

Lesson 10: 2 Kings 22:1–20 & Jonah 1–4

Read 2 Kings 22:1–20

1. Hilkiah found the Book of the Law (that is, the Torah) in the run-down temple that needed much repair. What does this situation and re-discovery of Scripture tell us about the state of religious devotion in the Southern Kingdom prior to Josiah's reign?
2. Of what value is a perfectly-preserved and dusty Bible? Which parts of Scripture do you need to dust off once in a while?
3. What was Josiah's immediate response upon hearing the Book of the Law read out loud to him and what does he then realize?
4. Josiah responds with a penitent and humble heart (verse 19) and God declares that Josiah will die in peace and not see the judgment God is bringing. How can we respond to the work of Jesus Christ in a similar way as Josiah did to hearing the Book of the Law?

Read Jeremiah 36:1–26

5. Read this story about Josiah's son Jehoiakim, and his reaction to the reading of God's word. Notice the strong literary connection between these two stories. How does Jehoiakim's response contrast with Josiah's response?

Prophet on the Run (Jonah 1–4)

Read 2 Kings 14:23–25 (Introduction to the prophet Jonah)

Note: Jonah son of Amittai was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II. The book of Jonah is the only narrative one amongst the prophetic books, without a single prophetic oracle.

Read Jonah 1

6. Imagine that you are reading this for the first time, and had never heard of this story. The Lord asks Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach against it, and he flees the opposite direction as quickly as he can! List all the possible reasons why he fled.
7. Put yourself in Jonah's shoes at the end of chapter one. He has fled the presence of the Lord, been thrown into the sea, and in the belly of the fish. What do you think are the thoughts running through Jonah's head? How do you think he perceives his relationship with God at this point?
8. The author uses a literary technic to emphasize Jonah's disobedience; instead of rising to go to Nineveh as commanded, he rises only to descend five times by the end of the chapter. What are these five steps down, and what does this image tell us about sin?

Read Mark 4:35–41

9. What parallels and contrasts do you find between Jesus and the disciples crossing the sea and Jonah in chapter 1? Consider the settings, the weather and its master, who is sleeping, the reactions of the sailors and disciples, and why they were in the boat/ship in the first place. Use a separate sheet of paper if needed to have sufficient space.

10. Some people say that Jesus never claimed to be God in the Bible. How does Mark's portrayal of Jesus in the light of the story of Jonah 1 proclaim that Jesus is indeed Yahweh incarnate? Why is the Old Testament witness in Jonah so important in this case?

Read Jonah 2: Jonah's Prayer

Jonah's prayer in this chapter includes lines from Psalms 3:4, 31:6, 31:22, 42:7, 50:14, 88: 6-7, 118:5 & 120:1.

11. What do you pray when you don't know what to pray? How does Jonah's prayer that is full of the language of the Psalms teach us to pray in desperate situations?

Read Jonah 3

12. The first line of chapter three repeats the first line of chapter 1, and this time he heads to Nineveh. The text does not say, but what do you think was running through Jonah's mind?

13. The Assyrians, whose capital city was Nineveh, were an especially brutal people even by the standards of the day. How could it be that they all repented based on one man's preaching? Why is it important that God is the primary agent in any conversion?

Read Jonah 4

14. Jonah finally reveals his real reason for fleeing to Tarshish, that he just knew that the Lord is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love...and he would rather die than see the Assyrians receive this grace! How do we resist the temptation to withhold the love of Christ from people we don't like?

15. What cultural divisions are present in your life that separate you from other people? Are there places where you have resisted crossing cultural barriers for the sake of the gospel or relationship due to fear or disdain for those different from you?