

# information / instructions

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The *next four pages* provide you with a lesson outline in which to write your own notes as you follow along with the lesson video.

The information/questions/instructions for the learning “tasks” (activities) referred to in the outline pages are found *after* the outline pages, on *the last seven pages* of this document:

- Introduction Task (four pages)
- Simply Striking Task (one page)
- Count the Costs Task (one page)
- Law-Gospel Task (one page)

If you can't or don't want to print this document to write on, just have it open as you watch the lesson and write your notes and responses on a separate paper. Or simply discuss your thoughts with the people in your home!

**Run into questions during the study? Write them down and email or text Pastor Snyder!** ([brad.snyder@cocidaho.org](mailto:brad.snyder@cocidaho.org) / 208-996-0862). He'd love to connect with you as you use these spiritual growth resources.

*Note that this study was originally prepared for a series of Wednesday evenings, to be used by individuals or groups. Some of the instructions or information will reflect that and doesn't apply to our current situation (dates, times, references to “this evening,” etc). Don't let that throw you!*



the book of  
**JONAH**

*God's grace to runaways*

Chapter 1 study guide — 9.3.14

## **Introductory Remarks**

Course goals

Tonight's lesson goals

## Introduction Task

*Please locate the four page "Introduction Task" materials and engage in them when prompted.*



The space below is provided for notes which may come about from our webcast discussion.

# Jonah Chapter 1 study tasks

*Please locate the materials and engage in them when prompted.*

## **“Simply Striking”**



## **“Count the Costs”**



## **“Law-Gospel”**



## **Jonah Chapter 1 concluding task**

On your own, as you reflect upon the facets and truths of this first chapter of Jonah, write down that for which you are thankful to the LORD who calls you to trust His faithful grace and mercy in Christ:

### **Next Meeting:**

Next Wednesday, September 10, 2014.

Topic: Jonah Chapter 2 ... The LORD's deliverance—his servant's prayer of thanksgiving.

# INTRODUCTION TASK



## Instructions

- Once prompted you are to examine the introductory facts on the following pages.
- Your task is to **select your top 3** important facts.  
(You may place your number ranking 1, 2, 3 in the box before each of your selected facts)
- You are free to set the parameters for what constitutes: important-to-you.
- If working in a group setting you might suggest five minutes for each individual to complete the examination and ranking process and then discuss your rankings for the remaining three minutes.
- If you are working alone on this task, instead of discussion, you might consider writing down your rationale for each of your top 3 selections.
- After the eight minutes allotted for this learning task have elapsed we will meet as a group with the facilitator on the webcast.

### **Fact A**

Neither the text of this book nor the rest of Scripture directly specify the author of this biographical account. Most conservative scholars however do ascribe the book to Jonah. Ascribing the book to Jonah by its title does recognize a common Old Testament pattern by which, e.g. Hosea, Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah are ascribed to those prophets. And although the author does not speak of himself in the first person, one can find similar usage of the third person by Moses throughout the Torah, John the evangelist throughout his gospel, Xenophon in his *Anabasis* and Julius Caesar in his *Gallic Wars*. Whether Jonah was the author or not, most scholars agree that the foundational source for the book was Jonah's own telling of the account after his return from Nineveh.

### **Fact B**

The prophet's name means "dove." His hometown was Gath-Hepher located on the northeast of Nazareth in the tribal allotment of Zebulun in northern Israel (Joshua 19:13). His father (or ancestor) was Amittai (1:1). All that we know about Jonah and his ministry aside from what is provided in this book is revealed in 2 Kings 14:25. Jonah had predicted that the Lord would restore the boundaries of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 BC).

### **Fact C**

The date of this book is likely sometime after Jonah's trip to Nineveh thus prompting us to consider sometime between 780 and 760 B.C. This places us roughly eighty years after the life and ministry of Elijah. It also places us on the threshold of other minor prophets sent to warn Israel of impending judgment if they continue to reject their covenant with the LORD. Amos (760 B.C.), Hosea (750 B.C.), Isaiah (740 B.C.) and Micah (730 B.C.) are waiting in the wings to share their messages with the LORD's people.

### **Fact D**

The central message of the book of Jonah is the compassion of God and his divine right to show his mercy as well as his power wherever and whenever he chooses. The nation of Israel, the prophet Jonah, and the city of Nineveh are all secondary “characters” in this drama. We are being taught primarily about the great compassion and international sovereignty of our Lord. It is not mainly a book on evangelism, but it certainly includes the truth that God’s gracious plans were not limited to Israel, as Israel too often imagined. It is not primarily a call to repentance, though that message is obviously included and also stood as a preachment of law against Israel and Nineveh. The book ends where it should end—speaking of divine compassion.

### **Fact E**

2 Kings 14:25 tells us that Jonah was on the scene before and during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel from 793-753 B.C. Jeroboam was the grandson of Jehoahaz (814-798 B.C.) Because of the evils of Jehoahaz, Israel had suffered mightily by the Arameans who dwelt immediately north of Israel. Because of the LORD’s great compassion, Israel was spared being destroyed by the Arameans likely because the king of Assyria engaged in his own fight with Aram. Jeroboam’s father, Jehoash (798-782 B.C.) took advantage of Aram’s weakened state and began to expand Israel’s borders. Jeroboam, as prophesied by the LORD through Jonah, expanded the borders to match the glorious days of kings David and Solomon. Jonah was a firsthand witness of the compassion the LORD extended to His rebellious and idolatrous people.

