

The Hero of the story of Jonah is the LORD God - “Gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness (*Hesed*) and one who relents concerning calamity” Jonah 4:2

Key Point for the Main Idea - God is in control of the creatures He has made.

The knowledge of this fundamental fact fortifies against false theories of God, which either make Him **(A)** subject to natural law or **(B)** make Him an inseparable, inescapable part of nature itself.

The scriptural conception of God is that He is nature’s Creator, the One who, apart from it, directs and sustains the universe, the One who is over all things (see Job 38; 39; Ps. 19; Col. 1:12–17; Rev. 14:7). - SDABC on Jonah 1:10

Jonah Outline - SDABC

- I. Jonah’s Commission and Disobedience, 1:1–17.
 - A. The prophet’s refusal and the consequent storm, 1:1–10.
 - B. His being swallowed by the great fish, 1:11–17.
- II. Jonah’s Prayer and Deliverance, 2:1–10.
- III. Jonah’s Preaching and the Repentance of the Ninevites, 3:1–10.
- IV. Jonah’s Anger and God’s Rebuke, 4:1–11.
 - A. The complaint, 4:1–5.
 - B. The withered plant and its lesson, 4:6–11.

Outline - Andrews Study Bible

- I. Introduction (1:1–2)
 - A. The messenger identified (1:1)
 - B. The mission and the message stated (1:2)
- II. The human missionary flees (1:3–2:10)
 - A. Jonah attempts to flee (1:3–17)
 - B. Jonah prays for deliverance (2:1–10)
- III. The Divine Missionary persists (3:1–4:11)
 - A. God sends Jonah a second time (3:1–10)
 - B. God teaches Jonah about mission (4:1–11)

Nineveh (nĭn’ĕ-vĕ), A city on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the mouth of a small tributary now known as the Khosr, opposite the present city of Mosul. The Assyrian Empire Under Ashurbanipal; Tigris River Region.

The city was founded by Nimrod (Gen 10:11). Excavations have brought to light remains that go back to very ancient times. **The patron goddess of Nineveh was Ishtar**, to whom Manishtusu of Akkad built a temple in the 23d cent. b.c.

It was probably in the time of Adad-nirari III (810–782 b.c.) that Jonah preached his message of warning in the streets of that city, resulting in temporary repentance and a postponement of the impending doom that had been pronounced over wicked Nineveh (Jon 1–4; cf. 2 Ki 14:25).
- Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary

Thus began to be fulfilled the prophecies of Nahum (Nah 2 and 3) and of Zephaniah (Zep 2:13–15) dealing with Nineveh’s doom. The large city not only was completely destroyed, but was actually forgotten in a short time. - SDABC

Jonah is first mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 - “Son of Amittai”

Nineveh = 550 mile journey Tarshish = 2500 miles by ship

The Storm - The Lord did not forsake Jonah even though the prophet attempted to flee from Him. By a series of “trials and strange providences” He sought to effect a change in Jonah’s attitude and conduct (see PK 266, 267).” - SDABC

1:7 - Casting lots - “The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.” (Proverbs 16:33 NAS95)

Commentary = “The lot. A decision-making process somewhat like rolling dice. the lap. Where the “dice” fall. from the Lord. By God’s guidance and not by chance—see Lev. 16:8; Josh. 18:3–6, 10; Ps. 22:18; Matt. 27:35.”

Concept: The Decision & Vows of the Sailors - 1:15-16 Jonah is not just “cargo”; LORD used twice to specify which God they feared.

Similar overtones with Matthew 8:23-27 & 14:22-33 - Ellen G. White:

“When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the "Master of earth and sea and sky" that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5:30. He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith--faith in God's love and care--that Jesus rested, and the power of that

word which stilled the storm was the power of God. {DA 336.1}

As Jesus rested by faith in the Father's care, so we are to rest in the care of our Saviour. If the disciples had trusted in Him, they would have been kept in peace. Their fear in the time of danger revealed their unbelief. In their efforts to save themselves, they forgot Jesus; and it was only when, in despair of self-dependence, they turned to Him that He could give them help.” {DA 336.2}

Jonah 1:17 = Luke 11:29



Jonah’s prayer and Salvation History - Psalms throughout the prayer suggest that perhaps Jonah is attempting to sooth his soul with meaningful songs of comfort - Jonah 2:2-9

2 - Ps 18:4-5

3 - Ps. 69:1; 42:7

4 - Ps. 31:22; 5:7

5 - Ps. 69:1

6 - Ps. 18:5; 16:10 (Job 33:28, Is. 38:17)

7 - Ps. 142:3; 77:10-11; 143:5; 18:6; 11:4; 65:4 (Hab. 2:20 - HYMN - ““But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.”” (Habakkuk 2:20 NAS95)

8 - Ps. 31:6

9: Ps. 50:14, 23; 3:8

Great Quote from SDABC about Jonah’s prayer - “Whenever they are in need the children of God have the precious privilege of appealing to Him for help. It matters not how unsuitable the place may be, God’s ear of mercy is open to their cry. However desolate and dark the place may be, it can be turned into a veritable temple by the praying child of God.” - SDABC

Jonah’s message in the CEV - ““Forty days from now, Nineveh will be destroyed!”” (Jonah 3:4 CEV)

Jonah's appeal key word - *nehpakhet* - "to turn about or over; by implication, to change, **overturn {TWOT}**, return, pervert: — x become, change, come, be converted, give, make (a bed), overthrow (-turn), perverse, retire, tumble, turn (again, aside, back, to the contrary, every way)." - Hebrew Keys

Key Conversion Story points -

The people responded and believed in Elohim- Mourning for the doom across all classes

The King's response to the warning prompted a national revival through hope in the compassion of Jonah's God, mourning for sin,

ASB - "Repentance of the Assyrians stopped the planned judgment. This repentance did not have lasting effects, since Nineveh would later be destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C. During the time of Jonah, however, God's warning was taken seriously." - on Jonah 3:5

The use of the past tense to describe the city of Nineveh may be regarded as nothing more than a simple narrative past tense describing the size of the city at the time that Jonah prophesied there.

