

Promised Land 2 Study and Discussion Questions
Lesson Nine: Introduction to Prophecy and the Fall of Israel –
2 Kings 14-17, with Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Joel, Micah, Isaiah

The Book of Jonah: In order to place Jonah in the context in which he lived, and in keeping with our chronological tracing of the kings of Israel and Judah, read 2 Kings 14:23-25 (a prophecy of Jonah's is mentioned that is not addressed in the book of Jonah). Then, glance at the following references to get a feel for the growing threat Assyria was to Israel: 2 Kings 15:19-20, 15:29, 16:7-9, 17:3-6, 17:24, and 18:13-16. Finally, read the four short chapters of Jonah (note: Nineveh was an important Assyrian city that later became the capital of the Assyrian Empire).

- 1) Unlike other Biblical books of prophecy, the primary focus of book of Jonah is not Jonah's prophecies.
 - a) What portion of the book of Jonah contains the Lord's message to the Assyrians in Nineveh, the message that Jonah was asked to deliver, and what was the message? **Only one simple statement in Jonah 3:4 conveys the Lord's message to the Ninevites: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned."**
 - b) Since the book of Jonah says little about his prophecies, it must have been recorded and preserved in the Scriptures for another purpose. What does the book teach us about the human struggles of a man called by the Lord to be a prophet? **The book of Jonah is written in narrative. It is unique among the prophetic books because it is primarily a story about the life of a prophet, much more than a record of his prophecies. Jonah gives us a unique perspective on the very human personal struggles of a prophet and his relationship with the Lord. Jonah must have written (or at least personally told) this story or else no one would have known about it, since it is entirely about his own struggle with God. Apparently, his hatred for the Ninevites stemmed from the fact that they were Israel's enemy; the idea of God loving them was abhorrent to him.**
- 2) What do you learn about God from the book of Jonah? **The book of Jonah puts God's relationship to His prophet, his loving concern for people from all nations, and His sovereign power over creation on display.**
- 3) Jonah resisted God. Is there something the Lord has asked you to do (or not do) that you have resisted doing (or giving up)? If so, what action do you need to take? **Personal sharing**

Kings Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea of Israel and the Book of Joel

- 4) Skim 2 Kings 14:23-17:6 and 18:1, identifying the chronological order of the kings of Israel and Judah and adding them to the chart of kings you began in Lesson 6. (Compare 2 Kings 15:1 and 13, noting King Azariah's alternate name, by which the prophets referred to him.) Which of these kings' reigns did the Assyrians impact in some way? **Assyria became a kingdom as early as 900 B.C., the time of Baasha, king of Israel, and Asa, king of Judah. However, the biblical record does not mention Assyria for another 150 years: 2 Kings 15:19 mentions that Pul, king of Assyria (also known as Tiglath-Pileser III), invaded Israel during the reign of Menahem (752 and 742 B.C.). Apparently, the Assyrians controlled political events in Israel beginning with Menahem and through the reigns of Israel's last kings, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea (these were the days when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah reigned in Judah).**
- 5) The prophets listed below were God's spokesmen to the kings of Israel and Judah during the time when the Assyrian Empire (the arch-villain of Old Testament prophecy) threatened national security. Examine the following references and list the kings of Israel and Judah to whom these prophets prophesied.
 - a) Hosea 1:1 **Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; Israel: Jeroboam II**
 - b) Amos 1:1 **Judah: Uzziah; Israel: Jeroboam II**
 - c) Micah 1:1 **Judah: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**
 - d) Isaiah 1:1; 7:1 **Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; Israel: the seven last kings of Israel (implied by period of writing), including Pekah, who is named in Isaiah 7:1**

