

## **Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 13, Amos, Part 3 Resources from NotebookLM**

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

### **1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 13, Amos, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Marv Wilson's "Prophets, Session 13, Amos, Part 3" explores the prophet Amos's scathing messages to Israel. The lecture highlights Amos's denunciation of the wealthy women, the biting sarcasm against idolatry, and the conflict between priests and prophets regarding external rituals versus inward repentance. **Wilson examines Amos's warnings about impending judgment** if the people don't seek God personally and address social injustices like bribery and oppression of the needy. **The discussion covers the Day of the Lord**, emphasizing it will bring darkness, not light, if repentance does not occur. **Finally, Wilson interprets Amos's visions and their significance** related to locusts, crop failure, and divine pardon.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 13 – 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  
ession 13.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 13, Amos, Part 3

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Wilson\_Prophets\_EN\_Session13.pdf," which is a lecture by Dr. Marv Wilson on the prophet Amos, specifically part 3.

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Marv Wilson on Amos (Session 13, Part 3)**

**Overview:** This session continues Dr. Wilson's exploration of the Book of Amos, focusing on the prophet's scathing indictments of Israel's social and religious failings. He highlights Amos' use of sarcasm and irony, his emphasis on internal righteousness over external rituals, the consequences of Israel's unfaithfulness, and God's ultimate call to repentance. Wilson also stresses the importance of the Old Testament for Christian understanding.

#### **Key Themes & Ideas:**

1. **Indebtedness to Israel:** Dr. Wilson begins by emphasizing the Church's foundational dependence on Israel, stating, "We're nothing without Israel. We can't explain ourselves without Israel. We grew out of Israel, not they out of us." He urges appreciation for the Hebrew Scriptures and the people of Israel.
2. **Condemnation of Social Injustice and Complacency:**
  - **The "Cows of Bashan":** Amos condemns the wealthy women of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) for their luxury and self-indulgence while ignoring the poor ("cows of Bashan...only interested in pampering themselves, not concerned...the poor, the needy."). He ties their materialism to the nation's impending downfall. He observes, "Riches have a tendency to destroy nations because people become fat and flabby and complacent."
  - **Reversal of Roles:** Wilson notes that these women were "bossy" with their husbands, "a reversal of the roles as they tended to be in Old Testament times."
  - **The Importance of the "Have-Nots":** Dr. Wilson notes that those who are in need are "much more likely to be open to God because they are the have-nots of society."
  - **Materialism Destroys Spirituality:** Dr. Wilson highlights how the pursuit of wealth and material possessions can destroy the spiritual core of a people, creating "a callousness that begins to develop toward others" amongst the rich.

- **The Rich's Fortress Mentality:** Wilson observes that wealthy individuals "have very much a fortress mentality," isolating themselves from the struggles of the average person.

#### 1. Critique of Empty Ritualism:

- **Sarcasm at Bethel:** Amos uses sarcasm, urging the people to "Come to Bethel and transgress," highlighting the hypocrisy of their worship at a center of pagan idolatry. He mocks their actions, pointing out, "a call to remove themselves from the empty ritual of the shrines of Israel."
- **Emphasis on Internal Righteousness:** Dr. Wilson stresses that external religious practices without genuine internal change are meaningless ("The emphasis was upon the external. The prophets come along and say you can do all of the legal requirements externally, but if your heart is wrong...they're phony, they're fake, they're pretentious, they aren't real.") He emphasizes that "External religion is not enough."
- **The Example of Baptism:** Wilson uses the example of baptism to illustrate that outward religious acts must have an inward counterpart ("There can be an outward symbol, but there has to be an inward reality to conform to it.")
- **God Desires Relationship, Not Just Ritual:** Amos and the other prophets prioritize a personal relationship with God, "This appeal for God not to seek more sacrifices, but to seek Him personally, is really the key to understanding Scripture." The teaching is that the desire to serve comes from this love and relationship, "because you want to, not because you have to."
- **The Problem of Compulsory Religion:** Compulsory religion, where "you've got to give this, this, this" to belong, is in opposition to love.

