


**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

Jonah

*New Life*

Encountering God's Word and being transformed into NEW LIFE in Christ.

Nov.14, 2023, Greg Chao



1

## Introduction - Is God only concerned about the Jews?

- Minor Prophets - Time of the Kings(9) & during Captivity(3)
- Before Captivity - Amos, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Joel, Obadiah --- The unfaithfulness of the Jews, call to repent, coming judgment, & hope for Messiah
- During Captivity - Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi ---Encouragement to build temple, & hope for Messiah
- Jonah, Nahum --- *Is God only concerned about the Jews?*
  - No certainty as to the dating of Jonah (750-250 BC, I favor early dating...)
  - Anti-hero story...the prophet is not the good guy

2

## Jonah 1 - Call and Flight

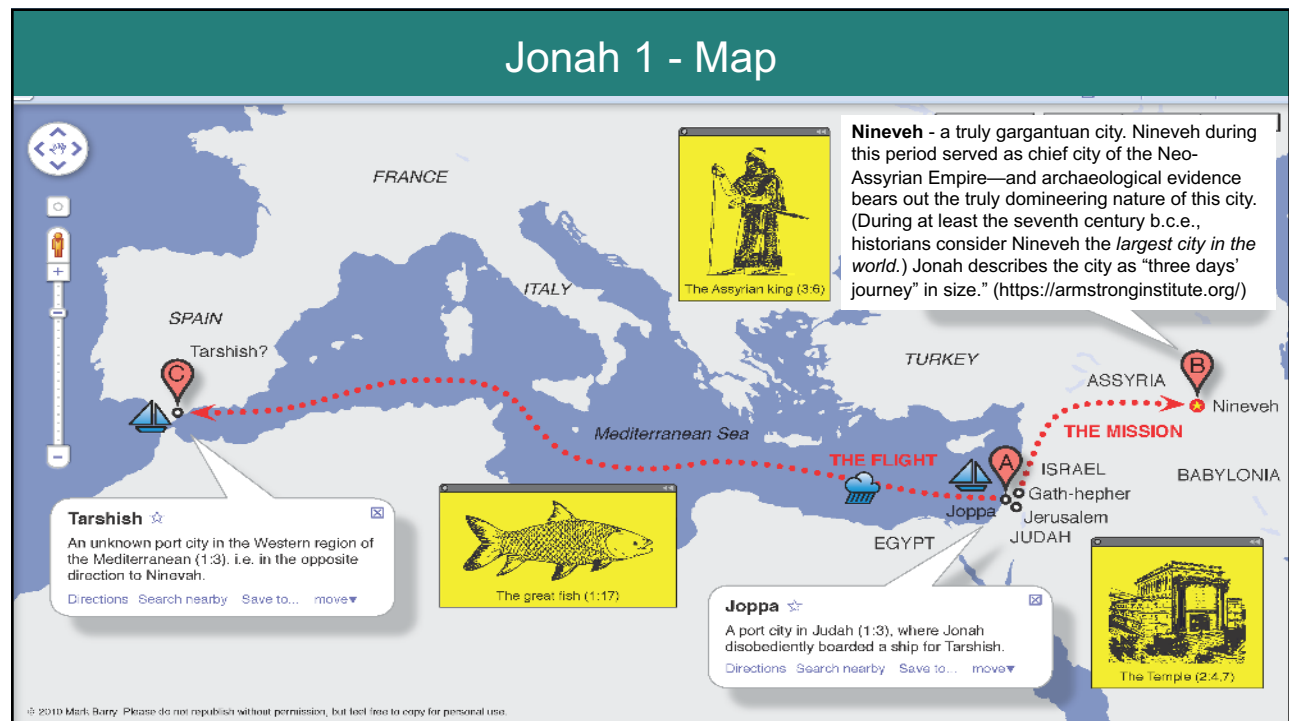
**Call and Flight - Jonah 1:1-8** - [1] The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: [2] “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its *wickedness* has come up before me.” [3] But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to *flee* from the Lord. (*See Map*)

**God brings calmity** - [4] Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and *such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up*. [5] All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. [6] The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

**Sailor’s search for cause** - [7] Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They *cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah*. [8] So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

3

## Jonah 1 - Map



4

## Jonah 1 (Continued) - Jonah & the Sailors

**Jonah shows integrity - Jonah 1:9-17** - [9] He answered, "*I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.*" [10] This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.) [11] The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" [12] "*Pick me up and throw me into the sea,*" he replied, "and it will become calm. *I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.*"

