

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 17, Jonah – Message and Structure 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 17, Jonah – Message and Structure, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' lecture explores the book of Jonah, emphasizing its message and structure within the broader context of the Book of the Twelve. The lecture goes beyond the simple Sunday school story, and it uncovers powerful theology. Yates highlights how Jonah illustrates the response to the prophetic word and God's potential to relent from judgment if people repent, as shown in Jeremiah. The lecture examines how Jonah serves as an indictment of Israel's unbelief compared to the Assyrians' repentance. The lecture also addresses the tension between divine justice and mercy, revealing God's inclination towards compassion even for the worst of sinners and discusses God's universal compassion for all nations. Finally, Yates analyzes the book's structure and recurring themes to underscore God's sovereignty and the contrast between Jonah's reaction to his own deliverance and his anger at God's mercy toward Nineveh.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 17 – 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]).**



**Yates_Book12_Sessi
on17.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 17, Jonah – Message and Structure

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Gary Yates's lecture on the Book of Jonah, Session 17:

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on Jonah - Message and Structure

Main Themes & Ideas:

This lecture focuses on the purpose and message of the Book of Jonah within the broader context of the Book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets), emphasizing the interplay between God's justice and mercy, and God's concern for *all* nations, not just Israel. Dr. Yates also delves into the structure of the book, arguing that it's carefully crafted to highlight these themes.

1. Responding to the Prophetic Word & Indictment of Israel:

- **Key Idea:** The Book of Jonah, as part of the Book of the Twelve, serves as a reminder of the importance of responding properly to the prophetic word and, in some ways, functions as an indictment of Israel's failure to do so.
- **Explanation:** Yates connects Jonah to Jeremiah 18:7-10, where God's judgment or blessing is contingent on a people's response to the prophetic word. Jonah exemplifies this principle. While Israel largely failed to heed the prophets' calls to repentance (Hosea, Joel), the Assyrians (Ninevites) *did* respond to Jonah's warning, at least initially.
- **Quote:** "Part of what I think the book of Jonah does as it functions in the book of the Twelve is that it's asking the question, why wasn't there more of this kind of response from the people of Israel?"
- **Significance:** This highlights a key purpose of the Book of the Twelve: to examine Israel's relationship with God's word and to underscore the consequences of disobedience.

2. The Tension Between Divine Justice and Divine Mercy:

- **Key Idea:** Jonah grapples with the tension between God's justice (punishment of the wicked) and God's mercy (compassion and forgiveness).

- **Explanation:** Jonah's reluctance to preach to Nineveh stems from his knowledge of God's merciful nature. He knew God was likely to forgive them, something Jonah struggled with. Yates emphasizes that God's inclination to show mercy is even greater than his disposition to mete out justice.
- **Quote:** "God's inclination to show mercy, even to the worst of the worst, is even greater than his disposition to mete out justice."
- **Significance:** This encourages a nuanced understanding of God's character, acknowledging both justice and mercy as essential attributes, with mercy often taking precedence.

3. God's Redemptive Concern for the Nations:

- **Key Idea:** The Book of Jonah reveals God's compassion and redemptive concern for *all* nations, not just Israel.
- **Explanation:** Yates refutes the notion that the Old Testament lacks a missional focus. He argues that God's plan, from the beginning (Genesis), has always included the blessing of all humanity. He cites examples like Abraham, Joseph, Ruth, and the inclusion of aliens in the Exodus to support this point. He also refers to Isaiah 19:19-25 which says "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance."
- **Quote:** "God has a redemptive concern for the Gentiles, and it was often easy for the people of Israel to forget about that."
- **Significance:** This challenges the perception of the Old Testament as solely focused on Israel and emphasizes the continuity of God's missional heart throughout the entire Bible.