#### 1. Consequences of Unfaithfulness:

- **Famine and Drought:** Amos points to various calamities (famine, drought, blight, disease, earthquakes) as divine judgments for Israel's failure to return to God. For example, he speaks of "cleanness of teeth" which is shown to mean withholding bread from the people. "I withheld the geshem or the rain...And yet, Israel did not return to him."
- **Rejection of Baal:** Wilson emphasizes that the people were vulnerable because they were worshipping Baal as the god of nature ("No worry about famine, no

worry about drought...Baal will take care of the locusts and get them off your back.") and not acknowledging Yahweh.

- **The Day of the Lord:** Wilson discusses the people's misplaced hope in the "Day of the Lord," noting that instead of being a day of deliverance it would be a day of judgment for unrighteous Israel. He says, "Amos says, what? Do you really want the Day of the Lord? Do you think the Day of the Lord is going to be pleasant?"
- **God's Rejection of Ritual:** God rejects their sacrifices and feasts saying, "I hate, I despise your feasts," emphasizing again that outward ritual without justice and righteousness are empty. God says, "Take away from me the noise of your songs...I don't want to listen to the melody of your harps."

#### 1. **Call to Repentance & Justice:**

- **"Seek Me and Live":** God's central message through Amos is a call for a personal relationship with Him. "Seek me and live" is how it's expressed in the scripture, which Wilson says is why Christians need to start their studies in the Old Testament.
- **Repentance as "Return":** Dr. Wilson explains the Hebrew understanding of repentance as a turning back to God, not just a changing of one's mind. He explains, "In the Hebrew Bible, it's to do an about-face, do a 180, go back, return is the idea. In other words, forsake your sin, return in faith to the God who loves you, and keep walking on the road of life."
- **Justice and Righteousness:** He highlights the importance of justice ("mishpat") and righteousness ("tzedakah") flowing like a waterfall and an ever-flowing stream ("Let justice...roll down or cascade down like a waterfall. And tzedakah, righteousness, like an ever-flowing stream.")
- **Righteousness Includes Compassion:** Dr. Wilson explains that righteousness goes beyond what is legally due, including a compassionate heart for others. He says, "righteousness...has to do with a burning compassion associated with the just act."
- **Hate Evil and Love Good:** The call is to "Hate evil and love what is good," and it is presented as a clear choice between the kingdoms of good and evil.
- **Justice in the Gate:** The call is to "establish justice in the gate," and he ties it to the reason that many Jewish people go into law.

## 1. The Prophet's Role:

- **Speaking Truth to Power:** Amos is presented as one who "wasn't afraid to meddle with the establishment, and speak out against the establishment," even to the leaders of the day.
- **A Voice for the Poor:** Dr. Wilson points out that Amos had the "guts to not only represent the poor people of his day and speak out on their behalf," but also to challenge the establishment.
- **Exposing Bad Religion:** He states, "Amos exposes what happens when religion goes bad," which he illustrates through examples of churches that focus on "hatch-match-dispatch" and the institutionalization of religion.

## 1. The Importance of the Old Testament for Christians:

- **Family Connection:** Wilson stresses that Christians are "engrafted" into the family of Israel, highlighting that "Abraham's family becomes your family." He emphasizes that the heroes of the faith, as outlined in Hebrews 11, also become the family of the faithful.
- **Nourishment from Israel:** Wilson argues that Christians are "nourished by this fat olive root," drawing on the metaphor of the olive tree for Israel, and explains that the faith of those in the Old Testament "nourishes us and sustains us"
- **Shallow Faith:** He warns against a "truncated, superficial, and shallow understanding of the Christian faith without our family, out of whom our faith grew."
- **The Old Testament is Not Optional:** Wilson says that "most people see the Jewish people in all that Old Testament history as optional...rather than the very foundation of their faith."

