

Jonah 1:1-10

Day 1

Israel and the prophets

1. What titles are given to Jonah in:

- Jonah 1:1
- 2 Kings 14:25b

FYI: "Jonah was addressed to the northern kingdom (Israel) during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.), a time of great territorial and commercial expansion."
- Archaeological Study Bible (1468)

King "Jeroboam II (*see 2 Kings 14:23*) reigned in the northern kingdom from 793-753 B.C. That means Jonah would have ministered in the Northern kingdom at least thirty years prior to Assyria's invasion of Israel in 722. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. It's possible that Jonah had heard the message of Assyria's impending invasion from other prophets such as Amos. If so, that may be one reason why he fled. After all, who wants to go share the gospel with one's future conquerors?...

Jeroboam II was one of the strongest military leaders in Israel's history. He expanded Israel's borders and ushered in a period of great peace and prosperity. Peace and prosperity, however, led to pride...Perhaps that's why God sent Jonah to Nineveh - to squelch the national and spiritual smugness prevalent among the Israelites and remind them that they were to show His grace and mercy beyond their borders to all the nations of the world."
- Charles Swindoll (42,43)

2. Read Deuteronomy 18:14-22.

- How did God often communicate His truth to the people? Vs. 15
- Why did the people want God to use prophets? Vs. 16
- How carefully were the people told to follow a prophet's words? Vs. 19
- How carefully was a prophet told to follow God's words? Vs. 20 (See also Ezekiel 13:9)

3. In the following verses, underline the titles given to prophets.

- Haggai 1:13 Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke by the commission of the LORD to the people saying, "I am with you," declares the LORD." NASU
- Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets. NASU
- Jeremiah 17:16 But as for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd after You, Nor have I longed for the woeful day; You Yourself know that the utterance of my lips Was in Your presence. NASU
- Ezekiel 3:17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me" NKJV

4. What was a prophet's responsibility? Jeremiah 1:7b

- How accountable was a prophet for the message he was given? Ezekiel 3:17-21 (Compare Paul's zeal for preaching. Acts 20:20-27 See especially vv. 26,27)

5. Underline God's reasons and motives for sending prophets to Israel.

- 2 Chronicles 24:18-19 They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols; so wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt. 19 Yet He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the LORD; though they testified against them, they would not listen. NASU
- 2 Kings 17:12-13 They served idols, concerning which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing." 13 Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." NASU
- 2 Chronicles 36:15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; NASU

6. Underline the role or the witness that the Lord wanted Israel to have on other nations.

- Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." NIV
- Exodus 19:3-6 Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." NIV
- Ezekiel 39:27-28 When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. 28 Then they will know that I am the LORD their God... NIV
- Isaiah 43:21 "The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise." NASU
- 1 Kings 8:59-60 And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day's need, 60 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other. NIV

7. Underline how the source of a prophet's words are described.

- 2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. NIV
- 2 Samuel 23:1-2 These are the last words of David... "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue." NIV (Compare Matthew 22:43)
- 1 Peter 1:10-11 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. NIV
- 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed NIV

8. Who was responsible for a prophet's message? Isaiah 44:26

- What does 1 Peter 1:10-12 indicate about even a prophet's understanding of the words he was given?

9. What was often given to a prophet to show that his words were true? Exodus 4:8 (for examples see Isaiah 38:7-8; 1 Kings 13:3-5)

Digging Deeper

Compare the confirmation of the ministry of Jesus: Matthew 4:23-24; 11:4-5; John 10:37-38

And the apostles: Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; Hebrews 2:3-4

10. What problem arose with prophets?

- Jeremiah 23:16
- Ezekiel 13:3,6

11. How could the people distinguish a true versus a false prophet?

- Deuteronomy 18:21-22
- Deuteronomy 13:1-5

Digging Deeper

What does the Bible say about how carefully we should regard the writings of scripture?

Galatians 1:8-9

Revelation 22:18-19

Applying the Word: How were you taught to regard Old Testament writings/stories? If you heard of the story of Jonah, what was your first impression?

Day 2

Prophets; God's Word

12. How did the Lord instruct Jonah? 1:1 (Compare Hosea 1:2a)

- How were the messages given to prophets to be regarded? Exodus 4:15-16, Jeremiah 1:9

13. Hebrews 1:1 says: "God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways" NIV Underline the phrases that describe how God communicated to various prophets.

- Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." NIV
- Exodus 3:1-4 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." NIV
- Exodus 33:9-11 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. 10 Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent. 11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. NIV
- Numbers 12:6-8 "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams." NIV
- Deuteronomy 4:11-12 You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness. 12 Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. NIV
- 1 Kings 19:12-13 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" NIV
- Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. NIV
- Ezekiel 1:1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God, NIV
- Daniel 10:7-10 "I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees." NIV

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14. What was unusual about some of the people that God called to be a prophet?

