

A Study of Jonah

PURPOSE:

To show the extent of God's grace - the message of salvation is for *all* people.

AUTHOR:

Jonah son of Amittai (also mentioned in 2nd Kings 14:25).

Original Audience:

All the people of Israel.

DATE WRITTEN:

Approximately 850 B.C. It was one of the earliest prophetic books written.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

This book is different from the other prophetic books because it tells the story of a prophet and does not center on his prophecies. In fact, only one verse summarizes his message to the people of Nineveh (3:4). Jonah is a historical narrative. It is also mentioned by Jesus as a picture of his death and resurrection (Matthew 12:38-42).

SIN runs rampant in society - daily headlines and overflowing prisons prove the fact. With child abuse, pornography, serial killings, terrorism, anarchy, and ruthless dictatorships, the world seems to be filled to overflowing with violence, hatred, and corruption. Hearing about these tragedies - and perhaps even experiencing them - we begin to understand the necessity of God's judgment. We may even find ourselves wishing for God's vengeance on the perpetrators. Surely they are beyond redemption! But suppose that in the midst of such thoughts, God told you to take the gospel to the worst of these offender - your personal enemies. How would you respond?

Jonah was given such a task. Assyria - a great but evil empire - was Israel's most dreaded enemy. The Assyrians flaunted their power before God and the world through numerous acts of heartless cruelty. When Jonah heard God tell him to go to Assyria and call the people to repentance, he ran in the opposite direction.

The book of Jonah tells the story of this prophet's flight and how God stopped him and turned him around. But it is much more than a story of a man and a great fish. Jonah's story is a profound illustration of God's mercy and grace. No one deserved God's favor less than the people of Nineveh, Assyria's capital. Jonah knew this. But he knew that God in mercy would forgive and bless them if they would turn from their sin and worship him. Jonah also knew the power of God's message, that even through his own weak preaching, they would respond and be spared God's judgment.

Jonah hated the Assyrians, and he wanted vengeance, not mercy. So he ran the other way. Eventually, Jonah obeyed and preached in the streets of Nineveh, and the people repented and were delivered from judgment. Then Jonah sulked and complained to God, "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people" (4:2). In the end, God confronted Jonah about his self-centered values and lack of compassion.

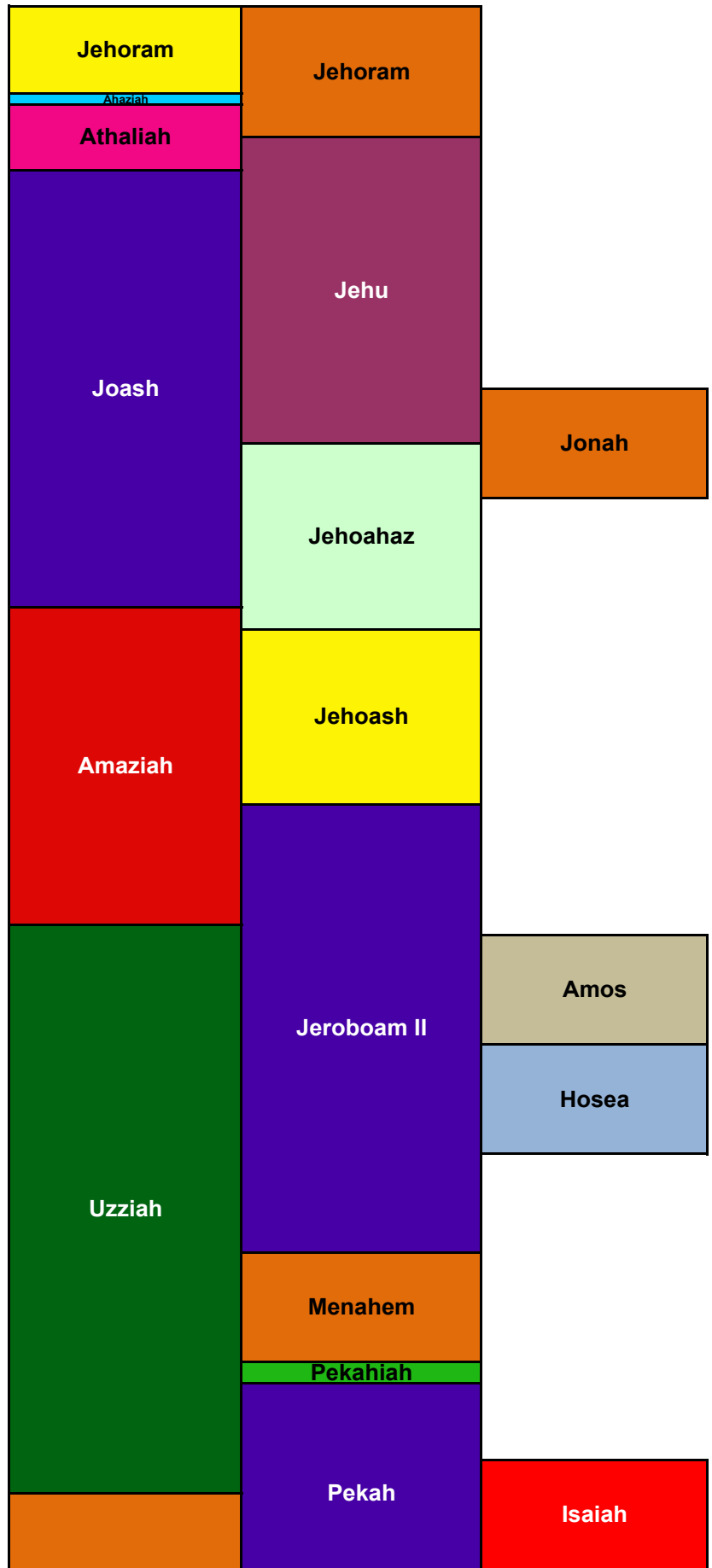
As you read Jonah, see the full picture of God's love and compassion and realize that no one is beyond redemption. The gospel is for all who will repent and believe. Jew and Gentile alike!

