

Chapter #4

The Prophet Jonah

Time of ministry:

800-750 B.C.

Author:

The author of this book is not recorded in the prophesy, but it is thought to be the work of the prophet *Jonah* due to the narrative style of the prophesy.

The prophet *Jonah* was from The Northern Kingdom of *Israel* born in the town of *Gath-hepher* and was the son of *Amittai*, he was born during the early years of the reign of *King Jeroboam II*. This time period of *Jonah's* prophesy would make him the earliest prophet that we have a record of in the *Old Testament Kingdom* age of the *Holy Bible*, this prophesy may have predated the prophets *Amos* and *Hosea*.

The prophesy:

The prophet *Jonah* was given a message by *The LORD, God* he was to deliver a *warning* of coming Judgement and destruction of the capitol city of *Assyria Nineveh*, the *Assyrians* were given a chance to *Repent* and be spared.

The *Assyrians* were the most hated and feared of all the enemies of *Israel*, *Jonah* was taught from early childhood to hate the *evil Pagan Assyrians* with all his heart.

Now as an adult *Hebrew* to be given the mission from *Yahweh* to offer *Assyria* and the people of *Nineveh* a chance to *Repent* and not be *Destroyed* by *Yahweh*, it was more than the prophet *Jonah* could take.

The prophet *Jonah* will attempt to run away from his *Prophetic Calling* by *Yahweh* and not go to *Nineveh*.

Because of this *bad decision* *Jonah* will be given a practical lesson in why it is incredibly wise to listen to *The LORD* when *He* gives you an assignment.

Jonah will after some *hands-on instruction* by *Yahweh* deliver *The LORD's* warning to *Nineveh*, even if he does not like the job of offering *Repentance* and *Forgiveness* to the *Assyrians* living in *Nineveh*.

Chapter #1

Jonah 1:1–6 (NLT)

Jonah Runs from The LORD!

The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: ²“Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.”

³ But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish.

⁴ But the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. ⁵ Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.

But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. ⁶ So the captain went down after him. "How can you sleep at a time like this?" he shouted. "Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives."

Comments on *Jonah 1:1-6* *Jonah Runs from The LORD*

The LORD who is *All-knowing* and filled with *Righteous Justice* never delivers *His Judgement* and punishment without a *Warning* and the opportunity to --- *Repent!*

Psalm 99:1-4 (NLT)

Your Name Is Holy!

¹ *The LORD is king!*

Let the nations tremble!

He sits on his throne between the cherubim.

Let the whole earth quake!

² *The LORD sits in majesty in Jerusalem,
exalted above all the nations.*

³ *Let them praise your great and awesome name.
Your name is holy!*

⁴ *Mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established fairness.*

*You have acted with justice
and righteousness throughout Israel.*

The prophet *Jonah* was chosen to be *Yahweh's* messenger of coming *Judgement* to the *evil* and *sinful* people of *Assyria* and *Nineveh*.

The assignment as a prophet of "*Coming Judgement*" and the chance for *Nineveh's Redemption* *Jonah* was given by *Father God* was so troubling to him, *Jonah* would *Refuse* to *Obey Yahweh*. *Jonah* was devastated to think that the *sinful* and *evil* people of *Nineveh* would *Repent*, and they would not be "*Destroyed*" by *Yahweh!*

Jonah knew in his heart and because of his *Hebrew education* that *Yahweh* was not a "*Vengeful*" *God*, He was a *Just* and *Loving God!*

Jonah booked passage on a ship from *Joppa* and sailed off to *Tarshish* which is over one thousand miles in the opposite direction from *Nineveh*, at this time it was the most remote part of the *Hebrew lands*.

The “Will” of *The LORD* would not be stopped by a “Disobedient” prophet who wanted to run away from his *duty*, *Yahweh* will not put up with “B.S.” --- (*Bad Sheep*)!

The first obstacle that *Jonah* will deal with is the frightening conditions of a small ship in a *violent storm*. The small ship *Jonah* was no was no match for power of a *violent* open sea storm, the ship would be *broken apart* and end up on the bottom of the *Mediterranean Sea*!

The power of the storm that *Yahweh* created had the *intended effect* on the crew of the ship they attempted to lighten the load of the ship by throwing cargo off the ship, *still sinking* the “*Terrified*” crew of the ship offered up *prayers* to their *god’s*.

