

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 11, Conclusion of Jonah, Amos Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 11, Conclusion of Jonah, Amos, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's session 11 lecture focuses on concluding the discussion of Jonah and commencing an exploration into the book of Amos. **The discussion of Jonah** emphasizes God's universal love and omnipresence while highlighting humanity's obstinate nature. **The lecture then transitions** to Amos, introducing him as a prophet from Tekoa in the southern kingdom, who preached social justice to the northern kingdom of Israel. **Amos's background as a shepherd and sycamore fig farmer** influences the metaphors used in his prophecies, which address the disparity between the rich and the poor. **The lecture discusses** the historical and cultural context of Amos's ministry, including the idolatry in the northern kingdom and Amos's use of literary devices. **The lecture concludes** by noting Amos's focus on social justice and God's concern for human rights.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 11 – 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
ession11.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 11, Conclusion of Jonah, Amos

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Wilson_Prophets_EN_Session11.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. Marv Wilson on Jonah and Amos

I. Overview

This session of Dr. Wilson's teaching focuses on the conclusion of the Book of Jonah and the beginning of the Book of Amos, two important Old Testament prophetic books. The session explores the themes of God's universal love, human obstinacy, God's sovereignty, social justice, and the nature of prophecy. Dr. Wilson uses a historical-cultural lens to interpret the texts, drawing on archaeology and ancient Near Eastern literary conventions.

II. Key Themes and Ideas

A. Book of Jonah (Conclusion)

- **"Right hand from their left":** Dr. Wilson interprets this phrase in Jonah 4:11 not literally (i.e., young children) but as a figure of speech representing those who are "lost, helpless, and ignorant" and in need of God's compassionate love. He states, "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."
- **God's Universal Love:** The primary theme of Jonah is God's concern not just for Israel but for all people. Wilson argues 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."
- **Human Obstinacy:** Jonah's story highlights the human tendency to avoid responsibility and difficult tasks. Wilson notes that people often "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."
- **God's Sovereignty:** The book demonstrates God's control over nature, which stands in contrast to the polytheistic worldview where nature was worshipped. Wilson explains, "Now we see the God of Israel controlling nature. He's not synonymous with it, but He's sovereign over it." Examples are given of the fish, the gourd, and the withering of the gourd.

- **God's Omnipresence:** Jonah's experience shows that no one can flee from God's presence. As Wilson notes, "even if you go all the way to Sheol, the grave, even there, God's hand is on one." This contrasts with the ancient Near Eastern concept of national gods limited to certain territories. He notes that YHWH is "The One who is actively present. That's what the word means. He's everywhere."
- **The Importance of the Old Testament:** Jonah provides relatable characters, showing "we're just like them, human beings".

B. Book of Amos (Introduction)

- **Context:** Amos was a prophet from the Southern Kingdom (Judah) who prophesied to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) during the reign of Jeroboam II. This is the period before the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 722-721 BC. Wilson establishes the historical timeline: "So, we're talking about the first half of the 8th century BC."
- **Amos's Background:** Amos was a herdsman and a pincher of sycamore figs from Tekoa, a town south of Jerusalem. He was an outdoors person and his background influenced his language and metaphors. Wilson emphasizes that "the human side of inspiration is very important" as is the case with other writers in the Bible (e.g. Matthew/Levi, Luke, and Paul).
- **Metaphors:** Amos' metaphors stem from his pastoral life, the outdoors, and knowledge of history. For instance, he is "among the shepherds" and uses metaphors of "iron sledges of the thresher, harvest carts, plowing of oxen, baskets of summer fruits, hooks and fishers netting," and so on.
- **Prophetic Ministry:** Prophets often disturb the status quo and expose corruption. "They did appear at times to be seditious, undermining the government, and unpatriotic." Wilson quotes Abraham Heschel, who says prophets are often tolerated because their message stings.
- **Social Justice:** Amos is characterized as "the prophet of social justice", focusing on the disparity between the rich and the poor. He is presented as a quintessential reformer. Wilson connects Amos' concern with Jesus' teaching on loving one's neighbor as oneself: "Amos gives us some of the specifics of what it means to love your neighbor."
- **Connection to the Earthquake:** Amos' ministry is linked to a significant earthquake around 765 BC, a significant point in history, similar to how people connect historical moments to 9/11.

