

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 23, Obadiah

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 23, Obadiah, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' lecture on Obadiah, part of a series on the Book of the 12, explores themes of divine justice and judgment. The lecture uses the books of Nahum and Obadiah to demonstrate how God holds nations accountable for violence and oppression, exemplified by Assyria and Edom. **Yates connects these Old Testament judgments to a broader pattern of God's involvement in history, pointing towards a final judgment of nations and the establishment of God's kingdom.** He cautions against equating any modern nation, including the United States, with Israel and encourages Christians to prioritize their allegiance to Christ over nationalistic ideologies. **The lecture emphasizes that God's judgments throughout history foreshadow a greater, ultimate justice.** God will ultimately defeat evil.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 23 – 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
on23.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 23, Obadiah

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Gary Yates' lecture on Obadiah and its connection to Nahum, focusing on God's judgment and justice:

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on Obadiah and Nahum

Main Themes:

- **God's Justice and Judgment:** The central theme is God's judgment against wicked nations (Assyria in Nahum, Edom in Obadiah) for their violence, pride, and oppression of others, particularly Israel/Judah. This judgment is not presented as glorifying war, but as God's ultimate deliverance from it.
- *"Faithful reading of the canon of Scripture forces us to interact with the parts of the Bible that make us uncomfortable, as well as the passages that we love and enjoy talking about God's goodness and God's love and God's mercy...One of those uncomfortable parts of the canon would certainly be these books in the Book of the 12 that talk about God's violence and God's judgment..."*
- **Reversal of Fortunes:** A key aspect of God's justice is the reversal of fortunes, where the oppressors experience the same fate they inflicted on others.
- *"Because God is ultimately going to turn on their heads the judgment that they have committed or the wicked things that they have done to other nations."*
- **God's Sovereignty:** God is sovereign over all nations and uses even evil nations to accomplish his purposes and justice in a fallen world. He will ultimately deliver his people and establish a kingdom of peace.
- *"God is sovereign over the nation. This violence will not ultimately prevail, and God will deliver his people. He will bring them out of exile, and ultimately, he will establish a kingdom of peace where swords will be beaten into plowshares."*
- **Hope and Salvation:** Even amidst messages of judgment, there's an underlying promise of salvation and deliverance for God's people.
- *"Even if we cannot understand all of the issues and the theodicy and the problems that are raised there, there is also an incredible promise in these books of salvation. God will deliver his people."*

- **The Day of the Lord:** The concept of the "Day of the Lord" is explored, connecting historical judgments with a future, final judgment of all nations.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Nahum and Assyria:** The book of Nahum focuses on God's judgment against Assyria, particularly Nineveh, for their atrocities.
- The book uses irony and reversal to show God's power over Assyria. Assyrian kings presented themselves as storm gods or mighty lions; Nahum portrays God as the ultimate "storm god" who will defeat them and reverses the lion imagery.
- *"The Assyrian kings also often portrayed themselves as mighty lions or as lion hunters...Now, in the book of Nahum, as Assyria becomes the object of God's judgment, that roaring lion is put to death."*
- The judgment against Assyria is a reversal of Isaiah's earlier prophecy where Assyria was depicted as an overwhelming flood against Judah.
- **Obadiah and Edom:** The book of Obadiah focuses on God's judgment against Edom for their pride and their opportunistic involvement in the Babylonian attack on Jerusalem.
- Edomites took advantage of Judah's weakness during the Babylonian invasion, seizing territory and possibly participating in the siege of Jerusalem.
- The Edomites' pride stemmed from their belief that their mountainous terrain made them invulnerable.
- *"The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks...who say in your heart, who will bring me down to the ground?"*
- Obadiah's message is intended to encourage the discouraged exiles in Judah, reminding them that God will ultimately deliver them and judge their enemies.
- There are parallels between Obadiah's message and Jeremiah's oracles against Edom (Jeremiah 49). Psalm 137 and Lamentations 4 also reference Edom's involvement in the Babylonian crisis.
- God's judgment against Edom was twofold: for their pride and for their violence against Judah.
- **Fulfillment of Prophecy (Obadiah):** The prophecy against Edom in Obadiah was fulfilled in two stages: first, with a Babylonian campaign against Edom (around

553 BC), and later with the Nabataean invasion that drove the Edomites from their land.

- Malachi 1:2-5 validates the fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy, contrasting the desolation of Edom with God's continued love for Jacob/Israel.
- *"If Edom says we are shattered, but we will rebuild the ruins, the Lord of hosts says, they may build, but I will tear down. And they will be called the wicked country and the people with whom the Lord is angry forever."*
- **Relevance for Today:** These historical judgments are not just past events but serve as reminders of God's continued involvement in history and the coming final judgment.
- Nations today are held accountable for their actions, particularly violence, oppression, and violations of the Noahic covenant.
- Nahum's description of Nineveh as a "wanton prostitute" who entices and betrays nations is paralleled in Revelation 18's description of the fall of Babylon the Great, highlighting a recurring pattern of God judging wicked empires.
- America should not be equated with Israel but seen as another great power that will be held accountable for its actions.