4. The Structure of Jonah and its Significance:

- **Key Idea:** The Book of Jonah is deliberately structured to highlight the contrast between Jonah's response to God's mercy towards himself and his response to God's mercy towards the Ninevites.
- **Explanation:** Yates describes an alternating panel structure:
- Chapters 1 & 3 (Panel A): Jonah interacts with pagan people (sailors, Ninevites).
- Chapters 2 & 4 (Panel B): Jonah interacts with God (prayer, complaint).

- The structure creates a parallel between Jonah's deliverance and the Ninevites' deliverance. Jonah celebrates his own salvation but is angry about theirs.
- **Significance:** The structure serves to emphasize Jonah's hypocrisy and to underscore the message that God's mercy is not exclusive to Israel.

5. God's Universal Sovereignty and Compassion:

- **Key Idea:** The book stresses God's universal sovereignty and compassion.
- **Explanation:** God controls all things. The Hebrew word “manah” which means appoint is repeated in the book referring to the fish, the plant, the worm and the scorching wind. Along with his universal sovereignty, there is universal compassion.
- **Quote:** "In fact, Jonah gives us a confession that the Lord is the creator God. He made the sea and the dry land in chapter 1, verse 9. However, what Israel and what Jonah often did not understand is that there is a corollary to God's universal sovereignty. That idea is that along with his universal sovereignty, there is a universal compassion."
- **Significance:** This explains that the idea that the Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love, a merciful God, relenting from disaster, is not just something that applies to Israel. It also applies to the nations.

6. The Recurrence of Evil and Calamity:

- **Key Idea:** The Hebrew word ra'ah which means evil and calamity is a key recurring theme and motif in the book.
- **Explanation:** The book deals with Ninevites' evil and God's justice and mercy.
- **Quote:** "So, it's important, and it's interesting as you're working your way through the book of Jonah; pay attention to the places where the word ra'ah is going to be used. In Jonah, chapter 1, verse 2, the Ninevites have done great ra'ah. It comes up before God."
- **Significance:** This word usage emphasizes God's relationship with people as they hear the prophetic word.

Overall Message:

The Book of Jonah challenges readers to examine their own hearts and to embrace God's compassion for all people. It is not simply a children's story, but a profound theological reflection on the nature of God, the importance of obedience, and the universality of God's love and mercy. The book of Jonah is a reminder of the importance of the church fulfilling its ministry and mission to take the gospel to the nations.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 17, Jonah – Message and Structure

Jonah: Message and Structure Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Yates, what is the purpose of the book of Jonah beyond just being a story about a fish or God's concern for the Ninevites?
2. How does the book of Jonah serve as an example of the theological principle found in Jeremiah 18:7-10?
3. What is the "surprise element" in the Book of the Twelve regarding repentance, and why is it significant?
4. According to Dr. Yates, what tension does the book of Jonah wrestle with?
5. What does the book of Jonah want people to see about how God deals with the nations?
6. What does Dr. Yates say is the difference between missions in the Old Testament and missions in the New Testament?
7. According to Dr. Yates, what are the four aspects of the eschatological message of the prophets?
8. How does the prophet Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 19:19-25 relate to the message of the book of Jonah?
9. How does Dr. Yates organize the structure of the book of Jonah?
10. What are the three great acts of deliverance and salvation in the book of Jonah?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The book of Jonah reminds us of the power of the prophetic word and raises the issue of how people respond to it. It serves as an indictment of the unbelief of God's own people and the necessity of proper response to the prophetic word. It is a study of God's attributes of justice and mercy.
2. The book of Jonah demonstrates that when a prophet announces a future event (Nineveh's overturning), there is always the possibility that if people respond in

repentance, God will relent and not send judgment. This principle is illustrated by the Ninevites' response to Jonah's message.

