

READING PLAN WEEK 7 for **The Epic of Eden – Jonah**

Word from the Author: “Stepping into Chapters 3 and 4 of Jonah, we find another literary theme emerge. Whereas the first two chapters of Jonah focused on “hurling” and “appointing”, this chapter resounds with “announcing”. As a prophet, it was Jonah’s task to announce the word of God. But as an Israelite, a member of the theocracy of Israel whose standard audience was *Israel*, Jonah was fighting a losing battle to understand how a word of forgiveness could be given to *Assyrians*. He thought the gifts of God were only for the people of God, and we join Jonah as he discovers a new breadth of God’s vision for the world. Clearly, it is not an easy revelation.

Day #1: Read Jonah 3:1-10. Meditate for a moment on the actions taken by the Ninevites in this section of scripture; the actions of the people and the actions of the king. Consider the deep motivations of these actions. This is not an unfamiliar motif in this book. Have a quick look at **Jonah 1:6** compared **Jonah 3:9**, and **Jonah 1:15-16** compared with **Jonah 3:10**. Now consider God’s response to the humility and repentance. What do these passages teach you about the character of Jonah’s God? What aspects of that character still seem to be missing in the character of Jonah?

Day #2: Read Jonah 4:1-5. Why was Jonah angry? Consider what Jonah says he knows of the character of God. What does he ask God to do to him and, more importantly, why? What do you think Jonah was expecting to “become of the city” in verse 5? **Now Read Luke 10:30-37.** This is a very familiar story told by Jesus himself. By looking at it, we are working to adopt a revolutionary view of God and His people to those we encounter; finding ourselves challenged not all that differently from Jonah. Mediate on the ways we may tend to fall into the patterns of the Priest or the Levite... or Jonah.

Day #3: Read Exodus 32:9-10, 31-32 and 34:6-7. Read also Jonah 3:10-4:5 . We are comparing the prophetic model of Moses against the prophetic model of Jonah. There are some similarities and some important divergences. In the case of the Exodus 32 reading, consider how God described the Israelites, what He intended to do with them, and what Moses asked God to do to him. Also consider the contrasting description God uses for himself in the Exodus chapter 34 reading. In the case of the Jonah reading, give thought to the difference between Moses’ request of God in Exodus 32:32 and Jonah’s in Jonah 4:3. Ponder how widely different the heart is behind these two “similar” requests!

This week’s reflection question: *Of all our meditations and lessons, this one is probably the most challenging. Rather than seeing the book of Jonah as a metaphor or a fable, it is compelling us to see it as an extremely practical window into the heart of God and into our own deepest perceptions of those outside of the family of God. We may very easily, like Jonah, get the doctrine of God’s nature correct, but neglect to adopt and welcome the character and disposition of God into every corner of our own lives. Take the opportunity to welcome a time redemptive self-reflection on this matter.*

