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RE Prophets Questions (Jonah, Amos, Elijah)

# Jonah

* Where did God ask Jonah to go?
  + God asked Jonah to go to Nineveh.
* Where did Jonah go instead?
  + Jonah went to Tarshish instead.
* If God is all knowing and so powerful, could he not have stepped in and made it difficult for Jonah to find a ship and the necessary fare to travel? What does the ease at which Jonah managed to secure a fare on that ship have to say about God?
  + It shows how easy Jonah was strayed away from God’s path, and it also makes Jonah choose to come back.
* What two things did the mariner’s do in response to the storm?
  + Threw items off the ship, and started praying to their deity.
* Where was Jonah when all of this was occurring?
  + Jonah was sleeping in the boat.
* What did the captain ask Jonah to do? What is significant about this and what does it tell you about the mariner and captain’s pagan gods?
  + The captain asks Jonah to “pray to his god.” This is significant as the mariners just see gods as something that will always bring them out of danger and that everyone has their own god. They don’t believe in the one true God.
* Given Jonah’s description of God as the one who made the heaven, sea and the earth, do you think his running away was foolish and futile? Is it possible to run away from such a God?
  + It was foolish and futile, because God would’ve caught up to him no matter where Jonah went. It is impossible to run away from a God who is everywhere at once.
* What is significant about the mariners, who were probably Phoenicians and polytheistic (people who believe in many gods) calling out to Jonah’s God?
  + Jonah was able to make them believe in God, and Jonah leaving the boat proved it to them. Jonah’s ability to persuade the mariners relates back to the reason why God was right in picking Jonah; he is persuasive.

*Chapter 2*

* What happened to Jonah?
  + Jonah jumps off the boat, which causes the storms to stop. While in the sea, Jonah is eaten by a big fish God made. While in the fish, Jonah prayed to God.
* How long did he spend in the water?
  + 3 days.

*Chapter 3*

* How long did it take Jonah to travel to Nineveh?
  + 3 days.
* What did Jonah proclaim to the Ninevites?
  + He said that if Nineveh doesn’t change their ways in 40 days, the city of Nineveh will be overthrown.
* What did the king do after hearing Jonah’s message? What was his decree?
  + The kings decree was for every person and animal to fast, cover themselves with sackcloth, and to ask God for forgiveness.
* What did the people of Nineveh do and for how long?
  + The people of Nineveh fasted, covered themselves in cloth, and engaged in no activity other than asking God for forgiveness.
* What did God do to them?
  + God showed them forgiveness.

*Chapter 4*

* Why do you think Jonah was so upset and angry? Shouldn’t he be pleased that the Ninevites listened to his message?
  + Jonah expected God to show the people of Nineveh no forgiveness.
* Explain the sign God gave Jonah concerning the tree. What message was God giving to him?
  + God gave Jonah the tree to give him something to shelter himself. Then, God made worms to each up the tree, causing it to wither away. Jonah is frustrated, but God tells Jonah that he felt pity over a tree he did not nurture or take care of. In the same vein, why should God not feel pity for the people of Nineveh, who are much more substantial than a tree who lives for one day and one night.
* What is the overall message of the Book of Jonah?
  + Obey God and no other god, and show pity, even for those who have been misguided.

# Elijah

*Read: 17:1-7*

* Where is Elijah from?
  + Elijah is from Tishbe in Gilead.
* What does Elijah predict will happen to Israel?
  + He believes there will be no dew or rain in the next few years.
* Where does Elijah run to and how does he survive?
  + He runs to the Kerith Ravin east of the Jordan. Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and evening, and drank from a small stream.

*Read: 17:8-24*

* Where is Zarephath? Is it in Israel? See if you can locate it on a map.
  + It is not in Israel. It is in an area (Sidon) located in Lebanon.
* Who does Elijah meet and what two miracles does he perform?
  + Elijah met a widow. He told the widow to make him bread everyday, and that her ingredients won’t run out. The widow’s son eventually becomes ill. Elijah holds the son and cries out to God, who in return brings the son back to life.

*Read: 18:20-40*

* Explain what occurred in the contest between the Baal gods and the Hebrew God.
  + Elijah challenged the Baal gods’ 450 prophets to cut up a bull and leave it for their gods to set on fire. Elijah would do the same and wait for God to ignite the bull. After the prophets’ futile attempts, Elijah starts to taunt them, and then began asking God. He took twelve stones (one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob) and built an altar and a small trench. Elijah tells the people to cover the bull and its wood plate with water, and they do it multiple times. Elijah prayed to God, asking him to prove himself to the Israelites. God ignites the bull offering, and the Israelites witness it.
* What did this tell the Israelites about the Baal gods and the Hebrew God?
  + It proved their Baal gods wrong and the Hebrew God right. The Israelites even exclaim “The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!”
* What did Elijah do to the Baal prophets and priests?
  + Elijah ordered the prophets to be seized and taken away.

