpreting prophecies about the future (eschatology), one should not disregard the importance of justice and the preservation of life. In other words, believing that God has willed a particular future outcome does not justify actions that cause harm or injustice in the present. For example, a deterministic interpretation of biblical prophecy shouldn't be used to justify violence or the destruction of life. The principle of pikuach nephesh (saving a life takes precedence over other commandments) reinforces this idea, highlighting the importance of valuing human life above all.

5. **How can we understand "multiple progressive fulfillments" in prophecy?**
6. Some prophecies in the Bible have an initial, local fulfillment relevant to the prophet's time, as well as a later, more ultimate fulfillment. Isaiah 7:14, which speaks of a young woman conceiving and bearing a son (Immanuel), illustrates this concept. It had an initial reference to a child born in Isaiah's time, and a more profound fulfillment in the birth of Jesus. Similarly, the prophecy in Jeremiah 31 about a new covenant had an immediate context for Israel and Judah, and is also inaugurated in the New Testament through Christ's blood. Yet, it may have additional fulfillment in the future for Israel. Understanding both the immediate context and the broader implications is key to interpreting prophecy accurately.
7. **What does the concept of "correspondence or equivalency" mean in biblical interpretation?**
8. The principle of correspondence or equivalency suggests that we may need to translate the specific imagery or objects used in biblical prophecies into modern equivalents. For example, when Isaiah speaks of beating swords into plowshares, we might consider how this imagery applies to modern implements of war like tanks, missiles, or fighter jets. Similarly, when prophecies speak of travel, like the highway from Egypt to Assyria, we can consider modern-day travel methods and geopolitical realignments. The idea is to understand the core concepts and apply them to our contemporary world without limiting them to ancient details.
9. **Why should prophecy be understood primarily as a message for its original hearers?**
10. When interpreting biblical prophecy, it is essential to consider the immediate audience and their context. The prophets were primarily delivering messages of correction, rebuke, and hope to their own generations. This does not mean that these prophecies have no relevance for the future or for us, but their initial message must be understood in its historical context first. Ignoring the original audience risks misinterpreting the intended meaning of the prophecy. It also helps to counter the notion that prophecy is solely about predicting the future, instead recognizing its original message as one of moral righteousness.

11. What is "sensus plenior," and how does it relate to interpreting fulfillment in the New Testament?

12. "Sensus plenior" refers to the "fuller or deeper meaning" of Scripture. In the New Testament, particularly in Matthew's Gospel, we see that the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies often goes beyond a direct, literal connection. For example, when the New Testament states that Jesus's return from Egypt fulfills Hosea 11:1 ("Out of Egypt I called my son"), it's not just a re-enactment of a past event. Jesus, as the Son of God, embodies the ultimate fulfillment of this "sonship" idea, surpassing the original meaning concerning Israel being called out of Egypt. In essence, fulfillment in the New Testament is not always a direct quote but a filling full of meaning in a richer and more profound sense.

13. What does the instructor mean when he says the book of Jonah is about a "big God" not a "big fish?"

14. This statement emphasizes that the book of Jonah is not primarily a fantastical story about a man being swallowed by a fish. Instead, it's a story meant to highlight the character of God. The book reveals the expansive and international love of God, who cares not only about Israel but also about other nations, including the Ninevites. God's desire for the salvation of all people challenges the narrow, parochial views held by many within Israel during the Old Testament. The focus is on God's love, compassion, and reach beyond national borders, underscoring the significance of God's character over the literal elements of the story.

15. Why is it important for Christians to understand the connection between biblical prophecy and the physical realities of places like Jerusalem and Israel?

16. A physical connection to the land of Israel and Jerusalem is crucial because many of the prophetic texts refer to concrete locations and historical realities. This understanding can be lost when prophecies are purely interpreted symbolically or metaphorically. The physical places hold real significance and give added context to the prophecies. Recognizing this helps to connect the historical reality of the Bible to its theological meaning and underscores the idea that God's promises often involve a physical or political dimension, not just a spiritual one, and that a study of a place like Jerusalem is important to get a more holistic understanding of scripture.