

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 5, Amos – Assyrian Crisis 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 5, Amos – Assyrian Crisis, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' lecture focuses on the prophet Amos and the historical context of his ministry, specifically the looming Assyrian crisis. The lecture explores why Amos is studied first among the Minor Prophets, emphasizing his role as a prototype. **It details Israel's history with Assyria, highlighting both conflict and periods of reprieve, particularly during Jeroboam II's reign.** The lecture emphasizes that Israel's prosperity during this time did not lead to repentance. **Yates connects Amos's calling as a shepherd from Judah to the seriousness of his message to the Northern Kingdom.** He also notes the earthquake that followed Amos's ministry as further authentication of God's impending judgment.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 5 – 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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on05.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 5, Amos – Assyrian Crisis

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

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on Amos and the Assyrian Crisis

Executive Summary:

This lecture provides a historical and theological overview of the prophet Amos and the Assyrian crisis that serves as the backdrop for his ministry. Dr. Yates emphasizes that Amos was the first of the writing prophets to minister to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, calling the people to repentance in the face of the looming threat of Assyrian expansion. The lecture highlights the significance of the Assyrian crisis, the unfaithfulness of Israel despite God's mercy, and God's sovereignty in using even pagan nations to accomplish his purposes. Amos's unique calling and the earthquake that followed his ministry served as warnings of impending judgment.

Key Themes and Ideas:

- **Chronological Placement of Amos:** Amos is presented as the *first* of the writing prophets ministering to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. "Chronologically, the first of these prophets to minister in the northern kingdom of Israel was the prophet Amos."
- **The Assyrian Crisis as a Catalyst:** The rise of the Assyrian Empire in the 8th century BC is the central historical context for Amos's message. "God raised up the classical prophets in the eighth century because there was a national crisis that was facing Israel... The thing that's looming on the horizon as Amos carries out his ministry is that the nation of Assyria is becoming a powerful empire."
- **Israel's History with Assyria:** The lecture highlights previous interactions between Israel and Assyria, including the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BC where King Ahab helped a coalition withstand the Assyrians, and Jehu's subsequent tribute to Shalmaneser in 841 BC. These events foreshadowed the coming Assyrian dominance due to Israel's "wickedness and the apostasy and the sin and the rebellion."

- God's Mercy and Israel's Unfaithfulness:** Despite past disobedience, God showed mercy to Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, allowing them to expand their borders and experience prosperity. "During the time of Jeroboam the second, second Kings chapter 14, verse 26 is going to say this, and notice the emphasis and notice the statement that's made here about the grace and the mercy of God. It says there, the Lord saw the affliction of Israel and saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter." However, this prosperity did not lead to repentance but to complacency and turning away from God. "Instead of producing gratitude, what it caused the people of Israel to do was to put God on the back burner of their lives, to forget him, to put their trust in their kings and in their human leaders instead of the Lord."
- The Role of the Prophet:** The prophets were raised up during this time of national crisis to call the people to repentance. "They are preaching not just to the kings... They are preaching to the people and they're calling them to repentance before this terrible national crisis comes."
- God's Sovereignty Over Nations:** Yates stresses that God uses even pagan nations like Assyria (and later Babylon and Persia) to accomplish his purposes, even if those nations are acting out of their own imperialistic ambitions. "God is going to raise up the Assyrian kings with their imperialistic designs and desires because God is ultimately going to use this nation. God is going to use these people to punish Israel and to punish Judah for their covenant unfaithfulness." God's sovereignty extends to the present day, impacting international events and national crises.
- Assyrian Brutality:** The lecture highlights the violence and brutality of the Assyrian empire, emphasizing that they were "built upon violence, bloodshed, and intimidation." Yates cites examples from Assyrian inscriptions and art depicting the horrific treatment of conquered peoples, including flaying, dismemberment, and impalement. This underscores the severity of the judgment God was using Assyria to bring upon Israel and Judah.
- Amos's Unique Calling:** Amos was not a professional prophet but a shepherd and dresser of sycamore figs from the Southern Kingdom. His call to preach in the Northern Kingdom underscores the seriousness of the message. "The urgency of this message is that the Lord just picks him up and moves him." The use of the word "noqed" suggests that Amos was a landowner with extensive land holdings, further emphasizing the sacrifice he made to answer God's call.

