

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title, Author, and Date.....	page 5
Background and Setting.....	page 6
Key Words & Names in Jonah.....	page 7
Historical and Theological Themes.....	page 7
Key Doctrines in Jonah.....	page 10
God's Character in Jonah.....	page 10
Contribution to the Bible.....	page 10
The Ten Providential Acts of God in Jonah.....	page 12
Christ in Jonah.....	page 13
Answers to Tough Questions.....	page 13
Outline of the Book of Jonah.....	page 15
The Meat of the Book of Jonah.....	page 16
List of Prophecies.....	page 32
Questions for Discussion.....	page 34



MAJOR LESSONS FROM

JONAH

WITH PASTOR CARY GREEN

“While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple. Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, but I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving...” Jonah 2:7-9a

TITLE:

Following the lead of the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT), the title of the book is derived from the principal character, Jonah (*Yonah* meaning “_____”), the son of Amittai (meaning “truthful”) (Jon. 1:1).

Both the Septuagint (LXX) and the Latin Vulgate (Vg.) ascribe the same name to this book.

AUTHOR AND DATE:

The book makes no direct claim regarding authorship.

Throughout the book, Jonah is repeatedly referred to in the third person, causing some to search for another author.

However, it was not an uncommon Old Testament practice to write in the third person (e.g., Ex. 11:3; 1 Sam. 12:11). Several other prophets such as Hosea, Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah all have similar third-person-voice styles.

Furthermore, the autobiographical information revealed within its pages clearly points to _____ as the author.

The firsthand accounts of such unusual events—even to the prayer he prayed inside the great fish—would be best recounted by Jonah himself.

According to 2 Kings 14:25, Jonah came from Gath-hepher.

The village of Gath-hepher was located about three miles north of _____ in lower Galilee, making Jonah a prophet of the northern kingdom.

The context places him during the long and prosperous reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (ca. 793–753 B.C.), making him a prophet to the northern tribes just prior to Amos during the first half of the eighth century, ca. 760 B.C.

AND SO, the Pharisees were wrong when they said “*no prophet has arisen out of Galilee*” (John 7:52), because Jonah was a _____.

An unverifiable Jewish tradition says Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath whom Elijah raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:8–24). But while this is may be an interesting thought, there is no Biblical basis for this theory.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

As a prophet to the ten northern tribes of Israel, Jonah shares a background and setting with Amos.

The nation enjoyed a time of relative _____ and prosperity.

Both Syria and Assyria were in a period of mild decline, allowing Jeroboam II to enlarge the northern borders of Israel to where they had been in the days of David and Solomon (2 Kings 14:23–27).

But even though some weak rulers had ascended her throne, Assyria still remained a constant threatening presence to the northeast. By the time of Jonah, Assyrian _____ had become legendary. Graphic accounts of their cruel treatment of captives have been found in ancient Assyrian records.

Meanwhile, it was a time of spiritual poverty for Israel. Religion was ritualistic and increasingly _____. And justice had become perverted.

Peacetime and wealth had made Israel bankrupt *spiritually, morally, and ethically* (cf. 2 Kings 14:24; Amos 4:1ff; 5:10–13). As a result, God was going to punish her by bringing destruction and captivity by the _____ in 722 B.C.

KEY WORDS IN JONAH:

Prepared/ _____: Hebrew (מָנַח) *manah*—Jon. 1:17; 4:6–8—describes God’s sovereign power to bring about His will. Literally, *manah* signifies the power to appoint or ordain. God’s great power in the Book of Jonah in the **preparing** of the storm, the fish, the plant, the worm, and the scorching east wind illustrated His sovereignty over all His creation. God used these created things to redirect His reluctant prophet, and to reveal to Jonah His mercy and love for all people.

Slow to _____: Hebrew (אָרַךְ אֵר) *erek appayim*—Jon. 4:2—idiom meaning “the nose burns” or “the nose becomes hot” characterizing the heavy breathing of an angry person (Gen. 30:2; Ex. 4:14). The Hebrew idiom for “*slow to anger*” reveals God’s great mercy and patience (Psa. 145:8; Joel 2:13).

KEY NAMES IN JONAH:

Jonah (יֹנָתַן) (*Yonah* meaning “dove”)—reluctant _____ to the Ninevites; was swallowed by a giant fish before he was willing to comply with God’s command (Jon. 1:1–17)

The captain and crew of Jonah’s getaway ship—tried to _____ killing Jonah; but eventually threw him overboard to stop the storm (Jon. 1:5–16).

HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL THEMES:

Jonah, though a prophet of Israel, is not remembered for his ministry in Israel, which could explain why the Pharisees erringly claimed in Jesus’ day that no prophet had come from Galilee (*cf.* John 7:52).

Rather, the book relates the account of his call to preach repentance to Nineveh and his refusal to go.

The focus of this book is on that Gentile city, which was founded by Nimrod, great-grandson of _____ (Gen. 10:6-12).

