

OWNit365 Bible Reading Tips

To assist you in making the most of your Bible reading, we offer the following:

- Background and overview information about the book
 - Thoughts and questions for your personal reflection and observation
 - Questions that you can use in a small group setting
- Something to look for in each chapter

Jonah

Author

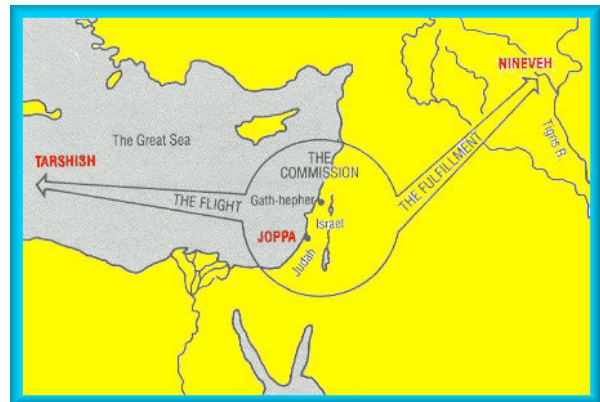
The name Jonah means dove. Jonah was a Hebrew prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel in the 8th century BC. He was a contemporary of Amos. Jonah came from a small town near Nazareth [2Kings 14:25]. Christ referred to the story of Jonah [Mat 12:39-40, Luke 11:29-32].

Book Background and History

Jonah tells the account of a Prophet of God going to a Gentile nation 3,000 years ago. The book focuses more on Jonah's disobedience than on his audience or their amazing story of repentance [Jonah 3:5]. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria (located in modern northern Iraq) and at the time of Jonah had 120,000 inhabitants.

The Assyrians were threatening God's people. During the time of Jonah's prophecy they occupied the land surrounding Israel. The Assyrians had committed heinous acts of torture and cruelty, making large grotesque displays of their victims to show their power and authority. Jonah brought a

message of impending destruction rather than one of hope.



The ship Jonah took was headed to Tarshish, likely in Spain; up to 2,000 miles west. This was the opposite direction of the approximately 500 mile land trip God wanted him to take northeast. Jews at the time were not a seafaring people so this was an extreme decision to go the opposite way.

Key Verse

Jonah 4:4 Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" (NKJV)

Outline

Jonah 1	Jonah runs from God	the storm
Jonah 2	Jonah prays to God	the fish
Jonah 3	Jonah speaks for God	the city
Jonah 4	Jonah learns of God	the Lord

Book Highlights

Unlike, the other prophets, Jonah does not make predictions. Rather, it is a compact, well-written narrative.

God had a specific plan for Jonah that he simply did not like. God told Jonah to preach to the Ninevites. Instead, Jonah decided to flee west by sea.

On the ship, Jonah fell into a deep sleep during a large storm that God had unleashed. The sailors cast Jonah into an angry sea where a fish swallowed him.

Once Jonah decided to follow God's direction, God placed Jonah on dry land. After Jonah delivered the message to the Ninevites, they repented. God spared them. Jonah became angry with God for sparing them. He sat under a vine wrestling with God.

Jonah pictures Israel. He was disobedient and ran to Gentiles for refuge instead of obeying God. God preserved Him in spite of his disobedience.

Jonah pictures Christ. He was inside the fish 3 days and nights as Christ was in the tomb 3 days and nights. Jonah came back from apparent death to carry God's Word to the Gentiles. Christ came back from the grave and He and His disciples carried His Word to the Gentiles.

Personal Reflection and Application

Have you learned these lessons?

- When it comes to God, you can run, but you can't hide.
- Life is more difficult when you disobey God.
- God will do anything to get your attention.
- God is a God of second chances.
- God has a heart for unreached people.
- God is against bigotry and prejudice.

Reflect on whether you have received God's grace and forgiveness for your own sins ([John 3:16-21](#), [Rom 10:9-10](#)).

Is there a person or people group that you would not want to reach out to if God directed? Is there a vine and gourd in your life that keeps you from reaching out to others([Jonah 4:4-9](#))?

Jonah proves there is no place to hide from God. God gives mercy to those who do not deserve it. God is concerned for all living beings in His creation ([Jonah 4:10](#)). How many chances has God given you to do as He wants? What does it take to get you to the point where you will turn to Him?

Small Group Conversation Guide

>>> [Jonah 1](#) <<<

Jonah had an opportunity to preach to 120,000 people. As a prophet, this could have been his dream job. What would Jonah have preferred to happen to the Ninevites? Why?

Who did the sailors first turn to when they were in trouble? Who do you first turn to when you are in trouble?

When the sailors realized that Jonah was the cause of their problems, what questions did they ask him? Why did Jonah require them to throw him into the sea rather than just jumping in himself? What was Jonah expecting when he entered the water?

>>> [Jonah 2](#) <<<

Close your eyes. Imagine what it was like in the belly of the fish. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? What do you smell? What do you taste?

In Jonah's dark time, what is the first thing he did? When we are in a dark time, what is the first thing God wants us to do ([James 5:13](#))?

When we are disobedient, what does God wait for us to do ([Hosea 5:15](#))? Jonah was not the only one who cried out to God when he was in 'deep water' ([Psa 69:1-2](#)). What can we do to stay in conversation with God whether or not we are in deep water? God heard Jonah's cry. As believers in Christ, how do we know God will respond to our prayers ([Heb 5:7](#))?

>>> [Jonah 3](#) <<<

What did the people of Nineveh do to demonstrate true humility, sorrow, and repentance? What is godly sorrow and true repentance ([2Cor 7:10](#))?

What brings people to the point that they turn to God ([Jonah 1:16](#), [Jonah 3:5](#), [Gal 3:6](#), [Heb 11:6](#))?

>>> [Jonah 4](#) <<<

What is God's heart regarding "the nations" ([Jonah 4:2](#), [Jonah 4:10-11](#))? What are our commands? What promise has Jesus made to us ([Mat 28:18-20](#))?

What should a believer's attitude and perspective be toward the lost ([Mark 13:10](#), [John 3:16](#), [Rom 1:15-17](#))?

Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to look for in each chapter.

What to Look for:

O1. What the sailors tried before casting Jonah overboard	O2. How Jonah's experience pictured Christ, [Mat 12:40]
O3. How the Ninevites responded to Jonah	O4. How Jonah responded to God's mercy