**Sailors show great integrity** - [13] *Instead, the men did their best to row back to land.* But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. [14] Then they cried out to the Lord, "*Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.*" [15] Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. [16] At this the men *greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.*

**God saves both Sailors and Jonah** - [17] Now the Lord *provided* a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.\*

\*Matthew 12:40 – "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"

5

## Jonah 2 - Repentance in the Fish

**Jonah knows he is responsible and asks for help - Jonah 2:1-10** - [1] From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. [2] He said: "*In my distress I called to the Lord,* and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. [3] *You hurled me into the depths,* into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. [4] I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' [5] The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. [6] To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever.

**Jonah will obey** - But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. [7] "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. [8] "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. [9] But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. *What I have vowed I will make good.* I will say, '*Salvation comes from the Lord.*'"\*

[10] And the Lord *commanded* the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

*\*Note: Jonah knows that he does not deserve deliverance. Is it up to Jonah or God to decide?*

6

## Jonah 3 - Nineveh

**Jonah preaches doom - Jonah 3:1-10** - [1] Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time:[2] “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” [3] Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. [4] Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” *(Jonah only preached for one day!)*

**Nineveh repents (big time)** - [5] *The Ninevites believed God.* A *fast* was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. [6] When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, *covered himself with sackcloth* and sat down in the dust. [7] This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. [8] But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. *Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.* [9] *Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.*”

**God relents** - [10] When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.\*\*

\*\* Luke 11:30 - <sup>30</sup>For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.

7

## Jonah 4 - Jonah’s Anger

**Jonah 4:1-4** - [1] But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. [2] He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. [3] Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

[4] But the Lord replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

*What exactly is Jonah angry about?*

8

## Jonah 4 (continued)

**Jonah 4:5-11** - [5] Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. [6] Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. [7] But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. [8] When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

[9] But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

[10] But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. [11] And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

*How is Jonah caught in a inconsistent argument? Why is the passage left open-ended (unresolved)?*

9

## First Question

*Is God only concerned about the Jews?*

10

## Themes/Meaning of Jonah - Focused on God

### God's Compassion for All

- **Theme 1** - God is a compassionate and merciful God who loves all peoples - God has a right to give mercy to whom he wishes...even Nineveh/sailors
  - “God so loved the world...” is not made up by Christians
- **Theme 2** - Our sense of justice is skewed by our limited viewpoint and/or our self-interest.
  - Vengeance is mine...says the Lord (Deuteronomy 32:35)
- **God's mercy and justice** (New Testament) - God's mercy does not violate his justice. The need for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is due to God giving us mercy while not violating His justice. Christ takes the punishment in our place...
 

*It is important to understanding the meaning before application (focused on the main points)*

11

## What is the lesson of Jonah from websites?

- God SPEAKS to us
- We have a specific PURPOSE
- Don't RUN from your purpose
- Don't WASTE your resources
- Don't get COMFORTABLE with sin
- Your CHOICES will dictate the life you live
- God will always PROVIDE a way
- FORGIVENESS is for everyone
- Don't live a life of COMPLAINING
- Though you may have started wrong, you can always finish STRONG

*Many of these statements are true but are peripherally drawn from the story of Jonah...*

12

## What is the lesson of Jonah from websites?

- “One of the overarching messages from the Book of Jonah is compassion. Jonah was a prophet, and even though he had let God down in numerous ways, he was still forgiven because God showed him unlimited love and compassion. God also modeled forgiveness and mercy for Jonah in how God dealt with other people.”

*The point of the story is compassion to all, not just Jonah...we don't even know if Jonah accepts the lesson in the end...*

13

## What is the Lesson of Jonah? (my take)

- God is compassionate and fair. We can trust Him to carry out justice and mercy fairly.
  - Only God can see the hearts of others --- the whole picture.
- Story of Jonah teaches me to temper my judgment of others
  - I may not see the true picture (limited) or am biased
  - bias (hypocritical) - “Justice for thee, mercy for me”
  - consistent - “Justice for thee, justice for me” or “Mercy for thee, mercy for me”
- Helps me to forgive others - “God, show them the same degree of mercy that you have shown me”

14

## Discussion Questions

- What do you appreciate about God from this story?
- How does the story of Jonah teach you about judgment of others?

In light of Jonah, what do you think it means “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes the sun to rise in the evil and good and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous”? Matt. 5:44-45