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

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3110	885	18
3117	884	19
3118	883	20
3119	882	Sabbath Year
3120	881	22
3121	880	23
3122	879	24
3123	878	25
3124	877	26
3125	876	27
3126	875	Sabbath Year
3127	874	29
3128	873	30
3129	872	31
3130	871	32
3131	870	33
3132	869	34
3133	868	Sabbath Year
3134	867	36
3135	866	37
3136	865	38
3137	864	39
3138	863	40
3139	862	41
3140	861	Sabbath Year
3141	860	43
3142	859	44
3143	858	45
3144	857	46
3145	856	47
3146	855	48
3147	854	Sabbath Year
3148	853	12th Jubilee Celebrated
3149	852	2
3150	851	3
3151	850	4
3152	849	5
3153	848	6
3154	847	Sabbath Year
3155	846	8
3156	845	9
3157	844	10
3158	843	11
3159	842	12
3160	841	13
3161	840	Sabbath Year
3162	839	15
3163	838	16
3164	837	17
3165	836	18
3166	835	19
3167	834	20
3168	833	Sabbath Year
3169	832	22
3170	831	23
3171	830	24
3172	829	25
3173	828	26
3174	827	27
3175	826	Sabbath Year
3176	825	29
3177	824	30
3178	823	31
3179	822	32
3180	821	33
3181	820	34
3182	819	Sabbath Year
3183	818	36
3184	817	37
3185	816	38
3186	815	39
3187	814	40
3188	813	41
3189	812	Sabbath Year
3190	811	43
3191	810	44
3192	809	45
3193	808	46
3194	807	47
3195	806	48
3196	805	Sabbath Year
3197	804	13th Jubilee Celebrated
3198	803	2
3199	802	3
3200	801	4
3201	800	5
3202	799	6
3203	798	Sabbath Year
3204	797	8
3205	796	9
3206	795	10
3207	794	11
3208	793	12
3209	792	13
3210	791	Sabbath Year
3211	790	15
3212	789	16
3213	788	17
3214	787	18
3215	786	19
3216	785	20
3217	784	Sabbath Year
3218	783	22
3219	782	23
3220	781	24
3221	780	25
3222	779	26
3223	778	27
3224	777	Sabbath Year
3225	776	29
3226	775	30
3227	774	31
3228	773	32
3229	772	33
3230	771	34
3231	770	Sabbath Year
3232	769	36
3233	768	37
3234	767	38
3235	766	39
3236	765	40
3237	764	41
3238	763	Sabbath Year
3239	762	43
3240	761	44
3241	760	45
3242	759	46
3243	758	47
3244	757	48
3245	756	Sabbath Year
3246	755	14th Jubilee Celebrated
3247	754	2
3248	753	3
3249	752	4
3250	751	5
3251	750	6
3252	749	Sabbath Year
3253	748	8
3254	747	9
3255	746	10
3256	745	11
3257	744	12
3258	743	13

3200



Note: Historians do not always agree on exact dates. This chart is designed to show the approximate relationships of the kings and prophets to each other.

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¹ Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ² Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. ³ But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

1. Jonah had apparently prophesied in Israel and had seen little repentance. God gave him a specific charge to go and announce his judgments against Nineveh, the chief city of the Assyrians. Why? Because he has always appointed that those who are lost, should be converted by the mighty power of His Word. So, within three day's preaching, Israel ought to have seen how horribly they had provoked God's wrath because they had not converted to the Lord, even after so many prophets and such diligent preaching.
2. The honor God put upon Jonah, in giving him a commission to go and prophesy against Nineveh. The name *Jonah* signifies a dove. His father's name was *Amittai - My truth*. To him *the word of the Lord came - to him it was* (so the word signifies), for God's word is a real thing. Men's words are like wind, but God's words are substance. He has been acquainted with the *word of the Lord*, and knows His voice from that of a stranger. The orders now given him were, *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city*.
3. Nineveh was at this time the metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy, *a great city, about forty-eight miles in circumference (15 miles across or larger), great in the number of the inhabitants (as appears by the number of infants in it), great in wealth (there was no end of its store) and great in power and dominion*.
4. Nineveh was a great city, but a heathen city, without the knowledge and worship of the true God. How many great cities and great nations are there that *sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death!* This great city was a wicked city: *Their wickedness has come up before me (their malice); their wickedness was presumptuous, and they sinned with a high hand*. It is sad to think that a great deal of sin is committed where there are many sinners, who are not only sinners, but in their sinning, they make each other to sin. *Their wickedness has come up*, that is, it has come to a high degree, to the highest pitch; the *measure of it is full to the brim; their wickedness has come up - to my face* (so the word is); it is a bold and open affront to God; it is sinning against him, *in his sight*. Therefore Jonah must *cry against it*; he must witness against their great wickedness, and must warn them of the destruction that was coming upon them for it. God is coming forth against it, and he sends Jonah before hand, to proclaim war, and to sound an alarm.
5. When the cry of sin comes up to God the cry of vengeance comes out against the sinner. He must *go to Nineveh*, and cry there upon the spot against the wickedness of it.
6. Those that go on God's errands must rise and go, must stir themselves to the work cut out for them.
7. The dishonor Jonah did to God in refusing to obey His orders, and to go on the errand on which he was sent. *But Jonah*, instead of rising to go to Nineveh, *rose up to flee to Tarshish*, desirous to get away *from the presence of the Lord*. Not that Jonah thought he could get away from under the eye of God's inspection, but from His special presence

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that he had long enjoyed as a prophet. It was this special presence that put him upon this work and he thought to get away from it.

8. Some think Jonah was of the opinion of some of the Jews that the spirit of prophecy was confined to the land of Israel and therefore he hoped he to get clear of it if he could get out of the borders of that land.
9. Jonah admits that the reason of his aversion to this journey was because he foresaw that the Ninevites would repent and that God would forgive them and take them into favor. This he viewed as a slur upon the people of Israel, who had been a peculiar people to God.

10. He therefore went to Tarshish. To do that, he went to Joppa, a famous seaport in the land of Israel (modern day Tel Aviv), in quest of a ship bound for Tarshish. Providence seemed to favor Jonah's efforts and give him an opportunity to escape. We may be out of the way of duty and still meet with a favorable results. The ready way is not always the right way.



11. He found the ship and set sail for Tarshish. He *paid the fare thereof*; so he could but gain his point, and get to a distance *from the presence of the Lord*. He went *with them*, with the mariners, with the passengers, with the merchants, whoever they were that were going to Tarshish. Jonah, forgetting his dignity as well as his duty, herded with

them, and *went down* into the ship to go *with them to Tarshish*. See what the best of men are when God leaves them to themselves, and what need we have, when the *Word of the Lord* comes to us, to have the *Spirit of the Lord* come along with the Word, to bring every thought within us into obedience to it. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that *therefore* he was not *rebellious*, neither *turned away back*, because God not only spoke to him, but *opened his ear*, (Isaiah 50:5). Let us learn to not to be too confident either of ourselves or others in a time of trial; but *let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*.



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⁴ But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. ⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. ⁶ So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.



1. The Bible says “the LORD sent out”. What does “sent out” mean? It is a verb that describes God as hurling or throwing this wind down onto the sea-going ship. God is angry and the mariners know it.
2. Jonah had done his all. Now God’s part begins. This He expresses by the word, “But”. Jonah took “his” measures, “and” now God takes “His.” As He often deals with those who rebel against Him, He lets them have their way up to a certain point. He waits, in the tranquility of His Almightyness, until they have completed their preparations. Then, when man has ended, God begins, so man can see clearly see it is God’s doing . Jonah thought to find rest in the sea but found a tempest. Probably, God sent the tempest, soon after he left the shore.
3. Tempests often swept along that shore, and were known by their own special name, like the Euroclydon off of Crete and, when the storm came, the mariners thought it possible to go back.
4. “The ship was like (likely or thought) to be broken”. Jonah seems to attribute to the ship a sense of its own danger, as she heaved and rolled and creaked and quivered under the weight of the storm which lay on her, and her masts groaned, and her yard-arms shivered. Everything on board - including the ship - was conscious to God’s displeasure except, of course, Jonah.
5. “And cried, every man unto his God” - They did what they could. Not knowing the truth, they still knew a Providence and they also knew that they had in ignorance received one who offended God.
6. “To lighten it of them”. What was it that weighed so much that the ship-load was in danger of drowning? They thought that the ship was weighed down by its cargo and they knew not that the whole weight was that of the fugitive prophet. The sailors cast forth their wares, but the ship was not lightened. For the whole weight still remained, the body of the prophet, that heavy burden, not from the nature of the body, but from the burden of sin. For nothing is so heavy as sin and disobedience. Remember, Christ cried aloud to those who lived in many sins, **Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