The description of the size of the city ("three days' journey") may be an indication of the length of time that it would take one to go through the suburbs included in the administrative district of Nineveh.

The repentance of the Ninevites is not to be understood as a mass conversion to Yahweh, the God of Israel. The book of Jonah describes their response as repentance in view of the impending destruction threatened by Jonah (Jon 3:4). While secular history does not record such an event, there is

evidence that such a response was possible. In less than a decade (765–759 bc) the city of Nineveh had experienced a total eclipse of the sun and two serious plagues. **One can understand how the citizens of Nineveh may have been prepared for the preaching of this prophet who came to them in such an unusual way.**

It should also be noted that one of the kings of Assyria, Adad-nirari III, limited his worship to the god Nebo. If the prophetic ministry of Jonah was active during the time of his reign (810–783 bc), it is possible that the Jewish monotheism represented by Jonah may have found a more favorable climate than one would normally expect in a pagan society.

The participation of the animals in the national penitence that followed Jonah's preaching (3:7–8) is not unknown from history. The historian Herodotus records a similar event in the Persian Empire.

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). Tyndale Bible dictionary. Tyndale reference library (732). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

ASB - 4:1 - "Jonah's anger shows his deep nationalistic pride. The missionary God had a prophet with a non-missionary heart."

4:6-9 - "God mobilizes agents from His creation—the plant, the worm, the sun, and a scorching east wind—to get Jonah to talk again. The strategy works. God can now express His rationale for forgiving the Ninevites: it is about compassion. If Jonah can have compassion for a plant, how much more is it justified for God to have compassion for the Ninevites, and even for the cattle in the city? This book reveals God's missionary passion to save lives."

Jesus gives authenticity to the story and the miracle of Jonah's experience - "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 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; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE

NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." (Matthew 12:38–41 NAS95)

SDABC - Matthew 12:41. **Men of Nineveh.** The "sign of the prophet Jonas" (v. 39) consisted not only in his miraculous escape from the "whale's belly," but also in his successful ministry for the people of Nineveh, capital of ancient Assyria (see DA 406).

Rise in judgment. That is, come forward as witnesses on the final day of judgment. It has been suggested that the Aramaic expression Christ here used originally meant "to accuse."

This generation. See on chs. 11:16; 23:36; 24:34.

They repented. Whether Jonah told the men of Nineveh about his experience with the sea monster we cannot say; the Scriptures are silent on this. The important point is that the Ninevites "repented" in spite of the fact that Jonah worked no miracles for them. They accepted his message on his own authority, because it carried conviction to their hearts (see Jonah 3:5–10). The same should have been true in the case of the scribes and Pharisees, for the message Christ bore certainly carried with it convincing evidence of His authority (see on Mark 1:22, 27). *But in addition to the words He spoke He wrought many wonderful works, and these constituted an additional testimony that His words were true (see John 5:36). Yet in spite of all this evidence the scribes and Pharisees still obdurately refused to believe the evidence afforded them.*

A greater than Jonas. That is, Christ Himself (see on v. 6)."

Appeal Poem: "Those Wasted Years"

I looked upon a farm one day,
That once I used to own;
The barn had fallen to the ground,
The fields were overgrown.

The house in which my children grew,
Where we had lived for years—
I turned to see it broken down,
And brushed aside the tears.

I looked upon my soul one day,
To find it too had grown
With thorns and nettles everywhere,
The seeds neglect had sown.

The years had passed while I had cared
For things of lesser worth:
The things of Heaven I let go
When minding things of Earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears,
And cried, "O Lord, forgive!
I haven't much time left for Thee,
Not many years to live."

The wasted years forever gone,
The days I can't recall;
If I could live those days again,
I'd make Him Lord of all. — Theodore W. Brennan
Source: Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations

Character: Jonah Runs from Commitment

(Jonah 1:1-10)

When God told Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh to repent, the prophet turned the other direction and fled. Spot someone who runs from commitment, and you'll find a person who lacks character.

Many times a leader must ask his followers to make a commitment. Usually God first asks the leader to commit. At this point, the leader discovers how much he's embraced the cause. Is he cautious, curious, or committed? Jonah teaches us the consequences of avoiding God's call to commitment:

1. We miss the privilege of partnership with God (vv. 1-3).
2. Our choice damages more people than we know (v. 4).
3. We become hardened and desensitized to the tragedies we cause (vv. 5-8).
4. We lose both integrity and trust (vv. 9, 10).

The Law of Influence: The King Leads in Delivering Nineveh

(Jonah 3:6-9)

When the news of Jonah's message of judgment reached the king of Nineveh, he immediately repented. He took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat down in the dust. He repented for his own sin. Then he used his influence to bring about city-wide revival. He issued a decree that every citizen follow his lead. When God saw his response, He had compassion on the Ninevites and did not destroy them.

In this case, the leader influenced the fate of an entire population. He did so by providing the three fundamentals every follower needs:

1. **A clear model:** He repented first, setting an example (v. 6).
2. **A clear message:** He called his people to a specific action (vv. 7, 8).
3. **A clear motivation:** He gave the people a reason for taking action (v. 9).