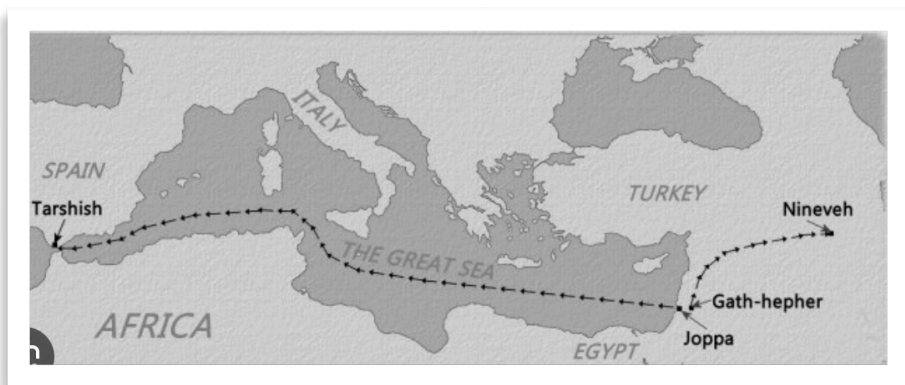
Nineveh was perhaps the largest city in the ancient world (1:2; 3:2-3; 4:11).

The _____ of Assyria, and infamous for its cruelty, Nineveh was a historical nemesis of Israel and Judah.

Israel's political distaste for Assyria, coupled with a sense of spiritual superiority as the recipient of God's covenant blessing, produced a recalcitrant attitude in Jonah toward God's request for missionary service.

When God called Jonah to preach repentance to the wicked Ninevites, the prophet knew that God's _____ might follow, and he really wanted to see the cruel Assyrians punished.

AND SO, he turned down the assignment and headed for Tarshish instead. Nineveh was northeast; Tarshish was _____.



But once God had dampened his spirits (by tossing him out of the boat and into the water) and demonstrated His protection (by moving him out of the water and into the fish), Jonah realized God was serious about His command!

Nineveh **must** hear the Word of the Lord, and so Jonah had to go.

His preaching resulted in an incredible _____ amongst the Ninevites, but Jonah came away angry and discouraged, for he had yet to learn the value of God's compassion upon sinful man.

Jonah was sent to Nineveh in part to shame Israel by the fact that a pagan city repented at the preaching of a stranger, whereas Israel would not repent though preached to by many of God's prophets.

Hundreds of years later, Jesus employed the repentance of the Ninevites to rebuke the _____, thereby illustrating the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts and their unwillingness to repent (Mat. 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-32).

The heathen city of Nineveh repented at the preaching of a reluctant prophet, but the Pharisees would not repent at the preaching of the Greatest of all prophets, in spite of overwhelming evidence that He was actually their Lord and Messiah.

Jonah is a picture of _____, who was chosen and commissioned by God to be His witness (Isa. 43:10-12; 44:8), who rebelled against His will (Ex. 32:1-4; Judg. 2:11-19; Ezk. 6:1-5; Mark 7:6-9), BUT who has been miraculously preserved by God through centuries of exile and dispersion to finally preach His truth (Jer. 30:11; 31:35-37; Hos. 3:3-5; Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-3).

Another strong theological theme in the book is that God's love and mercy extends to _____ of His creatures (Jon. 4:2, 10-11), not just His covenant people Israel (cf. Gen. 9:27; 12:3; Lev. 19:33, 34; 1 Sam. 2:10; Isa. 2:2; Joel 2:28-32).

And of course, the Book of Jonah, from beginning to end, reveals God's sovereign rule over man and all creation.

Creation came into being through Him (Jon. 1:9) and responds to His every command (Jon. 1:4, 17; 2:10; 4:6, 7; cf. Mark 4:41).

KEY DOCTRINES IN JONAH:

The _____ of God toward all nations (Jon. 4:2, 10-11; Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Psa. 86:5, 15; Joel 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9)

God's _____ rule (Jon. 1:4, 9, 17; 2:10; 4:6, 7; Job 42:2; Psa. 107:25; 146:6; Neh. 9:6; Mat. 10:29-30; Acts 17:24; Rom. 8:28)

GOD'S CHARACTER IN JONAH:

God is _____—Jon. 4:2, 10-11

God is providential—Jon. 1:4, 15

God is _____—Jon. 4:2

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE:

Unlike the other prophetic books, Jonah places more emphasis on the _____ than the message.

In the Hebrew, the prophetic message itself consists of only five words (Jon. 3:4).

The forty-eight verses of this biographical book provide a clear character development of the prophet, and a powerful portrait of his very _____ emotions.

Jonah was the only prophet sent directly to the Gentiles.

Nahum also prophesied against Nineveh, and Obadiah prophesied against Edom, but only Jonah was sent to travel TO the foreign nation of whom he prophesied.

And Jonah was the only prophet who tried to conceal his message.

Jonah learned a number of lessons:

- (1) It is _____ to run away from God.
- (2) There is no limit to what God can use to get one's attention.
- (3) Failure does not forever disqualify a person from God's service.
- (4) Disobedience to God creates _____ in the life of a believer.
- (5) Patriotism should never stand between a believer and the plan of God.

More than any other Old Testament book, Jonah reveals the universal concern of Yahweh for **all** men.

The historicity of Jonah has often been challenged because of its miraculous elements, especially the great fish.

However, there are published accounts of men who have survived being swallowed by whales—certain whales have the capacity to engorge a man in one swallow.

But the Hebrew word does not specify what kind of "fish" was involved in Jonah's case.