### **Fact F**

During the days of Jonah and Jeroboam II, while Aram was in her weakened state, Assyria was likewise enduring a period of relative weakness. Assyria was beset by conflicts with Aram to her south and the kingdom of Urartu to her north. There were widespread famines and numerous revolts within the Assyrian Empire. Some commentators suggest that the backdrop of Assyrian weakness in the early eighth century supports the plausibility of the events narrated in the book of Jonah. We note that the LORD of all the nations creates the “plausibility” of any events.

### **Fact G**

Though Assyria was in a bit of a downturn at this time she had established a reputation for brutality and arrogance. Deliberate terror and atrocity were her weapons of foreign policy. Excerpts from king Ashurnasirpal II, a century prior to Jonah’s time echoed down through time: “I caused great slaughter. I destroyed, I demolished, I burned. I took their warriors prisoner and impaled them on stakes before their cities.”

In a report of another battle Ashurnasirpal II crowed: “Many of the captives I burned in a fire. Many I took alive; from some I cut off their hands to the wrist, from others I cut off their noses, ears and fingers; I put out the eyes of many of the soldiers. I burnt their young men and women to death.”

More heinous atrocities are known of Assyria and can be found in historical records. Suffice to say this provides vivid background of the people to whom the prophet Jonah was called to deliver a message from the LORD.

## Fact H

Many people know of the book of Jonah largely because of the narrative of “the whale” swallowing Jonah. This is unfortunate because “the whale,” or great fish, appears in only one brief episode for a total of three verses (1:17; 2:1,10). And it is not the most important part of the Jonah narrative either.

Yet this account has caused Jonah to be one of the most—if not *the* most—misunderstood and challenged books of the Bible. The great fish swallowing Jonah and vomiting him up alive is a miracle many find hard to accept, along with the other miracles (up to 12?) in the book. The entire book, then is explained away as myth, folktale, allegory, parable, religious fiction, nonhistorical prose, or whatever. *Excerpt from The Peoples' Bible Commentary, Obadiah/Jonah/Micah, NPH.*

## Fact I

Fact or Fiction? *examples of how some are approaching Jonah:*

Surely this is not the record of actual historical events nor was it ever intended as such. It is a sin against the author to treat as literal prose what he intended as poetry... His story is thus a story with a moral, a parable, a prose poem like the story of the Good Samaritan.

- *The International Critical Commentary*

The author of the story utilized ancient myths and folk tales in his story of the fish. Out of such miscellaneous materials the author has composed a charming story intended to teach the lesson clearly expressed at the end of the book, namely, that Jehovah's loving-kindness and compassion are not restricted to the Jews, but extend to the heathen as well.

- *Pfeiffer, Introduction of the Old Testament*

## Fact J

*A Proposed Outline of the Book*

### I. Jonah Flees His Mission

- Commission and Flight
- Sailors Cry Out to gods
- Disobedience Exposed
- Punishment and Deliverance

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

### II. Jonah Fulfills His Mission

- Re-Commission and Obedience
- Ninevites Cry Out to the LORD
- Repentance Acknowledged
- Deliverance and Rebuke

**Fact K**

The distinctive features of the book of Jonah are disclosed in several ways. Rather than a series of oracles, common to other prophetic books, this book tells of one episode in the prophet's life and contains only one brief sentence of oracle prophecy. The compact nature of the book is also memorable: the whole account is told in forty verses, with another eight verses dedicated to Jonah's thankful prayer (2:2-9). The sensational and supernatural aura that surrounds the events of the book captures the reader's attention from start to finish.

**Fact L**

Most of the critics whose bias does not allow for the supernatural or miracles opt to allegorize the book of Jonah. Though you will find great variety in the proposed symbols, common suggestions are that Jonah represents the disobedient people of Israel, the sea represents the gentiles, the "whale" stands for Babylon, the three days in the belly of the "whale" represents the Babylonian captivity, and preaching in Nineveh represents outreach work after the exile.

# “SIMPLY STRIKING” TASK

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## Instructions

- Once prompted you are to examine chapter 1 of Jonah.
- Your task is to **locate at least five striking facts** from this chapter.
- If you are working in a group setting you might suggest five minutes for each individual to complete the examination and ranking process and then discuss your rankings for the remaining three minutes.
- If you are working alone on this task, instead of discussion, you might consider writing down your rationale for each of your five striking facts or time permitting, you might move on to another task.
- After the eight minutes allotted for this learning task have elapsed we will meet as a group with the facilitator on the webcast.

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# “COUNT THE COSTS” TASK

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## Instructions

- Once prompted you are to examine chapter 1 of Jonah.
- Your task is to **locate at least five count the cost facts** from this chapter.
- If you are working in a group setting you might suggest five minutes for each individual to complete the examination and ranking process and then discuss your rankings for the remaining three minutes.
- If you are working alone on this task, instead of discussion, you might consider writing down your rationale for each of your five cost facts or time permitting, you might move on to another task.
- After the eight minutes allotted for this learning task have elapsed we will meet as a group with the facilitator on the webcast.

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# “LAW-GOSPEL” TASK

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## Instructions

- Once prompted you are to examine chapter 1 of Jonah.
- Your task is to **locate and list several key law and gospel facts** from this chapter.
- If you are working in a group setting you might suggest five minutes for each individual to complete the examination and ranking process and then discuss your rankings for the remaining three minutes.
- If you are working alone on this task, instead of discussion, you might consider writing down a brief reaction to each law or gospel find or time permitting, you might move on to another task.
- After the eight minutes allotted for this learning task have elapsed we will meet as a group with the facilitator on the webcast.

**L**AW



**G**OSPEL