3. The surprise is that the Assyrians, enemies of Israel known for their wickedness and violence, respond to Jonah's message and repent. This is significant because it highlights that even Israel's enemies are capable of turning to God and receiving mercy.
4. The book of Jonah wrestles with the tension between divine justice and divine mercy, particularly in the context of God showing mercy to the wicked. It is a demonstration of God's attributes.
5. The book wants people to see that God deals with the nations in the same way He deals with Israel, offering compassion, mercy, and the opportunity for redemption. God's mercy is not exclusive to Israel.
6. Missions in the Old Testament primarily involve the nations coming to Israel to learn about God, whereas missions in the New Testament involve the people of God going out to the nations and proclaiming the message. Old Testament nations came to Israel to say, "we want to know your God".
7. The four aspects are: God will restore Israel, God will bring them back from exile, God will restore the Davidic dynasty with a king who will fulfill the promises to David, and God will rebuild the land, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple. Ultimately, through the blessing of Israel, the nations themselves would share in that.
8. Isaiah's vision depicts a future kingdom where Egypt and Assyria, former enemies of Israel, will worship God alongside Israel, symbolizing God's inclusive missionary concern. This relates to Jonah by demonstrating that God's mercy extends to all nations.
9. The book of Jonah is organized into two halves (chapters 1-2 and 3-4) and an alternating panel structure (A-B-A-B) across the four chapters. Chapters 1 and 3 parallel each other, featuring Jonah interacting with pagans; chapters 2 and 4 parallel each other, featuring Jonah's interactions with God.
10. The three acts of deliverance/salvation are: the sailors on the ship being spared from the storm, Jonah being saved from drowning by being swallowed by a great fish, and the Ninevites being spared from destruction after they repent.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Jonah's reluctance to preach to Nineveh in the context of Israel's understanding of God's covenant and their role as a "kingdom of priests."
2. Analyze the literary structure of the book of Jonah (the parallel structure of chapters 1-2 and 3-4 and the alternating panel structure) and explain how it contributes to the overall message of the book.
3. Explore the tension between divine justice and divine mercy as it is presented in the book of Jonah, and consider how this tension might be understood in the context of other Old Testament texts.
4. Examine the theme of God's universal sovereignty in the book of Jonah, focusing on the use of the word "manah" (to appoint) and its implications for understanding God's relationship with both Israel and the nations.
5. Compare and contrast Jonah's response to his own deliverance with his response to the Ninevites' deliverance, and discuss the implications of this contrast for understanding the book's central message.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Book of the Twelve:** A collection of twelve prophetic books (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) in the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Minor Prophets.
- **Prophetic Word:** The message or revelation communicated by a prophet on behalf of God.
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and a return to God, often accompanied by sorrow, confession, and a change in behavior.
- **Relent:** To abandon or mitigate a harsh intention or punishment; to show mercy or compassion.
- **Theodicy:** The attempt to justify God's justice and goodness in the face of evil and suffering in the world.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word often translated as "steadfast love," "loving-kindness," "mercy," or "grace," referring to God's covenantal faithfulness and unwavering love.

- **Missionary:** Relating to or characteristic of religious missions.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the study of "last things," such as death, judgment, and the end of the world.
- **Sovereignty:** Supreme power or authority; the absolute rule of God over all creation.
- **Ra'ah:** A Hebrew word that can mean both "evil" and "calamity," used in the book of Jonah to describe the wickedness of the Ninevites and the judgment they face.
- **Manah:** A Hebrew word meaning "to appoint," used in the book of Jonah to emphasize God's control over the forces of nature and specific events.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 17, Jonah – Message and Structure, Biblicalearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

