

Study Guide



The Ghent Altarpiece (1425–32), Hubert van Eyck, detail. Iberofoto / Iberofoto



LifeLight

LifeLight Expands

Available NOW!

The Bible: An Overview
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LifeLight Foundations

Baptism
Bible Feasts
Creation, New Creation
The Christian's Mission

End Times
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Law & Gospel
Ministry

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LifeLight Release Schedule

2015 RELEASES

LifeLight Foundations—

Time between the Testaments

December

The Day of the Lord Is Near

Obadiah

*Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.
Use enrichment magazine pp. 2–5.*

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Shall we not yield Him, in costly devotion,
Fragrance of Edom and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure.
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

LSB 400:1, 3–4

Prayer

Lord God, in Your infinite wisdom and by Your almighty power, You exalt and You make small. Keep us from sinful pride and arrogance that would turn us from You, our only hope and our sure salvation. Forgive us our many sins, and renew us daily through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 1

Day 1 • Read Genesis 25:19–34 and Jeremiah 49:7–22

1. Obadiah, whose name means “servant of the Lord [Yahweh],” records God’s word against a particular nation. Write below the name of the nation and a summary of where it was located, based on a Bible atlas or a map in your Bible.

2. According to Genesis 25:19–34, what was the origin of this nation?

3. Jeremiah also writes about this nation. Read Jeremiah 49:7–22. Summarize the future of this nation.

4. The little Book of Obadiah presents some big problems for historians. There are three main suggestions about when it was written: an early date, c. 845 BC; a late date, c. 400 BC; and a date after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, c. 587–555 BC. Compare Obadiah 1–4 with Jeremiah 49:14–16. What does the passage from Jeremiah suggest about the events Obadiah describes?

5. a. According to Obadiah 1, how did the prophet receive God’s message about this nation?

b. What does this tell you about the nature of the prophecy?

9. Who in this nation does the Lord target for judgment?

..... **Day 2 • Read Obadiah**

Today, you will read the whole Book of Obadiah, but the questions will focus on just the first portion of the book. This is to provide a good look at the full context before studying particulars. (Reading for context will also be used for Jonah and Micah and is a good general practice for interpreters of the Bible.)

6. a. The Lord's word about the nation begins with a summons. Who is summoned?

b. Why are they summoned?

7. What reasons does the Lord give for His summons in verses 3 and 7?

8. The prophet uses some figurative language to describe what he sees happening to the nation in verses 4–9. Choose an example of this figurative language and explain what historical events it depicts.

10. How does the Lord's focused wrath speak to the circumstances of your nation today?

..... **Day 3 • Read Obadiah 10–14 and Malachi 1:2–5**

11. In Obadiah 10, the Lord states how long the punishment against the nation will last. Compare it with Malachi 1:2–5. What does this tell us about the nature of God and His judgment?

12. In Obadiah 12–14, the Lord records a series of commands against the nation ("do not . . ."). Choose two of these commands and write them as commands against sin in our day.

a. First command: Do not . . .

b. Second command: Do not . . .

16. What principle of justice does the Lord apply to the nations?

13. Now turn these negative commands into something positive that the Lord calls His people to do for others.

a. First positive command: Do . . .

b. Second positive command: Do . . .

17. In verse 17, the Lord speaks a promise in connection with Zion, where the temple and its covenant services were held. What will become of Zion?

14. Why was it so important for the Lord to love, protect, and preserve the people of Judah? (Read Matthew 2:1–6, if you need help.)

18. How does the Lord transform the house of Jacob and of Joseph?

..... **Day 4 • Read Obadiah 15–18**

15. So far the passages of Obadiah have focused on God's wrath and judgment on a particular nation. How do these verses introduce changes of focus?

19. Today, there is no "house of Esau," as the Lord said would happen. Its inhabitants were certainly overwhelmed by judgment. But according to Deuteronomy 23:7–8; Amos 9:12; and Mark 3:7–8, how else might the house of Esau (Idumea) disappear?

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Day 5 • Read Obadiah 19–21

20. In these verses, the Lord gives a geography lesson and also declares the future of His people. How do the tribal names Ephraim and Benjamin help explain who “those of the Negeb” and “those of the Shephelah” are? (If you need further clues, read 1 Chronicles 9:1–3.)

21. We don’t usually see the word “Savior” in the plural as “saviors.” According to Judges 3:9, what kind of persons are such “saviors”?

