

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 1, Ministry and Message of the Prophets, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 1, Ministry and Message of the Prophets, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates, a professor of Old Testament Studies, introduces a lecture series on the **Minor Prophets, emphasizing their often-overlooked importance**. He aims to deepen understanding of scripture, particularly for those with limited access to formal study, and highlights the prophets' role as messengers of God's covenants. **Yates explains that the prophets were called by God to deliver specific messages, serving as spokesmen and reminding the people of their covenant responsibilities**. The covenant message of the prophets included accusations of sin and covenant breaking. **Yates presents a framework of sin, repentance, judgment, and eventual restoration, which he will use throughout the series**. He states that all covenants contain both promises and obligations.

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 1 – 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 → Book of the Twelve [Minor Prophets]).



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3. Briefing Document: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 1, Ministry and Message of the Prophets, Part 1

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Gary Yates' lecture on the Minor Prophets:

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on the Ministry and Message of the Prophets

Source: Excerpts from "Yates_MP_EN_Session_01.pdf" - Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the 12, Session 1, The Ministry and Message of the Prophets, Part 1 (© 2024 Gary Yates and Ted Hildebrandt)

Overview: This document summarizes the key points made by Dr. Gary Yates in the first lecture of his series on the Minor Prophets. The lecture focuses on establishing a foundation for understanding the prophets' role, mission, and message within the Old Testament, particularly in relation to covenants and God's plan of redemption.

Main Themes and Ideas:

1. The Importance of Studying the Old Testament Prophets:

- Yates emphasizes the significance of understanding the Old Testament for a fuller comprehension of Jesus and his mission. He states, *"I believe as Christians to know Jesus and who he is and what he's done for us and his place in our lives, we have to know the Old Testament."*
- He argues that the Old Testament "sets the stage" for understanding Jesus as the fulfillment of the entire biblical narrative. *"The Old Testament sets the stage and helps us to understand how Jesus is the goal and fulfillment of the entire story of the Bible."*
- Jesus himself used the Old Testament to explain his suffering, resurrection, and exaltation to his disciples.

1. The Prophets as Called Spokesmen of God:

- Prophets were specifically called by God to deliver a divine message. The word "nabi," meaning prophet, likely means "a called one". *"In fact, the word for prophet in the Old Testament, nabi, cognate evidence helps us to understand that the probable meaning for that word is that it's a person that's called. It's a called one."* This calling was not merely a personal desire but a direct commission from God.

- Yates illustrates this with examples like Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1), Ezekiel, and Amos. *"In Amos chapter seven, verse 14, Amos says, I was no prophet. I was not a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs... but the Lord took me from following the flock. And the Lord said to me, go and prophesy to my people, Israel."*
- They delivered messages directly from God, indicated by the frequent phrase "Thus says Yahweh". *"More than 350 times in the prophets we see this expression, thus says Yahweh."* This wasn't their personal opinion but a divine utterance. *"It's not Jeremiah's word or Amos's word, or Hosea's word. This is an utterance that comes from God."*
- Yates references 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16 to emphasize the inspiration of the prophets' message, *"prophecy did not originate in the will of man or the opinions of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* stating it was breathed out by God.

1. The Prophets as Messengers of God's Covenants:

- The prophets' message is deeply intertwined with the Old Testament covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic (Sinaitic), and Davidic. *"Specifically, their message, the role of the prophets, and the message that they proclaim, they come to the people of Israel as the messengers of God's covenants."* Understanding these covenants is crucial for understanding the prophets.
- **Noahic Covenant:** A promise not to destroy the earth by water, with an obligation on humanity to restrain violence.
- **Abrahamic Covenant:** Promises of descendants, land, and blessing to all nations through Abraham. Obligation to walk before God and be blameless. *"God promises Abraham that he'll give him descendants and make him a great nation...God also promises that he's going to give Abraham and his descendants a land...And then God also says that Abraham will become an instrument of blessing to all peoples."*
- **Mosaic (Sinaitic) Covenant:** Established at Mount Sinai, outlining Israel's mission as a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience. *"God says I've carried you on eagle's wings. I've brought you to myself...I am calling you to be a holy nation, to live in a distinctive way. I am calling you to be a kingdom of priests."*