Jonah on the other hand was so *unmoved* and *unaffected* by the powerful storm that he was *sleeping* below deck.

The desperate captain of the ship woke *Jonah* up knowing that he was a *Hebrew*, thinking that maybe his *prayers* to the *Powerful God Yahweh* form a *Jew* might cause his *God* to hear their *prayers* for --- *Help!*

Matthew 12:39–41 (NLT)

The Sign of Jonah!

³⁹ *But Jesus replied, “Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.*

⁴¹ *“The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.*

Jonah 1:7–17 (NLT)

Jonah Runs but He Can’t Hide!

⁷ *Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit. ⁸ “Why has this awful storm come down on us?” they demanded. “Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?”*

⁹ *Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”*

¹⁰ *The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the LORD. “Oh, why did you do it?” they groaned. ¹¹ And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, “What should we do to you to stop this storm?”*

¹² *“Throw me into the sea,” Jonah said, “and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault.”*

¹³ *Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land. But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn’t make it. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the LORD, Jonah’s God. “O LORD,” they pleaded, “don’t make us die for this man’s sin. And don’t hold us responsible for his death. O LORD, you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons.”*

¹⁵ Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! ¹⁶ The sailors were awestruck by the LORD's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him.

¹⁷ Now the LORD had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Comments on *Jonah 1:7-17*

Jonah Runs but He Can't Hide!

The crew of the *sinking ship* were in *great fear* of drowning, they concluded *correctly* that the storm was a *punishment* due to someone on the ship *offending god*.

At this time of history, the ancient people had a method of determining who had *offended god*, they would "*cast lots*", (The casting of lots was a method of answering an unknown question or problem with the throwing of specially marked stones).

When the *casting of lots* was completed *Jonah* was identified as the man who had *offended god* and caused the storm. The men of the crew were angry and *demanded* that *Jonah* answer, what had *Jonah* done to *cause* this storm, and *who was he*?

Jonah had before they set sail told the crew that he was *running away from God*, now he informed them that he was a *Hebrew from Israel* and a *Holy Prophet of God*. He informed them *The LORD, Yahweh* his *God* was the *One God* who *made* and *controlled* both the land and the sea.

This new information caused the crew of the *sinking ship* to become more "*Terrified*", they cried out --- "*Why did you do this*"!

The storm was getting *worse* and not letting up, they wanted to know how to *stop* the *storm* so they asked *Jonah* how it could be stopped.

Jonah knew that the storm was due to his *not following* the *Instruction* of *The LORD*, he then told the crew to *throw him* into the sea and the storm would --- *Stop!*

Jonah was a "*hard-hearted*" prophet who would *rather die* by drowning in the sea than give the *Pagan sinful* people in *Nineveh* an *opportunity* to be *saved from Death and Destruction*.

The *hard-headed* disobedient prophet *Jonah* will learn in a *very painful* way that it is much "*Wiser*" to be "*A fisher of men*" than to be --- *Fish Bait!*

The *god-fearing* crew wanted to be *saved* so instead of *committing murder* they started rowing as hard as they could, but their rowing was not enough to *save the ship!*

The crew of the *sinking ship* again sought help with *prayer*, they *cried out in prayer* to "*The LORD*" --- *Jonah's God!*

They pleaded with *Yahweh* to not take their lives for the *sins* of *Jonah*, who was the cause of the storm. Then the crew of the *sinking ship* *prayed* to *God*, asking *Him* not to hold them *responsible* for *Jonah's death*.

With the *prayer* to *God* completed the crew of the ship *regretfully* *threw Jonah* into the angry and raging sea --- *Instantly the Sea Became Calm!*

The sailors were *amazed* by the *undeniable "Power"* of *The LORD's* ability to control the sea, the crew of the ship then offered *sacrifices* and *vowed to serve* --- *Yahweh The LORD, God!*

As *Jonah* hit the water and sank, he was *consumed* by a "*Great Fish*" that *The LORD, God* had "*Prepared*" for His "*Disobedient*" prophet, *Jonah* was now --- *Fish Bait!*

This *extremely uncomfortable* new accommodation was to be his home for three days and nights, now *Jonah* can spend some “*Quality Time*” of *prayer* and *meditation*.

Psalm 28:1–2 (NLT)

I Cry Out for Your Help!

¹ *I pray to you, O LORD, my rock.*

Do not turn a deaf ear to me.

For if you are silent,

I might as well give up and die.

