

I. Jonah

- a. Purpose: We will look at the authorship, purpose and other aspects of the book of Jonah so we would be more familiar with this part of the Bible and yearn to study it for ourselves.
- b. Authorship
 - i. About Jonah
 1. The name Jonah means “dove.”¹
 2. We find more information about Jonah from **2 Kings 14:25**: “*He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher.*”
 - a. He was from a town called Gath Heper which is near Nazerth.²
 - b. According to **Joshua 19:10** and **19:13** this would have been a town in tribe of Zebulun.³
 - c. He was a “son of Amittai” which matches the description of Jonah the “son of Amittai” in **Jonah 1:1**.
 - d. “Amittai” means “truth.”⁴
 - e. The context of this verse in **2 Kings 14:23-29** reveal that this was during the time of king Jeroboam of Israel when it was a divided kingdom.
 - f. Jeroboam reigned from 793-752 BC.⁵
 - g. Jeroboam would have been the most powerful king of Israel but it was also a time Assyria was also increasing its regional power and prosperity.⁶
 - ii. Reasons why it is written by Jonah
 1. Reason 1 why it is by Jonah: It was to Jonah that the Word of God came to in this book: “*The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying*” (**Jonah 1:1**)
 2. Reason 2 why it is by Jonah: Jesus states Jonah was a prophet: “*But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet”* (**Matthew 12:39**)
 - a. Jesus called Jonah “*Jonah the prophet.*”
 - b. Notice Jesus goes on to affirm this Jonah was the same one who was swallowed by a sea creature (**Matthew 12:40**) and preached at Nineveh (**Matthew 12:41**) which indicates this is the same Jonah.

¹ John Hannah, “Jonah” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1461.

² Mark Rooker, “The Book of Jonah” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 15677.

³ John Hannah, “Jonah” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1461.

⁴ John Hannah, “Jonah” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1461.

⁵ John Hannah, “Jonah” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1461.

⁶ John Hannah, “Jonah” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1461.

- c. And as prophet Jonah would have spoken and written down God's Word.
- c. Purpose
 - i. According to Mark Rooker: "The book is instructing the Israelites of God's love and mercy for foreigners, even among Israel's enemies"⁷
 - ii. According to John Walton: "God reserves the sovereign right to be compassionate, even when those acts work against an already issued prophetic warning."⁸
 - iii. According to Paul House: "Jonah helps ease any fears that the Lord does not care for non-Jewish nations that may have arisen due to certain statements in Joel, Amos and Obadiah. Jonah proves that indeed God does love and care for even the Assyrians, the most vicious and powerful of all Israel's ancient enemies."⁹
- d. Structure
 - i. Shorter outline¹⁰
 1. God's mercy upon Jonah (1-2)
 2. God's mercy upon Nineveh (3-4)
 - ii. Chapter by chapter¹¹
 1. **Jonah 1**: Perishing
 2. **Jonah 2**: Praying
 3. **Jonah 3**: Preaching
 4. **Jonah 4**: Pouting
 - iii. Outline: Seven scenes¹²
 1. Jonah's Commission and Disobedience (**Jonah 1-2**)
 - a. Jonah's Call and Escape (**Jonah 1:1-3**)
 - b. The Storm at Sea and Jonah's Fate (**Jonah 1:4-17**)
 - c. Jonah's Psalm of Deliverance (**Jonah 2**)
 2. Jonah's Second Commission and Its Results (**Jonah 3-4**)
 - a. The Second Call and Obedience (**Jonah 3:1-4**)
 - b. The Ninevites Repentance and Deliverance (**Jonah 3:5-10**)
 - c. Jonah's Prayer (**Jonah 4:1-4**)
 - d. The Lesson for Jonah (**Jonah 4:5-11**)
- e. Closer look at Jonah
 - i. Some have questioned whether Jonah is history

⁷ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Jonah" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 15823-15824

⁸ John Walton, "Jonah" in *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 629.

⁹ Paul House, "The God Who Sends Prophets to the Gentiles: Jonah" in *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic), 365.

¹⁰ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master's Seminary), 84.

¹¹ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master's Seminary), 84.

¹² Mark Rooker, "The Book of Jonah" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 15771-15778.

1. Jonah being swallowed by the whale and the conversion of those in Nineveh are two incidents that modern scholars have the most trouble accepting.¹³
 2. Yet both events from the book were affirmed by Jesus Christ in **Matt 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-30**.
 3. Jonah in the belly of the whale was also used by Jesus as a type for His own burial.¹⁴
- ii. Six of the book's seven scenes parallel each other¹⁵
1. The book parallel divided in half parallel each other.
 - a. Focus on Sailors in **Jonah 1**. Focus on Jonah in **Jonah 2**.
 - b. Focus on Ninevites in **Jonah 3**. Focus on Jonah in **Jonah 4**.
 - c. While Jonah 1-2 show the similarities between the Gentile sailors and Jonah in **Jonah 3-4** we will see the contrast between Nineveh and Jonah.
 2. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (Gentile sailors and Jonah)
 - a. Both have crisis at sea (sailor in **Jonah 1:4**, Jonah in **Jonah 1:15; 2:3**).
 - b. Both prayed to God (sailor in **Jonah 1:14**, Jonah in in **Jonah 2:2**).
 - c. Both are delivered from death (sailor in **Jonah 1:15b**, Jonah in **Jonah 1:17, 2:6b**).
 - d. Both offered sacrifice and vows (sailor in **Jonah 1:16**, Jonah in **Jonah 2:9**).
 3. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 (Nineveh and Jonah)
 - a. Ninevites have crisis about destruction of city in **Jonah 3:4** but Jonah has crisis because the city was saved from destruction in **Jonah 3:4**.
 - b. Ninevites responds with repentance in **Jonah 3:5-8** but Jonah responds sinfully with anger in **Jonah 4:1-3**.
 - c. Ninevites have crisis about destruction of city in **Jonah 3:4** but Jonah has crisis because the city was saved from destruction in **Jonah 3:4**.
 - d. The Lord changes His mind concerning the Ninevites in **Jonah 3:10** whereas the Lord wants to change Jonah's mind in **Jonah 4:4, 6-11**.
- iii. The final scene does not parallel and therefore is heightened and more suspenseful.¹⁶

¹³ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Jonah" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 15737-15740.

