

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 22, Micah 6:8, Nahum 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 22, Micah 6:8, Nahum, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' lecture explores the books of Micah and Nahum within the broader context of the Book of the Twelve. He examines Micah 6:8, emphasizing God's call for justice, kindness, and humility, noting Judah's failure to meet these expectations. The lecture then transitions to Nahum, contrasting God's compassion with the impending judgment on Nineveh. Yates addresses the ethical complexities of God using violence through human armies to enact justice. Ultimately, he frames Nahum's message as a reminder of God's justice and the accountability of nations, while also offering hope for the deliverance of God's people. The lecture compares Nahum to Jonah and also lays out the historical context for the messages in Nahum.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 22 – 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 22, Micah 6:8, Nahum

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Gary Yates's lecture on Micah 6:8 and the book of Nahum.

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on Micah 6:8 and Nahum

Overview:

This lecture, part of a series on the Book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets), focuses on Micah 6:8 and the book of Nahum. Dr. Yates highlights the prophet Micah's call for justice, kindness, and humility as fundamental to a covenant relationship with God and then contrasts this with the book of Nahum which delivers a message of God's judgment upon the Ninevites for their violence and wickedness. The lecture addresses ethical complexities surrounding God's use of violence and emphasizes that God's justice ultimately leads to the deliverance and salvation of His people.

I. Micah 6:8: Justice, Kindness, and Humility

- **Context:** Micah, writing during the Assyrian crisis, emphasizes that true faithfulness involves more than ritualistic observance.
- **Core Message:** Micah 6:8 ("He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?") encapsulates the prophet's central concern: God requires a lifestyle of justice, kindness (Hesed - covenant faithfulness), and humility.
- **Covenant Lawsuit:** Dr. Yates frames Micah 6:1-8 as a "covenant lawsuit" where God reminds Israel of His faithfulness and their failure to uphold their covenant responsibilities. The mountains and the earth are presented as witnesses to this covenant. "The Lord is going to say, arise and plead your wreath, your lawsuit, your case before the mountains. Let the hills hear your voice. Hear the mountains, the indictment of the Lord, the enduring foundations of the earth."
- **Rejection of Empty Rituals:** Micah critiques the idea that fulfilling cultic responsibilities alone satisfies God. He uses a rhetorical series of increasingly valuable sacrifices (burnt offerings, rams, oil, even firstborn children) to demonstrate that these are inadequate without justice, kindness, and humility. "Should I come before the Lord with burnt offerings...will the Lord be pleased

with thousands of rams or with 10,000 rivers of oil?...shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?"

- **Practical Application:** Dr. Yates encourages Christians to apply Micah's message by actively caring for the needs of others in their communities and beyond. He stresses that this can be done without engaging in partisan politics, but rather by being informed by Biblical ethics and the Old Testament. "Will we, as rich and wealthy and affluent Christians in the suburbs, care about the people, not just in other parts of the world, but for the people that live in the inner city and do not have the resources that we have?"
- **Distinctiveness of Mosaic Law:** Dr. Yates references David Baker's book, "Tight Fist or Open Hands," to highlight the unique concern for the poor and vulnerable within the Old Testament law compared to other ancient Near Eastern law codes. Yates highlights that "the penalties for infringing property rights in the Bible are much more humane than elsewhere, and they never involve mutilation, beating, or death, which is what you see in these other law codes."

II. The Book of Nahum: God's Judgment on Nineveh

- **Counterpart to Jonah:** Nahum is presented as the prophetic counterpart to Jonah. While Jonah preached repentance and Nineveh was spared, Nahum prophesies the city's destruction 150 years later due to their return to wickedness.
- **Ethical Challenges:** Dr. Yates acknowledges the ethical dilemmas posed by the violence depicted in Nahum. Some commentators consider it a "disgrace." However, Yates urges faithful readers to see it as a troubling message that God sometimes uses human violence to execute justice in a fallen world. He stresses that we can trust in God to ultimately do this in a way that is good, fair and just.
- **Not Nationalistic Rage:** The book isn't simply an expression of hatred but offers hope that a holy God will make things right. "It ultimately gives us the hope that a holy God will make things right and ultimately bring about the deliverance of his people."
- **Addressing Violence and Injustice:** A key argument is that a God who *never* addresses violence and injustice would be a "moral monster." The severity of Nahum's judgment reflects the severity of Nineveh's crimes.

