

# JONAH: THE SUICIDAL MISSIONARY

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## Introduction

1. Jonah was a \_\_\_\_\_ man. Compare **Jonah 1:1** with **2 Kings 14:23-25**
2. Jonah was a prophet but the book of **Jonah** is not a \_\_\_\_\_ book.

The book of **Jonah** is not about a fish. The fish is not the story, the fish is a prop. The book of **Jonah** is about one man's journey with God and how it influences those around him.

## Chapter Overview

The four chapters of **Jonah**:

1. God's call and Jonah's run (\_\_\_\_\_)
2. Jonah's prayer and God's mercy (\_\_\_\_\_)
3. God's call and Jonah's obedience (\_\_\_\_\_)
4. Jonah's bitterness and God's heartbeat (\_\_\_\_\_)

## Jonah 1 (Pitching)

**1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah** ['Jonah' means '\_\_\_\_\_'] **the son of Amittai, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city** [We're introduced to Nineveh in **Genesis 10:8-12** and **Nahum 3:1-7**], **and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me** [literally, 'in my \_\_\_\_\_']."] [Jonah is the \_\_\_\_\_ missionary.] **3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.**

**4 But the LORD sent** [threw/\_\_\_\_\_] **out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.**

**5 Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god** [How often in our lives do we turn to our 'own gods?'], **and threw** [pitched] **the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.**

Jonah is able to sleep through the storm, like Jesus was sleeping through the storm in **Matthew 8:24**. However, peace in the midst of a storm should not guarantee us that we are in God's \_\_\_\_\_.

**6** So the captain came to him, and said to him, “What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us [think about us—his words display his \_\_\_\_\_], so that we may not perish.”

**7** And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble *has* come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah [Was God OK with this? See **Joshua 7**, **Proverbs 16:33**; and **Acts 1:26**]. **8** Then they said to him, “Please tell us [publish, declare, proclaim—these are the words used in the New Testament for \_\_\_\_\_]! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?”

**9** So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew [one from beyond]; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” [Jonah is addressing the fact that Jehovah is the God of \_\_\_\_\_ three locations.]

**10** Then the men were exceedingly afraid [extreme terror], and said to him, “Why have you done this?” For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. **11** Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm [quiet, silent] for us?”—for the sea was growing more tempestuous [stormy].

**12** And he said to them, “Pick me up and throw [pitch] me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me.”

**13** Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. [Have you ever had a problem that no matter how hard you worked, you just could not solve?] **14** Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, “We pray, O LORD [\_\_\_\_\_—they called upon the actual name of God, not just the generic word for god], please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You.” **15** So they picked up Jonah and threw [pitched] him into the sea, and the sea ceased [stood] from its raging. **16** Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered [killed] a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows [vows of appreciation for being spared].

**17** Now the LORD had prepared [appointed, ordained, assigned—the word for setting aside something that already existed for a special purpose—it’s what we do to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_] a great fish to swallow [engulf] Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly [inward parts] of the fish three days and three nights.

What are your observations of Jonah 1?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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## Introduction

1. Jonah was a real man. ([Matthew 12:39-41](#), [Matthew 16:4](#), and [Luke 11:29-32](#))

**Matthew 12:39-41: 39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish [Greek word is *ketos*—at that time, a very non-specific term for very large fish. It was not until much later that the word *ketos* came to be related specifically to \_\_\_\_\_], so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.**

Jonah is a \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

## Was Jonah alive or dead in the fish?

2. Jonah was a prophet but the book of **Jonah** is not a prophetic book.

## Chapter Overview

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Views of the Fish

There are three basic views on the fish:

1. God used an \_\_\_\_\_ fish to swallow Jonah

2. God created a \_\_\_\_\_ fish to swallow Jonah

3. There was \_\_\_\_\_ fish (the story is an allegory)

The Bible lends itself to view #\_\_\_\_\_

## Jonah 2 (Praying)

**1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God** [Jonah's God] **from the fish's belly** [if you are God's child, you have your Father's \_\_\_\_\_ and you can pray anywhere]. **2 And he said:**