- Judges 4:4
- Amos 7:14-15

Jeremiah 1:4-5

FYI: PROPHET: "One who is divinely inspired to communicate God's will to His people and to disclose the future to them...The general Hebrew word for prophet is *nabi'*...'to announce, call, a declarer, announcer.' The primary idea of a prophet, therefore, is a declarer, announcer, one who utters a communication." - The New Unger's Bible Dictionary

"The true prophets in the Old Testament were loyal servants of God and convinced foes of idolatry. They often risked their lives when confronting wicked kings and princes with the Word of God, and they poured their souls into their pleas that sinners repent and turn back to God...It is a mistake to think of the biblical prophets primarily as predictors of the future. To be sure, prediction was an essential part of their preaching, but their primary function was to call people to radical obedience and dependence upon God..."

The so-called 'writing prophets': have left us sixteen books . Four of these prophets - Isaiah Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel - are call the major prophets. Twelve others are represented by much shorter books and are called 'minor prophets' - a referent to the length of their writing, not to their quality or importance."

- Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts (200,201)

15. How did the following prophets respond to the assignments God gave them?

Moses:

Assignment: Exodus 3:9-10

Questions, objections: Exodus 3:11; 4:1,10,13; 6:12

Gideon:

Assignment: Judges 6:12,14

Questions, objections: Judges 6:13,15,17

Jeremiah:

Assignment: Jeremiah 1:5,7

Questions, objections: Jeremiah 1:6

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16. Underline the promises and assurances the Lord gave to each of these men.

- **Moses:** “And God said, ‘I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.’” Exodus 3:12
- **Gideon:** “The LORD answered, ‘I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.’” Judges 6:16 NIV
- **Jeremiah:** “‘Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,’ declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 1:8 NIV

17. How has God spoken to us today? Hebrews 1:1,2; John 1:17

18. In the following, underline the basis for discerning truth.

- Psalm 119:130 The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple. NAS
- Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. NKJV
- Colossians 2:2-3 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. NIV
- 2 Timothy 3:15-17 ...from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. NIV

Food for Thought: “Scripture unequivocally states that ‘the world through wisdom did not know God.’ (1 Cor. 1:21) Man has invented many gods and countless religions, but by himself he is unable to find the true and living God.

How then can we ever come to know the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth? The biblical answer is both simple and sublime: God makes Himself known to us. God has spoken. Throughout history God communicated His message to man through His appointed messengers, the prophets and the apostles. They were ‘holy men of God [who] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.’ (2 Peter 1:21) The mighty miracles they performed by God’s power witness to the fact that they were the voice of God on earth.

God’s self-manifestation reached its pinnacle in the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ. God ‘has in these last days spoken to us by His Son’ (Hebrews 1:2) Jesus is the Word of God, the perfect image of the invisible God, the truth, God with us! God’s revelation is now complete, and the Christian church is duty-bound ‘to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.’ (Jude 1:3) We should not be looking for some new message, but we should learn and believe what God already said.”
- Joseph Mizzi (9)

Applying the Word: *What is your measure for discerning truth? Where do you feel you need wisdom? Read James 1:2-8 What do you need to do?*

Day 3**Read Jonah 1:1-3****God's call**

19. What two things did God ask Jonah to do? 1:2a

- What reason was given for Jonah's assignment? 1:2b (In what ways would this assignment be challenging?)

FYI: "*Nineveh* was the great capital of Assyria, the empire that would later invade Israel and carry its people off into captivity. The Assyrians had the reputation of being the most cruel and licentious people of any of the great nations of antiquity....

After a brief revival following Jonah's preaching (Jonah 3:5), the nation became even worse later on, and Nahum then prophesied its utter destruction Nahum 1:1; 3:7."
- Henry Morris

Jonah's response

20. List the steps that describe Jonah's response to God's request. 1:3 (Contrast Psalm 139:7-10)

Digging Deeper

How did Moses feel about the "presence of the Lord?" Ex 33:13-17

What assurances did David equate with God's presence? Ps 16:8-11

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: **Flee** Strong's OT:1272 *barach*; to bolt, i.e. figuratively, to flee suddenly - Strong's Concordance

"**Tarshish:** The location of this port city is uncertain, but it could be Tartessus on the southeast coast of Spain....**Joppa**, a non-Israelite port town, was west of Jerusalem and about 50 miles southwest of Jonah's hometown of Gath Hopher."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1495)

"The location of Tarshish is commonly thought to have been in either Spain or Great Britain, but the exotic nature of cargoes from there, carried in the ships of the Phoenician king Hiram of Tyre (II Chronicles 9:21), might indicate a location either in central Africa or east Asia. More evidence is accumulating that the Phoenicians may have sailed all over the world."
- Henry Morris

21. What does Jonah 3:10-4:2 indicate about how Jonah was feeling and his reasons for fleeing?

FYI: "Why would Jonah, or any Israelite, want to go to Nineveh?...Assyria was an ungodly enemy of Israel and was the most powerful nation on earth at the time. It threatened Israel's very existence."
- Robert Brown (4)

"While we can only speculate about details of how Nineveh affected Jonah, Israel definitely had been brutalized by their archenemy. Just the name Nineveh would strike bitterness, dread, and fear in the heart of an Israelite." - Priscilla Shirer (15)