² *Listen to my prayer for mercy*

as I cry out to you for help,

as I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary.

Jonah 2:1–10 (NLT)

Jonah’s Prayer

¹ *Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. ² He said,*

*“I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble,
and he answered me.*

*I called to you from the land of the dead,
and LORD, you heard me!*

³ *You threw me into the ocean depths,
and I sank down to the heart of the sea.*

*The mighty waters engulfed me;
I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves.*

⁴ *Then I said, ‘O LORD, you have driven me from your presence.
Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.’*

⁵ *“I sank beneath the waves,
and the waters closed over me.
Seaweed wrapped itself around my head.*

⁶ *I sank down to the very roots of the mountains.
I was imprisoned in the earth,
whose gates lock shut forever.*

*But you, O LORD my God,
snatched me from the jaws of death!*

⁷ *As my life was slipping away,
I remembered the LORD.*

*And my earnest prayer went out to you
in your holy Temple.*

⁸ *Those who worship false gods
turn their backs on all God’s mercies.*

⁹ *But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise,*

*and I will fulfill all my vows.
For my salvation comes from the LORD alone."*

¹⁰ *Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.*

Comments on *Jonah 2:1-10*

It is hard to tell if the prophet *Jonah* is trying to describe being *dead* or just *trapped* inside a fish, however he is showing a *marked improvement* in his "Respect" and "Attitude" toward *Yahweh* as his --- *LORD!*

Jonah has remembered during his time of *mediation* that it is always "Wise" to approach a situation where you are in *Great Danger* with --- "The Power of Prayer"!

The "Repentant" prophet thanks *Yahweh* for not *punishing* his "Disobedience" with *death*, he has called out to *The LORD*, and promised that he will not be like the *Pagans* who are *Unfaithful*.

Jonah will not *turn his back* on *Yahweh* and forget all of *God's "Mercies"*, *Jonah* will offer *sacrifices* with *Reverent* and *Respectful* prayer.

The once "Disobedient" prophet promises to "Obey" all *The LORD's* commands, proclaiming that all his "Salvation" comes from *The LORD Alone!*

Psalm 130:1-5 (NLT)

A Call for Help!

¹ *From the depths of despair, O LORD,*

I call for your help.

² *Hear my cry, O Lord.*

Pay attention to my prayer.

³ *LORD, if you kept a record of our sins,*

who, O Lord, could ever survive?

⁴ *But you offer forgiveness,*

that we might learn to fear you.

⁵ *I am counting on the LORD;*

yes, I am counting on him.

I have put my hope in his word.

Yahweh was happy with the prophet *Jonah's* "Repentant" prayer and *Improved Attitude* toward going to *Nineveh*, *Father God* then directed the *Great Fish* to spit *Jonah* out on the beach.

Jonah 3:1-10 (NLT)

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: ² *"Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you."*

³ This time Jonah obeyed the LORD's command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. ⁴ On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" ⁵ The people of Nineveh believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put-on burlap to show their sorrow.

⁶ When the king of Nineveh heard what Jonah was saying, he stepped down from his throne and took off his royal robes. He dressed himself in burlap and sat on a heap of ashes. ⁷ Then the king and his nobles sent this decree throughout the city:

"No one, not even the animals from your herds and flocks, may eat or drink anything at all. ⁸ People and animals alike must wear garments of mourning, and everyone must pray earnestly to God. They must turn from their evil ways and stop all their violence. ⁹ Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will change his mind and hold back his fierce anger from destroying us."

¹⁰ When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened.

Comments on *Jonah 3:1-10*

The LORD God spoke to the prophet *Jonah* a second time, "Get up and go to the great city of *Nineveh*" this time having been educated by Father God *Jonah* "Obeyed" the Command of The Lord!

The details of the travels and journey to *Nineveh* are not recorded in the *Book of Jonah*, I will try and provide a reasonable and probable description of *Jonah's* travel to *Nineveh*.

This section of my book is my personal thoughts about the prophet *Jonah* and are not found in the *Holy Bible*.

The location where *Jonah* was spit out on the beach by the *Great Fish* could have been the port city of *Latakia* that is the principal port city of *Syria*.

The port city of *Latakia* during the *Assyrian kingdom* age was on the main trade route to the capital city of *Nineveh*.

The delivery of the living prophet *Jonah* on the beach of a major port city by a "Great Fish" would hardly go unnoticed by the local fishermen.

