

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

JONAH - OBSTINATE OBEDIENCE

Mar 2017

LESSON 1 –GOD’S CALL

INTRODUCTION

How far did you get when you tried to run away from home? What brought you back?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

*Note: Jonah was in the midst of his prophetic career. He was the most popular prophet of his day due to his consistently optimistic forecasts regarding the military successes of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25). On this occasion, however, the directive which Jonah received was different. Nineveh was a foreign city. Normally the prophets of Israel did not leave their native land to pronounce the judgment of the Lord, especially not on Gentile nations. Nineveh was also a “great city” politically, demographically and geographically. (175,000 people) It was one of the main centers of the Assyrian empire. It was a wicked city. In fact God declared that their wickedness was so great that God himself had taken judicial note of it. Escalating wickedness in society demands heavenly censure. The wickedness of the Assyrians included idolatry and pride, cruel oppression, and especially inhumane warfare. It was a city under divine condemnation. Jonah was to “cry against” the place, i.e., announce God’s judgment there.¹ It was 60 miles from Jonah’s home in Gath Hopher to Joppa. Joppa was 500 miles West of Nineveh. This is the very place where God told **Peter** (800 years later) to receive men of other nations. (Acts 10) “Kimchi says that Jonah thought like most Jews at the time, that the spirit of prophecy would not extend beyond the land of Israel.”²*

Read Jonah 1:1-3

1. Where was Nineveh?
2. Why were prophets not clamoring for the job? **Deuteronomy 18:17-22**
3. Why would Jonah not want to go to Nineveh? To preach “against” them?
4. What are the theological implications that Yahweh is the Lord of all nations and holds the world morally accountable? (vs 2) **Gen 18:20-21** How does that influence our (Christian) world view?
5. If Nineveh was so evil, why didn’t God destroy it rather than save it? i.e. postpone captivity of Israel, demonstrate His mercy, sovereignty, universal love.
6. What was Jonah thinking when he fled to Tarshish (2,000 miles *West*)? Do you think he was fleeing God or resigning his commission? Why was Jonah’s flight futile? **Psalms 139:7-12, Gen 3:8-10**

Note: Favorable circumstances may imply that we are in God’s will. Often things seem to “work out” even for a backslidden believer, for the ship was waiting for him and he had the money to pay the fare.³

7. Why (and how) do we flee or get out of an assignment?
8. Israel had just secured her borders under King Jeroboam II. She was politically secure, spiritually smug and morally bankrupt. How does that parallel us today?

APPLICATION

- Imagine that you are at Joppa. Are you more like Peter or Jonah?
- What would it take for you to be sure that you are listening to God and know His will?

¹ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Minor Prophets* (Jon 1:1–3). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

² *The Pulpit Commentary: Jonah*. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (2). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament* (Jon 1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.