



the  
prophets

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION  
**BOOKS OF THE BIBLE**

for kids

LISTEN TO GOD'S MESSENGERS TELL ABOUT HOPE AND TRUTH

*NlRV, The Books of the Bible for Kids: The Prophets*  
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# introduction to The Prophets

*The Prophets is a collection of books written many years ago. The Prophets is part of a much bigger collection known as “the Bible.”*

*Long ago God created the world. Everything he made was good. But creation turned its back on God. Suddenly, the whole world was caught up in sin and death.*

*So God set out to rescue his good creation—to save us from sin and death. He promised a man named Abraham that his family would bring blessing to all nations and make things right.*

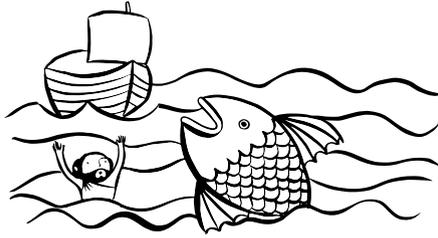
*Years later, God made a covenant, a very serious agreement, with Abraham’s grandchildren’s grandchildren. This agreement made these people a “kingdom of priests” and a “holy nation” for God. It taught them how to live well. They would help the world know and obey God. The covenant had promises called blessings for the nation if they obeyed God. It also promised curses if they disobeyed.*

*Sadly, most of the time the nation of Israel lived like the rest of the world, caught up in sin and death. And because one king disobeyed so badly, Israel split into two nations, Israel and Judah.*

*The prophets spoke for God. They reminded these two nations about their agreement with him. The prophets begged the people to ask for forgiveness and to agree with God that they were wrong. They begged them to start living how God asked them to. The prophets also talked about what would happen to the nations around Judah. They did this because God cares about all nations and wants the whole world to live well.*

*As you read the prophets, you will see a lot of sad things like hunger, sickness, enemies attacking, and death. These are the curses that the agreement talked about. But the prophets always looked forward to the blessing of God when the people admitted they were wrong.*

*You will also see a special promise. God promised that someone would come to his people and give them new hearts. Then they could live the way God asked them to without following lists of rules. They would be made new from the inside!*



## DAY 1 JONAH

### introduction to Jonah

*God called the prophet Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh that they would be punished soon for how they lived and treated other people. Nineveh was the capital city of the brutal Assyrian Empire. Jonah would rather do anything than ask them to admit their wrongdoing, since he and everyone else hated the Assyrians. He wanted God to judge them, say that they were wrong, and destroy them!*

*See what happens when Jonah speaks to the people of Nineveh. What does this book tell us about how God feels about people who disobey him?*



A message from the LORD came to Jonah, the son of Amittai. The LORD said, “Go to the great city of Nineveh. Preach against it. The sins of its people have come to my attention.”

But Jonah ran away from the LORD. He headed for Tarshish. So he went down to the port of Joppa. There he found a ship that was going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went on board. Then he sailed for Tarshish. He was running away from the LORD.

But the LORD sent a strong wind over the Mediterranean Sea. A wild storm came up. It was so wild that the ship was in danger of breaking apart. All the sailors were afraid. Each one cried out to his own god for help. They threw the ship’s contents into the sea. They were trying to make the ship lighter.

But Jonah had gone below deck. There he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went down to him and said, “How

can you sleep? Get up and call out to your god for help! Maybe he'll pay attention to what's happening to us. Then we won't die."

Here is what the sailors said to one another. "Someone is to blame for getting us into all this trouble. Come. Let's cast lots to find out who it is." So they did. And Jonah was picked. They asked him, "What terrible thing have you done to bring all this trouble on us? Tell us. What do you do for a living? Where do you come from? What is your country? What people do you belong to?"

He answered, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship the LORD. He is the God of heaven. He made the sea and the dry land."

They found out he was running away from the LORD. That's because he had told them. Then they became terrified. So they asked him, "How could you do a thing like that?"

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down?"

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied. "Then it will become calm. I know it's my fault that this terrible storm has come on you."