- **Corruption of the Northern Kingdom:** The Northern Kingdom was rich but morally corrupt. Wilson states, "They were 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." He goes on to note, "religion was not being neglected in Amos' day. It was more being perverted." The rich were becoming richer by oppressing the poor, and their actions were not in line with the outward rituals they were practicing.
- **Literary Style:** Amos uses zoomorphism (attributing animal characteristics to God) to describe God as a roaring lion. The phrase "for three sins... even for four" is a literary device to build to a climax. Wilson explains this device saying "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." He also connects this to literary conventions in other ancient Near Eastern texts.
- **Judgment:** Judgment is often symbolized by fire. The sins of the nations include "inhumanity", or human rights violations.
- **Teaching Centers:** The Levites, temples, wisdom traditions, and the family oracle were the main sources for learning about Israel's history. "There were 48 teaching centers scattered among the 12 tribes... the priests became a very important source for teaching."
- **Oral Culture:** The written text was a guide to memory and learning was done by repetition of the oral tradition. Wilson quotes William Foxwell Albright's statement that, "the written text in Old Testament times was not a substitute for memory. It was a guide to memory." He also connects this to the meaning of the word *Mishnah*.

III. Key Quotes

- **Jonah on Lostness:** "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."
- **Jonah on God's Love:** "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."
- **Human Obstinacy:** "...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."
- **God's Presence:** "even if you go all the way to Sheol, the grave, even there, God's hand is on one."
- **YHWH's Name:** "The One who is actively present. That's what the word means. He's everywhere."
- **Prophets:** "They did appear at times to be seditious, undermining the government, and unpatriotic."
- **Amos on Social Justice:** "Amos, probably more than any other, is really concerned in exposing the disparity between the rich and the poor."
- **Corruption:** "They were 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."
- **Literary Device:** "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."
- **Oral Tradition:** "the written text in Old Testament times was not a substitute for memory. It was a guide to memory."

IV. Implications

- The session emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and cultural contexts of the Old Testament.
- It highlights the enduring themes of God's love, justice, and human responsibility.

- It challenges listeners to examine their own attitudes towards wealth, compassion, and social justice.
- The session calls for a holistic faith that connects inward attitudes with outward actions.

V. Conclusion

Dr. Wilson's lecture effectively bridges the books of Jonah and Amos by highlighting how each prophet contributes to a broader understanding of God's nature, human fallibility, and the call to righteousness. He emphasizes not just studying the scripture but to connect the text to the way a person lives, in order to lead a life that is in accordance to the will of God.

4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 11, Conclusion of Jonah, Amos

Prophetic Voices: A Study Guide on Jonah and Amos

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does Dr. Wilson interpret the phrase "cannot tell their right hand from their left" in the book of Jonah?
2. According to Dr. Wilson, what is one key theme of the book of Jonah?
3. Why is the split of the kingdom after Solomon's death important to understand when reading the prophets?
4. Where was Amos from, and what was his occupation, according to Dr. Wilson?
5. How does Dr. Wilson explain the connection between a prophet's background and their message, using Paul and athletic contests as an example?
6. What does the name "Amos" mean, according to Dr. Wilson, and how does it relate to the prophet's role?
7. According to the lecture, what was the social climate like in the northern kingdom of Israel during the time of Amos?
8. What does Dr. Wilson say about the use of "three...even four" literary device?
9. What is the primary focus of Amos' prophecies against the nations, according to the lecture?
10. Why is Mount Carmel significant in the context of Amos' message and the Bible?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Wilson interprets this phrase not literally, meaning these are not simply young children, but figuratively to mean that the people of Nineveh were spiritually lost and helpless, needing God's compassion. He sees it as a metaphor for their spiritual ignorance.
2. One key theme, according to Dr. Wilson, is God's universal love and concern for all people, not just his covenant people, Israel. This underscores that God desires his servants to share his mercy and love with all.