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7. "Jonah was gone down", probably before the beginning of the storm. A pagan ship was a strange place for a prophet of God, not as a prophet, but as a fugitive; and so, probably, ashamed of what he had completed, he had withdrawn from sight and notice. He does not rejoice in his sin, but shrinks into himself. The conscience most commonly awakes, when the sin is done.
8. "And was fast asleep". The journey to Joppa had been long and hurried; he had "fled." Sorrow and remorse completed what fatigue began. Perhaps he had given himself up to sleep, to dull his conscience. Grief produces sleep; from where it is said of the apostles in the night before the Lord's Passion, when Jesus "rose up from prayer and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow" (Luke 22:45). Jonah was in a deep sleep, a sleep by which he was held and bound. Had God allowed the ship to sink, the memory of Jonah would have been that of the fugitive prophet. As it is, his deep sleep stands as an image of the stupor of sin .

While the storm raged, Jonah was sound asleep below deck. Even as he ran from God, Jonah's actions apparently didn't bother his conscience. The absence of guilt is not always a barometer of whether we are doing right. Because we can deny reality, we cannot measure obedience by our feelings. Instead, we must compare what we do with God's standards for living. We must measure our actions by His will and His Word.

Sleep is no necessary proof of innocence. Here Jonah sleeps because of the fruit of carnal security and a seared conscience. How different was Jesus' sleep on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:37-39)! Guilty Jonah's indifference to fear contrasts with the unoffending mariners' alarm.

The careless self-security with which he had embarked on the ship to flee from God, without considering that the hand of God could reach him even on the sea, and punish him for his disobedience. This false security is apparent in his subsequent conduct.

9. "What meanest thou?" The shipmaster, charged, as he was by office, with the common welfare of those on board, would, likely have a common prayer. It was the prophet's office to call the pagan to prayers and to call upon God. When God's servants do not represent God rightly, He uses those we minister to, to offer a "reproof" to us. God reproved the Scribes and Pharisees by the mouth of the children who "cried Hosanna" (Matthew 21:15); Jonah by the shipmaster; David by Abigail (1st Samuel 25:32-34) and Naaman by his servants.
10. "If so be that God will think upon us". Their calling upon their own gods had failed them. Perhaps the shipmaster had seen something special about Jonah, his manner, or his prophet's garb. He not only calls Jonah's God, "thy" God, but also "the God," acknowledging the God whom Jonah worshiped, to be "the God." It is not any pagan prayer which he asks Jonah to offer. It is the prayer of the creature in its need to God who can help.
11. The shipmaster knew from experience, that this was no common storm, that the surges were an infliction sent down from God. Surviving this was above human skill. The state of things needed another Master who orders the heavens and the ship's captain craved the guidance from on high.
12. Isn't it "ironic" that when Jonah refused to go to the Gentiles and tell them of God's anger toward their sin he finds himself in a boat-load of Gentiles - who become full aware of their sinful condition before God, and God still uses Jonah to preach His truth to their lost souls. We cannot run from God!!!

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⁷ And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. ⁸ Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou?

1. Occurrences of “Casting Lots” in the Bible.
 - a. General references: Proverbs 16:33, Proverbs 18:18, Isaiah 34:17, Joel 3:3.
 - b. The scapegoat chosen: Leviticus 16:8-10.
 - c. The land of Canaan divided among the tribes: Numbers 26:55, Joshua 8:10, 14:2, 19:51, 21:4-6, 1st Chronicles 6:61, 65, Ezekiel 45:1, 47:22, 48:29, Micah 2:5.
 - d. Saul chosen king: 1st Samuel 10:20-21.
 - e. Priests and Levites designated for temple service: 1st Chronicles 24:5-31, 26:13, Nehemiah 10:34, Luke 1:9.
 - f. Used after the captivity: Nehemiah 11:1.
 - g. An apostle (Judas Iscariot’s replacement) was chosen: Acts 1:26.
 - h. Instances of guilt determined:
 - (1) Achan - Joshua 7:14-18.
 - (2) Jonathan - 1st Samuel 14:41-42.
 - (3) Jonah - Jonah 1:7.
 - i. Used to fix the time for the execution of condemned persons: Esther 3:7, 9:24 (The Feast of Purim - “pur” is hebrew for “lots”).
 - j. The garments of Jesus divided: Psalm 22:18, Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, John 19:23-24.
2. **Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.
3. It should be observed by the careful Bible student that AFTER Pentecost (when The Holy Spirit began to indwell all believers) the use of “lots” ceased by Christians. Apparently because God now directs us and reveals necessary things to us through His Holy Spirit.
4. They knew the nature of the sea, and were acquainted with the character of wind and storm. Had these waves been like those they had known before, they would never have sought cast the lot to determine the cause of the threatening sea. God, who sent the storm to arrest Jonah and to cause him to be cast into the sea, provided that the character of the storm should cause the mariners to attempt “divination”.
5. They had no other way of knowing the cause of their current peril. This was God's way of getting them to test for the cause: and this may not be done except in matters of great importance. Even the heathen looked upon the casting of lots to be a sacred thing, to be done with seriousness and solemnity, and not to be made a sport of. It is a shame for Christians when we do not have a like reverence for an appeal to Providence.
6. Sin brings storms and tempests into the soul, into the family, into churches and nations. It is a disquieting, disturbing thing. Having called upon their gods for help, the sailors did what they could to help themselves.
7. Jonah was fast asleep. Sin is stupifying, and we are to take heed lest at any time our hearts are hardened by the deceitfulness of it. The sailors concluded the storm was a messenger of Divine justice sent to some one in that ship. Whatever evil is upon us at

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any time, there is a cause for it; and each must pray, Lord, show me why you contend with me. The lot fell upon Jonah. God has many ways of bringing to light hidden sins and sinners, and making manifest that folly which was thought to be hid from the eyes of all living.

8. Christian, when you refuse to get right with God, He has no choice except to hunt you down and send punishment. [Hebrews 12:6-8](#) ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Far to many churches end up in the same situation as these sailors. They have folks they have welcomed into their midst (not just members) that have angered God. Too often we think that the only “reason” to practice “church discipline” is because of unrepentant sexual immorality. However, we are without Biblical precedent when WE choose to view some sins as more “sinful” than others. Jonah was not guilty of some “vile” socially unacceptable sin. He was guilty of refusing to do what God wanted him to do. God takes that so seriously that EVERYONE on board was in peril of their lives.

