

The Book of JONAH

It's Hard to Love Your Enemies

I. Introduction to Jonah

A. **Author:** Jonah 1:1 specifically identifies the Prophet Jonah as the author of the Book of Jonah.

B. Who was Jonah?

1. Jonah was a prophet from Gath-hepher, which is a few miles north of Nazareth. He is thereby a prophet from Galilee (just as Jesus would be).
2. The only OT person likened by the Lord to Himself (Matt 12:38-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32).
3. Jonah lived and preached in the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the days of king Jeroboam 2nd and predicted victories over Syria, restoring the land of Israel to its ancient boundaries (2Kgs. 14:27).
4. But at the same time the Assyrian Empire was flexing its muscles and preparing to attack, and conquer those same Northern Tribes of Israel.
5. It was after the defeat of Israel by the Assyrian army that God calls Jonah to preach to those people in Nineveh.

C. **Date of Writing:** The Book of Jonah was likely written between 793 and 758 B.C.

D. Meaning of the name Jonah – _____

E. **Purpose of Writing:** To show just how far GOD will go to get us to do His will, and how rewarding doing God's will can be. The revival which Jonah brings to Nineveh is one of the greatest evangelistic efforts of all time.

F. **Brief Summary:** Jonah's fear and pride cause him to run from God. He does not wish to go to Nineveh to preach repentance to the people, as God has commanded, because he feels they are his enemy and he is convinced that God will not carry out his threat to destroy the city. Instead he boards a ship for Tarshish, which is in the opposite direction. Soon a raging storm causes the crew to cast lots to determine that Jonah is the problem. He is so determined to NOT do the will of God, that he would rather die in the sea than obey God. They throw him overboard, and he is swallowed by a whale. Jesus said it was a whale! In its belly for 3 days and 3 nights, Jonah repents of his sin to God, and the fish vomits him up on dry land (we wonder what took him so long to repent). Jonah then makes the 500 mile trip to Nineveh and leads the city in a great revival. But the prophet is displeased (he actually pouts) instead of thankful when Nineveh repents. God uses a wind, a gourd and a worm to teach him that God is merciful, but Jonah never gets his attitude right towards God's mercies.

G. **The book of Jonah is unique** in the Minor Prophets in many ways. It is chiefly a book about a prophet instead of being a collection of the preaching of the prophet. Only five Hebrew words, translate into eight English words are needed to report Jonah's prophetic utterance in Chap. 3:4 - "and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

1. Jonah is the only minor prophet, in whose career _____ play a prominent role.
2. The only minor prophet whose major activity is on foreign soil.
3. The only minor prophet who preaches exclusively to a foreign people.
4. Jonah is the only Old Testament character represented as taking a trip on the Mediterranean.
5. Jonah is also the only minor prophet mentioned by Jesus.
6. The only Old Testament character likened by the Lord to himself (Matt 12:38-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32).
7. The book stresses the universality of God's presence more than any other minor prophet, and God's universal concern for mankind.

H. Who Were These Ninevites?

1. _____ People
 - a. Ziggurats - pyramids
 - b. Multitude of gods and goddesses – Marduk the highest
 - c. No good afterlife – you only go into the underworld
2. Wicked People

Study In The Minor Prophets

The Book of JONAH

- a. When the Ninevites captured a city they slaughtered all the leading citizens. When I say slaughtered, They stretched men out flat on the ground and tied their hands and feet to stakes and literally, with a knife, skinned them alive. They drove a pointed pole into the lower chest of others; picked them up, placed the pole in a hole, and left them there squirming until they died. They made pyramids out of hu-man skulls to mark the route the conquerors had taken.
- b. One historian says, men were actually skinned alive, children burned, some were blinded, some had hands and feet, noses and ears cut off.

