

- Second act of Jonah begins as the first – this time Jonah obeys ... **Nineveh** (Mosul Iraq) – capital of Assyria, 12,000 pop (about size of Dayton; grew to 300,000); city of great importance, 3-days to visit properly (3) ... Known for power, wealth, idolatry, and barbaric treatment of enemies; poses great threat to N. Kingdom ... Assyria doesn't deserve God's mercy; they deserve His full judgment ... Jonah's unsure how they'll respond to God ... He knows how God will respond if they heed to His warning ... Regardless, Jonah wants to see Nineveh taken out
- Day 1 – Jonah preaches and Nineveh responds ... Message understood as: judgment is coming unless repentance takes place ... 40-days is a merciful amount of time to get right with God ... And the people don't waste any time ... **The people of Nineveh believed God** – not superficial beliefs about God; they **believed IN God** (Gn15:6, Ex14:31) ... Their behavior reveals beliefs (6-9): **fasting** – humility, dependance on God, **sackcloth** – mourning over sin, **ashes** – humble before God, recognizing His authority and power ... Outward and inward repentance – how they were living needed to change ... Actions resemble sailors; opposite of Jonah ... They call upon God to act according to His character (9) ... God receives the response He desired ... He relents in judgment because of inner change – fruit of faith (Ex32:14)
- What is it about God's mercy that scares us or frustrates us ... What is it about God's mercy we misunderstand ... Some of us are afraid of receiving from God His unconditional and unrelenting mercy ... Some of us believe that truth must be spoken before any mercy is shown ... Some of us think others need to earn mercy before they can receive mercy ... All of us need to be captured and awakened by God's mercy again and again
  - When it comes to God's attributes, He's every attribute perfectly ... God isn't divided into parts ... And yet, **there are some attributes that pour out of God more naturally than others** ... Thru the Bible, we find a God who's more excited to pour out mercy and grace than He is wrath and judgment ... **Ortlund: The One who rules and ordains all things brings afflictions into our lives with a certain divine reluctance. He's not reluctant about the ultimate good that's going to be brought about through that pain; that indeed is why He's doing it ... The pain itself does not reflect His heart ... Lm3:31-33**
  - God's heart for people is shown in the New Covenant – **Jr32:41** ... God's heart for people is shown in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus – **1J4:9-10** ... God says He takes no pleasure in anyone's death ... Instead, He takes great pleasure when people turn from sin and believe in Him (Ez18:23, 33) ... **Sibbes: There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us**
  - **Calvin: Christian faith is a firm and solid assurance of the heart, by which we cling securely to the mercy of God which is promised to us through the gospel ... He4:12-16** ... God's Spirit and Word transform us by bringing to light what's hidden and restoring what's broken (all things stand **naked and exposed** before God) ... Because of this, **let us hold fast to our confession** – the gospel, the truth of Jesus Christ ... He knows our struggles ... He's personally experienced our struggles ... He's not put off by them ... He calls us to boldly approach the Throne of Grace – Throne of God, **so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need**

