

JONAH THE PROPHET

Quote:

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.”

Matthew 12:40-41

Chapter Breakdown

The Sign of the Prophet Jonah

Ch 1:1-16 Jonah’s Commission, Evasion and Correction.

1:1-3 - Jonah attempts to Evade his Mission.

1:4-10 - Fear in the Storm-tossed Ship.

1:11-16 - Jonah’s Sacrifice turns the Crew to God.

Ch 1:17-2:10 Jonah’s Prayer and Deliverance.

1:17 - Jonah in the Fish.

2:1-9 - Jonah’s Prayer.

2:10 - Jonah Delivered out of the Fish.

Ch 3:1-10 Proclamation to Nineveh, and Their Repentance.

3:1-4 - Jonah Pays His Vows.

3:5-9 - Repentance of the Ninevites.

3:10 - God Grants Respite.

Ch 4:1-11 Jonah’s Displeasure and Education by Reproof.

4:1-3 - Jonah’s Displeasure.

4:4-11 - Yahweh’s Reproof.

Colour the Key Phrases in Jonah:

The Word of Yahweh (Colour Green):

occurs 7 times in Jonah:

1:1 “the word of Yahweh came unto Jonah”.

2:10 “Yahweh spake unto the fish”.

3:1 “the word of Yahweh came unto Jonah”.

3:3 “according to the word of Yahweh”.

4:4 “Then said Yahweh”.

4:9 “God said”.

4:10 “Then said Yahweh”.

Yahweh’s sovereign control over the life of Jonah (Colour Blue and mark the comments in the adjacent margin):

1:4 “But Yahweh sent out a great wind”.

1:7 “the lot fell upon Jonah” (see **Prov 16:33**).

1:13 “the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them” - ie directly opposing them.

1:14 “for thou O Yahweh hast done as it pleased thee”.

1:15 “the sea ceased from her raging” (see **Psa 65:7; 107:29**).

1:17 “now Yahweh had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah”.

2:10 “And Yahweh spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.”

4:6 “Yahweh God prepared a gourd and made it come up over Jonah”.

4:7 “God prepared a worm”.

4:8 “God prepared a vehement east wind”.

The Sign of the Prophet Jonah

The Lord spoke of this sign three times ([Matt 12:38-42](#); [Matt 16:1-4](#); [Luke 11:29-32](#)). Each is prefaced by a condemnation of the people to whom he spoke calling them a “wicked and adulterous generation” or similar. Each emphasises a different aspect of the sign demonstrated by the unique words of each:

- [Matthew 12:38-42](#) - see [v40](#) - Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the whale’s belly as Christ would be in the heart of the earth. It pointed to the fact that as the great fish (which had successfully digested all it had previously swallowed) could not hold Jonah, but vomited him out, so Christ would no see corruption, because the grave would not be able to hold him ([Acts 2:24,26-27](#)).
- [Luke 11:29-32](#) tells us that as the typically resurrected man Jonah himself was a sign, so would the Son of Man be a sign ([v30](#)). Jonah doubtless had bleached and tight parched skin, while Christ bore in his hands, feet and side the wounds of his crucifixion. The spectacle of both doubtless drew attention. It was a sign that would be heeded by the Gentiles.
- BUT in both [Matt 12:41-42](#) and [Lk 11:31-32](#), the Queen of the South actively sought the wisdom of Solomon and the men of Nineveh heeded the warning of impending judgement within 40 days, while the generation of Christ’s day refused both, and within forty prophetic "days" of years, Jerusalem fell before the onslaught of the Roman hordes.
- [Matthew 16:1-4](#) introduces the sign with a warning to discern the signs of the times. Thus the pattern of Jonah became a sign of the times. Namely - Like Jonah Jesus would be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth. This would be a sign that the nation had 40 years to repent ([Matt 24:34-35](#); [Acts 2:40](#)).

Further Reading:

- The Goodness and Severity of God (Verse by Verse Exposition of the Book of the Prophet Jonah) by Bro HP Mansfield.
- Story of the Bible Vol 3 pp 397-407 (By Bro HP Mansfield).

Extra Notes:

Chiastic Structure of Jonah 1:1-16

Jonah 1:1-16 has an interesting chiastic structure. Each point is answered by its corresponding point later in the chapter. It centres around **verse 9** where Jonah preached to and converted the Gentiles having fled from the presence of God to avoid doing so.

- A. (v1) Now the word of Yahweh came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (v2) Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. (v3) But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the **presence of Yahweh**, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the **presence of Yahweh**.
- B. (v4) But Yahweh *sent out* a great wind *into the sea*, and there was a mighty tempest in *the sea*, so that the ship was like to be broken.
- C. (v5) Then the mariners were afraid, and **cried every man unto his god**,
- D. and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into **the sea**, to lighten it of them.
- E. But Jonah was **gone down** into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. (v6) So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. (v7) And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, **that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us**.
- F. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.
- G. (v8) Then *said they unto him*, **Tell us**, we pray thee, **for whose cause this evil is upon us**; **What** is thine occupation? and **whence** comest thou? **what** is thy country? and of **what** people art thou?
- H. (v9) **And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear Yahweh, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.**
- G. (v10) Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and *said unto him*, **Why** hast thou done this? **For the men knew that he fled from the presence of Yahweh**, because he had told them.
- F. (v11) Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.
- E. (v12) And he said unto them, **Take me up**, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: **for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you**.
- D. (v13) Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for **the sea** wrought, and was tempestuous against them.
- C. (v14) Wherefore **they cried unto Yahweh**, and said, We beseech thee, O Yahweh, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Yahweh, hast done as it pleased thee.
- B. (v15) So they took up Jonah, and *cast him forth into the sea*: and *the sea* ceased from her raging.
- A. (v16) Then the men feared Yahweh exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto Yahweh, and made vows."