- **Davidic Covenant:** God promises to establish David's dynasty and kingdom forever. Conditional blessings and punishments based on obedience. Ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. *"God is going to raise up a son for David...God is going to establish the family of David, the dynasty of David, and the kingdom of David forever."*

1. **The New Covenant:**

- The prophets promised a new covenant to address the failures of the old covenants. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is key to understanding this, with promises of forgiveness and inner transformation. *"The promise of the prophets is that ultimately, after this judgment is over, the Lord is going to establish a new covenant with the people of Israel."*
- God would write the law on their hearts, giving them the desire and ability to obey. *"I will forgive the sins of the past. I will not remember them anymore...God is also going to provide enablement for your future, and the Lord is going to write the law on your heart so that you will have the desire to obey and the ability to do what God has commanded you to do."*
- Other prophets (Joel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah) describe this through the outpouring of the Spirit.

1. **Four-Part Covenantal Message of the Prophets:**

- Yates, drawing on DuVal and Hayes' "Grasping God's Word," summarizes the prophets' message as:
 1. **"You have sinned, and you have broken the covenant."** The prophets acted as God's "prosecuting attorneys," indicting the people based on violations of the Mosaic covenant. *"The first idea that we're going to see about the covenant in the Old Testament prophets is that they are going to tell the people, you have sinned, and you have broken the covenant."*
 2. **"You need to repent and turn around."** A call to change their ways and avoid judgment.
 3. **"If there is no repentance, then ultimately there will be judgment."** Judgment is a consequence of persistent disobedience.
 4. **"After this judgment has taken place, there will ultimately be restoration."** Even after judgment, God's covenant promises remain, offering hope for restoration.

5. Prophetic Judgment Speeches

- These contained two key elements: accusation/indictment and announcement of judgement. *"And a prophetic judgment speech basically contains two elements. There is an accusation against the people, and this is what you've done wrong...And then after the accusation, after the indictment, there is also an announcement where the prophet is going to announce to the people of God, this is what the Lord is going to do to you."* Yates uses Isaiah 5:8-10 and Micah 3:9-12 as examples.

Implications:

- This lecture provides a framework for interpreting the messages of the Minor Prophets, emphasizing their role as covenant messengers.
- Understanding the historical and covenantal context is crucial for accurate interpretation.
- The message of the prophets, while containing warnings of judgment, ultimately points toward hope and restoration through God's covenant faithfulness.

This briefing document captures the core ideas presented by Dr. Yates in the provided excerpts. It should serve as a useful summary for understanding the foundation he's laying for his series on the Minor Prophets.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 1, Ministry and Message of the Prophets, Part 1

The Ministry and Message of the Prophets: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Yates, what is one of the greatest needs in the church today?
2. What Old Testament passage did Jesus use to explain his mission to the disciples on the road to Emmaus?
3. What is the likely meaning of the Hebrew word *nabi*, used to describe a prophet?
4. Give an example from the minor prophets that demonstrates the prophet was called by God?
5. What phrase is repeated more than 350 times to show the source of the prophet's message?
6. According to Jeremiah, what distinguishes a true prophet from a false prophet?
7. According to Dr. Yates, what are the two prevailing ideas about God in the Old Testament?
8. What three promises did God make to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant?
9. What is the key passage in the Old Testament for understanding the New Covenant?
10. What are the two key elements of a prophetic judgment speech?

Quiz Answer Key

1. One of the greatest needs in the church today is a deeper and fuller understanding of God's Word. Dr. Yates feels the evangelical church has abandoned its commitment to scripture as the cornerstone of ministry. He believes God's word changes lives, not human ability.
2. Jesus used the Old Testament, including the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, to show the disciples on the road to Emmaus why it was necessary for him to suffer, be raised from the dead, and be exalted. He systematically taught them and helped them understand his mission.