3. The split of the kingdom is important because it distinguishes the prophets based on whether they came from the Northern Kingdom (Israel) or the Southern Kingdom (Judah). This split occurred at Solomon's death, creating distinct political and religious landscapes that shaped the prophetic messages.
4. Amos was from Tekoa, a town about 12 miles south of Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom, and he was a herdsman, or shepherd, and also a pincher/slitter of sycamore fig trees. His occupation gave him a unique perspective on social issues.
5. Dr. Wilson uses Paul's use of athletic metaphors to illustrate how prophets' personal backgrounds influence the language and examples they use to convey God's message. Paul, who grew up near Roman games, used athletic imagery because it resonated with him and his audience.
6. Dr. Wilson states that the name Amos means "burden," suggesting that prophets carry heavy messages to deliver, particularly God's judgments, to the people, as they are the ones who feel the brunt of the message.
7. According to the lecture, the Northern Kingdom was marked by a great disparity between the rich and the poor during Amos' time. The wealthy were becoming increasingly luxurious and self-centered, while the poor were oppressed and neglected.
8. Dr. Wilson explains the use of the "three...even four" device as a literary convention to build to a climactic conclusion by increasing the number. This stylistic approach is used to emphasize the fullness of the wrongdoing and the imminent judgment to follow.
9. The primary focus of Amos' prophecies against the nations is to condemn their inhumanity and human rights violations. It highlights the civil rights abuses and cruelties perpetrated against the other people by these nations.
10. Mount Carmel is significant because it was a place of Baal worship and a place known for its fertility. It's where Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal. In Amos' opening salvo, he proclaims God will wither the top of Carmel, signifying judgement on the northern kingdom, suggesting God has control over the land and its resources.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the messages of Jonah and Amos, highlighting their perspectives on God's justice and mercy. How do their personal experiences shape their prophetic voices?
2. Analyze the social, political, and religious context of the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the time of Amos, and discuss how this context influenced his prophetic message.
3. Discuss the role of nature and natural metaphors in the messages of both Jonah and Amos. How do their respective uses of natural elements serve to underscore or reinforce their themes?
4. Explore the concept of social justice as it is presented in the book of Amos. How does Amos' message challenge the religious and social practices of his time, and how does this message resonate today?
5. Examine the significance of the oral tradition in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible, as discussed in the lecture. How does this insight change how we understand the text and the role of the prophets?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Merism:** A literary device that uses two contrasting parts to express a totality (e.g., "right hand from left," meaning lost or disoriented).
- **Omnipresence:** The state of being everywhere present, often used to describe God's attribute of being present in all places at all times.
- **Northern Kingdom (Israel):** The northern portion of the divided kingdom of Israel, which split after Solomon's death, eventually falling to Assyria.
- **Southern Kingdom (Judah):** The southern portion of the divided kingdom of Israel, which fell to Babylon.
- **Tekoa:** The hometown of the prophet Amos, located in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, south of Jerusalem.
- **Bethel:** A key city in the Northern Kingdom, known as a center for golden calf worship.
- **Hacham:** Hebrew for "wise person." A sage or wise person, traditionally a source of wisdom and guidance in Israel.
- **Mishnah:** Hebrew for "repetition." Refers to the oral tradition, passed down through repetition, and later written down, and serves to codify the traditions and laws of the Torah.
- **Ayin Tova:** A Hebrew term meaning "good eye," used to describe a generous and open-hearted spirit in giving.
- **Ayin Ra'ah:** A Hebrew term meaning "bad eye," used to describe a tight-fisted, selfish, and ungenerous spirit.
- **Zoomorphism:** The use of animal characteristics to describe God or other non-human entities.
- **Jezreel Valley (Esdraelon Valley):** A large, fertile valley in northern Israel, known for its agricultural productivity, and referred to as the "God Sows" valley.
- **Kerem:** Hebrew word for "orchard" or "vineyard."

