

Bible Synthesis IV
(Bible Survey)

**INTRODUCTION TO
JONAH**

1. INTRODUCTION

Jonah speaks of two supernatural events: His being swallowed by the fish, and the gourd which grew overnight. This book has been greatly attacked by the critics and unbelievers because of the first of these two events. Men have said that a whale could not swallow a man, that a man could not live in the belly of a whale, etc., etc. The LORD did not say “whale,” He said, “The LORD had prepared *a great fish* to swallow up Jonah” (1:17). Also, we must be reminded that this fish was *prepared* by the LORD for just that very purpose of swallowing Jonah. Now, if a man can refit a submarine, God, the Creator of all, can *prepare* a great fish in any way He wants.

The skeptic creates a God in his own image. His God is too small. Of course, the essence of it all is that he refuses to be accountable to the God of the Bible, because he enjoys his sin. The greatest problem of the skeptic is the pride of unbelief.

2. AUTHOR

The Prophet Jonah = “a dove” — This is the story of “The dove who ‘flew the coop.’”

- (1) The son of Amittai (“truthful”) —Jonah 1:1; II Kings 14:25
- (2) He was from Gath-hepher in Zebulun in lower Galilee. [When the Jews said that no prophet would come from Galilee, they were sadly mistaken. Also, Jonah was not the only one from there, two other of God’s prophets came from Galilee.]
- (3) He prophesied in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (782–753 B.C.). He predicted that Israel would regain its boundaries, and that was fulfilled —II Kings 14:25.
- (4) Jonah is mentioned in the New Testament: Matt. 12:39–41; 16:4; Luke 11:29–30, 32.
- (5) He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.

3. RECIPIENTS

The Gentile city of Nineveh which was made by Sennacherib to be the capitol of Assyria.

Note: Nahum also prophesied to Nineveh about 150 years later, and that city fell in 612 B.C. Nineveh repented at Jonah’s preaching, and God spared it, but they failed to repent under the preaching of Nahum those many years later.

4. DATE OF WRITING

- (1) Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II (782–753 B.C.) —II Kings 14:25.
- (2) The date 782, which was the first year of Jeroboam’s reign, is suggested as the beginning of Jonah’s ministry, though no one can be certain of the exact year. The exact time of his trip to Nineveh and his preaching there is also unknown.
- (3) A few years after the reign of Jeroboam II, Menahem became tributary to King Pul of Assyria —II Kings 15:19.

- (4) It is thought that a series of events in Nineveh which preceded Jonah's preaching *may* have prepared the Ninevites for his message:
- 1. The plagues in 765 and 759 B.C.
 - 2. The total eclipse of 763 B.C.

5. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- (1) To show God's love and mercy toward the Gentiles, as well as toward Israel, and to illustrate His work among them even at that time, so many years before the time of Christ.
- (2) To reveal Israel's true purpose, as exemplified by Jonah, and to also reveal the typical Israelite's attitude toward that purpose. [Although, Jonah *may* have been willing to go to any nation other than to Nineveh in Assyria. Some have suggested that he foresaw the impending power of Assyria and its future threat to Israel—although this is purely speculation.]
- (3) To provide a typical significance, as shown by the Lord Jesus:
 - 1. The repentance of Nineveh — Matt. 12:39–41
 - 2. The prophet's three days and three nights in the belly of the fish typified Christ's three days and three nights in the grave — Matt. 12:40.
- (4) To show God's dealing with His own disobedient servant.

6. THEME

God's mercy

7. KEY PASSAGES

Jonah 3:10; 4:2, 11

8. KEY TERM

“Go” — 3 times (1:2, 3; 3:2)

“Prepared” (4 times). We notice that God prepared:

- a wind (1:4)
- a tempest (1:4)
- a fish (1:17)
- a gourd (4:6)
- a worm (4:7)
- an east wind (4:8)

—God *called* a man to be messenger. It is not said that God *prepared* a messenger. But God *did indeed prepare* that messenger as he went along. He did that preparation in much the same way as He must *prepare* His modern day messengers — step by step!

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OUTLINE OF
JONAH

- 1. Jonah's First Commission and His Flight** —Jonah 1

- 2. Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance** —Jonah 2

- 3. Jonah's Second Commission and His Obedience** —Jonah 3

- 4. Jonah's Displeasure and God's Rebuke** —Jonah 4
[The complaining, pouting Prophet]

