

Jonah

a fishy story?

Context

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 for forty-one years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD; he **did not abandon all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat**, into which he misled Israel. He **restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.**

(2 Kings 14:23-25 NASB 2020)

Outline

Jonah (the prophet) is commissioned
(chapters 1, 2)

Jonah is commissioned a second time
(chapter 3)

Jonah's displeasure (chapter 4:1-8)

God's compassion (chapter 4:9-11)

Jonah is Commissioned

The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.” But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD.

However, 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. Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried out to his god, and they hurled the cargo into the sea to lighten it for them.

Jonah 1:1-5a (NASB 2020)

The Lot Falls on Jonah

“I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”

Jonah 1:9 (NASB 2020)

Sailors' Reaction

Then they cried out to the LORD and said, “We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life, and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, LORD, have done as You pleased.”

So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. Then the men became extremely afraid of the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

And the LORD designated a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:14-17 (NASB 2020)

Jonah's Prayer (Chapter 2)

Verse 2 and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.

Verse 6 "I descended to the base of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, LORD my God.

Verse 9 But I will sacrifice to You with a voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

Verse 10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

Jonah 2:2,6,9-10 (NASB 2020)

God Commissions Jonah a Second Time

“...Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days’ walk. Then Jonah began to go through the city one day’s walk; and he cried out and said, “Forty more days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.”

Jonah 3:3b-4 (NASB 2020)

Prescription for Repentance

Joel

Dressing in burlap

Fasting, weeping,
mourning

Solemn assembly

prayer

Change of heart

The Ninevite Response

Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, removed his robe from himself, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the dust.

Jonah 3:5-6 (NASB 2020)

The King's Proclamation

The king issued a proclamation so no person, not even the animals were to eat or drink. “But every person and animal must be covered with sackcloth; and people are to call on God vehemently, and they are to turn, each one from his evil way, and from the violence which is in their hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent, and turn from His burning anger so that we will not perish.”

Jonah 3:8-9 (NASB 2020)

Prescription for Repentance

Joel	People of Nineveh
Dressing in burlap	Dressing in burlap (even the animals)
Fasting, weeping, mourning	Fasting (even the animals)
Solemn assembly	City-wide decree
prayer	prayer
Change of heart	Cessation of violence

God relents of the disaster He declared...

Jonah's Displeasure

But it greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry. Then he prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was this not what I said when I was still in my own country? Therefore in anticipation of this I fled to Tarshish, since I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in mercy, and One who relents of disaster. So now, LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life."

Jonah 4:1-4 (NASB 2020)

Jonah Watches the City

So **the LORD God designated a plant**, and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head, to relieve him of his discomfort. And Jonah was overjoyed about the plant. But **God designated a worm** when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered. And when the sun came up **God designated a scorching east wind**, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint, and he begged with all his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life!"

Jonah 4:6-8 (NASB 2020)

Comparing Responses 1

**Jonah
commissioned**



rebels



storm



great fish

**Jonah
commissioned
second time**



goes to Nineveh



God relents



Jonah angry

Comparing Responses 2

Sailors



cry out



row



**pray not to be
held accountable**



**sacrifice and
VOWS**

Ninevites



fast, sackcloth



City-wide decree



pray to God



stop violence

Comparing Responses 3

Jonah's prayer



**Calls out in
distress**



**Acknowledges
God**



**Thankfulness and
commitment**

**Jonah's second
prayer**



**Approaches
God in anger**



**Asks God to
take his life**

God's compassion

“Then the LORD said, “You had compassion on the plant, for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. Should I not also have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 people, who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left, as well as many animals?”

Jonah 4:10-11 (NASB 2020)

Satire

- Jonah – dove, son of my faithfulness proves to be unfaithful.
- prophet of God disobeys; the pagan sailors pray earnestly.
- city of Nineveh repents in sackcloth and ashes, a powerful king humbles himself at a one-sentence sermon
- prophet of God sulks because God didn't destroy the city and all the people in it.
- prophet of God is upset over plant, yet isn't concerned about the people of Nineveh.

Jonah is...

Children's fiction ✗

Allegory ✗

Parable ✗

Historical account ✓

God of the Impossible

Challenge	Reponse
Fish can't swallow human	Documented
Human can't survive	Documented
3 days and 3 nights	Partial days are treated as full days
Nineveh too small	Includes surrounding area (suburbs)
Plant can't grow that fast	Possibly castor bean plant

the LORD God of Heaven

- made the sea and the dry land
- hurled a great wind on the sea
- designated a great fish to swallow Jonah
- designated the plant, the worm, and the scorching east wind

He is... God of the impossible

sent His Son to be born of a virgin, to live, die for the sin of mankind, and to be raised from the dead.

Jesus and the Sign of Jonah

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves a sign; and so no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS IN THE STOMACH OF THE SEA MONSTER FOR THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. 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.

Matthew 12:38-41 (NASB 2020)

Jesus and the Sign of Jonah - 2

“... So the miraculous sign of Jonah isn’t so much a display of power as an astonishing display of weakness. Jesus laid aside his divine glory and prerogatives and humbled himself even to the point of death on a cross. Just as Jonah was cast into the water to save the sailors from the wrath of God, so Jesus would be cast into death to bear punishment our sins deserve – to save us. And just as Jonah came “back from the dead,” so Jesus was raised for our justification. That’s the sign of Jonah.”

Timothy Keller

Conclusion

- **The story of Jonah is about God's judgment and God's love for those He created**
 - **God wants all people to turn to Him**
 - **We are all created in God's image**
 - **we have all sinned and fallen short**
- **Jesus died on the cross for our sin and was raised from the dead for our justification.**
 - **Guard against being like Jonah at times**

**We will all stand before
the righteous judge one day.**

Will we be ready?