- **God's Sovereignty:** God uses nations (like Assyria and Babylon) to accomplish His purposes, but He remains separate from their evil. "Even though God uses these nations, he remains separate from the evil that they commit."
- **Connection to Exodus 34:** Both Jonah and Nahum allude to the confession about God in Exodus 34:6-7. Jonah emphasizes God's compassion and slowness to anger, while Nahum highlights that God "will by no means clear the guilty." This connection links God's mercy and judgment. "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and that's why God has spared the Ninevites...But the Lord will by no means clear the guilty."
- **Reasons for Judgment:** Dr. Yates, referencing Julie Woods, outlines Nineveh's sins: plotting against God, idolatry, vile violence (bloodshed), enslavement, presumption, arrogance, and unceasing cruelty. "In chapter 1, verses 9 and 11, they are guilty of plotting against God...In chapter 3, verse 1, they are a bloody city." Their violence also violated the Noahic covenant.
- **Underlying Cause: Pride:** The lecture connects the judgment to the overarching theme of human pride and rebellion against God, tracing it back to Genesis 1-11 (e.g., Tower of Babel). The Assyrians are presented as the epitome of this arrogance. "The Assyrians are the epitome of that type of arrogance and pride."
- **Historical Context:** Nahum's prophecies are situated between the fall of Thebes (663 BC) and the fall of Nineveh (612 BC), likely around 620 BC. The lecture outlines Assyria's interactions with Israel and Judah, including the fall of the Northern Kingdom and Hezekiah's rebellion. It explains how Josiah saw the decline of Assyria as an opportunity and discusses the rise of Babylon under Nabopolassar.
- **Fulfillment of Prophecy:** Archaeological evidence confirms the destruction of Nineveh as prophesied by Nahum. "Archeology and history confirm for us that the prophecy that Nahum makes here about the destruction of Nineveh was carried out."
- **Seven Oracles:** The book of Nahum is divided into seven speeches or oracles, each depicting God's judgment on Assyria. These oracles use vivid imagery, comparing Nineveh to a fallen lion, a prostitute, and a city overwhelmed by floodwaters.

- **Metaphorical Language:** The lecture emphasizes the rich metaphorical language used to describe the destruction, with images of fire, locusts, and drunk warriors. "The walls and the fortresses, the city of Nineveh itself in verse 12 has become like fig trees. Their fruit is ripe for the picking and they will be shaken and they will fall into the mouth simply and easily of the Babylonians when they shake the tree."
- **Warning and Hope:** While the book highlights God's judgment, it also offers a message of hope and deliverance for God's people. God's ultimate goal is to save and deliver them.

III. Key Takeaways

- The lecture stresses the importance of balancing the concepts of God's love and justice.
- Nahum's prophecy is not simply a historical event but a reminder of God's ultimate judgment on all enemies of righteousness.
- Even in the face of violence and destruction, God's promise of salvation and deliverance remains a source of hope.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 22, Micah 6:8, Nahum

Micah and Nahum: A Study Guide

I. Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the source material.

1. What three things does the Lord require, according to Micah 6:8?
2. What is a covenant lawsuit, as described in the lecture?
3. According to Dr. Yates, how can modern Christians live out Micah 6:8?
4. According to David Baker, what is a distinctive perspective in the Old Testament law?
5. What does the book of Nahum predict will happen to Nineveh?
6. What is the ethical dilemma many commentators have with the book of Nahum?
7. How does Dr. Yates say we should understand the fact that God used human armies?
8. What is a comparison between the book of Jonah and the book of Nahum?
9. According to the lecture, what are some of the sins for which Nineveh was judged?
10. According to the lecture, what was the underlying cause of all the sins of the Assyrians?