There are times that it is necessary to “throw overboard” those who have angered God. It is not for us to play the mediator or worry about what will become of them. That role is reserved by Jesus Christ Himself as mediator between God and man ([1st Timothy 2:5](#) For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus). There was still security in the ship as there is security within the church. Only when the unrepentant sinning brother (or sister) is cast out, do they reach a point where they realize that they are fully at God’s mercy - and that there is a fate worse than death.

9. The nature of their questioning implies that they already had a casual knowledge of Jonah’s occupation and origin. Here, they seem to question him further, for, on the surface, they saw no reason that the lot should have fallen upon him. However, they KNEW he was guilty (“for whose cause this evil *is* upon us”) and questioned him in earnest as to his REAL occupation, his REAL origin and background.
10. Criminals almost never confess until they find they cannot help it, till *the lot falls upon them*. We may suppose there were those in the ship who in other areas were greater sinners than Jonah, but he is the man that the tempest pursues and that the lot falls upon.
11. It is his own child and his own servant, that the parent or master, corrects. Others that offend, he leaves to the law. The storm is sent after Jonah, because God has work for him to do, and it is sent to fetch him back to it.
12. God has many ways of bringing to light concealed sins and cunning sinners. Of making public the folly which they thought was hidden from the eyes of all living. God's right hand will find out all his servants that desert him, as well as all his enemies that have designs against him (remember David, Bathsheba and Nathan’s confrontation?).
13. Though it was discovered by the lot that Jonah was the person responsible for their peril, they did not fly outrageously upon him, as one would fear they might have done. Instead they calmly and mildly enquired into his case. There is a compassion due to offenders when they are discovered and convicted. They give him no harsh words, but, “*Tell us, we pray thee...*” Oh that Christians would treat a sinning brother that makes such a full confession with the compassion and care that these sailors treated Jonah.

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⁹ And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land*. ¹⁰ Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. ¹¹ Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. ¹² And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest *is* upon you.

1. **I am an Hebrew** - This was the name by which Israel was known to foreigners. It is used in the Old Testament when they are spoken of by foreigners, speak of themselves to foreigners, or when mentioned in contrast with foreigners. Joseph in Genesis 40:15, the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:19, Miriam in Exodus 2:7, God in His commission to Moses in Exodus 3:18, 7:16, 9:1.

He does not say he is a “Jew”. That would have been false since he was of the tribe of Zebulun, and that was in the kingdom of Israel. Nor does he say an Israelite, since he might be thought to be in their idolatry, but he says “a Hebrew”. This was common term to both nations, it was the religion he professed, and it identified his God.

3. **I fear the LORD** - Not that Jonah was afraid, but that he was one who habitually stood in awe of Him, and therefore, one who stands in awe of sin too. In this small testimony, Jonah was faithful. There is a vast difference between “fearing” God and being “fearful” of God. He gave an honest testimony concerning the God he served. The God of Jonah was the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land, and governed both. He also honestly told them that he was fleeing from the presence of this God, whose honorable call he had refused to obey.
4. **the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land** - appropriately expressed considering the current circumstances. The heathen had distinct gods for the “heaven,” the “sea,” and the “land.” Jehovah is the one and only true God of all.

By this description of God, Jonah sets God forth in His nature and works and distinguishes Him from the gods of heathens, who had only particular parts of the universe assigned to them. Jonah’s God (Jehovah) is Lord of all.

He had told them before, that he had fled “from being before Jehovah.” They had not thought anything of this, for they thought of Jehovah, only as the God of the Jews. Now he adds, that He, whose service he had forsaken, was “the God of heaven who made the sea and dry land”. This was the same sea that terrified and threatened them.

The title, “the God of heaven,” asserts the doctrine of the creation of the heavens by God, and His supremacy. Here, Jonah all at once taught the sailors that there is One Lord of all, and why this evil had fallen on them - because he, the renegade servant of God, was with them. When Jonah said this, he indeed feared (stood in awe before) God and repented of his sin. If he lost proper “fear” by fleeing and disobeying, he recovered it by repentance.

5. **Then were the men exceedingly afraid** - Before, they had feared the tempest and the loss of their lives. Now they feared God. They feared, not the creation but the Creator. They knew that what they had feared was His almighty doing. They felt how awesome a thing it was to be in His Hands. Such fear is the beginning of their conversion - when people turn from dwelling on their distresses, to the God who sent them.

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6. **Why hast thou done this?** - is not a question as to “why” he sinned, but an exclamation of horror at his flight from Jehovah, the God heaven and earth. The great fear which came upon the heathen seamen at this confession of Jonah may be fully explained by the dangerous situation in which they found themselves. The storm preached the omnipotence of God more powerfully than words.

Their words are words of amazement and wonder. Why have you not obeyed so great a God, and how did you think to escape the hand of the Creator? Why did the worshiper of the One true God depart from his God? Why would you involve us in so much distress and danger? The inconsistency of believers is a marvel of the unsaved and to young Christians. All nature seems to cry out to and against the unfaithful Christian. It is nothing strange, that the world should reject the Gospel. But, to know, to believe, and then to DISOBEY? It makes no sense.

7. **for the men knew that he had fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.** - not when he first entered into the ship, but now. Jonah no doubt told the whole story, though not recorded here, and that his flight was the true reason for the storm.
8. **What shall we do unto thee?** - They knew him to be a prophet and they ask him the mind of his God. The lots had marked out Jonah as the cause of the storm; Jonah had admitted it, and admitted that the storm was for “his” cause, and came from “his” God. They dare not give him up but they cannot conceal him. If God is so angry at him that this is the result, then what are their options?
9. The question, **“that the sea may be calm for us?”** shows a typical human attitude of caring for one's own skin at all costs.
10. **The sea wrought and was tempestuous** - literally “was going and whirling.” It was not only increasingly tempestuous, but, like a thing alive and obeying its Master's will pursuing and demanding the runaway slave of God. It was swelling every moment, and if the sailors were too tardy, it was rising in even greater waves, showing that God would not allow delay.
11. **Take me up, and cast me into the sea** - God willed that Jonah should be cast into the sea where he had gone for escape. As a worshiper of Jehovah, he must pronounce his own sentence, or let it be pronounced by his God. Jonah confesses that he deserves to die for his rebellion against God, and that the wrath of God can only be appeased by his death. He pronounces this “death” sentence, not by any prophetic inspiration, but as a believing Hebrew who is well acquainted with the severity of the justice of the holy God.
12. You cannot seek God's love and run from him at the same time. Jonah soon realized that no matter where he went, he couldn't get away from God. But before Jonah could return to God, he first had to stop going in the opposite direction. What has God told you to do? If you want more of God's love and power, you must be willing to carry out the responsibilities he has already given you. You cannot say that you truly believe in God if you do not do what he says - ^{1st} John 2:3-6 ³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁶ He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

A Study of Jonah

¹³ Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. ¹⁴ Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. ¹⁵ So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

1. **Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land;** How often do we, like these men, try our hardest to work against what God has willed? Oh how small the group of Christians that really want's God's will - regardless. Jonah was running from it (as if that would cause God to change). These sailors were rowing against it (as if they, through human effort, could out-do what God was doing). However, Jesus prayed "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Our intellect tells us that we want God's will, but do our hearts and our actions reveal something different?