3. The Hebrew word *nabi*, used to describe a prophet, likely means "a person that's called" or "a called one." This emphasizes that the prophets were specifically chosen and commissioned by God for their role.
4. In Amos 7:14-15, Amos states he was not a professional prophet but a herdsman and dresser of sycamore figs. However, God intervened in his life and specifically called him to prophesy to Israel, demonstrating a direct calling from God.
5. The phrase "Thus says Yahweh" is repeated more than 350 times in the prophetic books, emphasizing that the prophet's message is not their own opinion but a direct communication from God. It highlights the divine authority behind their words.
6. According to Jeremiah, the difference between a true prophet and a false prophet is that false prophets speak from their own visions and imaginations, while true prophets receive and communicate a message directly given to them by God. True prophets have stood in the council of the Lord.
7. The two prevailing ideas about God in the Old Testament are that God is a King, and that God implements his kingdom through a series of covenants. The covenants are God's way of implementing his kingship and working out his redemptive plan.
8. In the Abrahamic covenant, God promised Abraham that he would have numerous descendants and become a great nation, that he would be given a land (the Promised Land) for his descendants, and that he would be a blessing to all peoples.
9. The key passage in the Old Testament for understanding the New Covenant is Jeremiah 31:31-34. This passage outlines God's promise to forgive sins and to write his law on the hearts of his people, enabling them to obey him.
10. The two key elements of a prophetic judgment speech are an accusation against the people, detailing their sins and violations of the covenant, and an announcement of the judgment that will come upon them as a consequence of their disobedience.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of understanding the Old Testament covenants for interpreting the messages of the Old Testament prophets. How do the covenants provide a framework for understanding the prophets' calls for repentance and their pronouncements of judgment and restoration?
2. Explain the role of the prophet as a "spokesman for God." How did the prophets receive their messages, and what authority did they have in communicating God's word to the people of Israel and Judah?
3. Describe the transition in the role of the prophet from the early figures like Samuel, Nathan, and Elijah to the classical writing prophets of the eighth century and beyond. What factors contributed to this transition, and how did it impact the message and ministry of the prophets?
4. Explain the concept of the New Covenant as it is presented in the Old Testament prophets. What are the key promises of the New Covenant, and how do they offer hope for the future restoration of Israel?
5. Analyze the four key points of the covenantal message of the prophets, as summarized by DuVal and Hayes, using specific examples from the Old Testament.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Prophet (Nabi):** A person called by God to deliver a specific message or mission to individuals or nations; a spokesman for God.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or treaty between two parties, often involving promises and obligations; in the Old Testament, covenants are God's way of implementing his kingship.
- **Noahic Covenant:** God's covenant with Noah after the flood, promising never again to destroy the earth by water, with obligations placed on humanity to restrain violence.
- **Abrahamic Covenant:** God's covenant with Abraham, promising descendants, land, and blessing to all nations through him, with the obligation of circumcision and walking blamelessly before God.
- **Mosaic (Sinaitic) Covenant:** God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, establishing them as a holy nation and kingdom of priests, with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience to the Law.
- **Davidic Covenant:** God's covenant with David, promising an everlasting kingdom and dynasty through his lineage, fulfilled ultimately in Jesus Christ.
- **New Covenant:** God's promise, primarily through Jeremiah, to forgive sins and write the law on the hearts of his people, enabling them to obey him through the power of the Spirit.
- **Thus says Yahweh:** A phrase used by the prophets to emphasize that their message comes directly from God, not from their own opinions or ideas.
- **Repentance (Shub):** Turning away from sin and back to God; a call to change one's ways and return to covenant faithfulness.
- **Prophetic Judgment Speech:** A common speech form in the prophets consisting of an accusation of sin and an announcement of impending judgment.
- **Exile:** The state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political reasons or as a punishment.
- **Restoration:** The act of returning something to a former owner, place, or condition.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 1, Ministry and Message of the Prophets, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About the Old Testament Prophets

Here are some frequently asked questions about the Old Testament prophets, based on Dr. Gary Yates' lecture:

1. Why is studying the Old Testament prophets important for Christians?

Understanding the Old Testament prophets is crucial for Christians because they provide context for understanding Jesus. Jesus himself used the Old Testament to explain his mission and necessity of his suffering, death, and resurrection (Luke 24). The Old Testament, particularly the prophets, sets the stage for understanding Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises and the culmination of the prophetic role (Hebrews 1). Jesus' ministry mirrored that of a prophet, warning of judgment and calling for repentance.