- **Amos's Message and the Earthquake:** Amos preached a message of impending judgment, which was authenticated by an earthquake two years later. "Two years later, there was an earthquake that was experienced in Israel and Judah... It was another shot across the bow by God on the people of Israel to remind them that judgment was coming." Archaeological evidence confirms the earthquake.
- **Sowing and Reaping:** Israel's long history of disobedience led to the consequences of the Assyrian invasion. "They have sown hundreds of years of disobedience and unfaithfulness to God. They are going to reap the consequences of that sin."

Key Quotes:

- "Chronologically, the first of these prophets to minister in the northern kingdom of Israel was the prophet Amos."
- "God raised up the classical prophets in the eighth century because there was a national crisis that was facing Israel."
- "The Lord saw the affliction of Israel and saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter."
- "Instead of producing gratitude, what it caused the people of Israel to do was to put God on the back burner of their lives, to forget him, to put their trust in their kings and in their human leaders instead of the Lord."
- "God is going to raise up the Assyrian kings with their imperialistic designs and desires because God is ultimately going to use this nation."
- "The urgency of this message is that the Lord just picks him up and moves him."
- "Two years later, there was an earthquake that was experienced in Israel and Judah... It was another shot across the bow by God on the people of Israel to remind them that judgment was coming."

Implications:

- The lecture provides a foundational understanding of the historical and theological context for interpreting the Book of Amos.
- It highlights the dangers of complacency and forgetting God in times of prosperity.

- It underscores the importance of heeding prophetic warnings and responding to God's call to repentance.
- It reinforces the concept of God's sovereignty over all nations and events, even in the face of wickedness and suffering.
- It shows the seriousness of sin and its consequences, as seen in the judgment brought upon Israel and Judah.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 5, Amos – Assyrian Crisis

Amos: The Assyrian Crisis as Its Background - A Study Guide

I. Review of Key Concepts

This section provides a framework for understanding the context of Amos's ministry and the major themes discussed in the lecture.

A. Historical Context

- **The Book of the Twelve:** Understand its literary unity and chronological arrangement, focusing on the shift from the Assyrian to Babylonian to Post-Exilic periods.
- **The Assyrian Crisis:** Comprehend the rise of Assyria as a dominant empire and its impact on Israel and Judah in the 8th century BC.
- **Pre-8th Century Israel and Assyria:** Review the interactions between Israel and Assyria in the 9th century BC, including the Battle of Qarqar and Jehu's tribute to Shalmaneser.
- **The Reign of Jeroboam II:** Understand the period of prosperity and territorial expansion in Israel under Jeroboam II and God's reasons for blessing them.
- **Uzziah's Reign in Judah:** How did his reign affect the spiritual health of Judah?
- **Tiglath-Pileser III:** Recognize his significance as the founder of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and his impact on the region.

B. Theological Themes

- **The Role of the Prophet:** Understand the prophet's role as a messenger of God, especially during national crises.
- **Covenant Curses and Blessings:** Remember God's covenant with Israel, specifically the curses outlined in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26.
- **Divine Sovereignty:** Recognize God's control over nations and empires, even those that are wicked. Understand how God uses these nations to accomplish his purposes.
- **Judgment and Repentance:** Identify the importance of repentance in the face of impending judgment and the consequences of unfaithfulness.

- **Grace and Mercy:** Explore the balance between God's justice and his mercy towards his people.
- **The Seriousness of Sin:** Be able to discuss the reasons for God's judgement of Israel and Judah, and what sin brought about His judgement.
- **Authenticity of Prophetic Warnings:** Discuss the events that demonstrate that prophetic warnings were true, i.e. the earthquake.

C. The Prophet Amos

- **Amos's Background:** Know the details of Amos's origins in Tekoa (Judah) and his occupation as a herdsman and dresser of sycamore figs.
- **Amos's Calling:** Understand the significance of God calling Amos, a non-professional prophet, to preach in the Northern Kingdom.
- **Amos's Message:** Identify the central themes of Amos's message, particularly the impending judgment on Israel.
- **Timing of Amos's Ministry:** Identify the time frame for Amos's preaching (760-750 BC) and that he came before the Assyrian invasion.
- **Opposition to Amos:** Know the conflict between Amos and the priest, Amaziah.

II. Short-Answer Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why is Amos considered a "prototypical prophet," and why is his book a good starting point for studying the Minor Prophets?
2. What was the significance of the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BC, and why is it not mentioned in the Book of Kings?
3. Explain how God showed mercy and grace to Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, despite the king's ungodliness.
4. Describe the role of Tiglath-Pileser III in the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its impact on Israel and Judah.
5. How does Isaiah 10:5 illustrate the concept of God using a pagan nation (Assyria) to accomplish his purposes?
6. What is the significance of Jeremiah calling Nebuchadnezzar "my servant" in Jeremiah 27, and how does this relate to God's sovereignty?

