

Jonah Chapter 1 Additional Questions

Overview

Author: Jonah son of Amittai

Time set: 790 - 760 BC (1 Kings 14:25)

Israel was on the ascendency and was experiencing military success and great prosperity. Their biggest threat came from the Arameans. Assyria was in a season of decline and was suffering from internal political instability. Only a century before Assyria had been the largest power in the area and had authority over Israel, Judah and Aram. The capital city was Calah, not Nineveh, and there were a number of rebellions that had left Assyria weakened. A short while later in 745 BC Tiglath Pileser III and his successors Shalmanaser V, Sargon II and Sennacherib ruled over Assyria at the height of its power. The Assyrian empire reigned for another 100 years. Nineveh became the capital and extensive building projects were completed including a grand palace and reinforced city walls, contributing significantly to its prominence.

Chapter 1

This first chapter highlights the human tendency to resist God's will, especially when it involves difficult or uncomfortable tasks. We are often called to do things that we don't want to do, whether it's sharing our faith, serving others, or making difficult choices.

Has God done anything recently in your life to demonstrate that He is still in control?

Do you ever feel that following Christ is too hard and that God asks too much of his disciples?

Have you considered that God may be calling you to serve others through a ministry in the local church?

Jonah Chapter 2 Additional Questions

Chapter 2 reminds us that it is important to give thanks no matter where we are or what our situation looks like. Prayer is a lifeline.

How important is an "attitude of gratitude?"

It is likely Jonah may have not been talking about his vow to be a prophet but was stating that he would later give thanks for his current deliverance. Is it better to serve God begrudgingly rather than not at all?

Are there times when rather than feeling thankful we feel let down by God and frustrated by unanswered prayer?

How important is it to be consistent in our approach to God through both the good and bad times in our life?

Jonah Chapter 3 Additional Questions

Chapter 3 sees Jonah, albeit reluctantly, preaching the message to the Assyrian people. Each of the local areas had their own prophets and the Assyrian kings were known for taking prophecy seriously (see 1 Kings 22:2-7). If the warning came from a foreign prophet his words would have possibly been taken more seriously due to the trouble he had endured to deliver it.

How difficult is it to stand for truth and speak God's Word in a world that has little desire to hear it?

Jonah had initially disobeyed God. Does past sin and failure ever disqualify us from fulfilling God's call now and in the future?

The people of Nineveh not only heard God's word but responded to it. Just hearing the message isn't enough; it should transform one's thoughts, attitudes, and actions. How easy is it to be a "doer" as well as a "hearer" of the Word?

Jonah Chapter 4 Additional Questions

In chapter 4 we see the people repent but Jonah is angry about this outcome. He knows that God is merciful but desires judgment instead of forgiveness. Even when given an object lesson Jonah still remains stubbornly angry "enough to die!"

Have you ever met people whose behaviour was so terrible you wanted nothing to do with them?

God shows mercy to Nineveh and then does the same with Jonah. How difficult is it for us to understand the mercy of God towards people who we feel deserve immediate judgement and punishment?

We never find out whether Jonah learned the lesson he was being taught. How easy is it to be sensitive to the spiritual needs of those around us and to give of ourselves to serve them?