2. How were the prophets called to their ministry?

The prophets were specifically called by God to deliver his message. The Hebrew word *nabi* suggests they were "called ones". This calling wasn't simply a personal desire but a direct and often visible or audible communication from God. Examples include Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6, Jeremiah's calling in Jeremiah 1, Ezekiel's encounter with God in Ezekiel 1, and Amos's experience as described in Amos 7:14-15. This calling was not optional, but an obligation. Even Jonah's attempt to flee God's calling highlights the compelling nature of this divine summons.

3. What does it mean to say the prophets were "spokesmen for God"?

The prophets did not simply offer their own opinions; their messages came directly from God. This is emphasized by the frequent phrase "Thus says Yahweh," appearing over 350 times in the prophetic books. 2 Peter 1:21 affirms that the prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, indicating divine inspiration. Jeremiah 23 contrasts true prophets, who communicate God's message, with false prophets, who speak from their own imaginations. The prophets saw themselves as having "stood in the counsel of God" (1 Kings 22), privy to God's plans and announcements, which they then relayed to the people.

4. How were the prophets like Moses?

Deuteronomy 18:15 speaks of God raising up a prophet like Moses, suggesting a continuous role of prophetic leadership. The prophets, like Moses, served as intermediaries between God and the people. They communicated God's message, similar to how Moses delivered the law and led the people. Samuel represents the establishment of the prophetic office alongside the monarchy, ensuring that even kings were accountable to God's word.

5. How did the ministry of the prophets shift over time?

Initially, prophets like Samuel, Nathan, and Gad primarily ministered to the kings, anointing them and holding them accountable. With Elijah and Elisha, the focus expanded to include the people due to widespread apostasy. By the time of the writing prophets (Amos onward), their message was directed toward both leaders and the nation at large, warning of impending crises and calling for repentance.

6. How were the prophets "messengers of the covenant," and what covenants are most relevant?

The prophets' message was deeply rooted in God's covenants with humanity and Israel. Key covenants include:

- **The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 6-9):** Establishes the continuation of the earth and obligates humanity to restrain violence.
- **The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22):** Promises Abraham descendants, land, and that he would be a blessing to all nations, obligating Abraham to walk before God and be blameless.
- **The Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant (Exodus 19):** Established Israel as a holy nation and kingdom of priests, conditional on their obedience to God's laws, with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- **The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7):** Promises an eternal dynasty through David's line, fulfilled ultimately in Jesus Christ, with individual kings blessed or punished based on their adherence to God's commands.

7. What are the main elements of the prophets' covenantal message?

Scott DuVal and J. Daniel Hayes summarize the prophetic covenantal message in four parts:

- **Accusation:** The prophets declared that the people had sinned and broken the covenant, often pointing to violations of the Mosaic Law.
- **Repentance:** The prophets called the people to repent (*shub*) and turn away from their sins, offering an opportunity to avert judgment (Joel 2:12-14).
- **Judgment:** If the people failed to repent, the prophets warned of impending judgment as a consequence of their covenant unfaithfulness.
- **Restoration:** Even after judgment, the prophets promised eventual restoration, reflecting God's enduring commitment to his covenant promises and his people.

8. What is the promise of the "New Covenant" that the prophets foretold?

The prophets, particularly Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34), spoke of a New Covenant that God would establish with Israel. This covenant would involve two key promises: forgiveness of past sins and the enablement for future obedience through the transformation of the people's hearts (written law on hearts), resulting in a desire to follow God's commands. Other prophets like Joel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah expand on this idea by describing the outpouring of God's Spirit, which will empower God's people to obey Him and follow Him, ultimately reversing the failures of the Old Testament.