5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 11, Conclusion of Jonah, Amos, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Key Themes and Ideas from Wilson's Lecture on Jonah and Amos

1. **What is the primary message of the Book of Jonah, and what does the phrase "cannot tell their right hand from their left" signify?**
2. The Book of Jonah primarily emphasizes God's universal love and mercy, extending beyond his covenant people to all of humanity. The phrase "cannot tell their right hand from their left" is not meant literally as referring to young children but rather as a figure of speech to describe people who are lost, ignorant, and helpless, regardless of their physical age. It highlights their need for God's compassionate love and guidance.
3. **What other key themes does the Book of Jonah highlight, and why is it important for understanding the Old Testament?**
4. Beyond God's universal love, the Book of Jonah also underscores human obstinacy and the tendency to avoid responsibility, something relatable to all of us. It emphasizes God's sovereignty over nature, challenging polytheistic views of the ancient world. Additionally, it shows that God is omnipresent, a concept also found throughout the Hebrew Bible, meaning that there is no place one can flee from His presence. The book's relatable characters and its exploration of these themes are important for understanding human nature and God's character.
5. **How does Dr. Wilson connect the Book of Jonah to the New Testament and Jesus?**
6. Dr. Wilson connects the Book of Jonah to the New Testament by noting how it demonstrates God's control over nature, a theme that is also present in the Gospels with Jesus' miracles. Additionally, the concept of God's universal love and mercy presented in Jonah anticipates the teachings of Jesus, which emphasize compassion and inclusivity.

7. **Who was Amos, and what was his social and geographical background?**
8. Amos was a prophet from the southern kingdom of Judah who was called by God to preach in the northern kingdom of Israel. He was a herdsman from the town of Tekoa, a small town south of Jerusalem in the hill country of Judea known for sheep raising and a bit of agriculture. He supplemented his income working with sycamore fig trees. His background as an outdoorsman is reflected in the imagery and metaphors he uses in his prophecies.
9. **What are some of the key themes of the Book of Amos and what social issues did it highlight?**
10. The Book of Amos is known for its strong focus on social justice. Amos exposes the disparity between the wealthy and the poor in Israel and criticizes the rich for their selfishness, materialism, and oppression of the poor. The prophet calls for authentic religion that is expressed not just through rituals, but through actions of loving one's neighbor. He also touches on themes of God's control over nature, using imagery that links back to his background and work with the land and livestock.
11. **How does the historical context of the Northern Kingdom impact Amos' message?**
12. The Northern Kingdom of Israel during the time of Amos was prosperous, but it was also experiencing moral, religious, and political corruption. The rich were growing wealthier while the poor were being exploited. Religion was being practiced without genuine compassion and concern for others. The Northern Kingdom was also participating in pagan worship, particularly the worship of golden calves at places like Bethel, which further contributed to the injustices in the society. Amos prophesied against these conditions in the Northern Kingdom, confronting these social injustices and idolatry.
13. **What role do metaphors and imagery play in the prophecies of Amos?**
14. Amos uses vivid metaphors and imagery drawn from nature and his own background as a shepherd and farmer. These include metaphors of lions, droughts, agricultural practices, and celestial bodies. These images make his messages more relatable and impactful for the people he was addressing and demonstrate his personal experiences and connection with the land. By tying his messages to experiences and things that people knew well, he was able to make his prophetic message understandable to a greater audience.

15. What is the significance of the literary structure in Amos 1-2, and what human rights violations are mentioned?

16. In the opening section of Amos, the prophet presents a series of judgments against various nations, beginning each pronouncement with the phrase, "For three sins...even for four." This literary device of incrementing the number serves to build climactic tension and shows the full measure of God's anger. The sins cited against the nations, except for Israel and Judah, all concern human rights violations, showcasing a concern for the treatment of people in society. These violations are primarily acts of cruelty and inhumanity against others, as God sees all of humanity as important and worthy of respect.