7. Describe the violence and intimidation tactics used by the Assyrians, as revealed in their inscriptions and art.
8. Explain how the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722-721 BC demonstrates the consequences of Israel's disobedience.
9. What were Amos's main complaints against Israel?
10. How did God authenticate Amos's warnings of judgment, and how did this event serve as a reminder to the people?

III. Answer Key to Short-Answer Quiz

1. Amos is considered a "prototypical prophet" because his ministry exemplifies the role of a prophet calling Israel to repentance during a national crisis. Studying his book provides a foundational understanding of the messages and purposes of the prophets.
2. The Battle of Qarqar in 853 BC was significant because King Ahab helped a coalition of kings withstand the Assyrians, preventing further aggression toward Israel. The Book of Kings doesn't mention it because the author focused more on Ahab's wickedness and theological failures.
3. During the reign of Jeroboam II, God showed mercy by restoring Israel's borders and giving them a reprieve from Assyrian domination, even though Jeroboam II was an evil king who continued in the sins of Jeroboam I. This mercy was an act of grace, not a reward for righteousness.
4. Tiglath-Pileser III was the founder of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and his rise marked a resurgence of Assyrian power and expansion. His campaigns in Syria-Palestine brought Israel and Judah under Assyrian authority.
5. Isaiah 10:5 illustrates God's sovereignty by declaring Assyria as "the rod of my anger," meaning God used the Assyrian army as his instrument to punish Israel for their sins, even though the Assyrians had their own imperialistic motives. This emphasizes that God is in control even over pagan nations.
6. Jeremiah's statement that Nebuchadnezzar is "my servant" signifies that God was using the Babylonian king to carry out his purposes, even though Nebuchadnezzar was unaware of it. This demonstrates God's sovereignty over all nations and his ability to use even wicked rulers to accomplish his will.

7. The Assyrians used violence, bloodshed, and intimidation tactics, such as displaying severed heads, dismembering bodies, and torturing prisoners, to instill fear and subjugate smaller nations like Israel and Judah, as evidenced by their inscriptions and art.
8. The fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722-721 BC demonstrates the consequences of Israel's disobedience to God's covenant. The kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians, and the ten northern tribes were taken into captivity, marking a significant punishment for their unfaithfulness.
9. Amos's main complaints against Israel included social injustice, religious hypocrisy, and moral decay. He condemned their oppression of the poor, empty rituals, and lack of genuine devotion to God.
10. God authenticated Amos's warnings of judgment by sending an earthquake two years after Amos preached his message. This earthquake served as a reminder and a wake-up call to the people, confirming that God was serious about the impending judgment.

IV. Essay Questions

Consider these essay questions to further explore your understanding of the material.

1. Discuss the ways that Israel failed to properly respond to God's blessings and prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II. How did this failure contribute to the Assyrian crisis?
2. Analyze the theological implications of God using pagan nations like Assyria and Babylon to punish Israel and Judah. What does this reveal about God's character and his relationship with the world?
3. Compare and contrast the roles of the prophet during times of national prosperity versus times of national crisis. How did the messages of the prophets reflect the specific circumstances of their ministry?
4. Examine the significance of Amos's background and calling as a non-professional prophet from the Southern Kingdom preaching in the Northern Kingdom. How did his unique circumstances impact his message and its reception?
5. Evaluate the lasting relevance of Amos's message for contemporary audiences. What lessons can be learned from Israel's failures and the consequences they faced?