THE TEN PROVIDENTIAL ACTS OF GOD IN JONAH:

(#1) **Jonah 1:4** – *“The Lord hurled a great wind on the sea”*

(#2) **Jonah 1:7** – *“the lot fell on Jonah”*

(#3) **Jonah 1:15** – *“the sea stopped its raging”*

(#4) **Jonah 1:17** – *“the LORD appointed a great fish”*

(#5) **Jonah 1:17** – *“to swallow Jonah [alive]”*

(#6) **Jonah 2:10** – *“the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land”*

(#7) **Jonah 3:10** – *“God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way”*

(#8) **Jonah 4:6** – *“the LORD God appointed a plant”*

(#9) **Jonah 4:7** – *“God appointed a worm”*

(#10) **Jonah 4:8** – *“God appointed a scorching east wind”*

Of all the people and things mentioned in this book—the storm, the lots, the sailors, the fish, the Ninevites, the plant, the worm, and the east wind—ONLY the prophet himself _____ to obey God.

All of these other things were used by God to teach Jonah a big lesson in compassion and obedience.

CHRIST IN JONAH:

Jonah attains notoriety as the only prophet whom Jesus Christ _____ with Himself (Mat. 12:38-41).

Matthew 12:38-41

38 *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

39 *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;*

40 *for **just as Jonah** was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, **so will the Son of Man** be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

41 *The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."*

Christ uses Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the fish as an _____ of the three days and three nights He would be "in the heart of the earth" after His crucifixion.

ANSWERS TO TOUGH QUESTIONS:

Number 1 – Were Jonah's adventures some kind of mythical story, or did the prophet actually live through all those amazing experiences?

God acts on a grand scale in this book, arranging among other things a relentless storm, Jonah's miraculous survival inside a large fish, and the genuine repentance of a world power.

These acts are on such a scale that some skeptics and critics simply deny Jonah's historical validity.

Others attempt to offer substitute spiritual lessons by making parts of Jonah allegorical or interpreting the whole book as a _____. Two factors speak strongly in favor of taking Jonah at face value:

First—The role of the providential acts of God in Jonah **offended** the prophet. They make him look *cowardly, mean*, and _____.

Given the constant tension between the prophet and the mission God had given to him, the most amazing thing of all is that Jonah eventually recorded these God-glorifying and prophet-humiliating historical events.

Second—Jesus referred to Jonah several times as a _____ person, and NOT as a parable (see Mat. 12:38-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32).

Number Two—Why did God care about what happened to Nineveh?

That was precisely _____ question. Jonah certainly didn't care about Nineveh. He hoped and prayed that God would carry out His intention to overthrow the city.

But Jonah also knew that God usually gives warnings as opportunities to _____.

Jonah did not want Nineveh to have another chance. Jonah hated Nineveh and everything it stood for. He resented the suffering that had befallen his people through the rulers of Nineveh.

He failed to identify with the _____ of Nineveh, seeing them simply as a faceless enemy.

But God offered Jonah a priceless lesson in compassion. He stirred up Jonah's sense of outrage through a plant that was eaten by a worm; and then God explained to the prophet that HE had the _____ right to exercise compassion on the many thousands in Nineveh who were ignorant of their own condition (4:1-11).

OUTLINE:

I. Running from God's Will (1:1-17)

- A. The Commission of Jonah (1:1, 2)*
- B. The Flight of Jonah (1:3)*
- C. The Pursuit of Jonah (1:4-16)*
- D. The Preservation of Jonah (1:17)*

II. Submitting to God's Will (2:1-10)

- A. The Helplessness of Jonah (2:1-3)*
- B. The Prayer of Jonah (2:4-7)*
- C. The Repentance of Jonah (2:8, 9)*
- D. The Deliverance of Jonah (2:10)*

III. Fulfilling God's Will (3:1-10)

- A. The Commission Renewed (3:1, 2)*
- B. The Prophet Obeys (3:3, 4)*
- C. The City Repents (3:5-9)*
- D. The Lord Relents (3:10)*

IV. Questioning God's Will (4:1-11)

- A. The Prophet Displeased (4:1-5)*
- B. The Prophet Rebuked (4:6-11)*

THE MEAT OF THE BOOK OF JONAH:

The book of Jonah is different from the other Minor Prophets in that it is the only one of the Twelve in which the prophet concerned comes across as an _____, with attitudes and actions that stand as a warning and NOT a good example.

Among the Bible's "clean pages," Jonah usually shows at least some evidence of having been read from time to time, almost certainly because it is the most user-friendly of the Twelve.

There are no complicated symbols or visions to interpret (as there are, for instance, in the book of Zephaniah), nor are there any long prophecies, oracles, or sermons to work through.

There are only _____ words of prophecy!

And instead of extended tracts of teaching, Jonah is a gripping, high-speed story. We could imagine it being reviewed as "a real page-turner."

This is precisely why many critics dismiss it as being no more than a fanciful yarn spun by somebody with an overly vivid imagination.

Others take a slightly different position and say it is a parable—a fictional story told to convey a _____ truth of some kind; but as we shall see, the book of Jonah records events that really did happen.

We already looked at Jonah's background. He was "*the son of Amittai*" (Jon. 1:1), and he lived in Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25), a village _____ from Jerusalem.

