

Outline of Jonah

The book of Jonah was most probably written sometime between 793 and 752 B.C. during the reign of Jeroboam II, a wicked king of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 14:25). Hosea and Amos would be roughly Jonah's contemporaries. Jonah is sent to the north and west to the people of Nineveh. This is somewhat odd for an Israelite prophet to be sent to another people.

I. Jonah's Flight	1:1-1:17
A. Command to go to Nineveh	1:1-2
B. Jonah's disobedience.....	1:3
C. The storm brings out the truth.....	1:4-10
D. The calming of the storm	1:11-16
E. Jonah in the huge fish prepared by God.....	1:17
II. Jonah's Prayer in the Fish	2:1-10
A. God hears Jonah's prayers and Jonah vows	2:1-9
B. God directs the fish to vomit Jonah.....	2:10
III. Jonah's Preaching and Nineveh's Repentance.....	3:1-10
A. Command to go to Nineveh	3:1-2
B. Jonah's preaching.....	3:3-4
C. The belief and repentance of the Ninevites	3:5-9
D. The "repentance" of God.....	3:10
IV. Jonah's Anger	
A. Jonah's selfish prayer	4:1-3
B. God's preparation of the gourd as an illustration.....	4:4-6
C. The worm and sunlight complete the object lesson	4:7-8
D. God's rebuke of Jonah: object lesson explained	4:9-11

Notes

- ❑ The account is historical, not fiction. Why? The Scriptures record it as such. There is no note of parable or allegory here at all. The Lord Jesus testifies to the same in Matthew 12:40. There are other reported cases of such incidents where a man is swallowed by a fish, yet lives, so it is not even unknown outside of the Scriptures. Even if it were, who cares? Is God or man the authority?
- ❑ The right thing to do is to obey God's clearly revealed will. Don't disobey!
- ❑ With respect to 1:7, it is not right *today* to cast lots to determine answers from God, though this has been used at times in the past, and with Divine sanction (see, for instance, the Urim and Thummim in Num. 27:21). See also Acts 1:26 and Judges 6:36-40. In the Judges passage, direct revelation from God was not enough for Gideon, though should have been. What would Gideon have done had the fleece not turned out the way he wanted? Would he have disobeyed God? In Acts 1:26, we see the last use of the lot in seeking direction from the Lord. Once the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost in His special baptizing and indwelling capacities in this age, the Spirit leads believers through other means (see Acts 13:2). Today, our direction comes through the leading of the Spirit as informed by the Word of God.
- ❑ Jonah is quite displeased that the Ninevites are not going to get their "due." What do you think that he is thinking? Perhaps this: "There is no way that the Ninevites should

- have a chance. They are far worse than Israel.” Can you conclude anything else? Do you think that he doesn’t understand the care that God has for souls? Do you think he is self-absorbed in the sense that he cared for the gourd (for his own benefit) but not the people of Nineveh? Do you think he would rejoice at the overthrow of Nineveh? What did God say about that kind of attitude in the Edomites (Obadiah 12).
- Notice the coupling of faith with repentance in the Ninevites. Notice the complete nature of the repentance—from King on down to the animals.
 - God’s “repentance” is an anthropomorphic expression for how he deals with men when they change their course of action. There is no uncertainty with God what He would do.
 - There is a nice note here of the need to put aside racial or ethnic prejudices. Israel was not the only people that God cared about—He demonstrates that He also cares for the Gentiles.
 - Notice the argument from lesser to greater in the last few verses of the book (gourd to people’s souls).
 - Did you ever notice that there is no missionary mandate in the OT? Israelites are not sent out in droves to preach to the other nations. The other nations have to come to Israel. The OT system is Israel-centric. In the NT, that is totally changed around in Matt. 28:18-20.