

# Jonah

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**MEANING** "Dove"

**AUTHOR:** Uncertain

**TIME WRITTEN:** Uncertain

**POSITION IN THE BIBLE:**

- 32nd Book in the Bible
- 32nd book in the Old Testament
- 10th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 5th of 12 Minor Prophet Books
- 31 have preceded it. 34 to follow it.

**CHAPTERS:** 4

**VERSES:** 48

**WORDS:** 1,321

**KEY WORD:** The Revival in Nineveh

**TWO KEY PASSAGES:**

1. **Jonah 2:8-9** - "Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."
2. **Jonah 4:2** - "So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm."

**KEY CHAPTER:** Jonah 3

1. The third chapter of Jonah records perhaps the greatest revival of all time as the entire city of Nineveh believes God and proclaims a fast, and cries out to God.

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT JONAH:**

1. Nineveh is northeast; Joppa is Southwest; Tarshish is west.
2. When God calls Jonah to preach repentance to the wicked Ninevites, the prophet knows God's mercy may follow.
  - a. He turns down the assignment and heads for Tarshish instead.
  - b. But once God has dampened his spirit by tossing him out of the boat into the after and has demonstrated His protection by moving him out of the water and into the great fish, Jonah is serious about His command.
  - c. Nineveh must hear the Word of the Lord; therefore Jonah goes.
  - d. Although the preaching is a success, the preacher comes away angry and discouraged.
  - e. Jonah must learn firsthand of God's compassion for sinful man.
3. Four chapters. Each with a description of men today.
  - a. Chapter 1 - Jonah is running **FROM** God.
  - b. Chapter 2 - Jonah is running **TO** God.
  - c. Chapter 3 - Jonah is running **WITH** God.
  - d. Chapter 4 - Jonah is running **AHEAD** of God.
4. Jonah was a contemporary of Jereboam II of Israel (782-753 B.C.) .
5. Jonah ministered after the time of Elisha and just before the time of Amos and Hosea.
6. Jonah was the son of Amittai,

- a. He was a prophet from the village of Gath Hopher.
  - b. Gath Hopher was located three miles north of Nazareth in lower Galilee .
  - c. Today the village of Gath Hopher is known as Mash Had.
  - d. The Pharisees were wrong in **John 7:52** when they said, “. . .”Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.”
  - e. Because Jonah was a Galilean, one Jewish tradition says that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath whom Elijah raised from the dead in 1 Kings 17:8-24.
7. By the time of Jonah, Assyrian cruelty had become legendary. Graphic accounts of their cruel treatment of captives have been found in ancient Assyrian records, especially from the 9th and 7th centuries B.C. Describe people put on poles.
  8. The repentance of Nineveh probably occurred in the reign of Ashurbanipal III (746-703 B.C.).
  9. Two major events may have prepared the people for Jonah’s message of judgment.
    - a. Two plagues (765 and 759 B.C.).
    - b. A solar eclipse in 763 B.C.

NOTE: The Ninevites experienced a plague, then two years later a solar eclipse, then four years after that another plague. Perhaps they were ready to listen to Jonah.
  10. Jonah is the only prophet whom Jesus likened to Himself. **Matthew 12:29-41** - “But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.
    - 40 “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
    - 41 “The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.”
      - a. Jonah’s experience is a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
      - b. The Hebrew Idiom, “**three days and three nights**,” only requires a portion of the first and third days.
  11. The Book of Jonah demonstrates a truth that many only associate with the New Testament— God’s loving concern for the Gentiles.
    - a. More than seven centuries before the birth of Christ, God commissioned the Hebrew prophet Jonah to proclaim a message of repentance to the Assyrians.
    - b. Jewish nationalism, however, blinded God’s prophets and covenant people to God’s worldwide purposes of salvation.
    - c. The story of Jonah is one of the clearest demonstrations of God’s love and mercy for all humankind in the entire Scriptures.

## SUMMARY OF JONAH

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jonah is an unusual book because of both its message and messenger.
  1. Unlike other Old Testament books it revolves exclusively around a Gentile nation.
  2. God is concerned for the Gentiles as well as for His covenant people Israel.

3. God's messenger, Jonah, is a reluctant prophet who does not want to proclaim his message for fear that the Assyrians will respond and be spared by the compassionate God of Israel.
  4. It is interesting to note that of all the people and things mentioned in the book—the storm, the sailor, the great fish, the Ninevites, the plant, the worm, and the east wind—only the prophet himself fails to obey God. All of these were used to teach Jonah a lesson in compassion and obedience.
- B. The four chapters divided into:
1. The First Commission of Jonah. 1 & 2
  2. The Second Commission of Jonah. 3 & 4

### **THE FIRST COMMISSION OF JONAH. (1-2)**

- A. Chapter one records three things.
1. The commission of Jonah. 1:1-2
  2. The disobedience of Jonah. 1:3
  3. The judgment on Jonah. 1:4-17
- B. Jonah does not want to see God spare the notoriously cruel Assyrians.
1. To preach a message of repentance to them would be like helping Israel's enemy.
  2. In his patriotic zeal, Jonah puts his country before his God and refuses to represent Him in Nineveh.
  3. Instead of going 500 miles northeast to Nineveh, Jonah attempts to go 2,000 miles to Tarshish (Spain).
  4. The Lord uses a creative series of counter measures to accomplish His desired result. Jonah's efforts to thwart Jonah's plan are futile.
- C. God prepares a "great fish" to preserve Jonah and deliver him on dry land.
1. The fish's divinely appointed rendezvous with the sinking prophet becomes a powerful reminder to Jonah of the sovereignty of God in every circumstance.
  2. While inside the fish, Jonah utters a declarative praise psalm, alluding to several psalms that were racing through his mind. (Psalm 3:8; 31:22; 42:7; 69:1)
  3. In this most unusual place of prayer, Jonah offers thanksgiving for his deliverance from drowning.
  4. When he acknowledges that "salvation is of the Lord" (2:9), he is finally willing to obey and be used by God.
  5. After he is cast up on the shore, Jonah has a long time to reflect on his experiences during his eastward trek of 500 miles to Nineveh.

### **THE SECOND COMMISSION OF JONAH. (3-4)**

- A. Jonah obeys his second commission to go to Nineveh (3:1-4) where he becomes a "sign to the Ninevites: (Luke 11:30).
1. This prodigal is a walking object lesson from God as he walks through the city, his skin no doubt bleached from his stay in the fish.
  2. His one-sentence sermon brings incredible results. It is the most responsive evangelistic effort in history.
  3. Jonah's words of coming judgment are followed by a proclamation by the king of the city to fast and repent.
  4. Because of His great mercy, God "relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them." (3:10).

5. In fact, Nineveh was allowed to stand for another 150 years until Babylonians, having rebelled against the Assyrians in 626 B.C. overthrew the mighty city of Nineveh 16 years later in 612 B.C.
- B. In the final chapter, God's love and grace are contrasted with Jonah's anger and lack of compassion.
1. Jonah is unhappy with the good results of his message because he knows God will now spare Nineveh.
  2. God uses a plant, a worm, and a wind to teach Jonah a lesson in compassion.
  3. Jonah's emotions shift from fierce anger (4:1) to despondency (4:3), then to great joy (4:6) and finally to despair (4:8)
  4. In a humorous but meaningful account, Jonah is forced to see that he has more concern for a plant than for hundreds of thousands of people. If 120,000 children are in mind in 4:11, the population the area may have been 600,000 people.
  5. Jonah's lack of divine perspective makes his repentance a greater problem than the repentance of Nineveh.
  6. When God wants you to do a job, do it!