We're given no exact date as to when his remarkable story unfolds, but as 2 Kings 14 places him in the reign of Jeroboam II, it was almost certainly in the latter part of the _____ century B.C. that God suddenly gave him a spine-chilling, breath-stopping assignment.

Jonah 1:1-2

1 *The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying,*

2 *"Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."*

Nineveh, which was then the capital of Assyria and located in what we now know as northern _____, was rated the greatest city of the ancient Near East, surrounded by massive walls 100 feet high and wide enough to take three chariots abreast.

It was also _____ miles northeast of where Jonah lived, so even getting there would have meant a long and dangerous journey.

More to the point, it also had a well-earned reputation for *paganism, idolatry, immorality, and violence*, and its vicious leaders thought nothing of cutting off the fingers, _____, and noses of those who opposed them.

One of the most impressive things about the Old Testament prophets is the way in which they obeyed God's commands—although a few tried to negotiate their way out of the particular commissions they were given (e.g., Moses (Ex. 3-4) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6)).

Jonah's response was very different; when the going got tough, Jonah got going—BUT in the wrong direction. He deliberately _____ the Lord, and instead of beginning the 500-mile trek to the northeast, he travelled sixty miles southwest and "*went down to Joppa*" (1:3).

The journey to the Mediterranean seaport of Joppa (modern-day _____) would have taken him several days, giving him ample opportunity to think about what he was doing and to change his mind—AND YET he did no such thing.

Even worse, Joppa was to be just his first step.

Jonah's real intention was "**to flee to Tarshish** from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3).

Tarshish is thought to have been Tartessus, a city west of the Straits of Gibraltar and on the Atlantic coast of southern _____.

People living in the Middle East knew of nothing beyond Tarshish; as far as they were concerned, it was the end of the world.

It was some _____ miles from Nineveh, and it's not difficult to imagine Jonah scouring the docks in Joppa, looking for a ship that would take him as far away from Nineveh as possible.

Whatever the exact details, Jonah's actions were not only sinful but foolish, as his aim was to run away "*from the presence of the Lord*" (Jon. 1:3).

Going as a one-man missionary to Nineveh may have been difficult, but running away from God was truly "Mission Impossible."

It matches what Adam and Eve tried to do in the Garden of Eden, after they had fallen into sin, when they "... *hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden*" (Gen. 3:8).

This was an exercise in utter futility, not only because God had put all the trees there in the first place, but also because, as He is _____, He always knew EXACTLY where they were (Psa. 139:7-8).

As mentioned already, the Hebrew word for "*Jonah*" is also the common noun "*dove*" and another minor prophet writes, "*Ephraim is like a dove, _____ and without sense*" (Hosea 7:11).

In trying to run away from God, Jonah lived up to this description.

We are told that Jonah "*went down to Joppa*" (v. 3).

This is literally correct, as he not only went southwest in direction, but he also traveled _____ from Gath-hepher, which was high in the foothills near Nazareth, to Joppa, which was obviously at sea level.

After he had paid the fare, and the ship sailed for Tarshish, he was soon to go even further down.

Jonah 1:4

4 *The Lord hurled a great wind on the sea, and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.*

The crew members were terrified *"and every man cried to his god"* (Jon. 1:5).

In order to _____ the ship they threw some of the cargo overboard, but while they were desperately trying to escape disaster *"Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep"* (Jon. 1:5).

So HOW could Jonah sleep, especially with the ship being tossed around like a cork and the chaotic noise of shouting crew members hurriedly moving cargo?

No doubt Jonah was exhausted after his three-day flight from Gath-hepher and emotionally worn out from searching for the right ship, BUT he was almost certainly stressed out with *sorrow, shame*, and _____ at what he was doing in disobeying God.

Fighting against the devil can be tiring, BUT trying to fight against GOD is utterly _____, which is why an unbeliever can often seem happier than a backsliding Christian.

An unbeliever can often sin without so much as a twinge of conscience, and a hard-wired atheist can do so without any thought that he might be morally culpable for his behavior.

BUT things are vastly different for the genuine believer.

Disobedience by a genuine believer places a strain on the _____, the emotions, the mind, the central nervous system, and eventually on the whole human fabric.

King David put it this way:

Psalm 32:3-4

3 *When I kept silent about my sin, **my body wasted away** through my groaning all day long.*

4 *For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; **My vitality was drained away** as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.*

Asleep on the lowest deck of the ship, Jonah had still not finished going down.

Sharing his crew's panic, the captain woke Jonah up and told him to pray that his God would deliver them.

Meantime, the crew superstitiously felt that someone on board must have been responsible for the storm, so they cast _____ to find out who it was – *“and the lot fell on Jonah”* (Jon. 1:7).

When they asked him what they should do with him, Jonah replied that they should throw him into the sea, since he knew that he was to blame for the trouble they were experiencing.

No doubt, his testimony that he worshipped *“the Lord God of heaven **Who made the sea and the dry land”*** struck a definite chord in the crew (Jon. 1:9-10).

At first, they tried hard to row the ship to shore, but when this failed, they did their best to _____ to Jonah's God, and then they heaved the prophet overboard.

Jonah then went even further down than the bottom deck of the ship; he went into the depths of the sea.

One reason why Jonah's rebellion was so sinful is that God had been so _____ to him in the past.