## 1. Visions and Prophecy:

- **Amos' Visions:** The lecture covers the first two of Amos's five visions: locusts bringing crop failure and a fire consuming the water supply. Wilson points out that, "Each one deals with Israel's condition and coming judgment."
- **Intercession:** Amos is shown to be a prophet who follows the model of intercession, as seen previously with Moses.
- **God's Faithfulness to Israel:** Dr. Wilson argues that despite Israel's unfaithfulness, God remains faithful to His purposes for the nation, stating, "And that's why I

don't think He's done with Israel yet." He argues for the physical, geopolitical significance of Israel in God's ultimate plan ("corporately, He's going to climax all of that in some way on this earth").

### Quotes:

- "We're nothing without Israel. We can't explain ourselves without Israel. We grew out of Israel, not they out of us."
- "Riches have a tendency to destroy nations because people become fat and flabby and complacent."
- "Come to Bethel and transgress."
- "The emphasis was upon the external. The prophets come along and say you can do all of the legal requirements externally, but if your heart is wrong...they're phony, they're fake, they're pretentious, they aren't real."
- "External religion is not enough."
- "Seek me and live."
- "In the Hebrew Bible, it's to do an about-face, do a 180, go back, return is the idea."
- "Let justice...roll down or cascade down like a waterfall. And tzedakah, righteousness, like an ever-flowing stream."
- "Amos exposes what happens when religion goes bad."
- "Abraham's family becomes your family."
- "most people see the Jewish people in all that Old Testament history as optional...rather than the very foundation of their faith."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Wilson's lecture provides a comprehensive understanding of Amos's message. He connects Amos's historical context to contemporary issues, urging his listeners to focus on justice, compassion, and genuine relationship with God, rather than on empty religious practices. He underscores the critical connection between the Old Testament and the Christian faith. He stresses that the Old Testament is foundational to Christian beliefs. He also asserts that God is not finished with Israel, and that God's plan will ultimately be fulfilled on earth.

This briefing document should provide a good summary of the key ideas in the provided source. Let me know if you have other questions.

## 4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 13, Amos, Part 3

### Amos: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is significant about the "cows of Bashan" imagery in Amos 4?
2. Explain the irony in Amos's call to "go to Bethel and transgress."
3. What distinction does Amos draw between the priests and the prophets in their understanding of worship?
4. How does Amos use the imagery of "cleanness of teeth" to critique Israel?
5. Why is Baal worship relevant to Amos's message about nature and divine judgment?
6. What is the significance of the phrase "brand snatched from the burning," and how does it connect to the prophet and to Israel?
7. In Amos's message, what does it mean to "seek the Lord and live"?
8. What is the significance of Gilgal, and why does Amos tell the people to cross it off their list?
9. What does Amos critique about the people who occupy the "gate"?
10. How does Amos describe the "Day of the Lord," and why is it not what the people expected?

#### Answer Key

1. The "cows of Bashan" image is used to describe the women of Israel as pampered and unconcerned with the needs of the poor. These sleek, prized cows symbolize the luxury and self-indulgence of the women, and their lack of compassion for the needy. They also bossed their husbands around, which is a reversal of traditional roles.
2. Amos uses sarcasm when he tells the people to go to Bethel and transgress. Bethel was a major center of pagan worship, so Amos is telling the people to continue their idolatry sarcastically in order to demonstrate the emptiness and absurdity of it. He is calling them to remove themselves from the empty rituals of the shrines.



