

Jonah

The Persistent Purpose of God

I. PREPARING TO STUDY

A. Authorship

The name Jonah means “_____.” 2 Kings 14:25 says that Jonah lived during the reign of Jeroboam II; probably around 745 B.C. Jonah’s home town was Gath-Hepher, a village only three miles from _____.

Despite the historical reference to the prophet cited above, many liberals and skeptics have relegated the story of Jonah to the category of _____ or legend. They just do not believe that a man could be swallowed by a great fish and live in its belly for three days. Some have gone to great lengths to try to prove that no man could ever survive inside any known whale, shark, or other “great fish.” However, such an examination misses the point. Jonah 1:17 says, “The Lord had _____ a great fish.” No great fish in its natural and normal condition could save the prophet’s life. Therefore, God prepared a fish so it could.

B. Relationship to the Other Books of the Bible

Jonah is not quoted by other books of the Bible, but the prophet and his story is referenced in the New Testament by _____ Himself. In fact, Jesus affirmed the historicity of the book of Jonah when He said,

Matthew 12:41 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.

II. EXAMINING THE TEXT

A. GOD’S DIRECTIVE (1:1-2)

Go to _____ and cry out against it.

Jonah 1:1–2 1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

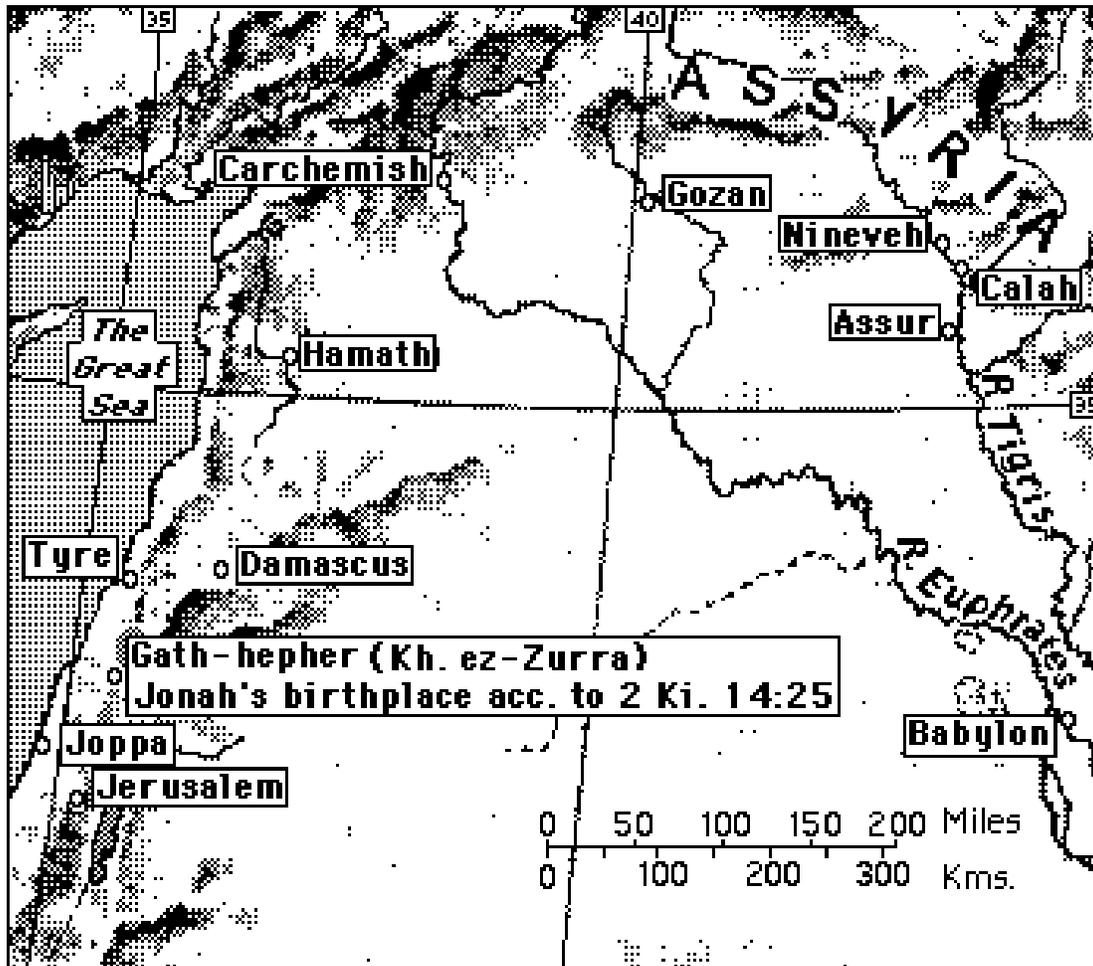
How does the Word of the Lord come to us today?