By trying to save Jonah's life, these pagan sailors showed more compassion than Jonah. He did not want to warn the Ninevites of the coming judgment of God. We should be ashamed when unbelievers show more concern and compassion for others than we do. God wants us to be concerned for all people, lost and saved.

2. **Wherefore they cried unto the LORD** - What wonderful spiritual progression has been made by these sailors in such a few moments. They have gone from "praying to their own gods" to "crying out to Jehovah (LORD)."
3. Their prayer is for two things:
 - a. Do not let us perish for this man's life (don't let us die because of Jonah).
 - b. Do not lay on us innocent blood (don't charge us with this man's death).
4. **So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea** - when we are not willing to take God's Word and act (in faith), He is very capable of putting us in situations where we will "do His Will" out of fear. These men were afraid to NOT do what God said.
5. **the sea ceased from her raging** - Literally, the sea "stood" from her raging. When Jesus stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee, and there was a sudden, complete, miraculous calm. Even here, there is a sudden, supernatural calm that cannot be explained. What the swelling waves had accomplished in terror, this sudden stopping of the storm confirm to these mariners that the LORD was in complete control.

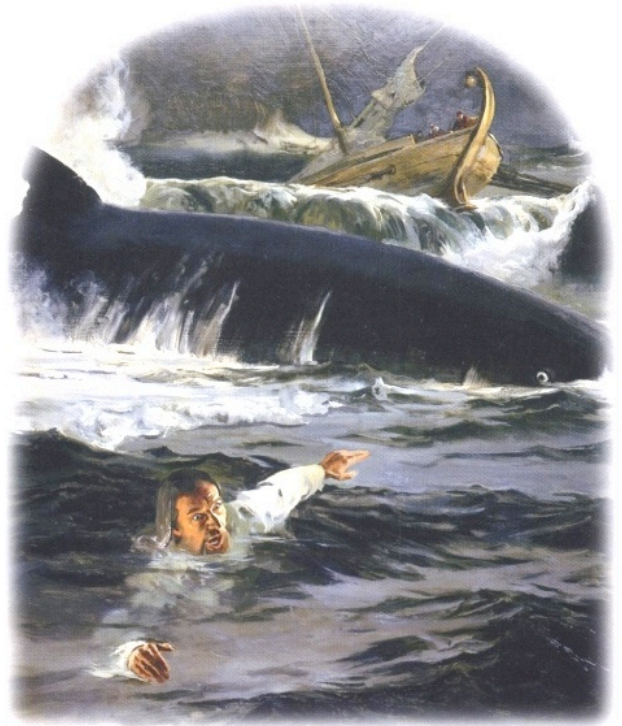


A Study of Jonah

6. **the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.** - What a wonderful transformation occurs in men when we come face-to-face with the reality that there is a God and that we are subject to Him. These men have had a life-changing experience. The storm is over. There is no more threat. However, they (1) sacrifice while still on the boat and (2) make vows to the LORD.

¹⁷ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

1. The Bible does not say that God “created”, but that He “prepared” a great fish.
2. The exact species of fish is not named. Yes, our Bibles say that in Matthew 12:40 Jesus called it a “whale”. However, the Greek word that is translated only means “great fish”. It is likely that the KJV translators named the only fish they knew that matched the description. Could it have been a whale? Certainly, as well as several other “large” sea animals. We must accurately repeat scripture by calling it what it was - a great fish
3. The fish was probably not a carnivorous fish (shark, squid, etc). Why? Because there is no record of the teeth tearing Jonah’s flesh, nor were there digestive enzymes present that would have digested Jonah’s fleshy body.
4. **Three days and three nights** - We should NOT construe this verse to mean “exactly 72 hours”. Let’s be only as clear as scripture is. Had Jonah been in the fish’s belly for MORE than “3 days and 3 nights” then the Bible would say either “4 days” or “4 nights”. Had Jonah been swallowed for less than 2-1/2 days, then the Bible would say either “2 days” or “2 nights”. There can be no other conclusion that is consistent with scripture than to say that Jonah was in the belly of the fish between 2-1/2 and 3 days (if you wish, think 60 to 72 hours).



This is important because Christ died around 3:00 pm on Passover Day. We know He arose early Sunday morning (the first day of the week). He said that the duration and place of Jonah’s experience was prophetically like what He would experience. **Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

Back up 2-1/2 days from Sunday morning and you have (approximately) Thursday evening at 6:00 pm. Three full days would be Thursday morning at sunrise. There is ample evidence here and elsewhere in scripture that Jesus died and was buried on Thursday afternoon.

A Study of Jonah

Jonah 2

¹ Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, ² And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice. ³ For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. ⁴ Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

1. There is not one word of petition in Jonah's prayer. It consists of thanksgiving (vv 2-6), contrition (vv 7-8) and rededication (v 9). It is really a psalm of praise (a doxology). Literally, Jonah is having a time of thanksgiving (rejoicing and singing) in the belly of a great fish. We may have had times of rejoicing and thanksgiving, but the novelty of singing and thanking God - from inside a great fish is absolutely without rival.
2. The mention of **the belly of hell (Sheol)** in verse 2 has led some to believe that Jonah actually *died* in the fish and was resurrected. However, the Hebrew word *Sheol* can mean *grave*, *afterlife*, and other things. Here it is probably a poetic usage for "the depths," or as modern idiom might put it, "the pits."
3. So, did he die? Some Christians say "yes" and others say "no". Is there internal evidence within the Book of Jonah that gives us a rather clear answer? Yes! Jonah discovers that he has been swallowed alive and begins to pray. That is significant. Nowhere in the Bible do we read that someone "prays" after death. Nowhere do we read that humans are given a "second chance" to make things right after death. The idea of a purgatory is strictly a made-up Catholic doctrine that has NO BASIS in scripture. The Bible is clear that there is no possibility of repentance and restoration after death. The very fact that Jonah prays and God hears and gives him another chance is ample proof to the serious Bible Student that Jonah was NOT dead.

Even though Jonah was not physically dead at this point, Jesus used the prophet as a picture of His own death, His burial for three days and nights, and His glorious resurrection (Matthew 12:40). Incidentally, this shows that Christ accepted Jonah as a historical character, and not merely as a "parable," as some modern preachers claim.

4. The question usually arises about "why" Jonah was in the the belly of the fish for so long (3 days and 3 nights). Clearly, he was still unrepentant when he was cast over the side of the ship. Obviously, he thought that his death was at hand and that he, in a way, had won and would NOT have to preach to the Ninevites.

We do not see any signs of repentance from Jonah until he is within the fish. He is beyond human hope and human help. Only when circumstances are so far beyond his ability to deal with, do we find that Jonah "cries" out to God. Even as he cries, he knows that God has heard him and will be returned to Israel.

⁵ The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. ⁶ I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

1. As Jonah repents, we find that he is deeply thankful to God. Even though the fish is swimming around at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea with the vegetation that it had swallowed wrapped around Jonah's head, he knows that God has heard him and that

A Study of Jonah

he will - somehow - see the Temple in Jerusalem again. Jonah has come face-to-face with his sin, repented, been forgiven and is profoundly thankful.

