

JONAH

Goals of the Lesson:

1. Realization that God is willing and anxious to save even the greatest sinners.
2. See our God as the God of the whole earth.
3. Understand the value of a soul as greater than all our personal desires.

Introduction: According to **2 Kings 14:23-25**, Jonah was a prophet of the northern kingdom of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II. Therefore, the date of the book is placed around 780 B.C. Jonah lived in Gath-hepher, a little village about four miles northeast of Nazareth. Jonah is a zealous patriot of Israel who cannot stand the thought that God would preserve the life of a wicked enemy nation. Jonah knew the severe suffering Assyria had caused the world by their invasions and of the threat they were to Israel. The book presents a beautiful contrast between God's love for a heathen people and Jonah's desire for their destruction.

Nineveh was a huge city even by today's standards. It was the capital city of Assyria with a population of about 750,000 people. We are told in **3:3** that it would take Jonah three days to travel through it proclaiming God's message.

Historical accuracy: Many treat the book of Jonah as a myth or at best an allegory of Israel's rebellion, repentance, and restoration. What New Testament texts about Jonah help confirm the historical accuracy of the book?

Survey of the book: Before beginning a more detailed study, read through the book quickly, filling in a main point on each section of the *Survey Chart* .

1:1-3: In the space below and left, write down the main points of the text as well as those things you find interesting:

1. Where is Tarshish?

1:4-10: In the space below and left, write down the main points of the text as well as those things you find interesting:

2. Who is the only "atheist" on board this ship?

1:11-17: In the space below and left, write down the main points of the text as well as those things you find interesting:

3. What applications can we make concerning the result of running away from God?

Revealing Thought:

Flight from duty is always down: down to Joppa; down into the ship; down into the sea; down into the fish; down into the belly of Sheol.

4. Jonah may be running away from God, but in what positive ways is God still using His prophet?

2:1-10: In the space below and left, write down the main points of the text as well as those things you find interesting:

5. Do you believe God still chastises His people in a similar fashion in order to bring about their repentance?

3:1-10: In the space below and left, write down the main points of the text as well as those things you find interesting:

6. Considering that Jonah was an unwilling preacher, how can we explain the overwhelming positive response of the people of Nineveh. Compare **Luke 11:30** and **Matthew 12:40-41**.

4:1-11: In the space below and left, write down the main points of the text as well as those things you find interesting:

7. For the first time in the book Jonah is happy. Consider why he is happy and how this exposes the hearts of all of us:
8. In this book God was not only interested in saving the people of Nineveh. Who also was he trying to save?

Main Points To Remember From This Lesson:

1. National sin demands national repentance
2. Running from God and responsibility to Him ends in disaster
3. God can even use rebellion to bring about His will
4. We must not place more value on our "gourds" than on the work of the Lord.