Jesus says that it comes to us through the _____.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. According to Gen. 10:11, Nineveh was founded by _____, the same wicked man who established Babel. Excavations of the site show ancient occupancy and are dated by secularists back to _____ B.C. During the days of Jonah, it was the capital of the mighty and growing empire of _____. Nineveh, as the rest of Assyria, was polytheistic in its belief and practice.

Map showing the area covered by the mission of Jonah. (NBD p. 613)



© 1980 GEORGE PHILIP & SON, LTD. AND INTER-VARSITY PRESS

Where does God tell us to go?

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, ...

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to the **end of the earth**.”

The primary importance of the Book of Jonah is to demonstrate that God's desire has always been for the man and woman He created to repent of their sin, be _____, and live in fellowship with Him forever.

B. JONAH'S DISOBEDIENCE (1:3-16)

1. **Jonah arose and fled to Tarshish** (a city on the coast of _____), the opposite direction from Nineveh.

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

The "presence of the Lord"

- **Does not mean "God's location."**
- **It means "the state of intimate _____ with God."**

When Jonah disobeyed God, he left the presence of the Lord.

When we disobey God, we leave the intimate fellowship a believer can have with His Creator.

2. **God's response:** He sent a _____ to turn Jonah around. Jonah's fellow sailors cast Jonah overboard because they saw Jonah's disobedience was putting their own lives in danger.

When believers persistently disobey the Lord, God sends storms of discipline into their lives to encourage them to repent and return to the presence of the Lord.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

Jonah 1:4–16 4 But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish." 7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are

you?” 9 So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, “Why have you done this?” For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?”—for the sea was growing more tempestuous. 12 And he said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me.” 13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, “We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You.” 15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

When God allows a storm to come into our life, it is always

- **Some of God’s storms come as chastisement to bring us to repentance.**
 - God did not want to leave Jonah away from the presence of the Lord. God did not want to leave Jonah in sin.
 - For Jonah’s sake
 - For the sake of the people of Nineveh
 - God does not want to leave us away from the presence of the Lord. God does not want to leave any of us in our sin.
 - For our sake
 - For the sake of others around us and others He desires to bless and benefit through us.
- **Some of God’s storms are _____ – they just move us the right direction.**
 - Sometimes a troubling storm comes, and it is not because of sin in your life.
 - But as a result of the storm, you are carried a different direction. The winds of trouble have blown you to a different place than you were. God has moved you by means of the storm.

- **Some of God's storms are purposed to _____ us personally.**

Matthew 8:23–27 23 Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. 24 And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. 25 Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

26 But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

- **Not every storm is about me or you.**
- **God may not send a particular storm because of you, but God has a purpose for _____ person caught up in the storm.**
 - God hurled the storm at Jonah's ship to turn the heart of a reluctant prophet who was running from His presence back to the sweet joy of fellowship with his Master,
 - But God also had a purpose for every sailor on the boat.

C. GOD'S DELIVERANCE (1:17 – 2:10)

1. **God _____ a great fish.**

The fish swallowed Jonah, rescuing him from drowning in the sea. Jonah lived inside the fish for _____ days and _____ nights. In the fish, Jonah had time to reconsider.

2. **Jonah's prayer of _____ and repentance (2:2-9)**
3. **God gives Jonah another opportunity to _____.** The fish vomits Jonah onto dry land.

Is this story real? Is it true? Or is it, as many claim, a fanciful myth that makes a spiritual point?

Matt. 12:40 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.

Who is speaking? _____! To what is He comparing Jonah's being swallowed and emerging after three days? The _____. If we believe that the great fish is mythological, to be consistent we must believe that the resurrection is mythological as well.

D. JONAH'S REPENTANCE (3:1-4)

1. **God said, "Arise, go... preach..."**
2. **Jonah arose, went, and preached.**

Because Nineveh was a large city (population _____ (4:11), it would take Jonah three days to travel through the city, stopping at public places to preach the message God had given him.

E. NINEVEH'S RESPONSE (3:5-10)

1. The people _____.
2. The king repented.
3. God _____ and did not destroy.

F. JONAH'S LESSON (4)

1. Jonah was angry that God did not _____ Nineveh.
2. God led Jonah to get angry over the destruction of a plant that was beneficial to the prophet.
3. **God reminded Jonah of His love for these _____, who were of far more importance than a plant.**