2. He is not out of danger, but the danger no longer matters. He is right with God. “Repentance”, “restoration”, “rejoicing” and “resting” takes time. Jonah spent a good part of the “three days and three nights” getting right with God.
3. After getting spiritually right with God, Jonah is helpless but not hopeless.

⁷When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. ⁸They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. ⁹But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD.

1. Jonah said, "As my life was slipping away, I remembered the LORD" (v 7). Often we act the same way. When life is going well, we tend to take God for granted; but when we lose hope, we cry out to him. This kind of relationship with God can result only in an inconsistent, up-and-down spiritual life. A consistent, daily commitment to God promotes a solid relationship with him. Look to God during both the good and bad times, and you will have a stronger spiritual life.
2. Modern Messianic Jews translate the phrase in verse 8 “they that observe lying vanities” as “those who worship vain idols. Truly, there is no greater “lying vanity” than idol worship and those that worship idols have given up their only source of mercy because idols have none.
3. Without a further miracle of God, he could do nothing. But he says, that he would nevermore forsake God. In Leviticus 7:12-15, the law appoints sacrifices of thanksgiving; these he will offer, not in act only, but with words of praise. He will “pay what he had vowed,” and chiefly himself, his life which God had given back to him, the obedience of his remaining life, in all things.
4. God seems often to wait for the full resignation of the soul, with all of its powers and will to Him. Then He can show mercy, when the soul is wholly surrendered to Him. At this full confession, Jonah has been restored, The prophet’s prayer ends almost in promising the same as the mariners. They “made vows” and Jonah says, “I will pay that I have vowed”.

¹⁰ And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry *land*.

1. God had commanded Jonah and he disobeyed. He commands the fish and the fish obeys.
2. How long will we go in our extremities before we COMPLETELY and willingly abandon ourselves to God’s will?

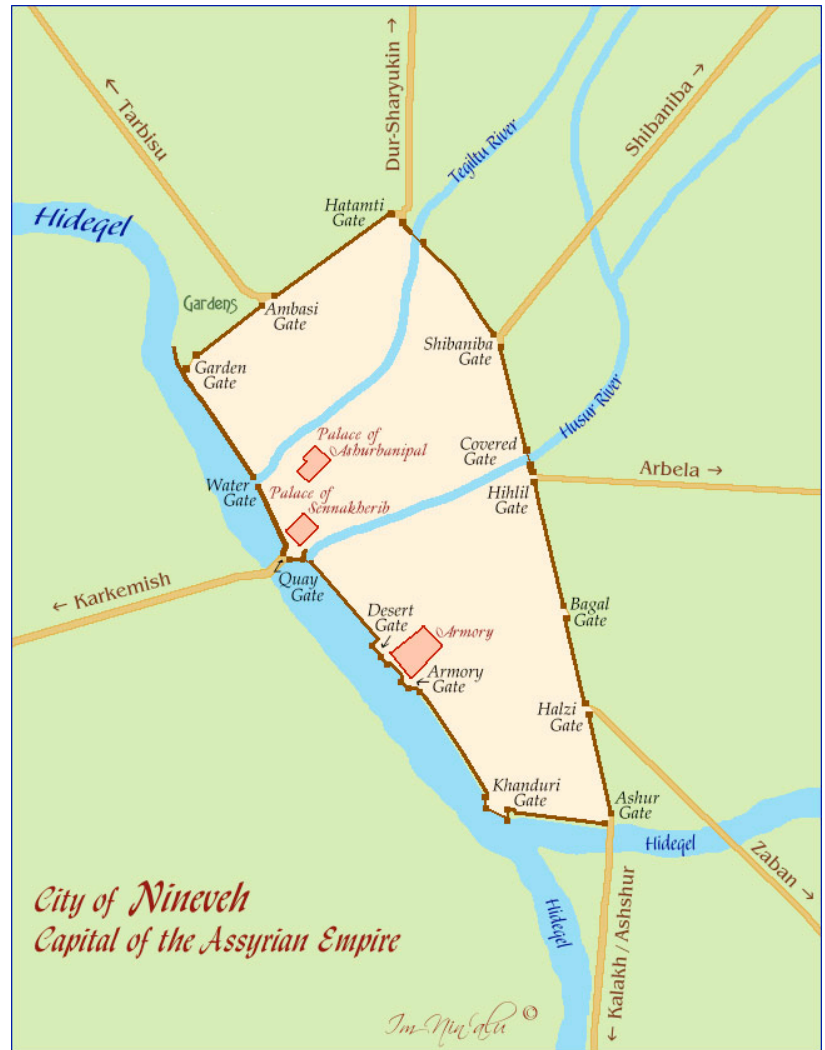


A Study of Jonah

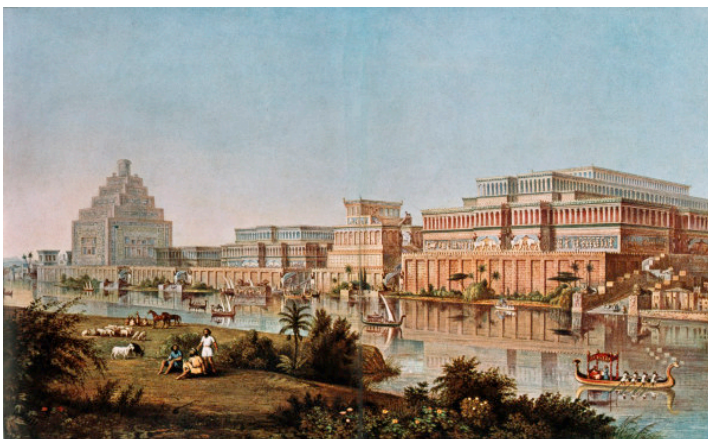
Jonah 3

¹ And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, ² Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

1. God often gives his saints a “second chance” to do His bidding. When we have been disobedient, we still should expect God to re-issue His command if He still wants us to “go” (like the Israelites the day after refusing to enter the Promised Land in Numbers 14).
2. God’s statement “Arise” is also repeated. Either this is said immediately as Jonah lay upon the sea shore, or he had visited Jerusalem, paid his vows at the Temple and returned “home”.
3. The same objections are still present (page 3 of notes): the greatness of the city, the number of its inhabitants, its being the metropolis of the Assyrian empire. But these did not have the same effect as before. He had now another spirit given him, not of fear, but of a sound mind. He knew that he was sent



by a greater King, and that the One who could rescue him inside the great fish was greater than any of the inhabitants of Nineveh who might possibly be against him.



* Current “Mosul is the same city as ancient Nineveh.

* It is about 550 miles from Israel to Nineveh.



A Study of Jonah

³ So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. ⁴ And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

1. Before, when God said those same words, “he arose and fled”, now “he arose and went”. True repentance shows the same energy in serving God as the unrepentant had before in serving self. Saul's spirit (which persecuted Christ), gleamed like lightning when Paul went through the world winning souls to Him.



