

READING PLAN WEEK 2 for **The Epic of Eden – Jonah**

Word from the Author: “As we consider plunging onto the well-known book of Jonah, we are dealing once again with the “Great Barrier”, the cultural and historical barrier that stands between us and them. How desperately we want to hear what God wants to say to us through Jonah, but we stand at a distance. When it comes to studying the Prophets, the distance is not only historical and cultural, it is literary as well. What is a prophetic book and why are there so many of them in the Old Testament? How are they organized? These issues were transparent to the ancient Israelites, but they are a whole new realm for us.

Day #1: Read Jonah 1:1-3, Isaiah 1:1 and Micah 1:1 Here are the opening words from three of the several prophets in the Old Testament. What is different about the opening of Jonah compared to the others?

Day #2: Read Deuteronomy 18:9-22. This is a description of the role of a prophet to the Israelites. Not only are they divine intermediaries for Israel, speaking on behalf of God (Yahweh), in these verses, the prophets and the people are given specific guidelines for responding to the word God. How important was the role of a prophet? What did his words accomplish in the midst of God’s people?

Day #3: Read Isaiah 6:1-8 and 1 Kings 22:19-23, 28. These are two pictures of prophets who encounter God and are confronted with bearing hard truths. What is the common sense of the prophet’s duty to convey, without shrinking, the word of God?

This week’s reflection question: The position of prophet is unlike most anything we are familiar with in our current culture. The standards are so purely elevated and the authority so unquestionable, it is difficult to imagine giving ourselves over to abject faith in the voice of any man. Yet, in the economy of the Old Testament, God has established the role of the prophet as a crucial emissary of His word and intent. It will be very important to keep this in mind as we approach the study of Jonah in the coming weeks. In your devotions this week, ask God to help you embrace the role and words of the messengers He gave to His people (and to us) in the foundational canon of the Old Testament.