*Read: 18:41-46*

* What occurred after the contest at Mount Carmel?
  + Elijah warns Ahab of heavy rain. Elijah climbs up to the top of Carmel and asked his servant what he saw at the sea. The servant, after 7 times of asking, tells that he sees a “cloud as small as a man’s hand” rise up from the sea. Elijah tells the servant to tell Ahab to go to Jezreel before the rain stops him.

*Read: 19:1-9*

* What was Jezebel’s reaction when she was told about the Baal prophets and priests?
  + Jezebel was angry, and threatened Elijah with the same fate of the prophets via a messenger.
* How do you think Elijah was feeling in 19:4-5?
  + Elijah was scared of what Jezebel might’ve done to him, so he wanted God to take his life so to not suffer.
* How long did Elijah spend in Horeb – the mountain of God?
  + 40 days and 40 nights
* Can you think of any other occasion or event/s in the Bible where that number is mentioned?
  + Jesus staying 40 days in the desert. The Israelites being forced to wonder the desert for 40 years.

*Read: 19:19-21*

* Who became Elijah’s disciple?
  + Elisha son of Shaphat.
* How did Elijah commission him to be his disciple?
  + Elijah went up to Elisha and threw his cloak around him.

**Read: 1 Kings 21:1-29**

***Read: Book 2 Kings 2:9-15***

* What happened to Elijah?
  + Elijah and Elisha were separated by horsemen of fire.
* What did Elisha ask Elijah for?
  + He wanted to inherit a double portion of your spirit. Elijah agrees, but it will only be his if Elijah is taken from him.
* Was his request granted?
  + The prophets watching saw the spirit of Elijah in Elisha and bowed at him, so in a way his request was granted.
* Who continued Elijah’s mission?
  + Elisha.

# Amos

*Read: 1:1*

* What was Amos’ occupation?
  + Amos was one of the shepherds of Tekoa.
* Who were the kings of Israel and Judah at the time of Amos’ mission?
  + Uzziah was king of Judah. Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.

*Read: 2:6-8*

* List the transgressions of the Israelites that angered God.
  + Selling the innocent for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals (refers to slaves). Trampling the heads of the poor and deny justice to the oppressed (refers to carelessness for the poor). Father and son using the same girl (self-explanatory).

*Read: 3:1-2*

* What has God previously done to help the Israelite people?
  + He brought the Israelites out of Egypt.

*Read: 3:13-15*

* How will God punish the Israelites for their transgressions?
  + He will destroy the altars of Bethel, tear down the winter and summer houses (refers to the wealthy who owned two houses), and demolish the mansions of the rich.

*Read: 4:6-13*

* List the warnings that God had given the Israelite people to get them to stop their wicked ways.
  + Made the people hungry and foodless.
  + Took away rain from certain towns, causing people to stagger from town to town for water.
  + Destroys the gardens and vineyards with locusts and mildew.
  + Sent plagues.
  + Overthrew the Israelites.

*Read: 5:21-27*

* What does God think about the Israelites religious festivals and their sacrifices to him?
  + God despises the religious festivals and doesn’t accept the sacrifices.
* What images had the Israelites made for themselves?
  + God describes the Israelites as idolatrous. “You have lifted up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols the star of your god -- which you made for yourselves.”
* What will God do to those who have such idols?
  + He will exile them beyond Damascus.

*Read: 6:4-11*

* Make a list of the Israelites transgressions.
  + Sleep in rich houses.
  + Dine on rich foods.
  + Play musical instruments.
  + Drink wines and use lotions.

*Read: 8:1-14*

* Make a list of Israelites transgressions.
  + Trample the needy.
  + Do away with the poor.
  + Skimping on the measure.
  + Boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales (in reference to wheat and markets).
  + Buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals.
  + Selling the sweepings with the wheat.
* Make a list of the punishments God will inflict on the Israelite nation.
  + Darken the earth in broad daylight.
  + Turn the religious festivals into mourning.
  + Make them wear sackcloth and shave their hair.
  + Send a famine through the land (a famine of hearing the words of the Lord).
  + Leading the people into disarray looking for the word of the Lord.
  + Faint the “lovely young women and strong young men.”
  + Kill off idol worshippers.

*Read: 9:14-15*

* What are Amos’ final words to the Israelite people?
  + Amos keeps his people Israel in their own land, where they will rebuild the cities and plant vineyards and make gardens.