II. Quiz Answer Key

1. According to Micah 6:8, the Lord requires us to do justice, love kindness (or mercy), and walk humbly with our God. These three actions reflect covenant faithfulness and a proper relationship with both God and other people.
2. A covenant lawsuit is a literary device used by the prophets, where God brings the people of Israel into a metaphorical courtroom. The prophet acts as the prosecuting attorney, and the mountains, heavens, and earth serve as witnesses to God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness.

3. Modern Christians can live out Micah 6:8 by treating people in the right way and meeting the needs of those around them. This can be done in everyday life through simple acts of kindness, justice, and service to others.
4. According to David Baker, a distinctive perspective in the Old Testament law is the emphasis on concern for the poor, widows, and orphans. This includes provisions for their welfare and protection against exploitation, reflecting a unique ethos of social justice.
5. The book of Nahum predicts the complete destruction of Nineveh due to its violence, idolatry, and plotting against God. The destruction is portrayed as a just punishment for the city's wickedness and a sign of God's power.
6. Many commentators are troubled by the violence depicted in the book of Nahum, specifically God's use of violence to execute judgment. The ethical dilemma involves reconciling this depiction with traditional views of God as compassionate and merciful.
7. We should understand that God is ultimately sovereign and uses these nations to accomplish his purposes, but without participating in their evil. We should trust that God will ultimately make all things right, even when we do not understand his ways.
8. Both Jonah and Nahum allude to the confession about God that is found in Exodus 34 verses 6 and 7. Jonah knows God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, forgiving sins, and relenting from evil. However, Nahum emphasizes that God does not excuse the guilty and ultimately holds them accountable for their sin.
9. Nineveh was judged for plotting against God, idolatry, committing vile violence, shedding blood, enslaving other nations, presumption and arrogance, and unceasing cruelty. These sins represent a complete disregard for God's covenant and the well-being of humanity.
10. The underlying cause of all the sins of the Assyrians was the arrogance and pride of humanity as they shake their fist in God's face. It is the desire to be like God and make up their own rules.

III. Essay Questions

Instructions: Consider the following essay questions and formulate well-supported arguments based on the provided source material.

1. Explore the tension between God's justice and mercy as portrayed in the books of Micah and Nahum. How do these books contribute to a more complex understanding of God's character?
2. Analyze the social justice themes in Micah 6:8 and discuss their relevance to contemporary social issues. How can the principles outlined in this verse be applied to address poverty, inequality, and other forms of injustice?
3. Discuss the significance of the historical context in understanding the message of Nahum. How does understanding the Assyrian empire and its relationship with Israel and Judah help us interpret the book's themes of judgment and divine justice?
4. Compare and contrast the messages of Jonah and Nahum in relation to Nineveh. How do these two books together provide a fuller picture of God's dealings with nations and the consequences of both repentance and continued wickedness?
5. Examine the recurring theme of pride and arrogance in the lecture and its connection to God's judgment of nations. How does this theme relate to the broader narrative of human rebellion against God in the Old Testament?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Assyrian Crisis:** A period in the 8th-7th centuries BCE when the Neo-Assyrian Empire expanded and threatened both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.
- **Babylonian Crisis:** The period in the late 7th and early 6th centuries BCE when the Neo-Babylonian Empire rose to power and eventually conquered Judah, leading to the Babylonian exile.
- **Covenant Lawsuit:** A literary device used by the prophets in which God presents a case against Israel for breaking the covenant, often using legal imagery and witnesses.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word often translated as "loving-kindness," "mercy," or "steadfast love," referring to God's covenantal faithfulness and loving actions toward his people.
- **Neo-Assyrian Empire:** A powerful empire that dominated the ancient Near East from the 9th to 7th centuries BCE, known for its military strength and brutality.
- **Neo-Babylonian Empire:** An empire that rose to power in the late 7th century BCE, succeeding the Assyrians and conquering Judah, leading to the Babylonian exile.
- **Nineveh:** The capital city of the Assyrian Empire, known for its wealth, power, and wickedness, and the target of God's judgment in the book of Nahum.
- **Noahic Covenant:** The covenant God made with Noah after the flood, establishing rules for humanity, including the prohibition of murder and the responsibility to restrain violence.
- **Oracle:** A prophetic message or pronouncement, often delivered in poetic form, conveying God's will or judgment.
- **Ra'ah (Evil):** (Hebrew) The evil committed by Nineveh.
- **Thebes:** An important city in ancient Egypt, captured by the Assyrians in 663 BC, used as a comparison in Nahum to illustrate the vulnerability of even the most secure cities.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 22, Micah 6:8, Nahum, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