- 6) Neither the Assyrian nor Babylonian Empires is mentioned in the book of Joel, making the book difficult to date. However, Joel covers subjects and contains elements that are common to most of the prophetic books of the Bible. Questions 6a-d will help you discover typical prophetic subjects or elements.
- Judgment is a common theme in the writing of the prophets. Which repeated phrase refers to it (see Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; and 3:14)? **The Day of the Lord**
 - Sometimes, the prophets described a current or near-future event as prefiguring an event that found (or will find) its ultimate fulfillment at a much later date. Read Joel 1:4, 6-7, together with Joel 2:3-11. What image did Joel use to describe a near-term judgment on Israel that may yet have a future and final fulfillment? **Joel describes an invasion by locusts in 1:4 and 2:3-11. In that part of the world, locust invasions were common and utterly devastating. However, 2:11 says, “The Lord thunders at the head of His army...the day of the Lord is great.” While Joel could be talking about a literal locust invasion used by the Lord for a great judgment in Joel’s day, it is generally understood that “the day of the Lord” (a technical phrase used by the prophets) refers to final judgment.**
 - Another common theme in Biblical prophecy is found in Joel 2:12-17. What is that theme? **Repentance is another typical prophetic theme.**
 - The prophets often place two particular events side by side. What are the two events that are described in Joel 3:1-2 and 12-18? **Joel describes the Lord’s terrible judgment on the nations as being concurrent with the Lord’s deliverance, restoration, and blessing of His own people.**
- 7) Joel records an invasion that the Lord sent to devastate the land.
- Has the Lord allowed some kind of devastation in your life in order to get your attention? Has He “stripped you” (Joel 1:7) of anything? If so, what? **Personal sharing**
 - According to Joel 2:25-27, what does the Lord intend to do for those who respond to His “invasion” with humility and repentance? **The Lord promised to restore those who humble themselves and to repay them for the devastation that resulted from His hand of discipline/judgment.**

Amos and Hosea prophesied in the northern Kingdom of Israel.

- 8) Read Matthew 5:11-12, Acts 7:51-52, and Hebrews 11:32-40, together with Amos 7:10-15 and Hosea 1:2-3, 3:1-3. How did Amos and Hosea suffer as God’s representatives? **Amaziah, priest of Bethel, conspired against and condemned Amos for his ominous prophecy against King Jeroboam II of Israel. Hosea suffered as a living illustration of God’s relationship to His wayward people: the Lord told him to take an adulterous wife (she may have been a prostitute already when he married her or the phrase “adulterous wife” may have been a prophetic indication that she would become adulterous). After Hosea’s wife was unfaithful to him, the Lord told him to redeem her and continue being her husband.**
- 9) Which key words in Hosea 4:1-2, 10-18 reflect the Lord’s indictment against Israel (also illustrated by Hosea’s marriage [1:2-3, 3:1-3])? What evidence you have seen in our study of Israel’s monarchy that the Lord’s indictment was fitting? **Beginning with Jeroboam, the Northern Kingdom’s first monarch, Israel had become a nation of idolaters (worsening under kings like Omri and Ahab). Through Hosea, the Lord indicted them with prostitution, unfaithfulness, and adultery.**
- 10) See Amos 2:6-7, 3:10, 15; 4:1, 5; 5:10-12; 6:1, 4-6.
- What was the socio-economic and spiritual condition of the people in Israel when Amos addressed them? **Jeroboam II’s long reign resulted in a Golden Age in Israel where people grew complacent, spiritually lazy, self-satisfied, and self-absorbed. Although many (particularly, the leaders and notable men and women) were materially wealthy, they were spiritually bankrupt. They rushed through religious practices in a meaningless way, just so they could say they had kept their obligation, and then congratulated themselves for having done so. They oppressed the poor and the few righteous people, denied justice, despised honesty, practiced sexual immorality, hoarded goods, and reveled in “the good life.” They thought they were utterly secure and felt no remorse over their spiritual ruin.**

- b) What eternal loss can result from self-absorption, according to Amos 8:11? **A famine of hearing the words of the Lord (that is, increasing rarity in God's word being spoken and closed ears to actually receive the message when it is given).**
- c) How can you guard against self-absorption and complacency? **Personal sharing**

Read 2 Kings 17.

