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Jonah is fascinating! The profound cultural impact of the book of Jonah is out of all proportion to its small size. Jonah has captured the imaginations of authors, songwriters, artists, and poets. In the 21st Century, the Newsboys wrote "In the Belly of the Whale" for Veggie Tales "Jonah" and Bruce Springsteen released, "Swallowed Up (in the Belly of the Whale)." What makes Jonah so fascinating? Jonah a prophet running away from God. It is a heaven and earth and under the earth narrative like no other!

- **Note: The word for God is YHWH (Yahweh) throughout the book of Jonah.**

The Book of Jonah - Why study it?

- Jonah is compared to Jesus Christ by Christ Himself, specifically as a sign for His resurrection. (Matt. 12:39-41; Luke 11:9-32)
- **Jonah is a compact Theology book, filled with precepts that describe God's person and heart.**
- **Jonah, a prophet of God (YHWH), struggles with God (YHWH). Do you ever struggle with what God allows? God's character? God's plan that does not fit your plan?**
- **It is a life account describing God's amazing mercy and grace to a city full of people and the prophet did not want God to be merciful.**
- The Apostle Paul presents the essence of Jonah's message in the New Testament: *"As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all." Romans 11:28-36*

The Prophet Jonah is a person in history.

- August 1, 2014 "Members of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the ruthless militant group currently marauding through Iraq, ... **blew up** the tomb of the Prophet Yunus. The burial site of Yunus,...the Biblical figure Jonah, it was located in the modern-day city of Mosul (once Biblical Nineveh), and was seen by many archeologist and religious scholars as an ancient — and precious — religious artifact. Now, reports indicate, it is **little more than rubble.**"¹

Referenced in Old Testament

2 Kings 14:25 (NASB95)

25 He, [Jeroboam II], restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.

Three observations from the text above:

1. **Jonah the Prophet is a prophet of Israel**
2. **Jonah was Popular.**
This previous assignment was a prophetic proclamation that Jeroboam II would expand his territory. This was a prophetic message that made Jonah popular. It most certainly was easier than the urgent request of YHWH in Jonah 1:1-3. **Why, in your opinion, did God build Jonah's career as a prophet this way?**
3. **Jonah's time of life - 8th Century B.C.**
 - During reign of Jeroboam II in Israel (793–753 BC)
 - Jonah's life time (786-746 BC)
 - Gath Hopher, a town in the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. 19:10, 13). 3 miles North and East of Nazareth.
 - The Tribe of Zebulun (Num. 1:31)... entered Canaan (26:27). It was one of the tribes which did not drive out the Canaanites..(Judg. 1:30). It took little interest in public affairs. It responded to the summons of Gideon (6:35), and afterwards assisted in enthroning David at Hebron (1 Chr. 12:33, 40). Zebulun was carried away, with Northern Israel into the land of Assyria by Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:29).

Jonah 1:1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah ...

I. Jonah's Direct Call

The phrase "YHWH's word" (debar yhwh) occurs frequently in the Old Testament (242 times).² It usually states that the book or passage in a book is God's spoken word. Uniquely here the Word of the Lord is to the Prophet. **This is a royal commission from YHWH to his servant Jonah. [This occurred with Samuel and Elijah also, I Sam. 15:10; and I Kings 17:2,8]**

There often is a desire from people who seek God that God would just make His will in lives clear, perhaps just write it out or speak directly. Well, God gives Jonah his assignment verbally and the Prophet Jonah rebels.

A prophet of God disagreeing with God, this could be interesting? Have you ever disagreed with God on things that are clear in His word?

II. A Desirable Name “... the son of Amittai saying,”

Jonah’s name (yannes) is the Hebrew word for “dove.” Personal names derived from animal nomenclature are well attested in Hebrew as well as in other Afro-Asiatic languages. 3 Their significance, however, is unknown. The prophet Jonah is the only Old Testament character to wear this name.4

Characteristics of a Dove

Peace

- Genesis 8:11 Dove w/olive branch =symbol of peace.

Purity

- Matthew 3:16 Holy Spirit takes form of a DOVE.
- Song of Solomon 5:2 “My dove, my perfect one” “My dove, my undefiled”

Innocence

- Matthew 10:16 – innocence / purity “...wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

SON of AMITTAI

His father’s name, amittay, appears to derive from the noun ‘emet,(“truth” or “faithfulness”), followed by an abbreviated form of the divine name YHWH, yielding a meaning like “YHWH is faithful and true”.

Note: A PROPHET WHO BY HIS NAME IS “A PURE PROCLAMATION THAT YAHWEH IS FAITHFUL AND TRUE” IS CALLED UPON DIRECTLY BY GOD WITH AN HONORABLE ASSIGNMENT.

Jonah 1:2 (NASB95)

“Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

III. An Imperative Go and Condemn!

- The imperative “UP” (gum) when closely linked with other commands serves as an interjection or exclamation, ...hasten! –Condemn!
- Do you find it interesting that when God sends a word of condemnation it comes along with his grace?



Nineveh

- The commission of a prophet to visit and reach a foreign nation was unprecedented in Hebrew prophecy.
- Many prophets proclaimed judgment on foreign nations but did so rhetorically in message to Israel.

Nineveh was built by Nimrod and became a significant city.

Genesis 10:11

“From that land, Ashshur [note the father of Assyria] emerged and built Nineveh, that is the broadest city, and **Calah**, between Resen and Nineveh, **as the capital city.**” **Genesis 10:12 points to Calah as capital.**

YHWH describes Nineveh as a “great metropolis” in 3:2,3 and 4:11. This reveals God’s knowing not only present but future. Nineveh will become the great metropolis and capital during Sennacherib’s time.

IV. An Insubordinate “NO”

Verse 3 “So Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish, away from YHWH’s presence...”

This action reveals the influence of culture on Jonah’s theology!

<http://thinkprogress.org/world/2014/08/01/3466867/wy-isis-blew-up-jonahs-tomb/> accessed May 15, 2016 9 a.m.

² Frank Ritchell Ames, “dbr” NIDOTTE, 1:912-15.

³Jack M. Sasson, *Jonah* (AB 24B; New York: Doubleday 1990), 68.

⁴ Youngblood, Kevin J., *JONAH* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan 2013)53

5 Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 340

Next Legislators Bible Study:
Tuesday 7:30 AM
LOB 414
Next Staff/ Intern Bible Study is noon in the Chapel