3. Condemned People

- a. Every nation has a period of time that where they grow and mature, but at some point will have to give account to God, or be judged
- b. Assyria (Nineveh was the capital) had been a nation for a 1,000 years by the time of Jonah, and had become the greatest empire of its day
- c. But they were rapidly decaying, and would soon be judged by God
- d. It was at this time, that God wanted to warn them through Jonah of the impending judgment
- e. But Jonah WANTED them destroyed by God

I. The World's Spiritual Condition at the time of impending Judgment

1. _____ prophets/preachers – full of anger, bitterness, and rebellion towards God (you would think otherwise)
2. General _____ – people only believing in signs and miracles, angels and apparitions
3. An Evil Generation – against God – loving evil instead of good
4. An Adulterous Generation – violating homes and families (TV, rock music, country and western music)
5. Unconcern for people
6. Universal need for _____ – not more religion
7. Need for unconditional _____ of God

- J. **Practical Application:** We cannot hide from God. Regardless of our patriotism, we must never put our country ahead of God. Regardless of our reputation, nationality or race God loves us. Rejoicing in the salvation of others is an experience God wants us to enjoy with Him (not be resentful, jealous or thinking it is not "real").

II. Study Outline of Jonah

A. The Great Commission (Chapter 1:1,2)

1. God's Man
 - a. A preacher, prophet, ambassador
 - b. A bearer of _____ news, warnings, rebukes (examine the messages of ALL of the preaching in the Bible)!
 - c. Yet modern "preachers" are only positive and uplifting
2. God's Message
 - a. It is what _____ would say if He was there
 - b. God speaks through dreams (see Peter in Acts 10), trances, inescapable revelations (See 2 Cor 12:1-7)
 - c. Is always directed to a people – Nineveh – who they were (Cross Culturally) Capital City
 - d. "_____ " – not just preach
 - e. Because of their sin – time was up – see Amorites in Gen. 15:16 – An Affront to God!

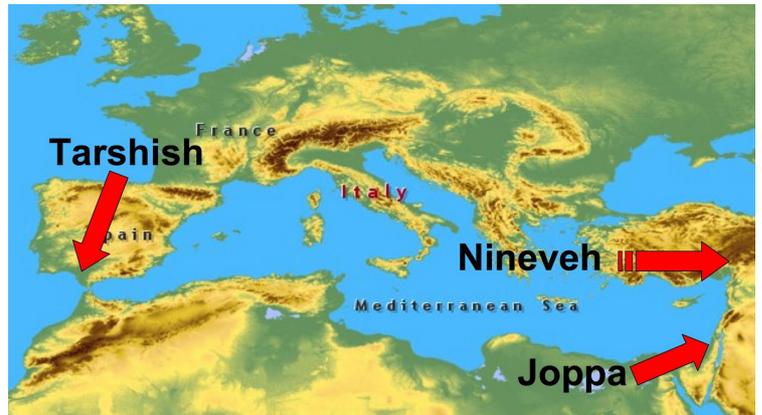
B. The Great Rebellion (1:3-12)

1. Principles of the Will of God
 - a. It USUALLY is _____ – something we usually DON'T want to do!

- b. It demands _____ than we can give
- c. It will always have supernatural results that we _____ have accomplished ourselves
- d. God's will, _____ get done, whether we go along with it or not

2. Jonah's Rebellion

- a. It is amazing that _____ rebel as much as we do!
- b. Fled to _____
- c. "From the presence of the Lord" on purpose
- d. From God's presence – Is that possible?
- e. Searched & found a ship
- f. Paid the fare
- g. Quite at peace with it all too – asleep (1:5)



3. The Storm – the COST of resisting the Holy Spirit

- a. Great wind – hurricane – NT Euroclydon (Act 27:14)
- b. There are loads of storms in Bible
- c. Everyone on the ship was about to perish – a major crisis
- d. Everyone cried out to their false gods – no hope
- e. Except Jonah – he only had a _____ – grateful for disasters
- f. The men tried to save the ship

4. Upset with Jonah – O Sleeper! What a slam against us!

- a. They became Universalists – very accommodating of other religions
- b. Here was an opportunity for God to show himself strong
- c. They were searching for the _____ of the trouble
- d. Cast lots – the Lot fall upon Jonah
- e. Questions Jonah
 - 1) Who are you trying to hurt?
 - 2) What is your occupation?
 - 3) Where are you from?
 - 4) What is your country?
 - 5) What is your nationality
- f. He gives two answers (1:9)
 - 1) An _____
 - 2) I fear the Jehovah – said God's name
 - a) God of heaven – above the story
 - b) Creator of the vast sea & land
 - 3) These are like the words of a _____
- g. This revelation _____ these sailors
 - 1) More than the storm!
 - 2) They realized God was after Jonah who was running from Him. Maybe even bragged about it to them before
 - 3) They were curious why Jonah, knowing how powerful God was, why would he try & hide from Him?