2. Nineveh was at this time the metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy, a great city, about forty-eight miles in circumference (15 miles across or larger), great in the number of the inhabitants (as appears by the number of infants in it), great in wealth (there was no end of its store) and great in power and dominion.

3. The picture on the right is an accurate representation of one of the “gods” that Nineveh worshipped.

4. God employs Jonah again in his service. He makes use of us as an evidence of his being at peace with us. Jonah was no longer disobedient. He neither avoided hearing the command nor declined to obey it. This is the nature of repentance; it is the change of our mind and way, and a return to our work and duty. Also see the benefit of affliction; it brings those back to their place who have deserted it.



⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. ⁶ For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. ⁹ Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

1. Why would the idol worshipping Ninevites so readily and willingly believe Jonah's message from God (whom they did NOT worship)? Their response demonstrates something to us about God and His dealings with humanity on several levels.

A Study of Jonah

- a. They must have known something about Jonah's ordeal before coming to Nineveh. Therefore, they believed that God, Who obviously forgave and spared Jonah, would also forgive their disobedience as well.
- b. They might have believed that God must have some mercy in store for them, because He not only sent His prophet to them from so far away, but had done such mighty wonders to subdue His prophet's resistance and to make him go to them.
- c. Belief in a Sovereign God, to whom we WILL be held accountable is universally true of ALL humans. Romans 1:20 says "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse".

According to The Bible, there is no such thing as a "natural atheist". Men (or women) develop a belief in "no God" because of personal, hideous sin. and their personal belief of "Atheism" is a result of God Himself turning them over (Romans 1:21). It's not "their" choice, it's His.

Furthermore, a person that is in the process of becoming an atheist will first become an "idol worshipper" (Romans 1:22-25) and ultimately, a homosexual or lesbian (Romans 1:26-27).

Contrary to what the mainstream media declares, sexual perversion is not "your choice", nor were you "born that way". Someone in deep sexual sin / atheism has been "turned" there because God has turned His back on them and left them to come to their own end.

Refusal to acknowledge belief in the supreme God and personal accountability to Him will eventually lead all the way down the path to a ruined, lost life, in the Lake of Fire forever. These Ninevites were at least honest with themselves when confronted by God's message. They repented instead of saying "God does not exist or that God does not care".

- d. These Ninevites were not athiests, but they were sinful idol-worshippers (among others, they worshipped the fish-god, Dagon). Once they were confronted with the truth of God's message, they did not refuse to believe, but believed what their hearts were already telling them - God is REAL! They had sinned and needed forgiveness and mercy (not justice) from God.
2. Why sackcloth? In the East, outward actions are often used as symbolical expressions of inward feelings. Fasting and clothing in sackcloth were customary in humiliation. Compare King Ahab's case, to that of Nineveh. Both received a respite upon repentance (1st Kings 21:27-29).
 3. From the greatest to the least - repentance is not more "appropriate" for some rather than others. True repentance pervades all classes. The person that TRUELY humbles himself before God will think NOTHING of the humiliation associated with public repentance.



A Study of Jonah

4. Not only does the king repent. He apparently does so early on and then insists that ALL of the Ninevites publicly repent as well. Much good or much harm can be brought to a nation by the actions, behavior and decrees of it's rulers. Yes, God holds us personally accountable for our actions but He also holds a nation responsible for their actions and the actions of their leaders.
5. Why are even the animals made to show the outward signs of repentance. The irrational animals cannot, through words, learn the anger of God, but they can learn through hunger that the infliction is from God. If the city should be overthrown, it would be just as grave for the animals as for the inhabitants. It was not an arbitrary or careless act of the king of Nineveh to make the mute animals share in the common fast. It proceeded probably from the realization that God cares for them also, and that "they" were not even guilty.
6. Fasting is usually limited to "no ingestion of food. Normally, water is allowed. However, this "fast" is different. In an attempt to gain God's attention, they deny themselves not only food, but also water.

¹⁰ And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

1. Much is said in the Bible about "works".
 - a. Works are called:
 - Good fruits, James 3:17
 - Fruits meet for repentance, Matthew 3:8
 - Fruits of righteousness, Philippians 1:11
 - Works and labors of love, Hebrews 6:10
 - Wrought by God in us, Philippians 2:13
 - Scripture is designed to lead us to, James 1:25
 - To be performed in Christ's name, Colossians 3:17
 - Heavenly wisdom is full of, James 3:17
 - Justification unattainable by, Romans 3:20
 - Salvation unattainable by, Ephesians 2:8
 - b. Saints are:
 - Created in Christ to, Ephesians 2:10
 - Full of, Acts 9:36.
 - Rich in, 1st Timothy 6:18
 - Should be careful to maintain, Titus 3:8
 - Should be established in, 2nd Thessalonians 2:17
 - Should be fruitful in, Colossians 1:10
 - Should be perfect in, Hebrews 13:21
 - Followed into rest by their, Revelation 14:13
 - God remembers, Hebrews 6:9-10
2. How does God "repent"? Repent means "to feel pain, sorrow or regret for something done or spoken; to express sorrow for something past; to change the mind or to change the course of our dealings.
3. Literally, God "changed His mind" about what He intended to do. As a result, He did not destroy Nineveh (at this time).

A Study of Jonah

Jonah 4

¹ But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. ² And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. ⁴ Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

1. We must remember that God is sovereign. At this time in Nineveh, God saw fit to show His mercy upon the Gentile Ninevites. That made Jonah VERY angry. How often does God do something that we don't like and our response is to "get angry"?
2. Jonah blames God for his own rebellion in running away the first time. When God asks us to do something "distasteful" or "difficult", do we respond by running away? When He corners us and makes us do what He wants, do we do so willingly with a cheerful heart? A Christian should NEVER be angry at (or with) God.
3. Jonah knows no "middle ground". With him, life is "all or nothing". If he cannot run from God, then he goes all the way and faithfully delivers the message. If God will not destroy Nineveh like He planned, then Jonah does not want to live.
4. God "corners" Jonah about his anger. Even God asks a question rather than make an accusation about Jonah's temper. We would do well to learn this approach when dealing with "prickly" people. Asking questions is the least offensive way to discuss a personal topic that is likely to bring strong emotions.
5. It must not go without notice that Jonah never questions God. Rather than ask sincere, honest questions of God that would clarify the situations and calling, Jonah simply responds (usually wrongly) to what God is doing. How dare a Christian pass judgement upon God, His ways and His motives. We cannot know "why" or "what" unless we ask and He chooses to answer.

⁵ So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

1. We must pay close attention to the order of things that Jonah does. Often, we get things out of order or fail to pay attention to smaller details.
2. The Bible says that Jonah made a booth (shelter). It also says that the booth gave Jonah some protection because of its shadow.
3. It is under the shadow of the booth that Jonah sits, waits and watches for God to destroy the city according to his prophecy.



JONAH UNDER HIS BOOTH.