This week: What is God's mercy

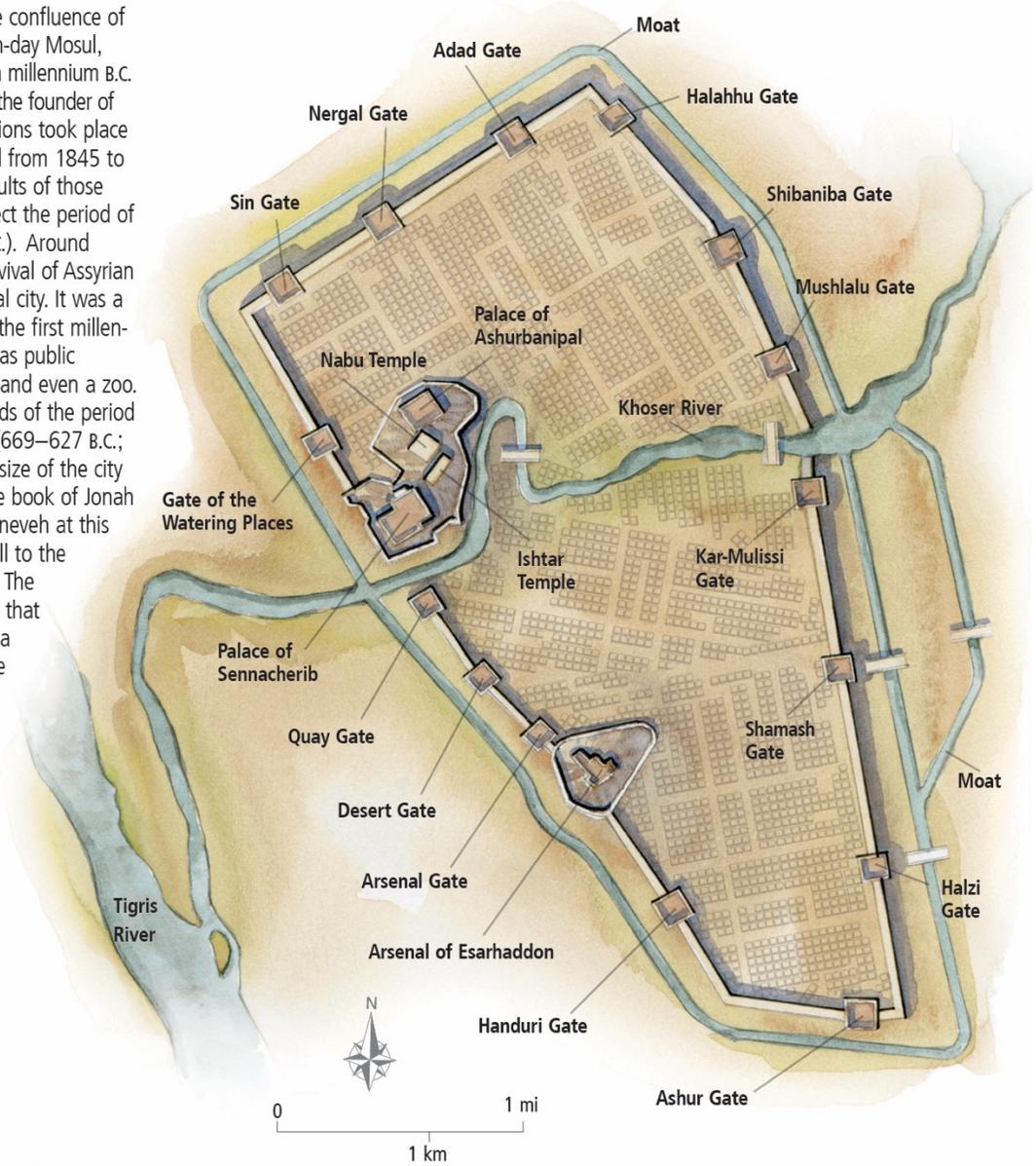
Next week: Reacting to God's mercy – Jonah 4:1-4

Following week: Being taught God's mercy – Jonah 4:5-11



## The City of Nineveh

Nineveh, which was situated at the confluence of the Tigris and Khoser rivers (modern-day Mosul, Iraq), was first settled in the seventh millennium B.C. According to the Bible, Nimrod was the founder of the city (Gen. 10:11). Major excavations took place under the direction of Henry Layard from 1845 to 1854. The diagram pictures the results of those excavations, especially as they reflect the period of the Assyrian Empire (1420–609 B.C.). Around 1000 B.C. there occurred a great revival of Assyrian power, and Nineveh became a royal city. It was a thriving city during the first half of the first millennium, and contained such luxuries as public squares, parks, botanical gardens, and even a zoo. One of the great archaeological finds of the period is the library of King Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.; called Osnappar in Ezra 4:10). The size of the city was approximately 1,850 acres. The book of Jonah reflects the flourishing nature of Nineveh at this time (3:1–5). Nineveh eventually fell to the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C. The invading armies dammed the rivers that supplied water to the city, causing a flood that broke through one of the perimeter walls, giving the foreign armies access to the city.



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