5. Concerned About what to do next (1:11)

- a. See Acts 2:36, 37
- b. They wanted Jonah to get things right with God
- c. They (pagans) were willing to help him get right!

6. Jonah has a Death Wish (1:12)

- a. Cannot commit suicide – needs someone to kill him
- b. Same with Elijah 1 Kg. 19:4
- c. “Throw me away” – That’s how low he felt
- d. Expected to drown in the sea

7. Jonah’s Prophecies (1:12)

- a. The sea will be calm
- b. The storm really IS for his sake
- c. They come true

C. The Conversion of Pagan Men (1:13-17)

1. Trying to save Jonah (1:13)

- a. These pagan sailors cared more about Jonah than he did himself
- b. Feared God more than Jonah did
- c. The men wore themselves out trying to save a rebellious, ungrateful, backslidden prophet of a God they did not know!
- d. But they could not get to safety - the storm was too great!

2. Concern for “their” relationship with Jonah’s God as well

- a. Their guiltiness for what they were about to do
- b. Concern for their souls
- c. Called upon His NAME – Jehovah
- d. Begged God, “Don’t hold us guilty for Jonah’s death” – innocent blood
- e. We know you are in control
- f. They yielded to God’s will

3. They Obeyed the Man of God

- a. Took him up
- b. Cast him overboard into the sea
- c. Expected him to drown
- d. Jonah expected to just drown and that be the end
- e. Instantly the storm ceased

4. These pagan men were _____ (1:16)

- a. Feared Jehovah exceedingly – His judgement & power
- b. Gave sacrifices
- c. Made vows

5. Jonah’s Affliction (Psalm 119:71) - God had Jonah right where he needed to be

- a. Instead of letting him drown
- b. Prepared a Great Fish – not just a fish
 - 1) The Hebrew word is _____
 - 2) Jesus calls it a _____ (Mt 12:40)
 - 3) A whale is a mammal, so technically is not a “fish”
 - 4) But that is MAN’S way of classifying it
- c. To swallow Jonah
 - 1) Not normally possible

- 2) Neither is keeping a man alive for 72 hours INSIDE a fish swimming at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea (1 mile deep) “possible” either!
- d. Left there in the belly for 72 hours – to rot!

D. Jonah’s Confession (Chapter 2)

1. Jonah was finally _____ (2:1,2)
 - a. Still in the belly of the whale
 - b. He had had enough of affliction – the LORD made his life miserable
 - c. It was HELL in there to him
 - d. Closed in around his SOUL (2:5)
 - e. He finally was worn out (2:7) and finally prays! He was silent the entire time in the whale’s belly, waiting to die – and yet he didn’t die!
 - f. He realised anyone who believes lying vanities (stupid lies), forsake God’s mercy available to them – and HE was the guy who believed his own lie that he could escape the will of God (2:8)

2. Full Surrender to the Will of God (2:2-9)
 - a. Prayed to the LORD – the Lord of Jonah
 - b. KNEW that God heard him finally
 - c. God took over Jonah’s life – showing HE was GOD
 - 1) Took him into the belly of the whale
 - 2) Left him there until Jonah broke
 - 3) Took that whale down under the ocean – completely surrounded by water
 - 4) Wrapped in seaweed in that belly
 - 5) To the bottom of the mountains (2:6)
 - 6) The bars of the earth? (Job 38:4-11)
 - 7) In darkness (no light in that belly)
 - 8) God did not speak to him the entire time - Jonah had to figure this all out himself!
 - d. That’s when he remembered the LORD – that He was GOD!
 - e. Because, in that whale’s belly, under all that pressure, he still had hope, and confidence (2:4,6)
 - 1) “He _____ again look to the temple in Jerusalem”
 - 2) He knew he would live and not die
 - f. When God delivers Jonah from the whale’s belly, He was delivering him from certain death – “corruption”
 - 1) Corruption as decay in the grave
 - 2) Here, decay in the hydrochloric acid
 - g. It was THEN that he finally decides to... (2:9)
 - 1) Sacrifice his praise when he wanted only to complain and quit
 - 2) Pay the _____ of service that he made years earlier when God called him
 - 3) Trust that God would save him from death in that whale!