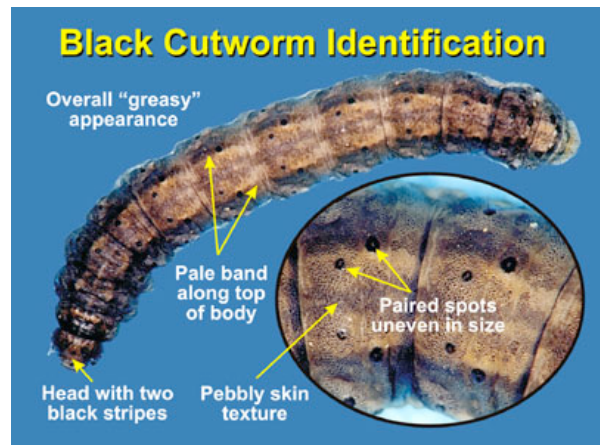
A Study of Jonah

⁶ And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. ⁷ But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. ⁸ And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.



1. There are three things in these few verses that we are told that “God prepared”.
 - a. A gourd.
 - b. A worm.
 - c. A wind.
2. The “gourd” plant known in this area of Assyria (Mosul, Iraq) is most likely the Castor Bean Plant. It grows to a height of six feet to 25 feet. It dies back and then leafs out rather quickly in the spring. Jonah may have built his “booth” under this plant. This may also give us a time reference for Nineveh’s repentance, the spring of the year.
3. The cutworm known to be in this part of Iraq grows to be 1-1/2” to 2” long.
4. Isn’t it amazing that God “prepared”:
 - a. A fish to swallow.
 - b. Jonah to deliver a message.
 - c. Nineveh to hear and repent.
 - d. A gourd to shelter.
 - e. A worm to destroy.
 - f. A wind to discourage.

and all of them GLADLY did God’s bidding except for one - Jonah. Why is it that Christians are often the most reluctant to cooperate with God’s plans?



5. Jonah has a fairly consistent approach to life. Whatever happens, his response is “I would be better off dead”.
 - a. God said “Jonah, go and preach to Nineveh”. Jonah said “I would rather die”.
 - b. God said “Throw Jonah overboard”. Jonah said “I’ll die”.
 - c. God said “Fish, swallow Jonah”. Jonah said “I’m dead”.
 - d. God said “I’m not going to destroy Nineveh”. Jonah said “I would rather die”.
 - e. God said “Wind, blow on Jonah”. Jonah said “I want to die”.
6. Why do WE approach life so selfishly? Why do we think that everything is about “us”? We find fault with Jonah for his response, but how often do we do the same thing.

A Study of Jonah

⁹ And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. ¹⁰ Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: ¹¹ And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

1. There the LORD God prepared a large plant to protect him from the sun. Jonah was greatly pleased by this. The next day, however, God prepared a worm which caused the plant to wither. Also, the Lord prepared a sultry east wind which, together with the sun, caused the prophet to faint and to wish for death.
2. Then God reminded His prophet that if he had pity on the plant, how much more reason did the Lord have to show pity to a city with more than one hundred and twenty thousand children alone, to say nothing of much livestock.
3. The lesson of this little book is that God loves the world—not just the Jews, but the Gentiles as well.

Concluding Thoughts on the Book of Jonah

1. The Jews have a tradition that Jonah's mother was the widow of Sarepta, whose son Elijah raised from the dead. This would make Jonah that boy. He is called the son of Amittai (truth), because his mother knew and believed that the word of the Lord in the mouth of Elijah was truth, 1st Kings 17:23. However, this is unlikely because Jonah was a Hebrew (Jonah 1:9) and Sarepta was a city of Sidon.
2. The principal design of this book is to set forth Jonah as the type of the death and resurrection of Christ, by his being three days in the great fish's belly, and then delivered from it. Also to declare the grace and mercy of God to repenting sinners, and to signify the calling of the Gentiles.
3. A much-misunderstood expression of the prophet shows that this mission fell in the later part of his life, at least after he had already been exercising the prophetic office. Our translation says: "Jonah rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord." It has been asked, "How could a "prophet" imagine that he could flee from the presence of God?" Jonah knew well the Psalm of David (Psalm 139:7), "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Today, we would say, "he went out of the king's presence" so it literally is "he rose to flee from being in the presence of the Lord,"(from standing in His presence as His Servant and Minister). So he must have had the office he sought to abandon.
4. The righteous judgment of God stands out more in the history of the mariners and of the Ninevites in comparison with that of the prophet. Disobedient Jonah cares only to teach what God taught him. The mariners were spared, the Hebrew prophet was cast forth as guilty. The Ninevites were forgiven: the prophet, rebuked.

OUTLINE

from The Believer's Bible Commentary

- I. **THE DISOBEDIENCE OF THE PROPHET (Chap. 1)**
 - A. Jonah's Missionary Call (1:1, 2)
 - B. Jonah's Flight to Tarshish (1:3)
 - C. The Storm at Sea (1:4-10)

A Study of Jonah

D. Jonah Thrown Overboard and Swallowed by a Great Fish (1:11-17)

II. THE DELIVERANCE OF THE PROPHET (Chap. 2)

- A. Jonah's Prayer (2:1-9)
- B. God's Answer (2:10)

III. THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S MESSAGE THROUGH THE PROPHET (Chap. 3)

- A. The Threat of Judgment (3:1-4)
- B. The City-Wide Repentance (3:5-9)
- C. The Judgment Averted (3:10)

IV. THE DISPLEASURE OF THE PROPHET (Chap. 4)

- A. Jonah's Petulant Prayer (4:1-3)
- B. God's Searching Question (4:4)
- C. Jonah Sulking Outside the City (4:5)
- D. Object Lesson on God's Sovereign Mercy (4:6-11)

Theme	Explanation	Importance
God's Sovereignty	Although the prophet Jonah tried to run away from God, God was in control. By controlling the stormy seas and a great fish, God displayed his absolute, yet loving guidance.	Rather than running from God, trust him with your past, present, and future. Saying no to God quickly leads to disaster. Saying yes brings new understanding of God and his purpose in the world.
God's Message to all the World	God had given Jonah a purpose - to preach to the great Assyrian city of Nineveh. Jonah hated Nineveh, and so he responded with anger and indifference. Jonah had to learn that God loves all people. Through Jonah, God reminded Israel of its missionary purpose.	We must not limit our focus to our own people. God wants his people to proclaim his love in words and actions to the whole world. He wants us to be his missionaries wherever we are, wherever he sends us.
Repentance	When the preacher went to Nineveh, there was a great response. The people repented and turned to God. This was a powerful rebuke to the people of Israel, who thought they were better but refused to respond to God's message. God will forgive all those who turn from their sin.	God doesn't honor sham or pretense. He wants the sincere devotion of each person. It is not enough to share the privileges of Christianity; we must ask God to forgive us and to remove our sin. Refusing to repent shows that we still love our sin.
God's Compassion	God's message of love and forgiveness was not for the Jews alone. God loves all the people of the world. The Assyrians didn't deserve it, but God spared them when they repented. In his mercy, God did not reject Jonah for aborting his mission. God has great love, patience, and forgiveness.	God loves each of us, even when we fail him. But he also loves other people, including those not of our group, background, race, or denomination. When we accept his love, we must also learn to accept all those whom he loves. We will find it much easier to love others when we truly love God.