The half-digested smelly and bleached-out man that had arrived in a *Great Fish* was "The talk of the town"! As it was *Jonah's* attitude, he was not bashful about telling how he became inside the *Great Fish* and why he was going to *Nineveh*, this "fish story" must have caused a large crowd to gather.

The people who witnessed *Jonah* being spit-out of the *Great Fish* would have "Confirmed" how *Jonah* arrived at their port city. Then after giving his "Truthful" testimony *Jonah* would have asked for help to travel to *Nineveh*.

The local people would have been willing to help as it was the cultural custom to help a stranger who needed their help. At the time *Jonah* arrived in *Latakia* when an event of an unusual or important type occurred the information would be taken to the capitol city of

Nineveh by “Runners” (The *runner* would take a document of some type by horse or camel as fast as possible, there was no other communication method).

Jonah would have had to travel along the route of a camel trade caravan, that would make frequent stops for trade. The journey to *Nineveh* was long distance an estimated 750 to 850 miles.

This journey to *Nineveh* would take some time, it could be as long as three months or longer. On the other hand, the “Runners” with the news of the *prophet Jonah* might take less than half that time. In the time period where the news about the *prophet Jonah* and his *coming prophesy* would have been circulating in *Nineveh* it was *the talk of the town*. This *Fearful Anticipation* would continue to build up until *Jonah* did arrive.

The *Assyrian King* and the religious leaders of *Nineveh* would have previously had knowledge of the *Hebrew God “Yahweh”* and *His* history of *Frightening Power* and *Wonderous Miracles!*

On the day that the *prophet Jonah* arrives in *Nineveh* he goes into the city and delivers with a *shout* this message to the people --- “*Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!*”

Even after the months of elapsed time that the journey to *Nineveh* would take, *Jonah* would probably show *some signs* of his being *partially digested* in the *Great Fish*.

This *Frightening Warning* from the *prophet of the Hebrew God Yahweh* delivered by the man that was *spit out* of a “*Great Fish*” was *Totally Believed* by the people of *Nineveh*.

After hearing the *Warning* from the *Prophet of God* the citizens of *Nineveh* declared that they would go on a *fast “Repenting”* while wearing *rough burlap clothing* to show publicly *deep sorrow* for their *sins!*

The *Reluctant Prophet of God* warned of coming *Destruction* but did not offer the option of *Repenting* to stop the *Destruction* of *Nineveh* and its citizens, the *prophet Jonah* still had some learning to do.

The *King of Assyria* after hearing the warning of coming *Judgement* from “*The Holy Prophet of God*”, stepped off his throne, *removed his royal robes* and put-on *rough burlap clothing* then he in “*Repentance*” sat on a pile of aches not his throne.

All the actions by the *King* were a sign of *Deep Mourning*, he then sent out a decree that all the people and domestic farm livestock in *Nineveh* would go on a *fast*, drinking or eating nothing at all, then both citizens and livestock would put on *rough burlap clothing*.

The *King* also demanded that all the citizens of *Nineveh* *pray earnestly* and “*Repent*” from the *sinful acts of evil violence* he added perhaps there was a chance that *Yahweh* the *Hebrew God* would change *His* mind, hold back *His “Fierce Anger”* and not *Destroy Nineveh*.

The *Righteous and Forgiving Father God* did see and hear the “*Repentant*” *King* and people of *Nineveh*, they had “*Repented*” and stopped their violence and *evil ways*.

Yahweh then “*Relented*” and held back *His “Powerful Destruction”*, the *King* and the people in *Nineveh* were not *Destroyed!*

Nehemiah 9:1–3 (NLT)

The People Confess Their Sins!

On October 31, the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. ² Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all

foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. ³ They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the LORD their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the LORD their God.

Jonah 4:1–11 (NLT)

Jonah's Anger at the LORD's Mercy

This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. ² So he complained to the LORD about it: "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people. ³ Just kill me now, LORD! I'd rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen."

⁴ The LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry about this?"

⁵ Then Jonah went out to the east side of the city and made a shelter to sit under as he waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ And the LORD God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head, shading him from the sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

⁷ But God also arranged for a worm! The next morning at dawn the worm ate through the stem of the plant so that it withered away. ⁸ And as the sun grew hot, God arranged for a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint and wished to die. "Death is certainly better than living like this!" he exclaimed.

⁹ Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?"

"Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"

¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. ¹¹ But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?"