Quotes of Significance:

- *"The Old Testament does not glorify war. It presents war as the thing that God will ultimately deliver humanity from. So, it's important to keep the message of hope and the positive aspects of God's judgment here in mind."*
- *"As you have done, it shall be done to you, and your deed shall return on your own head."* (Obadiah 1:15) - This encapsulates the theme of reversal of fortunes.
- *"The message that God gives us about Assyria and Edom in the books of Nahum and Obadiah, respectively, are not just historical lessons. They are powerful expressions of God's dealing with the nations and a reminder of the ultimate justice that God is going to bring against all evil, all violence, and all resistance to his kingdom."*

In Summary:

Dr. Yates' lecture emphasizes the enduring relevance of Nahum and Obadiah. These books are not just historical accounts but powerful reminders of God's justice, sovereignty, and ultimate plan for salvation and peace. They serve as warnings to all nations, including contemporary ones, about the consequences of pride, violence, and oppression. They point to a future day of judgment and the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 23, Obadiah

Obadiah and Nahum: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. Why are books like Nahum and Obadiah considered "uncomfortable" parts of the biblical canon?
2. What is the central message of the book of Nahum concerning God's justice?
3. How does Nahum use the imagery of the "storm god" to contrast God with the Assyrian kings?
4. How does Nahum's prophecy reverse Isaiah's earlier pronouncements regarding Assyria?
5. What specific historical event forms the backdrop for the book of Obadiah?
6. Why is it difficult to pinpoint the exact dating of the book of Obadiah?
7. According to the lecture, what two primary reasons does God bring judgment upon the Edomites?
8. How did the Edomites demonstrate a lack of brotherly kindness toward Judah during its crisis?
9. How is the concept of the "day of the Lord" used in the book of Obadiah?
10. According to Malachi, how did the Edomites' fate demonstrate God's love for Israel?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Books like Nahum and Obadiah deal with God's violence and judgment against nations, which can be unsettling and conflict with modern sensibilities that emphasize God's love and mercy. These books challenge us to grapple with the complexities of God's character and his use of judgment in a fallen world.
2. The central message of Nahum is that God will bring justice to the Assyrians for their wickedness and violence against other nations. This justice will be a reversal

of fortunes, where the Assyrians experience the same destruction and suffering they inflicted on others.

3. Nahum contrasts God with the Assyrian kings by depicting God as the ultimate "storm god," surpassing the power and authority the Assyrian kings claimed for themselves or their gods. While Assyrian kings presented themselves as overwhelming storms, Nahum declares that God is the true storm, who will overwhelm and overcome the Assyrians.
4. Nahum's prophecy reverses Isaiah's earlier pronouncements by depicting God as the overwhelming flood against Assyria, whereas Isaiah described the Assyrian army as an overwhelming flood against Judah. This reversal demonstrates God's power to turn the tables and bring judgment upon those who were once instruments of his wrath.
5. The book of Obadiah is set against the backdrop of the Babylonian invasion of Judah and the subsequent exile of the Jewish people. The Edomites took advantage of Judah's weakness during this time, seizing territory and participating in the pillaging of Jerusalem.
6. It's difficult to date Obadiah precisely because conflicts between Israel/Judah and the Edomites occurred throughout their history. Proposed dates range from as early as the ninth century BC to as late as the fourth century BC, with the lack of specific historical details in the book contributing to the uncertainty.
7. God brings judgment upon the Edomites primarily for two reasons: their excessive pride and their mistreatment of Israel during its time of crisis. Their pride stemmed from their belief in the invulnerability of their mountainous land, while their mistreatment involved taking advantage of Judah's vulnerability during the Babylonian invasion.
8. The Edomites demonstrated a lack of brotherly kindness by rejoicing in Judah's misfortune, participating in the pillaging of Jerusalem, and seizing territory for themselves. Instead of offering assistance or compassion, they exploited Judah's weakness for their own gain.
9. In Obadiah, the "day of the Lord" signifies a time of judgment not only for Edom but also for all nations. It represents a time when God will hold all accountable for their actions, and the punishment will fit the crime.

10. According to Malachi, the Edomites' final destruction, contrasted with Israel's hope for restoration, demonstrated God's love for Jacob. God rejected Esau and the Edomites, validating the prophecy given in Obadiah and showing that He kept His promises to His chosen people.

