



### The Sad, Successful Preacher

Perhaps no prophet is as well known as Jonah. Jonah's tale is one of the first Bible stories children learn. Aside from Jonah's incredible story, the prophet and his book are very unique. Jonah was the son of Amittai, and from Gath-hepher (2 Kgs. 14:25), which was a town in the territory of Zebulun (only a little northeast of Nazareth). This means Jonah was a prophet from the northern kingdom. He lived and worked during the

reign of Jeroboam II. While it appears from 2 Kings that Jonah may have uttered prophecies concerning Israel, the book of Jonah is focused on another nation entirely. Instead of being sent to Israel or Samaria, God wanted Jonah to Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian empire! Instead of obeying God and travelling northeast to Assyria, he headed west to Joppa and tried to sail further west to Tarshish (in modern-day Spain!). God intervened, and Jonah found himself in the belly of a great fish. There, he uttered an incredible prayer that is recorded in chapter two. Once the fish vomited Jonah on dry land, the prophet was ready to obey. Jonah arrived in Nineveh with a simple but terrifying message: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" This simplest of sermons had the greatest of effects. From the king of Assyria to the peasant on the street, the people were convicted and ready to change. The king called for fasting and the wearing of sackcloth, and commanded the people to turn from their evil ways and "...call out mightily to God!" As evil as the nation of Assyria had been, they are an incredible example of repentance in the story of Jonah. Because of their change of heart and action, God relented and did not destroy the city. This may make Jonah the most successful preacher in history. It's estimated that the city was home to hundreds of thousands of people—all, or at least a majority of whom, responded favorably to Jonah's teaching. Dozens of prophets would plead with Jews and Israelites to no avail, yet Jonah found a receptive crowd in the Ninevites. To top the irony (and tragedy), Jonah was dismayed instead of gladdened. Seeing the Ninevites spared angered Jonah. His nationalism trumped his love for the souls of men. Thus, in chapter four God teaches Jonah a lesson about compassion. The story of Jonah teaches us great lessons about obedience, repentance, the mercy of God, and the care we should possess for the souls of others!

#### An Outline from Jonah's Perspective

"I won't Go" (1)

"I Will Go" (2)

"I'm Here" (3)

"Wish I Hadn't Come" (4)

### Micah: A Prophet of Warning and Hope

Micah was from a town on the border of Judah and Philistia—an area of country and agriculture. He served during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah, making him a contemporary of Isaiah. In many ways, Micah's prophesy is like a miniature version of Isaiah. Micah's message is to both Israel and Judah, but seems more focused on Judah. The prophet's words are similar to many of the other prophets. He confronts the sin and rebellion that had seeped into the culture, and he especially focuses on the corruption that was found in

do justice  
walk humbly  
love kindness

MICAH 6:8

places of leadership. Leaders and the people were dishonest in business, liars, and given to violence. They were covetous and oppressive; the exact opposite of what they should be. Micah says, "you hate the good and love the evil." He reminds that God wants His people to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." But false prophets spoke smooth lies to the people, and the people were glad to hear them. Because of such evils, both Samaria and Jerusalem would be judged. Micah's prophecy has a great deal of hope mingled in, however. He speaks at length of the hope of restoration, and he looks further than just a return from captivity. For such a short book, Micah has much to say about the Messianic age. Also, Micah provides one of the key messianic prophecies of the Old Testament—the prophecy of where the Christ would be born. In Micah 5:2 the prophet names Bethlehem as the city from which will come forth the "...one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." Micah finishes with a beautiful picture of God's forgiveness for those that will be faithful to Him.

## "That You May Grow Thereby..."

A weekly Bible reading plan



### Obadiah, Jonah, & Micah

#### Evil Neighbors, Great Fish, and Promises of a Savior

##### Overview

This week we encounter three more of the minor prophets. These three men were quite different: they all came from different places; prophesied to different groups; and had different backgrounds. Obadiah is one of the most obscure Old Testament prophets. His single chapter of prophecy is the shortest book in the Old Testament, and his prophecy is directed at the nation of Edom. Jonah is one of the most well known prophets due to the unique story found within the book. The book of Jonah is incredibly unique; it is one of the only prophetic book that is more narrative than teaching or prophecy. Further, Jonah is a prophet from the north and sent to Assyria! Micah is a fairly short book, but packs a powerful message of both warning and hope to Jerusalem. Like his contemporary Isaiah, Micah provides some powerful prophecies concerning the future and the Messiah!

##### Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Obadiah 1

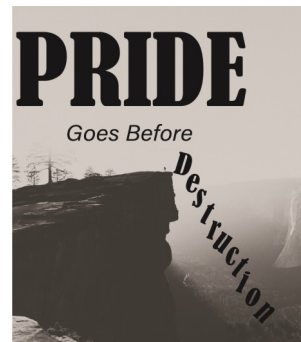
Tuesday: Jonah 1-4

Wednesday: Micah 1-2

Thursday: Micah 3-5

Friday: Micah 6-7

### Obadiah: The Downfall of Edom



Obadiah is a case study in the proverb "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Pro. 16:18). The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, thus they were Israel's brethren. The battle that started in Rebekah's womb (Gen. 25:22-23) had only intensified over the centuries. Instead of being allies, Edom most often chose enmity with Israel and Judah. Their enmity and hatred toward Israel finally caught up to them though, and God sent Obadiah to spell out Edom's doom. Essentially nothing is known of Obadiah. His book doesn't record family information or where he's from, simply the message he was given. There are 12 other men named Obadiah in the Old Testament, but determining whether any were this prophet is

difficult if not impossible. Still, Obadiah's message was a clear one: Edom will face complete destruction for its evil. Edom's first problem was pride (v. 3). This pride caused the Edomites to hate their Jewish cousins and feel secure in their own homeland. Their pride wasn't just an attitude though—it was meted out in actual violence (v. 10) and in gloating over Israel's woes (v. 12). Obadiah describes a time when Jerusalem was invaded and plundered. What did Edom do? They gloated and rejoiced at the misfortune of their neighbors. God's anger over this should remind us to never gloat over the failure of others! Because of Edom's evil, God promised judgment. All their pride wouldn't save them—they would be completely demolished. Like other prophets, Obadiah refers to "the day of the Lord" (v. 15) in a sense of judgment. The day of the Lord would not be a good day for Edom. In the final section of the prophecy (vv. 19-21) Obadiah offers a word of hope for the exiles of Jerusalem. While Edom will be completely decimated, there will be a remnant of God's people. The conclusion: "Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's!"



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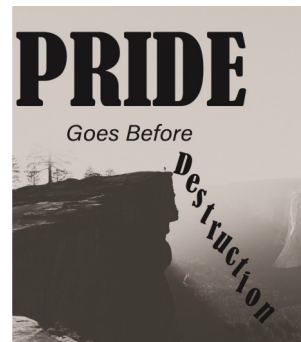
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