But the men didn't do what he said. Instead, they did their best to row back to land. But they couldn't. The sea got even rougher than before. Then they cried out to the LORD. They prayed, "Please, LORD, don't let us die for taking this man's life. After all, he might not be guilty of doing anything wrong. So don't hold us responsible for killing him. LORD, you always do what you want to." Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard. And the stormy sea became calm. The men saw what had happened. Then they began to have great respect for the LORD. They offered a sacrifice to him. And they made promises to him.



Now the LORD sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. He said,

"When I was in trouble, I called out to the LORD.  
And he answered me.

When I was deep in the place of the dead,  
I called out for help.  
And you listened to my cry.  
You threw me deep into the Mediterranean Sea.  
I was deep down in its waters.  
They were all around me.  
All your rolling waves  
were sweeping over me.  
I said, 'I have been driven away from you.  
But I will look again  
toward your holy temple in Jerusalem.'  
I had almost drowned in the waves.  
The deep waters were all around me.  
Seaweed was wrapped around my head.  
I sank down to the bottom of the mountains.  
I thought I had died  
and gone down into the grave forever.  
But you are the LORD my God.  
You brought my life up  
from the very edge of the pit of death.

"When my life was nearly over,  
I remembered you, LORD.  
My prayer rose up to you.  
It reached you in your holy temple in heaven.

"Some people worship the worthless statues of  
their gods.  
They turn away from God's love for them.  
But I will sacrifice a thank offering to you.  
And I will shout with thankful praise.  
I will do what I have promised.  
I will say, 'LORD, you are the one who saves.'"

The LORD gave the fish a command. And it spit Jonah up onto  
dry land.



A message from the LORD came to Jonah a second time. The LORD said, “Go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce to its people the message I give you.”

Jonah obeyed the LORD. He went to Nineveh. It was a very large city. In fact, it took about three days to go through it. Jonah began by going one whole day into the city. As he went, he announced, “In 40 days Nineveh will be destroyed.” The people of Nineveh believed God’s warning. So they decided not to eat any food for a while. And all of them put on the rough clothing people wear when they’re sad. That’s what everyone did, from the least important of them to the most important.

Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh. He got up from his throne. He took off his royal robes. He also dressed himself in the clothing of sadness. And then he sat down in the dust. Here is the message he sent out to the people of Nineveh.

“I and my nobles give this order.

Don’t let people or animals taste anything. That includes your herds and flocks. People and animals must not eat or drink anything. Let people and animals alike be covered with the clothing of sadness. All of you must call out to God with all your hearts. Stop doing what is evil. Don’t harm others. Who knows? God might take pity on us. He might not be angry with us anymore. Then we won’t die.”

God saw what they did. He saw that they stopped doing what was evil. So he took pity on them. He didn’t destroy them as he had said he would.



But to Jonah this seemed very wrong. He became angry. He prayed to the LORD. Here is what Jonah said to him. “LORD, isn’t this exactly what I thought would happen when I was still at home? That is what I tried to prevent by running away to Tarshish. I knew that you are gracious. You are tender and kind. You are slow to get angry. You are full of love. You are a God who takes pity on people.

You don't want to destroy them. LORD, take away my life. I'd rather die than live."

But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

Jonah had left the city. He had sat down at a place east of it. There he put some branches over his head. He sat in their shade. He waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the LORD God sent a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah. It gave him more shade for his head. It made him more comfortable. Jonah was very happy he had the leafy plant. But before sunrise the next day, God sent a worm. It chewed the plant so much that it dried up. When the sun rose, God sent a burning east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head. It made him very weak. He wanted to die. So he said, "I'd rather die than live."

But God spoke to Jonah. God said, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," Jonah said. "In fact, I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant. But you did not take care of it. You did not make it grow. It grew up in one night and died the next. And shouldn't I show concern for the great city of Nineveh? It has more than 120,000 people. They can't tell right from wrong. Nineveh also has a lot of animals."

# remember what you read

1. What is something you noticed for the first time?

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2. What questions did you have?

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3. Was there anything that bothered you?

