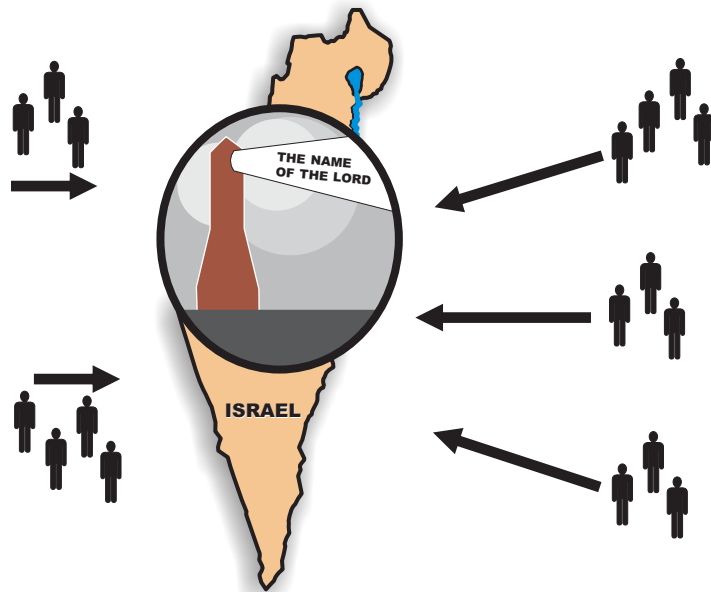


DOES THE BOOK OF JONAH CONSTITUTE A CALL TO FOREIGN MISSIONARY SERVICE?

Old Testament

Does the book of Jonah constitute a call to foreign missionary service? It does record God's call of one of His prophets to this kind of ministry. However, this is a rare ministry in the Old Testament period. Israel was to be a light to the nations by providing a model theocracy in the Promised Land. This was to attract Gentiles to her. The nations were to come to Israel for the knowledge of God and take this knowledge back home with them (**Ex.19:5-6; 1Ki.10; Is.42:6; Ac.8:26-40**).



"And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions." (1Ki.10:1-29)

"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (Is.42:6) [See also Ex.19:5-6; Ac.8:26-40]

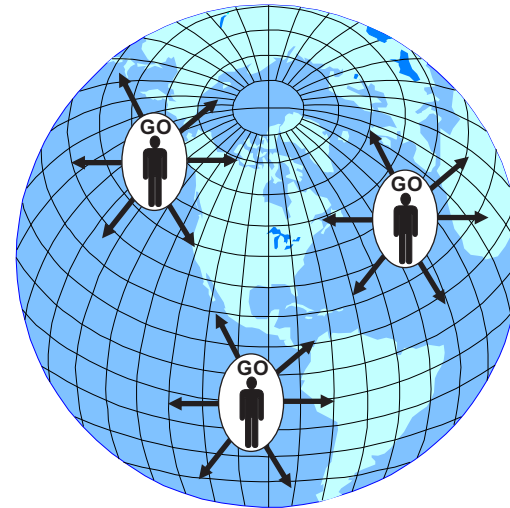
SUMMARY In the Old Testament the nations were to come to Israel to learn about the Lord. Israel was to attract the nations by the God-ordained Theocracy. New Testament believers are commanded to "Go" into all the world and proclaim the Gospel message. In the OT the nations were to come to Israel. In the NT believers are to go to the nations. God's will in the Old Testament was not for all Israelites to go, and do what God specifically told Jonah to do. However, they were to have a heart of compassion to those outside the covenant community, and show them mercy to attract them to the Lord.

New Testament

In the New Testament Jesus changed the missionary method used for the nations to learn of God. Now we are to "go" into all the world and herald the gospel to everyone rather than wait for them to come to us. The book of Jonah shows us an Old Testament prophet reluctant to do what Christians should do enthusiastically.

Christians should teach the book of Jonah and stress its true message (attitude and compassion), and not make the call of Jonah the main point.

During the Millennial Kingdom there will be a re-focus on Israel. All the nations of the world will once again come to her to worship the Lord.



"¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Mt.28:20-21)