Essay Questions

1. Explore the ethical complexities of reading and interpreting texts that depict divine violence, such as the books of Nahum and Obadiah. How can these texts be reconciled with modern sensibilities and understandings of God's character?
2. Compare and contrast the historical contexts and theological messages of the books of Nahum and Obadiah. What do these books reveal about God's justice and sovereignty over nations?
3. Discuss the significance of the "day of the Lord" in the book of Obadiah, and how it relates to the concept of divine justice and the restoration of Israel.
4. Analyze the use of imagery and rhetoric in the book of Nahum, focusing on how it portrays God's power and judgment against the Assyrians.
5. How can the messages of Nahum and Obadiah be applied to contemporary issues and challenges faced by nations and individuals today?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Canon:** The collection of books recognized as the authoritative scripture of a particular religious community.
- **Theodicy:** The attempt to justify God's justice in the face of evil and suffering in the world.
- **Sovereignty:** God's ultimate authority and control over all things.
- **Assyria:** An ancient Mesopotamian empire known for its military strength and brutality.
- **Nineveh:** The capital city of the Assyrian Empire, known for its wickedness.
- **Edom:** A nation located southeast of Judah, often in conflict with Israel.
- **Babylonian Exile:** The period in Jewish history when many Jews were deported to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- **Nabataeans:** An Arab people who eventually displaced the Edomites in their territory.
- **Day of the Lord:** A prophetic term referring to a time of divine judgment and/or salvation.
- **Chiasm:** A literary structure in which parallel elements are arranged in a crisscross pattern (A-B-C-B'-A').
- **Noahic Covenant:** In Genesis 9, God makes a covenant with Noah after the flood that extends to all humanity. Under the terms of the covenant, God promises never again to destroy all life on Earth by flood. The covenant also includes instructions to humanity.
- **Eschatology:** The study of the end times and the ultimate destiny of humanity and the world.
- **Hermeneutics:** The branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible.
- **Typology:** A way of interpreting the Old Testament by seeing events, persons, and institutions as prefiguring or foreshadowing New Testament realities.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 23, Obadiah, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Book of the 12 FAQ (Nahum & Obadiah)

What is the primary purpose of including books like Nahum and Obadiah, which focus on God's judgment and violence, in the biblical canon?

These books, while uncomfortable for some modern readers, are crucial for a complete understanding of God. Rather than editing out difficult passages, we are meant to engage with them to learn about the mystery of how God uses even evil nations and warfare in a fallen world to accomplish justice. These books remind us to trust in God's holiness and righteousness, even when we don't fully understand His ways, and that God will ultimately deliver his people and establish a kingdom of peace.

How does the book of Nahum portray God's justice in relation to Assyria?

Nahum presents God's justice as a reversal of fortune for the Assyrians. The book uses the very imagery and rhetoric that the Assyrians used to boast of their power (like portraying their kings and gods as overwhelming storms and themselves as roaring lions) and turns it against them. God is presented as the ultimate "storm god" who will overwhelm them and bring about their destruction, echoing and reversing the judgment that Isaiah had announced against Judah at the hands of the Assyrians, ultimately ensuring that violence and wickedness will not prevail.

What was the specific sin of the Edomites that led to God's judgment in the book of Obadiah?

The Edomites were judged primarily for two reasons: their excessive pride and their actions during the Babylonian invasion of Judah. Their pride stemmed from a false sense of security in their mountainous terrain, leading them to believe they were invulnerable. Crucially, they took advantage of Judah's weakness during the Babylonian crisis, actively participating in the pillaging of Jerusalem and seizing territory for themselves, demonstrating a betrayal of their familial connection to Israel as descendants of Esau, violating the vow of peace that Esau made with Jacob.

Why is the book of Obadiah placed where it is in the Book of the 12?

While dating the book can be difficult, Obadiah is likely placed in its particular location for thematic reasons. The end of Amos speaks of restoring the fallen booth of David so that they might possess the remnant of Edom. This provides a link word and a catchword that leads into the message of Obadiah, concerning the fall of the Edomites.

How does the book of Obadiah use the concept of "the day of the Lord"?

Obadiah uses the "day of the Lord" to describe both the immediate judgment that would fall upon Edom for their actions during the Babylonian crisis and a future, final judgment that would encompass all nations. The judgment on Edom serves as a foreshadowing and a reminder of this greater, eschatological judgment. While the events of the Babylonian crisis affected Judah and then Edom, the prophet's vision extends to the ultimate restoration of Israel and the judgment of God's enemies.

Was the prophecy against Edom fulfilled? If so, how?

Yes, the prophecy against Edom was fulfilled in two stages. First, shortly after the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, the Babylonians themselves carried out campaigns against the Edomites. Later, in the post-exilic period, the Nabataeans invaded and drove the Edomites out of their land, replacing them and building the city of Petra. Malachi references this fulfillment, pointing to the destruction of Edom as evidence of God's love for Israel.

What is the lasting theological message of Nahum and Obadiah?

Beyond their historical context, these books confirm God's continued involvement in history and serve as a reminder of the final judgment of all nations. God holds nations accountable for violence, oppression, and injustice, regardless of when they occur. These books establish a pattern of God judging wicked empires and those who perpetrate crimes similar to those committed by Assyria and Edom. This pattern extends into the eschatological future, emphasizing that God's justice will ultimately prevail.

How do the messages in Nahum and Obadiah apply to modern nations, including the United States?

While there are no explicit prophecies about specific modern nations like the United States, the principles in Nahum and Obadiah apply universally. God holds all nations accountable for upholding the Noahic covenant (avoiding violence and bloodshed). The United States, like any nation, is subject to God's judgment if it perpetuates the sins of empires like Assyria or Edom. The lecture emphasizes the need for Christians to prioritize their allegiance to Jesus and the church over national identity, recognizing that any nation is ultimately part of the city of man and will be held accountable for its actions.