22. According to verse 21, who will be the ultimate Savior?

23. **Challenge question.** Obadiah prophesied that “the kingdom shall be the LORD’s.” According to Matthew 6:10, is the prophecy of Obadiah fulfilled? Explain why or why not.

Arise, Go to Nineveh

Jonah 1

Distribute before session 2 for use in session 2.

Use enrichment magazine pp. 6–8.

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

Jesus, lead Thou on
Till our rest is won;
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow calm and fearless.
Guide us by Thy hand
To our fatherland.

If the way be drear,
If the foe be near,
Let not faithless fears o'ertake us;
Let not faith and hope forsake us;
For through many a woe
To our home we go.

When we seek relief
From a long-felt grief,
When temptations come alluring,
Make us patient and enduring.
Show us that bright shore
Where we weep no more.

Jesus, lead Thou on
Till our rest is won.
Heav'nly leader, still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us,
Till we safely stand
In our fatherland.

LSB 718

Prayer

O Lord, salvation belongs to You, and You alone! You have given us the Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations. How often we, like Jonah, have wanted to flee rather than to serve. Forgive us our indifference, cowardice, and prejudice. Embolden us by Your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 2

Day 1 • Read 2 Kings 14:23–29

1. Apart from the Book of Jonah, 2 Kings 14 is the only other place in the Old Testament that mentions the prophet Jonah. Summarize below the setting for Jonah's ministry.

Where

What king

What circumstances

What prophecy

2. The description of the Lord in verses 24–27 provides helpful background for understanding the Book of Jonah. How does the writer of 2 Kings describe the Lord here?

3. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* God calls each of us to share His Word—both the harsh message of the Law and the life-giving message of the Gospel—with those around us. How does the ministry of Jonah in 2 Kings 14 encourage you to share God’s Word today?

7. Israel sought the presence of the Lord at the tabernacle or temple, where God promised to be present to bless His people. How do believers today seek the Lord’s presence?

8. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* What special requests would you make of the Lord in His presence?

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Day 2 • Read Jonah 1

4. The name Jonah means “dove” or “pigeon” in Hebrew. According to Leviticus 1:14–17, what special roles did doves have in Hebrew culture?

5. Jonah’s father’s name, Amittai, means “faithful” or “loyal.” What irony do you see between the name of Jonah’s father and Jonah’s actions in 1:3?

6. Twice in verse 3, Jonah is said to flee “from the presence of the LORD” (literally, from “the face of the LORD”). Based on Genesis 3:8 and 4:16, what is the state of Jonah’s mind and heart?

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Day 3 • Read Jonah 1:4–6

9. **Challenge question.** These few verses of Jonah raise some challenging theological questions. Based on Jonah 1:4 and Job 1:12–19 (especially vv. 16, 18–19), is God responsible for all “natural” disasters? Why or why not?

10. Are God’s actions fair toward the sailors who suffer damage to their ship and who lose their cargo? Why or why not?

11. To the ship's captain, Jonah's God is just one god among many who might hear their prayers. Based on Hebrews 11:6, does God hear the prayers of those who pray as the sailors do here?

15. People who worship many gods typically have a god for each major natural phenomenon. How does Jonah's confession show that his God is different?

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Day 4 • Read Jonah 1:7–10

12. What does it mean to "cast lots"?

13. The sailors spray Jonah with a stream of questions, revealing their desperation for an answer. What question(s) did Jonah leave unanswered in his reply of verse 9?

14. Jonah states "I fear the LORD." What does it mean to "fear" the Lord? (Read Psalm 119:38; 130:4 for help.)

16. Jonah told the sailors that he was "fleeing from the presence of the LORD" (1:10). How does Jonah's confession of his actions conflict with his confession of the Lord in verse 9?

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Day 5 • Read Jonah 1:11–16

17. Jonah stuns us with his answer to the sailors' question in verse 11. Is Jonah's answer a statement of faith or a statement of despair? Explain your answer.

18. What fear do the sailors express in verse 14?

19. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* Four times, the sailors speak of prayer or seeking God's will in the midst of their hardship (vv. 6, 7, 14, and 16). In contrast, chapter 1 records no prayers from Jonah! How do you respond when you face hardship?

20. In question 14, we explored what it means to "fear" the Lord. Apply what you learned to the description of the sailors in verse 16. What does this verse tell us and not tell us about their "fear"?

Tells us

Does not tell us