

Jonah 1 Sample Observations

Based on the English Standard Version

Jonah 1:1-3. Title: The prophet Jonah defies God's instruction.

1:1. Who? The LORD; Jonah, son of Amittai

Note: LORD (all caps) translates the Hebrew Yahweh, the presumed correct spelling of the proper name for God. For the meaning of Yahweh, see Exodus 3:14 = "I AM." We could say His name means "The Self-Existing One." "I Am Who I Am!"

What? The word of the LORD came to Jonah

1:2. What was the message from the LORD?

What? Arise, go to Where? Nineveh, that great city

Where is Nineveh? (Need to consult a map)

What? And call out against it

Why? For their evil has come up before Me.

1:3. How did Jonah respond? But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish

Where is Tarshish? (Consult a map)

Why? From the presence of the LORD

What did he do? He went down to Joppa

Where is Joppa? (Consult map)

What? And found a ship going Where? to Tarshish

What? So he paid the fare and went down into it,

Why? To go with them to Tarshish

Why? Away from the presence of the LORD.

Big Question: What was it (Why?) that drove a prophet of the LORD to disobey his assignment and flee the opposite direction?

What motivated him?

Did he think he could get away with it?

Jonah 1:4-6. Title: God's great storm and the praying sailors. The LORD hurled a great storm on the sea and all the occupants of the ship except Jonah prayed fervently to their gods. (All the sailors are frightened and pray to their gods. But Jonah is asleep and is reprimanded by the captain for not praying.)

1:4. Who? But the LORD

What did He do? He hurled a great wind

Where? On the sea

What was the result? There was a mighty tempest on the sea

How bad was it? So that the ship threatened to break up.

So what? When we deliberately disobey God, there are times when He will throw a sizeable road block in our paths. Will we be able to figure it out?

1:5. Who? The mariners

What? They were afraid

What did they do? Each cried out – To whom? to his god. Literally, “to his gods” (the noun is plural – Elohim. This is not the true God, but it is the plural noun used here.)

So what? When we disobey God, we put others at risk.

What else did they do? They hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea.

Why? To lighten the ship for themselves

Who? Jonah.

What did he do? He had gone down

Where? Into the inner part of the ship

What did he do then? He had lain down

What was the result? And he was fast asleep.

1:6. Who? The captain

What did he do?

He came and said

To whom? To Jonah

What did he say?

“What do you mean, you sleeper?

“Arise, call out to your god! (Literally, “your gods” – the noun is the plural – Elohim)

“Perhaps the gods (literally) will give a thought to us

Why? “That we may not perish”

Jonah 1:7-9. Title: The sailors cast lots and identify Jonah as the cause of their catastrophe.

1:7 Who? The sailors

What did they do? They said To whom? To one another

What did they say? “Come, let us cast lots”

Why? “That we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us”

What did they do? So they cast lots

What happened? And the lot fell on Jonah.

So What Question:

God controlled the storm. Did He control the casting of lots?

Is there anything God does NOT control?

1:8. Who? The sailors said to Jonah

What did they say?

“Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us.

“What is your occupation?

“And where do you come from?

“Where is your country?

“And of what people are you?”

1:9. Who? Jonah. What was his response? “And he said to them:

‘I am a Hebrew,

‘And I fear the LORD (Yahweh). Who is He?

‘The God of heaven, (Literally, Gods of the heavens)

‘Who made the sea and the dry land.’”

Jonah 1:10-14. Title: The fearful sailors reluctantly decide to toss Jonah into the sea, begging the LORD for mercy.

1:10. What was the effect of Jonah’s statement on the mariners? “Then the men were exceedingly afraid

What did they say to Jonah? “And said to him, ‘What is this that you have done!’”

Why did they say that? For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD

How did they know that? – because he had told them.

1:11. What did the mariners say next? “Then they said to him,

‘What shall we do to you, Why? That the sea may quiet down for us?

Why did they say that? “For the sea grew more and more tempestuous.”

1:12. What was Jonah’s response? He said to them,

What? ‘Pick me up and hurl me into the sea;

What would happen? ‘Then the sea will quiet down for you,’

Why would this happen? ‘For I know that it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.’

1:13. Who? The sailors.

What did they do? Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land,

What happened? But they could not,

Why not? For the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them.

1:14. Therefore they (Who? – the sailors) called out to whom? To the LORD.

What did they say? “O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life,

What else did they say? “And lay not on us innocent blood

Why? “For you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.”

Jonah 1:15-16. Title: The sailors threw Jonah into the sea. When the sea stopped its raging, they feared the LORD greatly, offered a sacrifice to Him and made vows to Him!

1:15. What did the sailors do? So they picked up Jonah

What else did they do? And hurled him Where? Into the sea,

What happened then? And the sea ceased from its raging!

1:16. What did the sailors do next? Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly,

What else did they do? And they offered a sacrifice to the LORD

What else? And made vows. (Literally, “and they vowed vows.”)

Question: What do you suppose they vowed?

Jonah 1:17. Title: The LORD appointed a large fish to swallow Jonah for 3 days and nights!

Who? Yahweh. What did Yahweh do? And the LORD **appointed** a great fish

The word “appointed” is the 3rd Masculine Singular [Piel](#) Waw Consecutive of the Hebrew verb *manáh* ([4487](#)). (In the [Piel](#) [Intensive] stem it means “to appoint, ordain” – so [OBU](#).) This verb appears in the [Piel](#) stem 3 more times in Jonah – in Jonah 4:6, 7, 8.

Even though the verb “appointed” is not used elsewhere, there are several other occasions in Jonah in which God actively entered into arranging things that happened.

(1) In Jonah 1:4, the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, endangering the boat.

(2) In Jonah 1:7, the LORD arranged for the lot to fall on Jonah.

(3) In Jonah 1:15-16, as soon as the sailors had thrown Jonah overboard, the sea ceased from its raging!

(4) In Jonah 2:10 the LORD spoke to the fish and caused it to vomit Jonah upon dry land.

(5) In Jonah 3:10, when God saw that the people of Nineveh had repented, He relented of the disaster He had decreed on the city.

(6) In Jonah 4, God worked patiently with Jonah to change his attitude. Did God succeed?

To do what? To swallow up Jonah.

What happened to Jonah? And Jonah was Where? In the belly of the fish

How long? Three days and three nights.

Why? Is there any particular reason why the fish swallowed Jonah for 3 days and 3 nights?

Updated January 6, 2024