The only other Old Testament reference to Jonah tells us this:

2 Kings 14:23-25

23 *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years.*

24 *He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin.*

25 *He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, **according to the word of the Lord**, the God of Israel, which He spoke **through His servant Jonah** the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.*

In spite of Jeroboam's wickedness, his reign included a period when God prospered Israel, enabling her to recapture lost territory, _____ as Jonah had prophesied.

This would have raised the prophet's profile, not only in the eyes of the people in general, but also in those of the godless king.

As we pick up Jonah's story, we should learn the lesson that God's _____ is never at the expense of His justice.

In the well-known New Testament parable which Jesus told in Luke 15:11-32, it was one thing for the prodigal son to "*come to his senses*," but another thing to "*return to his father*."

The irony in the case of Jonah is that although he had paid the fare, he never got to Tarshish, and he never got a refund! In other words, there is _____ a price to be paid for disobedience.

Quote:

"There is no such thing as cheap grace, but neither is there such a thing as cheap disgrace."

Quote:

"When you run away from the Lord, you never get where you are going, and you always pay your own fare." – Donald Grey Barnhouse

Every step of disobedience is a costly step _____.

For Jonah, the cost now included being thrown into the sea without any means of survival.

Then came the event that turned the entire story around:

Jonah 1:17

17 And **the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah**, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

This must have seemed beyond belief to Jonah.

When we are told that God "*appointed*" or "*prepared*" (depending on the translation) a great fish, does this mean that years earlier it was a minnow which gradually grew into a full-fledged sea monster, and was then steered by God to ensure that it was in the right place, on the right day, at the right time, with its mouth wide open at exactly the right angle to swallow the drowning prophet?

We are not _____.

Perhaps God brought this particular sea monster into being specifically for this one purpose. Again, we are not told.

Quote:

"If this means a special creature for a special purpose we need not search our books on sea creatures to find out the most likely possibility" –Bernard Ramm

For countless people, the idea that Jonah could have been “swallowed by a whale” (the usual way it is put), then regurgitated three days later, is sufficient for them to discard the whole book.

BUT the Bible nowhere says that Jonah was swallowed by a _____ specifically, but rather by “a great fish,” without specifying the species.

In the Septuagint, the creature concerned is described as *ketos* (κῆτος), which means more broadly “a large sea monster.”

This could either have been a whale, some giant fish, or some other kind of huge sea creature.

Skeptics anxious to airbrush all the miracles out of Jonah’s story have even gone so far as to suggest (without a shred of evidence) that Jonah swam to shore and spent three nights in an inn called “The Fish”!

The Bible records many miraculous events, and when these appear to clash with scientific claims, we have “*the living and abiding Word of God*” (1 Peter 1:23) on one side, and *fickle, current* human opinion on the other.

AND IF the two cannot be reconciled, the Christian should know which to trust!

The Bible’s integrity is rooted in the identity and integrity of its divine Author.

Jesus confirmed the _____ of the book of Jonah some 500 years after it was written.

When Pharisees asked Him to show them a sign (that is, a miracle), He replied,

Matthew 12:39-40

39 “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except **the sign of the prophet Jonah**.

40 For just 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.”

Jesus' *death, burial, and resurrection* were to be historical events so _____ that the entire Christian faith came to stand on them; **THUS** it is inconceivable that Jesus would illustrate this awesomely important teaching with a fairy tale.

Accepting the story of Jonah as historical fact is the only worthy position for those who accept the deity of Christ, for Whom the book was part of the inspired Word of God.

A book may be historically accurate and not be inspired, but it could never be inspired and not be historically accurate.

This book is not merely, or even primarily, about Jonah; it is more importantly about God's gradually unfolding plan of His _____.

Now, while Jonah was inside the great fish, the once rebellious prophet made a dramatic spiritual U-turn.

Instead of running away from God, he turned 180 degrees and began running _____ Him.

Chapter 2 records what happened in the belly of that fish.

To begin with, "**Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God**" (Jon. 2:1), something he had probably _____ doing for some time.

Then he recognized God's sovereign oversight of the sailors' actions in throwing him overboard:

"For **You had cast me** into the deep, into the heart of the seas" (Jon. 2:3).

He acknowledged that even the raging seas were in God's hands:

"... all **Your breakers and billows** passed over me" (Jon. 2:3).

He had reached the point when it seemed there was no escape from _____:
"Water encompassed me **to the point of death**. The great deep engulfed me, weeds were wrapped around my head" (Jon. 2:5).

But God had further work for Jonah to do and delivered him just as he was "fainting away" (Jon. 2:7).

Looking gratefully back, Jonah told God,
"...**my prayer came to You**, into Your holy temple" (Jon. 2:7).

Rejoicing in this, he pledged,
"...**I will sacrifice to You** with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay" (Jon. 2:9).

Finally, he ended his prayer with the triumphant declaration,
"_____ **is from the Lord!**" (Jon. 2:9).

Reflecting on God's sovereignty and grace in Jonah's life should move us to adoration and _____—but there is more.

God not only restored to Jonah the joy of his salvation, he also restored him to the privilege of _____.

Jonah 3:1-2

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah **the second time**, saying,

2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you."

This is not only a major point in Jonah's story, it is one that provides a memorable example of God's gracious dealings with His erring children.

