

Jonah (“Dove”)

Introduction: Jonah ben Amittai was from the city of Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25), which was near Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus. He prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 793-753 BC). He ministered among the 10 northern tribes and also to the nation of Assyria (@ 700 miles to the NNE). When the Pharisees said, “no prophet arises out of Galilee” (John 7:52), they were wrong.

He ministered during a time marked by 3 things: *political* peace, *material* prosperity, and *spiritual* poverty. Sound familiar? Jonah is the only prophet who prophesied more by his life than by what he said (Matthew 12:40; 16:4). His life’s story is an explanation of Romans 3:29.

Who is the hero of Jonah’s story? This is revealed in the construction of the book. Note the parallels and the final emphasis. I am indebted to David Dorsey for his insights on much of the basic outline.

1) Yahweh commands Jonah to go to Nineveh, but he disobeys—1:1-3

a) Jonah and the pagan sailors—1:4-16

i) Note the initial parallels

- Yahweh hurls the wind upon the sea—1:4
 - The sailors cry out to **false gods**—1:5a
 - The futile efforts of sinful people—1:5bc
 - The sailors look for answers—1:6-8
 - **FOCUS:** Jonah’s testimony—1:9
 - The sailors look for answers—1:10-12
 - The futile efforts of sinful people—1:13
 - The sailors cry out to the **True God**—1:14
- The sailors hurl Jonah into the sea—1:15

i) Jonah’s prayer of gratitude—1:17-2:10

(1) The sea creature swallows Jonah—1:17

- Jonah prays—2:1-9
 - (a) Yahweh answers prayer—2:1-2
 - (i) Jonah describes his suffering—2:3-6b
 - (b) Yahweh spares Jonah—2:6c-7
 - (i) Jonah’s promise of future service for Yahweh—2:8-9

(2) The sea creature vomits Jonah out—2:10

2) Yahweh commands Jonah to go to Nineveh, and he obeys—3:1-3a

a) Jonah and the pagan city-dwellers—3:3b-10

i) Note the parallels

- Yahweh’s judgment announced—3:3b-4
 - The people repent—3:5
 - Word goes to the king—3:6a
 - **FOCUS:** the king repents—3:6b
 - Word goes forth from the king—3:7a

- The people commanded to repent—3:7b-9
 - Yahweh’s judgment canceled—3:10
 - ii) Jonah’s prayer of complaint—4:1-4
 - Jonah’s anger expressed to Yahweh—4:1
 - Jonah complains about Yahweh’ mercy—4:2a
 - Jonah’s excuse—4:2b
 - Jonah complains about Yahweh’s mercy—4:2c
 - Jonah’s request—4:3
 - Jonah’s anger exposed by Yahweh—4:4
- 3) **FOCUS: Yahweh teaches His angry prophet—4:5-11**
- a) Yahweh prepares a plant for Jonah—4:5-6a
 - i) Jonah’s response: joy—4:6b
 - b) Yahweh destroys the plant—4:7-8a
 - i) Jonah’s response: hopelessness—4:8b
 - c) Yahweh questions Jonah—4:9a
 - i) Jonah’s response: hopeless—4:9b
 - d) **FOCUS:** Yahweh’s lesson for Jonah (and us)—4:10-11
- 4) **Things we need to remember** (think, feel, do):
- a) **ALL** people groups are accountable to Yahweh.
 - i) Jonah views this as a vague truth; Israel doesn’t deserve it, but Nineveh does
 - b) Yahweh **IS** gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loyal-love, and willing to relent from doing harm.
 - i) Jonah views this as a negative; Nineveh doesn’t deserve this
 - c) Yahweh can demonstrate these attributes **to whom He pleases**.
 - i) Jonah views this as a negative; Nineveh doesn’t deserve this
 - ii) Yahweh will show mercy if sinners (from any people group) repent
 - d) Yahweh can demonstrate these attributes (and more) **when He pleases**.
 - i) Jonah views this as a negative; Nineveh doesn’t deserve this
 - ii) Nineveh was destroyed years later in 612 BC, long after Jonah’s time.
 - e) It is hypocritical to rejoice in one’s own salvation while resenting the salvation of others.