- 11) How do the following passages relate to the historical events that occurred in 2 Kings 17: Exodus 20:3-17, 24:7-8; Deuteronomy 9:5, 12:1-4, 18:9, 28:15, 49-52, 64? **Israel entered a covenant relationship with the Lord, agreeing to keep His commandments. God warned Israel of the consequences of disobedience, specifically warning her against imitating the immorality, idolatry, and evil religious ceremonies of the nations whom He had thrown out of the land. Such disobedience would result in Israel also being removed from the land. God said He would send a foreign nation to plunder them and to send them into exile. Nevertheless, Israel disobeyed in the very ways they had specifically been warned against. The Lord sent the Assyrians to plunder them and take them into exile.**
- 12) Reread 2 Kings 17:13.
- a) Why did God send prophets to Israel and Judah, according to 2 Kings 17:13 and Micah 1:3, 5a, 16 and 3:8? **The Lord sent prophets to warn the Israelites that if they continued to break His covenant He would follow through with judgment.**
 - b) Which special group of individuals was disbelieving of Micah's message and spoke against it (see Micah 2:6, 11 and 3:5)? **Israel's false prophets told Micah that he should stop prophesying doom. They told the people that, contrary to what Micah said, God would not bring disaster (judgment) on them.**
 - c) Read Psalm 119:89, Matthew 24:34-35, 1 Peter 1:25, and 2 Peter 3:3-9. For which scoffing, disbelieving person will you pray today? **Personal sharing**

Micah and Isaiah prophesied in the southern Kingdom of Judah.

- 13) Reread 2 Kings 17:18-19 with 18:17, 19:1-2, 20, 35-36, and 21:10-12. According to this information, what was going on in the southern Kingdom of Judah in the years immediately prior to the northern Kingdom's exile (this will be covered more completely in the following lesson)? **Although the Assyrians did not carry the southern kingdom of Judah into exile, they threatened them. God used this threat to grab Judah's attention, since Judah's relationship with Him had waned. Manasseh's reign was exceptionally wicked and, during his day, the Lord foretold disaster on Jerusalem.**
- 14) The prophets Micah and Isaiah witnessed the horror of Israel's exile, but their primary ministries were to the kings in Judah (see your updated chart of kings and your answer to question 5c and d.) How is God's expectation of His people, in all ages, summarized in the following passages?
- a) Micah 6:8 **God's expects us to have a right relationship with Him and with others: humility in our relationship with Him, justice and mercy in our relationships with others.**
 - b) Isaiah 1:16-18 and 58:6-14 **God expects us to repent of sin and walk in accordance to His good commands. These passages particularly address freeing others from injustice, encouraging the oppressed, sharing generously with the needy, keeping the Sabbath as a delight and as honorable, rather than just doing as we please.**
 - c) Isaiah 57:15 and 66:2 **God blesses contrition, humility, and fear of His word.**
- 15) Describe the horror of God's judgment or the wonder of His mercy, as expressed in these verses:
- a) Micah 2:3-4 **Disaster from the Lord will bring an end to our pride and will be the beginning of ridicule and ruin.**
 - b) Micah 6:13-15 **Those whom God judges will eat without being satisfied, store up without saving, plant but not harvest, and prepare but not enjoy what is prepared.**
 - c) Micah 7:18-20 **God pardons and forgives sin, and delights in showing mercy.**

- d) Isaiah 2:19-21 In the day of Lord's wrath, people will attempt to run from the splendor of His majesty and find themselves hiding in caves and holes in the ground.
- e) Isaiah 24:1-6 The Lord will devastate the earth because of disobedience. Very few people will survive.
- f) Isaiah 30:15-21 The Lord longs to be gracious and rises up to show compassion. He is a God of justice. Salvation is found in repentance, rest, quietness and trust.
- g) Isaiah 40:28-31 Those who are weary find strength by putting their hope in the Lord.
- h) Isaiah 43:1-7 The Lord's personal presence is with those who call on His name as they pass through the flames of trials. They are precious to Him.
- i) Isaiah 43:25 The Lord blots out transgressions and remembers sins no more.
- j) Isaiah 49:14-15 The Lord's own are never forgotten or forsaken by Him. He has compassion on us.