When Jesus was about to be arrested, the Apostle Peter promised him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" (Luke 22:33), but a few hours later, when challenged that he was one of Jesus' followers, Peter claimed, "I do not know Him" (Luke 22:57).

AND YET *Jesus did not abandon him*, and after His resurrection He re-commissioned Peter so that he became a pillar in the Early Church.

In Jonah's case, the re-commissioning could not have been more definite or dramatic:

*"Arise, **go to Nineveh** the great city, and **proclaim** to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you"* (Jon. 3:2).

This time, Jonah's response was _____ and committed:
*"So Jonah **arose** and **went** to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord"* (Jon. 3:3).

When he got there, his message was uncompromising and _____:
*"Yet forty days and **Nineveh will be overthrown!**"* (Jon. 3:4).

We can assume that he preached more than these eight words (just five in the original Hebrew) BUT his message was exactly the one God had commissioned to him. He made no attempt to spin God's words into something the Ninevites might have found more –"user-friendly."

Today's preachers would do well to follow his example and keep to the timeless truths of Scripture.

The effect of Jonah's preaching was astonishing: *"Then the people of Nineveh **believed in God**"* (Jon. 3:5).

They had apparently heard of Jonah's amazing experience of being delivered from three days inside the sea monster, as Jesus told the people of His day, *"Jonah became a _____ to the people of Nineveh"* (Luke 11:30).

Suddenly realizing that their gross wickedness had exposed them to God's wrath, and that they needed to change their ways before judgment fell on them, the Ninevites put on _____ *"from the greatest to the least of them"* (Jon. 3:5).

Considering the city had a reputation for being saturated with paganism, this mass confession of sin was a greater wonder than the sudden appearance of a sea monster to swallow Jonah.

When the _____ heard of this, even *“he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes”* (Jon. 3:6).

What’s more, he issued a proclamation saying, *“In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish”* (Jon. 3:7-9).

The outcome was astonishing:

*“When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, **then God relented** concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it”* (Jon. 3:10).

It would be going too far to claim that all the Ninevites became true worshippers of the God of Israel, BUT there was no doubt a _____ change had taken place in the city’s moral tone; and the disaster Jonah said would happen in forty days’ time did not come.

Instead of the prophet being laughed at or attacked, God stopped countless Ninevites in their tracks and _____ their city.

NOW IF the book of Jonah were a piece of fiction, we might expect it to end by telling us that after the remarkable outcome of his preaching in Nineveh, the prophet went on to exercise a dynamic and effective ministry for the rest of his life.

BUT RATHER, the final chapter paints a very different picture; it begins by telling us exactly _____ Jonah tried to run away from God in the first place.

As Nineveh was an evil, pagan city, and no prophet in history had ever been sent to such a place, Jonah would have realized that he had been given a tough assignment.

He may have been able to slip into the city unnoticed, but as soon as he announced WHY he had come, the Ninevites would have thought nothing of killing him on the spot.

Yet we saw that years earlier he had not been afraid to exercise his prophetic ministry when an ungodly king was on the throne; so we know that he was not a _____.

This makes what we next read come as a jolting surprise. When Nineveh was spared "...**it greatly displeased Jonah**, and he became angry" (Jon. 4:1).

He turned to God and admitted, "*Therefore **in order to forestall this** I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and One Who relents concerning calamity*" (Jon. 4:2).

Jonah's reason for refusing God's commission now becomes clear—and _____.

All other prophets had been commissioned to preach in God's covenant land, either Judah or Israel; but Jonah was sent to a Gentile nation that had no covenant relationship with God.

Proud of being an Israelite, he had an inbuilt aversion to pagan Gentiles, and a particular loathing of the Ninevites, who were sworn enemies of Israel.

Knowing the power and grace of God as he did, Jonah realized that being sent to warn Nineveh of impending doom could mean only one thing—God intended to _____ Nineveh the judgment that hung over its head.

This so stuck in Jonah's craw that he set out on a journey far more hazardous (and over five times as long) in an attempt to wash his hands of the whole business.

Jonah had lost sight of God's universal sovereignty and tried to squeeze it into his own narrow-minded _____.

He was sure that God was the Sovereign Lord of Israel, BUT NOT of the whole world.

This blind spot prevented him from seeing the significance of God's promise to Abraham that *"in you **all** the families of the earth shall be **blessed**"* (Gen. 12:3).

In Jonah's case his deep-rooted _____ meant he could not cope with the thought of God extending His mercy beyond His covenant people, and he wanted no part in bringing this about.

He resented the idea so deeply that this reluctant _____ would actually rather die than see his hearers repent and live: *"Therefore now, O Lord, **please take my life** from me"* (Jon. 4:3).

When God responded by asking the pouting prophet, *"Do you have good reason to be angry?"* (Jon. 4:4), Jonah turned away and found a spot outside the city where he could sit and sulk, perhaps even hoping against all odds that judgment might still fall on Nineveh.

He settled for being a _____, yet again God dealt graciously with him: *"... the Lord God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah, **to be a shade** over his head, to deliver him from his discomfort"* (Jon. 4:6).

Jonah was *"extremely _____"* for this (the only time in the entire story when he seemed to have been glad about anything!), but God had a further lesson to teach him.

But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered. When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life" (Jon. 4:7-8).