**"I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol** [Sheol was the word used in the Old Testament to describe the location of those that were \_\_\_\_\_.] **I cried, And You heard my voice.**

**3 For You cast** [threw—not the same word for pitched as is used in **Jonah 1**] **me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods** [underground streams] **surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.** [**Psalm 42:7**]

**4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out** [driven away, tossed] **of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'**

**5 The waters** [figuratively used of \_\_\_\_\_ and violence] **surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around** [bound up] **my head.** [**Psalm 69:1**]

**6 I went down to the moorings** [base] **of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up** [caused to be brought up] **my life from the pit** [of Hell or destruction], [**John Wesley: In the assurance of faith, he speaks of the thing as \_\_\_\_\_ done.**] **O LORD, my God.**

**7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up** [entered, came] **to You, Into Your holy temple.** [**Psalm 3:4**]

**8 "Those who regard** [pay attention to] **worthless** [vain, \_\_\_\_\_] **idols** [\_\_\_\_\_] **Forsake** [depart, leave, abandon] **their own Mercy** [chesed = loving-kindness].

**John Calvin: Men in vain weary themselves when they follow their own inventions; for the more strenuously they run, the farther they recede from the right way.**

**9 But I will sacrifice** [kill—each part of the story so far involves a \_\_\_\_\_] **to You With the voice of thanksgiving** [confession, praise]; **I will pay** [make good] **what I have vowed. Salvation** [deliverance] **is of the LORD."**

**10 So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.**

## Wikipedia

The story of \_\_\_\_\_ (from Israel, to Tarshish, to the sea, to under the sea) becomes the story of \_\_\_\_\_ (from the . . . fish, to land, to the city of Nineveh)

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## Jonah 3 (Preaching)

**1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise** [an imperative—the same word used in **Jonah 1:2**], **go** [an imperative—the same word used in **Jonah 1:2**] **to Nineveh, that great city** [the second time God refers to the city of Nineveh this way. **John Wesley: The \_\_\_\_\_ city of the known world at that day.**], **and preach** [an imperative meaning to call, cry, proclaim, summon, and invite—the same word used in **Jonah 1:2**] **to it the message** [proclamation] **that I tell you.”** [this little phrase was not present in **Jonah 1:2** when God originally instructed Jonah] **3 So Jonah arose** [obedient act #1] **and went** [obedient act #2] **to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly** [the Hebrew word is \_\_\_\_\_] **great city, a three-day journey in extent. 4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out** [obedient act #3] **and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”**

**John Calvin: Nothing is better for us than to be humbled under God's hand.**

**5 So the people of Nineveh believed** [stood firm, trusted, were certain] **God, proclaimed** [same word for \_\_\_\_\_ in **Jonah 3:2**] **a fast, and put on sackcloth** [the modern-day equivalent would be a burlap sack], **from the greatest** [oldest] **to the least** [youngest] **of them.**

It's interesting to note that \_\_\_\_\_ person in the entire book of Jonah repents

The Ninevites show \_\_\_\_\_ faith and repentance

**John Calvin: faith and repentance are \_\_\_\_\_ together**

**6 Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside** [literally, he caused someone to take away] **his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed** [called out] **and published** [said] **throughout Nineveh by the decree** [repentance and faith had changed his \_\_\_\_\_] **of the king and his nobles, saying,**

**Let neither man nor beast** [any animal], **herd** [cattle] **nor flock** [sheep and goats], **taste anything; do not let them eat** [graze], **or drink water. 8 But let man and beast** [any animal] **be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily** [strongly, violently] **to God; yes, let every one turn** [David Guzik: In the Christian life, repentance does not describe what you must do to turn to God; it describes the very \_\_\_\_\_ of turning to God] **from his evil** [wicked, displeasing, injurious] **way** [direction, habit] **and from the violence** [wrong, cruelty, injustice] **that is in his hands. 9 Who can tell** [know, perceive] **if God will turn** [\_\_\_\_\_] **and relent** [be sorry, have compassion], **and turn away** [repent] **from His fierce** [burning] **anger** [\_\_\_\_\_], **so that we may not perish** [be lost or exterminated]?