Comments on *Jonah 4:1-10*

Jonah's Anger at The LORD's Mercy

The *Prophet Jonah* was not happy with the *King of Assyria* and his people's "Repentance", it was like a *bad dream come true*. His vision of a *burning city* and all its citizens dead would not happen, there would be no *Destruction of Nineveh!*

Jonah full of anger and disappointment tells *Yahweh* that he knew his God "*Yahweh*" was the *God of Love and Compassion* and if he delivered *Yahweh's Warning* to *Nineveh*, they would be "Saved" by their *Repentance*.

The *Prophet of God* then acted like a *spoiled child* and told *Yahweh* to *kill him* because he would rather be *dead* than not have *his way!*

The *LORD God* then asked *Jonah* one question, *Yahweh* asked him if his *Anger and Disappointment* were *correct?*

Jonah again acting like a *child* that cannot have his way goes out to the eastern outskirts of *Nineveh* to *sulk* and wait for the *Destruction* of his *hated enemy*.

With his skin probably still damaged and sensitive by his time in the "*Great Fish*", the direct sun

light would be *painful*, so he built a small shelter.

The LORD caused a broad leaf gourd plant to grow up overnight and it provided shade for *Jonah's shelter*, this plant was a *comfort* to *Jonah's* sensitive skin.

Yahweh also produced a gourd *stem eating worm*, and the next day the worm did what it was created to do, and the gourd plant withered and died.

The sun was shining down brightly, and *The LORD* arranged for a *scorching hot* east wind to blow on the "*Childlike*" prophet.

The sun and the wind had a *profound effect* on *Jonah* he was getting *sun stroke*, again he wanted *God* to *kill him*, *death* would be better than living in *such pain!*

The LORD God then asked if it was "*Correct*" for *Jonah* to be so mad about the death of his *shade plant?*

The *sunburnt spoiled rotten* prophet replied that he was *angry* enough to --- *die!*

Yahweh then informed *Jonah* the shade plant was *God's plant*, it came and went quickly it was just a plant.

The LORD God then "*Reminded*" *His Reluctant Prophet* that the city of *Nineveh* contained *120,000 people* that were living in "*Spiritual Darkness*" (spiritual children) and did not *Truly* --- "*Know God*"!

Why should *Yahweh* the *God of Love* not show *His Never-ending "Grace"* to a "*Repentant*" great city and its *people?*

Father God then added what about all the poor innocent livestock that were *forced* to go on a *fast* and wear *stupid burlap covers*, they did not have a *clue* what was going on.

I think that this last part of *The Testimony of Jonah* about the *dieting cows* in burlap proves that *Father God* does have a *great sense of humor*.

I can only hope that *Jonah* had a good laugh with *Father God* *surrendered* to the *will of Yahweh* then he returned to Israel to write a record of his eventful journey to *Nineveh*.

This last chapter of this book of prophesy contains the "*Core Truth*" of the entire book of *Jonah*.

We as readers of this book of prophesy must *open our eyes* and see that as *Redeemed Sinners* and *Believers* in "*The Gospel of Jesus Christ*" it is "*Vital*" that we --- "*Hate Sin and Not The Sinner*"!

It is not our *job description* to be *Judge* and *Jury* of our fellow members of the human race, *Father God* wants "*His Children*" (His Church) to be a *mirror reflection* of *His Love* and *Grace*.

Psalms 99:1-9 (NLT)

The LORD!

¹ *The LORD is king!*

Let the nations tremble!

He sits on his throne between the cherubim.

Let the whole earth quake!

² *The LORD sits in majesty in Jerusalem,*

exalted above all the nations.

³ *Let them praise your great and awesome name.*

Your name is holy!

⁴ *Mighty King, lover of justice,*

*you have established fairness.
You have acted with justice
and righteousness throughout Israel.*

⁵ *Exalt the LORD our God!
Bow low before his feet, for he is holy!*

⁶ *Moses and Aaron were among his priests;
Samuel also called on his name.
They cried to the LORD for help,
and he answered them.*

⁷ *He spoke to Israel from the pillar of cloud,
and they followed the laws and decrees he gave them.*

⁸ *O LORD our God, you answered them.
You were a forgiving God to them,
but you punished them when they went wrong.*

⁹ *Exalt the LORD our God,
and worship at his holy mountain in Jerusalem,
for the LORD our God is holy!*