

JONAH 800 - 750 B.C

The prophet Jonah was sent on a mission to pronounce God's warning of destruction to the wicked city of Nineveh. Jonah's voyage and the account of his disobedience to the *Voice of the Lord* is a well-known story. It is *not* fictional; and God did *not* prepare a whale but - a great fish.

Jonah is considered to be one of the earliest of the Minor Prophets and therefore contemporary with Amos. In the book of Jonah, no dates are included and he is known only as the son of Amittai, probably from Zebulun.

Read 2 Kings 14: 25 - 27 (additional information about Jonah)

In the days of King Jeroboam<sup>11</sup>, Israel's borders were restored as foretold by the prophet Jonah. His words from the Lord were fulfilled with the ending of hostilities with Damascus with its defeat by Assyria.

Read Jonah Chapter 1

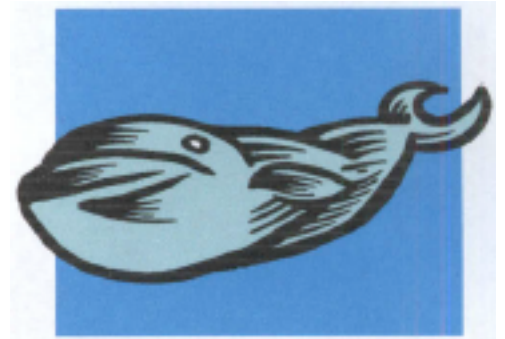
The book of Jonah is the account of his God-appointed mission to warn Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, of God's imminent judgment. Hear God's voice to Jonah –

*Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and proclaim against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.*

Jonah 1: 2

Jonah, instead, went by ship in the opposite direction to avoid carrying out God's commission to a Gentile and enemy nation. In Jonah's mind, God's mercy was only for Israel! While Jonah slept, the Lord caused a great wind to blow and a furious storm arose endangering the ship. The violent waves were only stilled when the fearful and reluctant sailors threw Jonah into the sea. It was then the Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, prepared that great fish to swallow Jonah alive. Like a grave, Jonah was inside that huge sea creature for three days and three nights.

(Jonah 1: 17)



In the New Testament, Jesus, on being asked for a sign, used the prophet Jonah as the only sign to be given.

(Matthew 12: 39, 40, !6: 4)

In using Jonah as a sign, Jesus was prophesying His coming death, burial in the tomb and resurrection. As Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so would the Son of man be entombed.

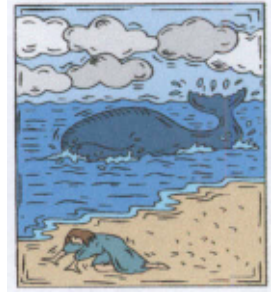
JONAH'S PRAYER FROM THE DEEP

Inside the sea monster (not Leviathan) for three days and nights, Jonah called upon his God. He prayed in confession with thanksgiving to the Lord out of both the depths of the sea and his great distress. He promised to pay his vow of obedience to the Lord with these words:

*I will pay that which I have vowed.  
Salvation and deliverance belong to the Lord!*

Jonah 2: 9b

## GOD ANSWERS JONAH'S PRAYER



God listened and dramatically answered:

*And the Lord spoke to the fish,  
and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.*     Jonah 2: 10

Then the God of the second chance repeated the same words to Jonah.

*Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out to it the preaching that I tell you.*     Jonah 3: 2

This time Jonah obeyed and travelled to Nineveh. As he crossed that great city, he cried out God's warning to the people, that in forty days Nineveh would be destroyed. Hearing Jonah's terrible message, the King and people fasted and prayed as they repented in sackcloth and ashes. Even the animals were denied sustenance and were covered in sackcloth! Jonah was much displeased, for he knew that the Lord would not destroy the city. The prophet, unlike his compassionate God, continued to lack any pity for a Gentile enemy people.

Jonah was so angry he wanted to die!

*Then said the Lord, Do you do well to be angry?*     Jonah 4: 4

Jonah, under his own erected shelter outside the city, waited to see what would happen. While watching the city, the Lord prepared a gourd to give Jonah extra shade – probably for protection from the sun of his now most sensitive skin! Next day, Jonah grateful for the shade over his head, became angry again; the Lord having prepared a worm to destroy the gourd and an uncomfortable hot east wind to blow! Although he had been miraculously rescued from death, Jonah once again wanted to die!

Jonah was angry for the loss of the gourd but had no pity for the inhabitants of Nineveh, even its youngest children and the city's many animals.

*Do you do well to be angry for the loss of the gourd?*     Jonah 4: 9a



*You have had pity on the gourd, for which you have not laboured nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons not yet old enough to know their right hand from their left, and also many cattle (not accountable for sin)?*

Jonah 4: 10, 11

The book of Jonah begins and ends with the *Voice of the Lord* - God's words reveal His compassion for both man and animals and that He would have all men to be saved.

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