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4. What did you learn about loving God?

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5. What did you learn about loving others?

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# A Word About The New International Reader's Version

## *Have You Ever Heard of the New International Version?*

We call it the NIV. Many people read the NIV. In fact, more people read the NIV than any other English Bible. They like it because it's easy to read and understand.

And now we are happy to give you another Bible that's easy to read and understand. It's the New International Reader's Version. We call it the Nlrv.

## *Who Will Enjoy Reading the New International Reader's Version?*

People who are just starting to read will understand and enjoy the Nlrv. Children will be able to read it and understand it. So will older people who are learning how to read. People who are reading the Bible for the first time will be able to enjoy reading the Nlrv. So will people who have a hard time understanding what they read. And so will people who use English as their second language. We hope this Bible will be just right for you.

## *How Is the Nlrv Different From the NIV?*

The Nlrv is based on the NIV. The NIV Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) didn't produce the Nlrv. But a few of us who worked on the Nlrv are members of CBT. We worked hard to make the Nlrv possible. We used the words of the NIV when we could. When the words of the NIV were too long, we used shorter words. We tried to use words that are easy to understand. We also made the sentences of the NIV much shorter.

Why did we do all these things? Because we wanted to make the Nlrv very easy to read and understand.

## *What Other Helps Does the Nlrv Have?*

We decided to give you a lot of other help too. For example, sometimes a verse is quoted from another place in the Bible. When it is, we tell you the Bible book, chapter and verse it comes from. We put that information right after the verse that quotes from another place.

We separated each chapter into shorter sections. We gave a title to almost every chapter. Sometimes we even gave a title to a section. We

did these things to help you understand what the chapter or section is all about.

Another example of a helpful change has to do with the word “Selah” in the Psalms. What this Hebrew word means is still not clear. So, for now, this word is not helpful for readers. The NIV has moved the word to the bottom of the page. We have followed the NIV and removed this Hebrew word from the NIrV. Perhaps one day we will learn what this word means. But until then, the Psalms are easier to read and understand without it.

Sometimes the writers of the Bible used more than one name for the same person or place. For example, in the New Testament the Sea of Galilee is also called the Sea of Gennesaret. Sometimes it is also called the Sea of Tiberias. But in the NIrV we decided to call it the Sea of Galilee everywhere it appears. We called it that because that is its most familiar name.

We also wanted to help you learn the names of people and places in the Bible. So sometimes we provided names even in verses where those names don’t actually appear. For example, sometimes the Bible says “the River” where it means “the Euphrates River.” In those places, we used the full name “the Euphrates River.” Sometimes the word “Pharaoh” in the Bible means “Pharaoh Hophra.” In those places, we used his full name “Pharaoh Hophra.” We did all these things in order to make the NIrV as clear as possible.

### *Does the NIrV Say What the First Writers of the Bible Said?*

We wanted the NIrV to say just what the first writers of the Bible said. So we kept checking the Greek New Testament as we did our work. That’s because the New Testament’s first writers used Greek. We also kept checking the Hebrew Old Testament as we did our work. That’s because the Old Testament’s first writers used Hebrew.

We used the best copies of the Greek New Testament. We also used the best copies of the Hebrew Old Testament. Older English Bibles couldn’t use those copies because they had not yet been found. The oldest copies are best because they are closer in time to the ones the first Bible writers wrote. That’s why we kept checking the older copies instead of the newer ones.

Some newer copies of the Greek New Testament added several verses that the older ones don’t have. Sometimes it’s several verses in a row. This occurs at Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53—8:11. We have included these verses in the NIrV. Sometimes the newer copies added only a

single verse. An example is Mark 9:44. That verse is not in the oldest Greek New Testaments. So we put the verse number 43/44 right before Mark 9:43. You can look on the list below for Mark 9:44 and locate the verse that was added.