3. Amos says that the priests are concerned with external ceremonies, such as ensuring that sacrifices are done correctly. However, the prophets emphasize the internal spirit and heart of worship, stressing that true worship requires repentance (teshuva) and a sincere relationship with God, not just outward actions.
4. The phrase "cleanness of teeth" is a metaphor for famine; that is, a lack of food. God is saying that if their teeth are clean it is because they have not been eating. By withholding bread, God showed his displeasure at their actions.
5. Baal was considered the God of nature who controlled weather, crops, and plagues. Amos is emphasizing that God is the one in control, and Israel is vulnerable because they have put their faith in Baal rather than God. This also explains why God is bringing plagues and natural disasters as judgment.
6. The phrase "brand snatched from the burning" describes a remnant saved from destruction, much as Heschel described himself after fleeing Poland. This imagery is used to illustrate that God had spared the northern kingdom despite its sins, similar to Sodom and Gomorrah, even though it didn't repent.
7. To "seek the Lord and live," according to Amos, means to prioritize a personal relationship with God over religious rituals or material comforts. He is calling the people to focus on an inward relationship with God, not outward acts, or complacency, and to reject things that are destroying them.
8. Gilgal was where Israel camped after crossing the Jordan into the promised land, and where the 40-year miracle of manna ceased. By telling the people to cross it off their list, Amos is criticizing them for clinging to past glories, not current faithfulness, and for embracing a form of worship that is an empty ritual.
9. Amos criticizes those who sit at the gate for taking bribes and perverting justice. He is upset at the way the rich and powerful mistreated the righteous and needy. They were using their power to exploit others for profit.
10. Amos describes the "Day of the Lord" as a day of darkness and judgment, not a day of light and vindication. It will be a time when God judges his own people for their lack of righteousness, not a time when He vanquishes their external enemies. The Day of the Lord will involve judgment for them rather than glory.

## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Consider these questions and develop a well-organized essay for each, drawing upon the source material.

1. Analyze how Amos uses literary devices, such as irony, sarcasm, and metaphor, to convey his message about social injustice and spiritual corruption in Israel. How do these devices enhance the power and impact of his prophecy?
2. Discuss the tension between external religious practices and genuine internal devotion as presented in the book of Amos. How does the prophet critique the rituals and sacrifices of his time, and what does he propose as an alternative form of worship?
3. Explore the significance of the concept of "return" (teshuva) in the book of Amos. How does Amos connect repentance with God's actions and covenantal relationship with Israel? How does the concept compare to the New Testament teaching on repentance?
4. Examine Amos's role as a prophet who confronts the establishment and advocates for social justice. How does he challenge the leaders, the wealthy, and the religious institutions of his time, and how does this relate to his understanding of God's justice?
5. Discuss the relevance of the messages in the book of Amos for contemporary issues. How does the prophet's critique of complacency, materialism, and social injustice apply to modern society, and what lessons can be learned from his prophetic voice?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Bashan:** A fertile area northeast of the Dead Sea, known for its sleek, prized cows.
- **Bethel:** A major center of pagan worship located on the southern border of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- **Gilgal:** The first campsite for the Israelites after crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land; a place of significant historical importance.
- **Golan Heights (Golanitis):** The modern name of the area northeast of the Dead Sea; a buffer zone that overlooks the Assyrian territory where Israel holds its modern border.
- **Geshem:** The Hebrew word for "rain;" also the name of a character in the Old Testament.
- **Mishpat:** The Hebrew word for justice.
- **Tzedakah:** The Hebrew word for righteousness.
- **Teshuva:** The Hebrew word for repentance, literally meaning "return" or "to do an about-face"
- **Yom Yahweh:** The Hebrew term for "The Day of the Lord."
- **Metanoeo:** The Greek word for "repent" used in the New Testament, meaning to change one's mind.
- **Shalomim:** Hebrew for peace offerings, which were fellowship offerings shared by the priest and the one who offers it.
- **Ola:** Hebrew for whole burnt offerings.
- **Micha:** Hebrew for cereal offerings.
- **Haggadah:** The liturgical book of readings and poems and scripture and songs that help to tell the story of the Exodus, especially during Passover.