As the Lord of hosts, God is in sovereign control of all nature's elements, and it is worth noting that in dealing with Jonah he used those on _____ (the plant and the worm), in the sea (the great fish) and in the air (first the storm at sea, and now the scorching wind).

When the combination of sun and wind caused Jonah to become faint, he begged God to end his life, saying, *"Death is better to me than life"* (Jon. 4:8).

When asked by God whether he had the right to be _____ about the plant withering, Jonah had no hesitation in replying, *"I have **good reason to be angry, even to death**"* (Jon. 4:9).

AND that is the last word we hear from Jonah.

Unfortunately, it shows him to be *petty, self-centered, and irrational*, making the withering of a plant sufficient justification for wanting his life to end.

The contrast between Jonah and _____ could not be greater.

When Job was told that in one day he had lost over 1,100 animals, seven sons, and three daughters, he fell on the ground and worshipped, calling out, *"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; **blessed be the name of the Lord**"* (Job 1:21).

BUT when God removed the sheltering plant from Jonah, the _____ prophet threw a hissy fit.

In reply, God showed him how ridiculous it was for him to be concerned about a single plant AND YET be angry when God had compassion on an entire city full of people.

In the book of Jonah, God has the last word—as He always does—and in this case, it was to reveal His love for ALL, even the _____.

We know nothing of what happened to Jonah after this. To borrow a famous phrase from the twentieth-century American-born British poet T. S. Eliot, our last sight of Jonah sees him going out "*not with a bang, but a whimper.*"

And this helps us to see that the book bearing his name is not primarily about him, BUT about _____.

It tells us of God's unqualified sovereignty in appointing and controlling the casting of the sailors' lots, the storm at sea, the great fish, the plant, the worm, and the scorching east wind.

It tells us of His grace in warning the Ninevites of the danger they were in.

It tells us of His great _____ in changing their thinking and way of life.

In recording Jonah being thrown into the sea, swallowed by a great fish for three days, then regurgitated onto dry land, it gives us a dramatic picture of the *death, burial, and resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ, One "*greater than Jonah*" (Mat. 12:41).

It also foreshadows what has rightly been called the Church's Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19-20

19 "*Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*

20 *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

We can never _____ the whole world to Christ, but we are under crystal clear orders to _____ Christ to the whole world.

This comes across loud and clear as we read Jonah's remarkably honest testimony.

Quote:

"The chief purpose of the book of Jonah is to communicate the truth that since God has a heart of compassion for the heathen, His people should _____ that same attitude by reaching out with the message of salvation to all who are alienated from God—especially those who are blatantly evil in their behavior" –Steve Kreloff

LIST OF PROPHECIES IN JONAH:

The following is a list of prophecies found in the book of Jonah and accompanying references to Jonah in 2 Kings.

Possible fulfillment time periods include–

the Old Testament, the First Coming of Christ, the Last Days (our age), the Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, the Millennial Kingdom, and the Eternal State.

Statistics

Total Verses: 48

Prophetic Verses: 3

Prophetic Percentage: ____%

Prophetic Count

- ✓ Historically Fulfilled: 2
- ❖ Partial Fulfilment: 0
- ❖ Awaiting Future Fulfillment: 0

Prophecies

2 Kings 14:25

*He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, **which He spoke through His servant Jonah** the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.*

➤ **Prophecy:** King Jeroboam, the son of Joash, would enlarge the borders of Israel.

✓ **Status:** Historically Fulfilled



Period: Old Testament

Jonah 1:17

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

➤ **Prophecy:** The Sign of Jonah the Prophet

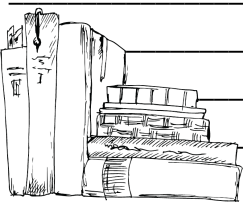
✓ **Status:** Historically Fulfilled (as a type pointing to the Messiah spending three days and nights in the grave; noted by Jesus in Matthew 12:39-40; 16:4; Luke 11:29-30)



Period: First Coming

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh?
- Describe the ups and downs of Jonah's attitude throughout this book.
- Why did God rescue Jonah in spite of the prophet's blatant disobedience?
- What insights does the Book of Jonah give about God's love?
- In what specific ways can you identify with Jonah? What would you like to avoid about his attitudes and experiences?
- Share a time when you were reluctant to follow God's leading. Why were you hesitant?
- What counsel would you give to the residents of Nineveh as they engaged in repentance? What would help their newfound faith last in a culture that was not used to following God?
- Jonah's example is mostly a negative one, full of attitudes and actions to avoid. Who are some positive examples of men or women who followed God's call even when they didn't feel like it?
- What is the relationship between emotion and obedience?