FAQ on the Book of Jonah

- **What is the main purpose of the Book of Jonah within the context of the Book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets)?**
- The Book of Jonah serves multiple purposes within the Book of the Twelve. Beyond being a story about a disobedient prophet and God's concern for Nineveh, it highlights the power of the prophetic word and raises the critical issue of how people respond to it. The narrative serves as an indictment of Israel's unbelief, contrasting their lack of repentance with the Ninevites' response to Jonah's message. It also addresses the tension between divine justice and divine mercy and ultimately reveals God's heart and compassion for all nations, not just Israel.
- **How does the Book of Jonah demonstrate the principle of repentance and the potential for God to relent?**
- The Book of Jonah provides a practical example of the theological principle articulated in Jeremiah 18:7-10: When God announces judgment through a prophet, the people have the opportunity to repent, prompting God to relent and withhold judgment. The Ninevites' response to Jonah's prophecy, marked by repentance and turning to God, leads to God's decision to spare them. This contrasts with the general lack of response from the people of Israel to the prophetic messages they received.
- **In what way does the Book of Jonah indict Israel's unbelief?**
- The Book of Jonah serves as an indictment of Israel's unbelief by showcasing the repentance of the Assyrians, the enemies of Israel. Jonah preaches a short, direct message to Nineveh, and the people respond, leading to God's mercy. The lecture asks why such a response was not more common among the people of Israel and Judah, who had many prophets and opportunities to turn back to God. It raises the question of how much mercy and grace God would have shown Israel had they responded positively to the prophetic word.

- **What is the central tension that the Book of Jonah wrestles with, regarding God's character?**
- The Book of Jonah wrestles with the tension between God's justice and God's mercy. Jonah struggles with the idea of God showing mercy to the wicked Ninevites, fearing the implications for Israel. The book ultimately demonstrates that while God will ultimately mete out justice, His inclination to show mercy, even to the worst of sinners, is immense. This is rooted in God's character as described in Exodus 34:6-7, where his mercy extends for a thousand generations while judgment has its limitations.
- **How does the Book of Jonah contribute to the understanding of God's concern for the nations in the Old Testament?**
- The Book of Jonah reminds us of God's redemptive concern for the Gentiles. God deals with the nations in the same way he deals with the people of Israel. God has a redemptive concern for the Gentiles, and it was often easy for the people of Israel to forget about that. Jonah, represents in some ways the people of Israel as a whole. The people of Israel cannot hold God's mercy, God's grace, and God's compassion to themselves. It's not just for them. God has a redemptive concern for the nations. God's covenant with Abraham, the inclusion of foreigners in the Exodus, and prophecies like Isaiah 19, verses 19 to 25, all reinforce the idea of God's missional heart.
- **What is the narrative structure of the Book of Jonah, and how does it contribute to its message?**
- The Book of Jonah is structured in two mirrored halves: chapters 1-2 and 3-4. Within each half, an alternating panel structure (A-B-A-B) is present. Chapters 1 and 3 (A panels) focus on Jonah interacting with pagan groups (sailors and Ninevites), while Chapters 2 and 4 (B panels) involve Jonah's interactions with God through prayer. This structure emphasizes the contrast between Jonah's positive response to God's mercy towards him and his negative reaction to God's mercy towards the Ninevites, highlighting the book's punchline about God's universal compassion.

- **What are the three acts of salvation presented in the Book of Jonah, and what response do they elicit or should elicit?**
- The three acts of salvation are: 1) the saving of the sailors from the storm (eliciting sacrifice and vows), 2) the saving of Jonah from the sea via the great fish (eliciting praise and thanksgiving), and 3) the saving of the Ninevites from destruction (which should have elicited similar praise and thanksgiving but instead elicits anger from Jonah). This highlights the proper response to God's deliverance and underscores Jonah's failure to share God's compassionate heart.
- **What is the significance of the Hebrew word *manah* (to appoint) in the Book of Jonah?**
- The Hebrew word *manah*, meaning "to appoint," is used to demonstrate God's universal sovereignty. It appears four times in the book: when God appoints the great fish, the plant, the worm, and the scorching wind. These instances emphasize God's control over nature and his ability to use it to accomplish his purposes, whether to save Jonah or to teach him a lesson. The speaker highlights that Jonah understood God's role as creator, but that he (and Israel) failed to understand that God's sovereignty is coupled with universal compassion.