3. And THAT is when God had that fish spit him out upon dry land (2:10)

E. Conversion of Ninevites (Chapter 3)

1. God calls Jonah a second time (3:1,2)
 - a. God is more interested in two things than in Jonah’s “feelings” about the matter:
 - 1) About the _____ of the Ninevites who had a chance
 - 2) And in obedience by the _____
 - b. So God calls Jonah a SECOND time to do what he said do at the first – God doesn’t change!

- c. Arise, and Go, and Preach the same thing I told you to preach at first
- 2. So Jonah agrees (3:3)
 - a. Travels to Nineveh
 - b. A city three days journey in _____, not distance
 - c. Went one day's journey into the city limits
 - d. Remember what Jonah probably looked like as he walked amongst the thousands of people
- 3. Jonah's Preaching (3:4)
 - a. Right in the heart of the city – not out in the outskirts!
 - b. Preached ___ simple, words – at the top of his lungs – with authority
 - 1) “Yet forty days” – time is short! But there is TIME to get right!
 - 2) “Nineveh” – YOU, ALL of you – not someone else!
 - 3) “Shall be overthrown” – like as in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:25)
 - 4) Very authoritative – not wishy-washy
 - c. Probably preached in Hebrew!
 - d. Probably repeated that message over and over as he walked through the city
- 4. The People Believed the Preaching (3:5-9) **Why Did the Ninevites respond so well?**
 - a. They _____ - They knew of God's judgment in the past
 - 1) Noah's flood of the whole world
 - 2) Fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrah
 - 3) Judgment upon Egypt – 10 plagues
 - b. They “_____” (see Rom 4:3 and Gen 5:16 where that was ALL that was needed to be justified)
 - c. They _____ on their repentance and faith
 - 1) The king made a “religious” decree – a righteous decree! A desperate decree!
 - 2) Took the judgment seriously – FASTED
 - 3) Humbled themselves – wore sackcloth
 - 4) Sat in ashes
 - 5) No food or water for any living thing. Just stop and wait and see if God will TURN from His fierce wrath!
 - 6) The king commanded everyone to cry mightily unto GOD and agree to repent from his evil way and from their violence
 - d. They trusted in God's _____ (3:9) – did not demand it, but just hoped in His mercy, which is how ALL sinners get born again!
- 5. God changed His mind (3:10)
 - a. God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way – John the Baptist demanded WORKS that proved they had repented
 - b. God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.
 - 1) Gen 6:5-7 “it _____ the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”
 - 2) Ex 32:11-14, “And the Lord _____ of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”
 - 3) 1 Samuel 15:10,11 “It _____ me that I have set up Saul to be king”
 - 4) 2Sam 24:15,16 “And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord _____ him of the evil”
 - 5) Ps 90:13 “Return, O Lord, how long? and let it _____ thee concerning thy servants.”
 - 6) Ps 135:14 “For the Lord will judge his people, and he will _____ himself concerning his servants.”

c. Apparent Contradictions

- 1) Num 32:19 “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”
- 2) 1Sam 15:28,29 “And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.”

F. Compassion on Jonah (Ch. 4)

1. Jonah 4:1, “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.”
 - a. What displeased Jonah?
 - b. That God actually did NOT destroy Nineveh! That God actually had mercy on THEM!
 - c. The picture is of the Jews not caring at all about the Gentiles
 - d. Obviously, God wanted to prepare the Jews for the eventual reunification of both Jew and Gentile into ONE Body
 - e. This lesson is also well illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15.

2. Jonah’s Selfish Anger (4:2,3)
 - a. Rebukes God for being gracious
 - b. Reminds God that His graciousness was the _____ and not Jonah’s attitude! At least that was what JONAH believed!
 - c. Prays for God to STILL _____ him!
 - 1) Suicide is NOT a Spirit-led idea!
 - 2) You may want to die, but you wouldn’t take your own life unless the devil was given the chance to influence you!