THEMES

HOSEA: GOD IS FAITHFUL

JOEL: GOD IS WRATHFUL

AMOS: GOD IS JUST

OBADIAH: GOD IS JEALOUS

JONAH: GOD IS MERCIFUL

MICAH: GOD SEES EVERYTHING

NAHUM: GOD IS PATIENT

HABAKKUK: GOD WANTS OUR FAITH

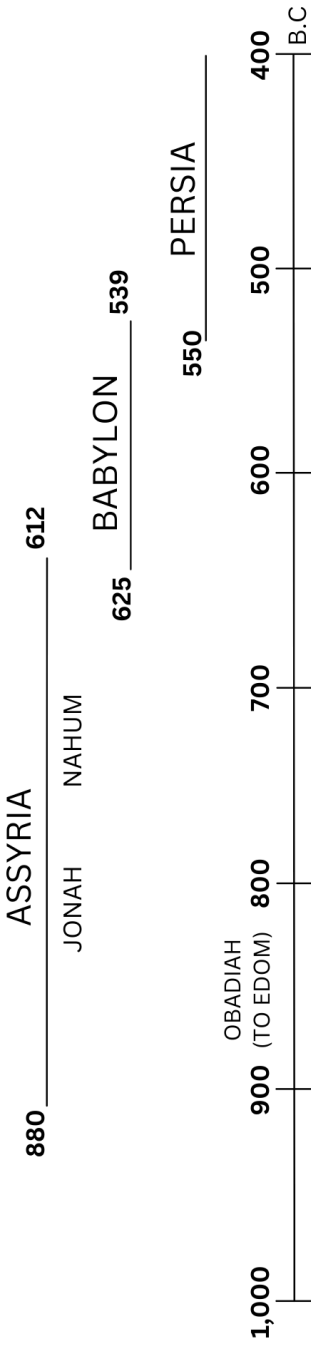
ZEPHANIAH: GOD IS WITH US

HAGGAI: GOD WANTS FIRST PLACE

ZECHARIAH: GOD CHOSE JERUSALEM

MALACHI: GOD WANTS OUR LOVE

Chronology of the Prophets of Israel and Judah



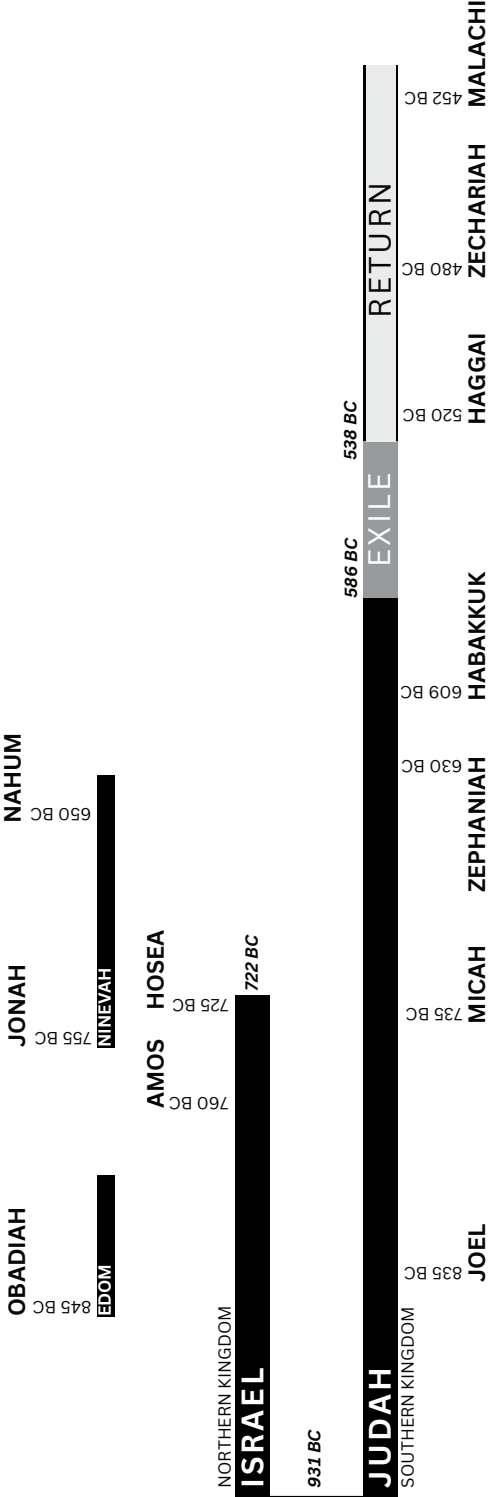
ISRAEL 721
 AMOS
 HOSEA

JUDAH

931
 JOEL
 MICAH
 ISAIAH
 DANIEL
 HAGGAI
 ZECHARIAH
 EZEKIEL
 JEREMIAH
 MALACHI

- - MAJOR PROPHET

TIMELINE



ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Joel	Amos	Obadiah	Jonah	Nahum	Zephaniah	Zechariah*
Ammon		49:1-6	25:1-7		1:13-15					
Arabia	21:13-17									
Assyria (Nineveh)	10:5-19; 14:24-27						(Nineveh)	(Nineveh)		
Babylon	13:1-14:23; 21:1-10; 46:1-47:15	50:1-51:64								2:9-12?
Damascus	17:1-6?	49:23-27			1:3-5					9:01
Edom	21:11-12	49:7-22	25:12-14		1:11-12	1-14?				
Egypt	18:1-20:6	46:2-26	29:1-32:32							
Elam		49:34-39								
Ethiopia									2:12-15	
Gaza					1:6-8					9:05
Kedar and Hazor		49:28-33								
Lebanon										11:1-3?
Moab	15:1-16:14	48:1-47	25:8-11		2:1-3				2:8-11	
Philistia	14:28-32	47:1-7	25:15-17	3:4-8					2:5-7	9:06
Tyre Sidon	23:1-18		26:1-28:19; 28:20-23	3:4-8	1:9-10					9:2-3