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets):** A collection of twelve prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible, viewed as a single literary unit.
- **Assyrian Crisis:** The period in the 8th century BC when the Assyrian Empire rose to power and threatened the existence of Israel and Judah.
- **Neo-Assyrian Empire:** The resurgence of Assyrian power in the 8th century BC under Tiglath-Pileser III, characterized by military expansion and administrative skill.
- **Covenant Curses:** The negative consequences outlined in the Mosaic covenant (e.g., Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26) for disobedience to God's laws.
- **Divine Sovereignty:** God's ultimate authority and control over all things, including nations, empires, and human rulers.
- **Repentance:** Turning away from sin and returning to God with a sincere change of heart.
- **The Rod of My Anger:** A term used by Isaiah to describe Assyria as God's instrument of punishment against Israel.
- **Vassal:** A state or kingdom that is subordinate to a more powerful empire and pays tribute to it.
- **Tekoa:** The hometown of the prophet Amos, located in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- **Herdsmen:** The occupation of Amos before he was called to be a prophet. The term also implies a significant owner of livestock.
- **Dresser of Sycamore Figs:** Another occupation of Amos before becoming a prophet, involving the cultivation of sycamore trees.
- **Amaziah:** A priest in the Northern Kingdom who opposed Amos's preaching and tried to expel him from the land.
- **Authentication:** Proof that something is genuine or true. In this context, refers to the way God proves the validity of the prophet's message.
- **Sennacherib:** Assyrian King who reigned from 705 to 681 BC.
- **Tiglath-Pileser III:** Assyrian King who reigned from 745 to 727 BC.

- **Jeroboam II:** King of Israel who reigned from 786 to 746 BC.
- **Uzziah:** King of Judah who reigned from 792 to 740 BC.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 5, Amos – Assyrian Crisis, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Amos and the Assyrian Crisis: An FAQ

- **Why does the study of the Minor Prophets begin with the Book of Amos?**
- Chronologically, Amos is the first of the writing prophets to minister to the northern kingdom of Israel. Studying Amos provides a good foundation for understanding the broader context of the Assyrian crisis and the role of the prophets during this period. Amos serves as a "prototypical prophet," embodying the key themes and messages relevant to the other Minor Prophets who addressed the Assyrian threat.
- **What was the Assyrian crisis and why was it a critical time in Israel's history?**
- The Assyrian crisis refers to the rise of the Assyrian Empire in the 8th century BC and its expansionist ambitions towards Syria-Palestine, including Israel and Judah. This period was critical because it threatened Israel's national security and sovereignty, ultimately leading to the downfall of the northern kingdom and subjugation of the southern kingdom. The Assyrian crisis also served as a backdrop for God's judgment on Israel's covenant unfaithfulness.
- **What role did the prophets, like Amos, play during the Assyrian crisis?**
- The prophets served as messengers of God, warning the people of Israel about the impending judgment due to their disobedience and covenant unfaithfulness. They called the people to repentance and reminded them of their dependence on God. The prophets also provided a theological understanding of the Assyrian crisis, explaining that God was using the Assyrian Empire as an instrument of judgment.
- **How did Israel's past relationship with Assyria impact the events of the 8th century BC?**
- Israel had prior interactions with Assyria in the 9th century BC, including conflicts and periods of tribute payment. While King Ahab had once helped withstand the Assyrians, later kings like Jehu were forced to submit. These early interactions foreshadowed the growing power of Assyria and the consequences of Israel's continued apostasy, ultimately leading to Assyrian domination in the 8th century.

- **How did Israel's prosperity under Jeroboam II relate to the message of Amos?**
- During the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity and territorial expansion. However, this prosperity did not lead the people to repentance or gratitude towards God. Instead, they became complacent and turned away from Him. Amos's message of impending judgment was particularly challenging because it contradicted the prevailing sense of security and blessing that the people were experiencing.
- **Why was Amos's background and calling significant?**
- Amos was a shepherd and dresser of sycamore figs from the southern kingdom of Judah, not a professional prophet. God called him to preach in the northern kingdom of Israel, a foreign and potentially hostile territory. This demonstrates the urgency and seriousness of the message, as God chose someone outside the traditional prophetic circles to deliver it. Amos's calling from a life of relative wealth also emphasized the importance of heeding God's call above worldly concerns.
- **What was the significance of the earthquake mentioned in Amos 1:1?**
- The earthquake, which occurred two years after Amos began his ministry, served as a sign of God's impending judgment. It was a physical manifestation of the warnings that Amos had been proclaiming, confirming the truth of his message and urging the people to take it seriously. Archaeological evidence confirms the occurrence of this earthquake in the 8th century BC.
- **How does the message of Amos and the Assyrian crisis relate to contemporary issues?**
- The story of Amos and the Assyrian crisis reminds us of God's sovereignty over nations and His use of even wicked powers to accomplish His purposes. It also highlights the consequences of disobedience and the importance of repentance. Furthermore, it serves as a reminder that material prosperity does not guarantee God's favor and that faithfulness to God's calling may require sacrifice and unpopularity. It also serves as a reminder that God is still in control today.