3. God’s _____ Question (4:4)
 - a. “Doest thou well to be angry?”
 - b. Same question He made to Cain
 - c. Same kind of question He asked of Elijah
 - d. God was attempting to reason with an angry man – rarely does it ever work

4. Jonah was Stubborn (4:5,6)
 - a. Not interested in being reasoned with
 - b. Jonah left the city limits, and waited out the 40 days there
 - c. Note how that 40 day cycles are throughout Scripture...
 - d. Probably up on a hill somewhere with a good view of the city – still WISHING that God would change His mind BACK again and go ahead and destroy Nineveh!
 - e. Built a _____ to stay in – a makeshift camping tent – HIS effort
 - f. God GAVE Jonah a plant that miraculously grew to cover him with shade
 - g. That _____ made Jonah SUPER happy!
 - h. Amazingly, Jonah was happier about the GOURD leaves than about the salvation of condemned souls in Nineveh!!!

5. God’s Judgment Against _____ (4:7,8)
 - a. Sent a hungry WORM
 - b. Just like he sent a hungry WHALE
 - c. Destroyed the gourd plant overnight
 - d. Then a fierce east, dry, hot wind, along with the heat of the sun, beat down upon Jonah

6. Jonah is Back to Just Wanting to Die (4:8)
 - a. Still a selfish wreck
 - b. Demon-possessed!

c. Paul said to live is Christ and to die is gain, but Paul never wished to die! Lived for God!

7. God's Final Reasoning With Jonah (4:9-11)

a. Asks Jonah if being angry about the destruction of a gourd – is that something to be upset over?

1) Environmentalists would be

2) But God couldn't care less about plants, and "mother earth"

b. Asks why Jonah would have PITY, compassion on a gourd

c. But not want to have pity/compassion on a city full of SOULS!

1) _____ young people – who are too young to know their left and right hands - innocents

2) Much cattle

3) God would have had to judge everything and everyone in that city

d. Jonah _____ gets right in his heart about the Gentiles. Evidently, NO amount of reasoning about the coming judgment of God on this world will affect a bitter man!

III. The following are God's Warning Signs of Coming Judgment – present in Jesus' Day, and in Our Day

A. **Storms** (Mt 24:3-8). Not everything is just wind and water, but also sometimes, the clear judgment of God on sin in this world!

B. **Beached Whales** (Jonah 2:10) – the only creature (along with dolphins and porpoises) who beach themselves just as Jonah's whale did – should always remind our generation of a warning being given to a wicked generation

1. What the scripture reveals with Jonah being vomited upon dry land is something that happens today and when it does, it makes the major news outlets. That event is called 'A whale on the beach!'

2. I long held the view that the whale vomited Jonah out on dry land and went on its way. I had not considered exactly how a whale in the ocean vomited (cannon-balled) a man to dry land from 150 yards out, so that the man lands on dry soil without the landing killing him.

3. After pondering this subject for a few days I realized:

a. The whale rode the tide in.

b. Beached itself as whales do.

c. The tide receded leaving the beached whale there with old Jonah in its belly.

d. The whale delivered its cargo (Jonah) and died. When that whale hit the beach, it was for the set purpose of delivering Jonah to dry land, for we were plainly told he was vomited out on dry land not into the ocean. Other than a dolphin or porpoise what other marine life hits the beach for the set purpose of dying?

e. In the heat of the day the gases inside the whale expanded and the end results was Jonah was vomited out on dry land some 72 hours after entering the whale when the gas was released.

4. The above scenario could have happened and not violated one scriptural point. I must admit such thinking varies from what I have been taught and previously thought. Those thoughts of Jonah in such a predicament are distasteful and less than pleasant.

5. When the Hebrew children came out of the fiery furnace, there was no smell of smoke upon them and their hair was not singed, Dan 3:27. To think that Jonah came out of the belly as clean as they, are two separate situations. The Hebrew children were in the will of God and under His protective care. Jonah was under His protective care, but his state of fellowship was not as wholesome.

6. Today when a whale hits the beach, an all out effort is made to get it back into its habitat. Would it be too far fetched in our thinking to say that each time we hear of beached whale(s), God may be sending us a message? Instead of trying to get the whale back into the ocean, perhaps mankind ought to consider the spiritual aspect of the beaching?

C. **The Judgment of God's People** – Jonah himself judged by God in that whale's belly. Judgment begins in the house of God (1Pet 4:17)

D. **The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ** (Acts 2:22-24, 36-41)

E. **Preachers with a Bible, and a call** – Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites of God's coming judgment (Lk 11:30).