"[Possibly] Jonah didn't want to share God's grace with an enemy prophesied to conquer his own nation. Another reason could have been fear for his life. The Assyrians' reputation for cruel treatment of their enemies was widespread. They were brutal and vicious, taking conquest to extremes of torture and murder. Chapter 4, however, suggests that at least part of Jonah's problem was his displeasure with the prospect of God lavishing His grace on an undeserving, pagan nation. Jonah didn't want the Ninevites saved; he wanted them judged."
- Charles Swindoll (45)

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22. Although Moses, Gideon and Jeremiah were afraid, how did their *reactions* differ from Jonah's? (see questions #15)

- How did Jonah's *assignment* (Jonah 1:2) differ from theirs?

23. Although Jonah may have been dealing with fear and/or displeasure with his assignment, what do you think would have happened if he had shared it with the Lord?

24. Underline the calling/work/ministry the Lord has given us.

- Matthew 5:14, 16 "You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.... NIV
- Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. NIV

25. Underline the ways that God has equipped us.

- John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. NIV
- 2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
- 2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.NIV
- Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. NIV

Applying the Word: Can you identify a people or a place that feels like a Nineveh to you? What have you learned from this study so far that would help you to minister to people or in places that you don't want to? What do you need to understand or trust about God in order to do that?

Day 4**Read Jonah 1:4-10****The Storm**

26. How violent was the storm that God sent? 1:4 (Contrast Mark 4:39)
27. How did the sailors respond to the storm. 1:5 What do you learn about the sailors' beliefs from their response?

- Where was Jonah? What reasons can you think of for why Jonah was sleeping?

Food for Thought: "What a curious and tragic scene! All the sailors were religious men, devout in their prayers to their gods. Yet their gods were really *nothing*, and could do *nothing*. There was one man on board who had a relationship with the true God, knew His Word, and worshipped Him - yet he was asleep!" - David Guzik

28. Ironically, what did the crew seek from Jonah? 1:6 (Compare the words of the captain "that we perish not" (vs. 6) with John 3:16,17.)

- How, apparently, did Jonah respond to their request?

FYI: 1:6 "call upon thy God. The mariners were evidently recruits from various nations, for each had his own 'god' (Jonah 1:5). ... They were no doubt accustomed to storms at sea, but this one was so uniquely severe that they had to assume there was a special cause." - Henry Morris

29. What did the sailors think had led to this "calamity?" 1:7 (Compare Isaiah 45:7)

FYI: Cast Lots "Nations of this world have sought God's will in all manner of ways They practice astrology, witchcraft, fortune-telling and all manner of idolatrous occult activities in a vain effort to find out what Fate would have in store for them...As typical humans (the sailors) appeal to divinity...using chance. When logic fails, emotion rules and mysticism prevails. It is true that God gave His approval in using lots to determine His will, but that was limit to Israel and it was not a practice He approved for the nations. Today God's will is not found by devices of chance, but in His word." - Robert Brown (5,6)

"The fact that the lots provided the correct answer also argues in favour of the sovereignty of God, who is unrestricted in what instruments he can use to accomplish his purpose. He can make use of a donkey (Num. 22:28-30), a fish (Matt 17:27), or lots as part of His plan." - The Africa Bible Commentary (1043)

(Lots in the Old Testament) The Urim and Thummin were "gems or stones carried by the high priest and used by him to determine God's will in certain matters...[They] were either on, by, or in the high priest's breastplate. For this reason the breastplate is often called the breastplate of judgment, or decision...No one knows the exact nature of the Urim and Thummim or precisely how they were used." - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (See Exodus 28:30, Numbers 27:18-21; Joshua 18:6; Acts 1:26)

The Sailors question Jonah

30. Why do you think the sailors asked Jonah so many questions? 1:8 (Compare John 8:25)

31. What did Jonah acknowledge about himself? 1:9a

- About God? 1:9b (Compare Isaiah 45:18)

Digging Deeper

Compare Paul's words to the people in Athens who worshipped many gods: Acts 17:24,26. What makes this a powerful place to start in witnessing to unbelievers?

FYI: "To say 'I am a Hebrew' means 'I worship one God, Jehovah'."

- Robert Brown (6)

"The sailors understood Jonah's description of God as being characteristic of the highest deity, for in the religions of the ancient Near East the supreme god was generally considered the master of the seas." - Archaeological Study Bible (1471)

32. Why do you think Jonah's answer made the sailors *terrified* ("exceedingly afraid" KJV)? 1:10a

- What inconsistency did they recognize in Jonah's behavior? 1:10b

Food for Thought: "Even an unbeliever who knows *some* truth about God can rightly rebuke a Christian who is resisting God. '**Why have you done this?**' is the most logical question in the world, even for an unbeliever to ask a believer."

- David Guzik

Applying the Word: *When have you seen an inconsistency in a believer's behavior and beliefs? How did that affect you? Can you think of an incident where your consistent behavior helped others to see Christ in you? What makes that a powerful witness?*