*Verses That Were Not Found in Oldest Greek New Testaments*

- Matthew 17:21 But that kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.
- Matthew 18:11 The Son of Man came to save what was lost.
- Matthew 23:14 How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders! You take over the houses of widows. You say long prayers to show off. So God will punish you much more.
- Mark 7:16 Everyone who has ears to hear should listen.
- Mark 9:44 In hell, / “ ‘the worms don’t die, / and the fire doesn’t go out.’
- Mark 9:46 In hell, / “ ‘the worms don’t die, / and the fire doesn’t go out.’
- Mark 11:26 But if you do not forgive, your Father who is in heaven will not forgive your sins either.
- Mark 15:28 Scripture came true. It says, “And he was counted among those who disobey the law.”
- Luke 17:36 Two men will be in the field. One will be taken and the other left.
- Luke 23:17 It was Pilate’s duty to let one prisoner go free for them at the Feast.
- John 5:4 From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down. The angel would stir up the waters. The first disabled person to go into the pool after it was stirred would be healed.
- Acts 8:37 Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you can.” The official answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- Acts 15:34 But Silas decided to remain there.
- Acts 24:7 But Lysias, the commander, came. By using a lot of force, he took Paul from our hands.
- Acts 28:29 After he said that, the Jews left. They were arguing strongly among themselves.
- Romans 16:24 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.

*What Is Our Prayer for You?*

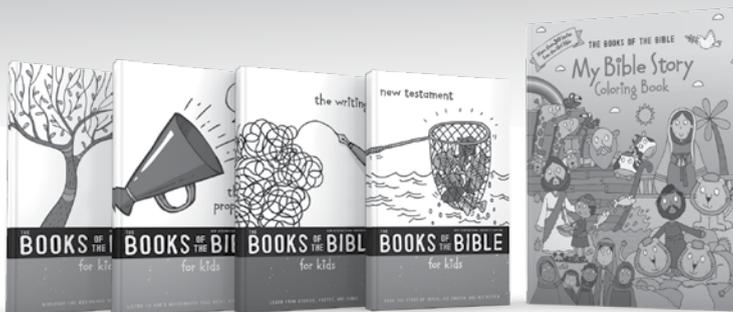
The Lord has blessed the New International Version in a wonderful way. He has used it to help millions of Bible readers. Many people have put their faith in Jesus after reading it. Many others have become stronger believers because they have read it.

We hope and pray that the New International Reader's Version will help you in the same way. If that happens, we will give God all the glory.

*A Word About This Edition*

This edition of the New International Reader's Version has been revised to include the changes of the New International Version. Over the years, many helpful changes have been made to the New International Version. Those changes were made because our understanding of the original writings is better. Those changes also include changes that have taken place in the English language. We wanted the New International Reader's Version to include those helpful changes as well. We wanted the New International Reader's Version to be as clear and correct as possible.

We want to thank the people who helped us prepare this new edition. They are Jeannine Brown from Bethel Seminary St. Paul, Yvonne Van Ee from Calvin College, Michael Williams from Calvin Theological Seminary, and Ron Youngblood from Bethel Seminary San Diego. We also want to thank the people at Biblica who encouraged and supported this work.



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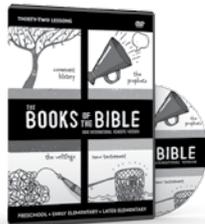
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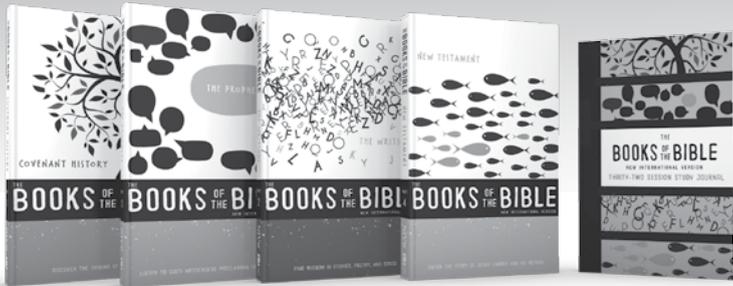
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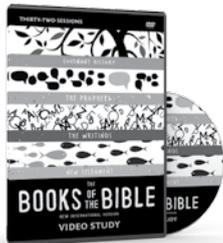
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