## 5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 13, Amos, Part 3, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions About Amos and the Prophets

1. **Why does Dr. Wilson emphasize the importance of Israel in understanding the Christian faith?** Dr. Wilson asserts that the Christian faith is inextricably linked to Israel. He argues that Christianity grew out of Israel, not the other way around. He emphasizes that we cannot explain our own faith without understanding the Hebrew Bible and the people of Israel, and that we as Christians are indebted to them for our faith's foundations and the scriptures we study. This includes acknowledging the covenantal relationship between God and the people of Israel, and how that is foundational to the gospel.
2. **What is the significance of Amos's critique of the "cows of Bashan"?** Amos uses the term "cows of Bashan" to describe the wealthy women of his time, particularly in the Northern Kingdom. This was an area known for its prized, sleek cows, representing luxury and excess. He criticizes these women for their self-indulgence, their neglect of the poor and needy, and their domineering behavior within their households, which he sees as a sign of societal decay. This critique highlights how material wealth can lead to spiritual complacency and social injustice.
3. **How does Amos use sarcasm in his pronouncements, and what is the purpose of such rhetoric?** Amos employs sarcasm, irony, and biting humor to expose the hypocrisy of the religious practices of his day. For example, when he says, "Come to Bethel and transgress," he's not literally encouraging sin, but rather highlighting the futility of religious rituals performed without genuine heart-felt repentance and devotion. This mocking tone is intended to jolt people out of their complacency, revealing the emptiness of their external actions when divorced from genuine spiritual renewal.

4. **What is the central conflict between the priests and the prophets, according to Dr. Wilson?** The priests of Amos's time focused on the external, legalistic aspects of worship, ensuring that ceremonies and sacrifices were performed correctly. The prophets, on the other hand, emphasized internal change, repentance (teshuva), and a genuine relationship with God. They argued that outward religious acts are meaningless without a corresponding inner transformation. This is exemplified by God's claim that He is more interested in justice and righteousness than in sacrifices and songs that do not come from a sincere heart.
5. **How does Amos use natural disasters to convey God's message?** Amos describes various natural calamities, such as famine (lack of bread), drought (withheld rain), and blight, as God's means of prompting repentance in Israel. These events, which would have been understood as divine judgment, underscore the inadequacy of relying on Baal, the false god of nature, for sustenance and well-being. Amos shows that even amidst these natural disruptions, which point to the power and sovereignty of God, the people of Israel failed to turn back to Him.
6. **What is the meaning of the phrase "a brand snatched from the burning," and what connection does it have to Amos?** The phrase "a brand snatched from the burning" is a metaphor derived from Amos (4:11), illustrating God's grace in rescuing a remnant from destruction. Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Jewish theologian, used this phrase to describe his own escape from Nazi-occupied Poland. This resonates with Amos's depiction of Israel's near-destruction, from which God mercifully preserves a small group. The image emphasizes both the severity of the judgment and the hope of restoration through God's intervention.
7. **What does Amos mean by "seek me and live," and how does this relate to the Christian faith?** Amos's call to "seek me and live" is a fundamental call for a personal relationship with God. Dr. Wilson sees this as foundational to the Christian faith, which follows the same pattern: establishing a relationship with God through faith in His grace, and only then moving to instruction on how to live according to His word. The emphasis is on a covenantal relationship rather than mere adherence to external rules. Dr. Wilson uses Jesus' words to love God entirely as an example of this vertical relationship needed first, followed by the horizontal aspect of how we love and act toward others.

8. **How does Amos' message about justice and righteousness apply to modern-day society?** Amos champions justice (mishpat) and righteousness (tzedakah) as key indicators of true religion. Dr. Wilson explains that these are not merely about reciprocal actions or legal correctness, but about a compassion that drives people to act justly out of kindness. He underscores the importance of social justice and equitable distribution of resources, emphasizing that true faith must manifest itself in how we treat the poor and vulnerable. Amos's message remains relevant today because it challenges complacency, social injustice and hypocrisy, and calls for a society built on integrity and compassion.