**10 Then God saw their works, that they turned** [repented] **from their evil way; and God relented** [was sorry, had compassion] **from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.**

**Jonah 3** illustrates that God can use prophecy not only to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ that He is all-knowing, but also (2) as a means to \_\_\_\_\_ people to repentance.

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A theme throughout the book of **Jonah** is that God models the behavior he is looking for in Jonah—in **Jonah 1**, God modeled persistence; in **Jonah 2**, God modeled compassion; in **Jonah 3**, God modeled repentance; in **Jonah 4**, God modeled \_\_\_\_\_.

## Jonah 4 (Pouting)

**1 But it displeased** [trembled, quivered] **Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2 So he prayed to the LORD** [it is good that Jonah took his problems to God, but Jonah \_\_\_\_\_ God], **and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? [Did we know about this conversation?] Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful [compassionate] God, slow to anger [long nosed] and abundant in lovingkindness [chesed], One who relents [shows sorrow, pity, and compassion] from doing harm. 3 Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better [agreeable] for me to die than to live!"** [The \_\_\_\_\_ time that Jonah has wished to be killed]

**4 Then the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"** [David Guzik: God likes to ask us questions, because they reveal our \_\_\_\_\_.]

**5 So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter** [a covering from the sun] **and sat under it in the shade** [literally, the shadow—the shadow of \_\_\_\_\_-pity.], **till he might see** [observe, inspect] **what would become of the city. 6 And the LORD God prepared** [appointed, ordained, assigned] **a plant** [a plant or a gourd—the verb form means 'to \_\_\_\_\_'] **and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver** [rescue] **him from his misery**

[What does the fact that God need to provide Jonah with shade say about Jonah's ability to provide for his own comfort?]. So Jonah was very grateful [exceedingly happy and rejoicing—this is the \_\_\_\_\_ time we find Jonah happy] for the plant. 7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared [appointed, ordained, assigned] a worm [literally a grub worm—the verb form means 'to \_\_\_\_\_'], and it so damaged [attacked, damaged] the plant that it withered [Never underestimate God's ability to use anything to expose \_\_\_\_\_]. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared [appointed, ordained, assigned] a vehement [harsh, hot, silent] east wind [the verb form means 'to smell \_\_\_\_\_']; and the sun beat [the same word used of the worm in **Jonah 4:7** meaning attacked, damaged] on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished [begged] death for himself [the \_\_\_\_\_ time that Jonah has wished to be killed], and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

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

John Calvin: But let us be reminded . . . how furious and unreasonable are the passions of our flesh. There is, therefore, nothing better than to restrain them, before they gather more strength than they ought; for when any one feeds his vices, this obstinacy and hardness always follow.

And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!" [Jonah's \_\_\_\_\_ words]

10 But the LORD said, "You have had pity [compassion] on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished [was exterminated] in a night. 11 And should I not pity [have compassion] Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern [distinguish] between their right hand and their left [We get our priorities mixed up so much and sometimes it takes a simple comparison to set us straight]—and much livestock?"

Despite Jonah's objections in **Jonah 4**, God never interferes with Jonah's free \_\_\_\_\_.

## Conclusion

Why doesn't the book of Jonah feel 'finished'?

John Calvin: Let us learn by the example of Jonah not to measure God's judgments by our own wisdom, but to wait until he turns darkness into light. And at the same time let us learn to \_\_\_\_\_ his commands, to follow his call without any disputing: though heaven and earth oppose us, though many things occur which may tend to avert us from the right course, let us yet continue in this resolution, that nothing is better for us than to obey God, and to go on in the way which \_\_\_\_\_ points out to us.