¹⁴ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Jonah" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 15737-15740.

¹⁵ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Jonah" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 15761-15769.

¹⁶ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Jonah" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 15748-15749.

- iv. Use of questions is profound in Jonah¹⁷
 - 1. There are 14 of them, and often the way of bringing Jonah to the scene by means of questions in **Jonah 1:6, 8, 11; 4:4, 9, 11**.
 - 2. In the first part of the book, all questions (seven of them) are directed towards Jonah.
 - 3. In the second part the questions is from Jonah to God (Jonah 2:4)
 - 4. Then rhetorical question in **Jonah 3:9**.
 - 5. Jonah's angry question towards God is found in **Jonah 4:2**.
 - 6. Yahweh's three questions back in **Jonah 4:4, 9, 11**.
 - 7. The book ends with a question to provoke readers to think about God's compassion towards Gentiles and how the readers should handle this truth.
- v. Use of opposites
 - 1. Yahweh sends a wet wind upon the sea (**1:4**), then sends a warm wind against Jonah (**4:8**).
 - 2. Uses at first a big fish (**1:17**) but also a tiny worm to teach a lesson (**4:6-7**).
 - 3. Sea and dry land (**1:9**)
 - 4. Day and night (**1:17**)
 - 5. Greatest/least (**3:5**)
 - 6. Humans/animals (**3:7-8**)
 - 7. Persons/animals (**4:11**).
- vi. Use of irony
 - 1. Jonah is a prophet, but in the beginning is being asked more questions of him than he is preaching.¹⁸
 - 2. Gentiles were turning to God and obeying Him more than the prophet Jonah.
 - 3. God has shown Jonah mercy with the whale and the big tree but he can't stand God showing mercy to others.
- f. Place of this book in the Canon
 - i. Antecedant Theology
 - 1. Recall the ironic prayer of complaint by Jonah: "*He prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity."*(**Jonah 4:2**)
 - a. This prayer mention God's attribute but rather than praise God Jonah ended up complaining to God about Him having these attributes.
 - b. How did Jonah know these five attributes about God?
 - c. Four attributes of God are mentioned in **Exodus 34:6-7**.

¹⁷ James Limburg, *Jonah: A Commentary (Old Testament Library)* (Sun Valley, California: Westminster John Knox Press), 25.

¹⁸ James Limburg, *Jonah: A Commentary (Old Testament Library)* (Sun Valley, California: Westminster John Knox Press), 25.

- d. Last one, “*one who relents concerning calamity*” is derived from the context of **Exodus 34:6-7** earlier in **Exodus 33** of Israel’s sin bringing calamity (v. 1-3), Moses petition (v.12-23) and favor shown (**Exodus 34:1-5**).
- e. But what is amazing is that now God’s attributes in Exodus 34:6-7 is shown not to Jews but to Gentiles!
- f. This was to fulfill God’s promise to Abraham: “*And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed*” (**Genesis 12:3**)
- g. Earlier in the Old Testament we have seen individual Gentiles come to God such as Melchizedek, multitudes who left Egypt, Jethro, Rahab, Ruth, etc., but now we see Gentiles at the level of nations experiencing the goodness of God.

ii. Anticipating Christ

- 1. At the end of **Matthew 12:41** we hear these words: “*and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.*”
- 2. We might appreciate this more when we consider Jesus in **Matthew 8:23-27**.
- 3. The parallel with Jonah and Jesus:
 - a. Both episodes involve a man of God.
 - b. Both episodes involve being in a vessel: “*When He got into the boat*” (**Matthew 8:23a**)
 - c. Both episodes involve a vessel sailing the opposite direction (Youngblood, Location 1724).
 - d. Both episodes involve a man of God that has others being in the vessel with him as well: “*His disciples followed Him.*” (**Matthew 8:23b**)
 - e. Both episodes involves being at sea. “*on the sea*” (**Matthew 8:24a**)
 - f. Both episodes involve a “big storm”: “*And behold, there arose ^la great storm on the sea,*” (**Matthew 8:24a**)
 - g. Both episodes involve the vessel being threatened: “*so that the boat was being covered with the waves,*” (**Matthew 8:24b**)
 - h. Both episodes involve the man of God sleeping during the storm: “*but Jesus Himself was asleep.*” (**Matthew 8:24c**)
 - i. Both episodes involve the man of God being waken up: “*but Jesus Himself was asleep.*” (**Matthew 8:25**)
 - j. Both episodes involve terrified men: “*And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, “ Save us, Lord; we are perishing!”*” (**Matthew 8:25**)
 - k. Both episodes involve the storm miraculously stopped: “*He *said to them, “Why are you ^lb]afraid, you men of little*

faith?” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and ^lcit became perfectly calm.” (Matthew 8:26)

1. Both episodes involve the response of fear and awe: *“The men were amazed, and said, “What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” (Matthew 8:27)*
4. Of course Jesus was greater than Jonah in that Jesus was without sin, in His work on the Cross to not just only saved one Gentile nation but nations!