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

FAQ

1. What is the central theme of Micah 6:8, and how does it relate to the broader message of the prophets?

Micah 6:8 emphasizes that God requires justice, kindness, and humility from his people. It is a reflection of the emphasis and concern throughout the prophets. This verse encapsulates the ethical demands of the covenant relationship with God, contrasting with the people's misplaced reliance on ritualistic sacrifices alone. The people were not living up to this standard, leading to impending judgment.

2. How does Micah use the concept of a "covenant lawsuit" in his prophecy, and what is its significance?

Micah employs the imagery of a covenant lawsuit, where God brings the people of Israel into a courtroom setting. The mountains and other elements of creation act as witnesses to God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness. This legal framework underscores the broken covenant and justifies God's impending judgment.

3. According to Dr. Yates, what is a proper application of the prophets to contemporary Christian life, particularly concerning social justice?

Dr. Yates suggests that the prophets call Christians to care for the needs of those around them. While it's not necessarily about advocating for specific political policies, it is about living a lifestyle of justice by treating people fairly and meeting the needs of those in their communities and beyond, embodying the ethos of the Old Testament.

4. In what ways did Old Testament law uniquely prioritize the welfare of the poor and vulnerable, compared to other ancient Near Eastern legal codes?

Old Testament law, according to David Baker, featured more humane penalties for property crimes, did not discriminate based on the status of the perpetrator or victim, equitably allocated ancestral land, provided protections for slaves (including asylum for fugitive slaves and mandated rest), and included provisions for interest-free loans. Additionally, it emphasized the protection of widows and orphans and implemented agricultural practices like gleaning to ensure the poor had access to food. These elements distinguish it from other contemporary law codes.

5. How does the book of Nahum present a different perspective on God compared to the book of Jonah, and why is this contrast important?

While Jonah portrays God as merciful and willing to forgive Nineveh upon their repentance, Nahum depicts God as a warrior executing judgment on Nineveh for their continued wickedness. This contrast highlights the balance between God's compassion and his justice. It shows that while God offers opportunities for repentance, unrepentant evil will ultimately face divine retribution.

6. What is the significance of Exodus 34:6-7 in both the books of Jonah and Nahum, and how does each book utilize this passage?

Exodus 34:6-7 describes God as both compassionate and just, slow to anger but also one who does not excuse the guilty. Jonah references this passage to explain his reluctance to preach repentance to Nineveh, knowing God's merciful nature. Nahum uses the same passage to underscore that, despite God's patience and slow anger, He will ultimately punish the unrepentant Ninevites for their sins, emphasizing the justice aspect of God's character.

7. What sins of Nineveh are specifically mentioned as reasons for God's judgment in the book of Nahum?

The sins of Nineveh that led to God's judgment include plotting against God, idolatry, vile violence, bloodshed, enslavement of other nations, presumption, arrogance, and unceasing cruelty. These sins represent a comprehensive rejection of God's moral order and a violation of the Noahic covenant's mandate to restrain violence.

8. What is the overarching message of the book of Nahum, and how does it apply beyond the specific historical context of Nineveh's destruction?

The overarching message of Nahum is that God is just and will ultimately hold nations accountable for their wickedness, particularly their violence, pride, and rejection of God's moral order. While focusing on the destruction of Nineveh, the book serves as a warning that all empires and nations that follow a similar path of arrogance and injustice will face divine judgment. It also offers hope to God's people that He will deliver them from oppression.