

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE NINEVITE'S EVANGELIZATION AND REPENTANCE – CHPTR. 3

THE 2ND COMMISSION TO JONAH VSS.1-2

EXEGESIS VERSES 1 – 2:

וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יוֹנָה שֵׁנִית לֵאמֹר: ^{WTT} Jonah 3:1

^{NAS} Jonah 3:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 7

+ הָיָה + דְבַר + יְהוָה + אֶל + יוֹנָה (waw - consec + hayah - v/Qal/IPF/3m/s; "Now it came" + dabar - n/comm/m/s/constr. + yahweh - n/proper; "the word of the Lord"; + el - prep. + Yonah - n/proper; "to Jonah"; exact same opening phrase of 1:1 in the Hebrew) שֵׁנִי + ל + אָמַר (sheniy - adj/f/s/abso.; "a second time" + lamed - prep. + -amar - v/Qal/Inf/constr.; purpose; "to say")

קוּם לֵךְ אֶל־נִינְוֵה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרֵא אֵלֶיהָ
אֶת־הַקְּרִיאָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר אֵלֶיךָ: ^{WTT} Jonah 3:2

^{NAS} Jonah 3:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city קוּם + הֵלֵךְ + אֶל + נִינְוֵה + הַ

+ עִיר + הַ + גְּדוֹלָה (qum - v/Qal/Imp/m/s; "Arise/Prepare" + halak - v/Qal/Imp/m/s; "go/walk"; + el - prep. + niyneweh - n/proper; "to Nineveh"; + d.a. + -iyr n/comm/f/s/absol; "the city"; + d.a. + gadol - adj/f/s/absol; "the great one") **and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.** וְ + קְרֵא + אֶל + אֶת + הַ + קְרִיאָה (waw - conj + qara - v/Qal/Imp/m/s; "proclaim/cry out/call out"; same 3 imperatives "Arise/go/cry out" used in the 1st commission in 1:2; el - prep w/3/f/s/suff.; "to it"; + d.a. + qeriy-ah - n/comm/f/s/abso; "the proclamation") אֲשֶׁר + אֲנִי + דֹבֵר + אֶל + (-asher - rel. pro.; "which"; + -anokiy - indep.pro./1/comm/s; "I Myself"; + dabar - v/Qal/Ptc/m/s; "am going to tell/speak"; + el - prep w/2/m/s/suff.; "to you")

THE BOOK OF JONAH

ANALYSIS VERSES 1 – 2:

1. The opening of vs.1, “**Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah**” in the Hebrew mirrors the beginning of the book in 1:1.
2. This grammatically dissects the book into two major halves:
 - A. The 1st half revolving around Jonah’s disobedience to God (chptrs.1-2).
 - B. The 2nd half revolving around his resultant obedience to God (chptrs.3-4).
3. This highlights the underlying theme to this book: God’s grace and mercy bestowed upon His +V servant (compliments His grace and mercy towards repentant nations).
4. Jonah’s act of disobedience was most severe i.e., abandonment of his MPR as a prophet.
5. **Jonah** completely rebelled against God’s directive for his office.
6. He rejected Divine authority.
7. Yet, God forgave him and continued to use him in his prophetic office.
8. **Jonah** was a commissioned authority of God (as with P-T’s today).
9. He wasn’t “fired” or demoted nor was he taken off his unique assignment to go to **Nineveh**.
10. With spiritual recovery, his prophetic niche is again “business as usual”.
11. Peter is an example of an otherwise adjusted Apostle to the Church that got involved in gross hypocrisy, yet God retained him in his office. Cp.Gal.2:11ff.
12. Principle: God establishes all authority (Rom.13:1; Col.1:16; cp.1Pet.2:13) to include the spiritual realm (cp.Heb.13:17).
13. Principle: It is God’s right and privilege to sustain or remove authority as He sees fit (via omniscience) and it is best not to interfere without otherwise a clear doctrinal directive.
14. Remember: God also deals with subordinates with His perfect mercy, even when a believer has otherwise failed miserably in his Christian walk. Cf.Psa.130:3-4 cp. Eph.2:4
15. Warning: The self-righteous believer will deny others the same grace they expect from God’s mercy pool, even when the accused has an otherwise solid history of +V.
16. Stop: Don’t write people off over isolated sin (areas of STA weakness).
17. Application: In the event of flagrant failures of others, pray about it, apply separation as appropriate and let God deal with them.
18. As believers, we should be encouraged by God’s handling of the rebellious prophet.
19. That God’s grace was indeed all sufficient for **Jonah** with spiritual recovery is seen in the fact that God recommissions **Jonah**, “**the second time, saying**”.
20. Some time after his deliverance from the great fish, **Jonah** returns to his homeland to fulfill his vows of sacrifice and MPR of office (being a servant of God). Cp.2:9
21. While reengaged in his niche, another audible is spoken to the prophet of God.
22. As before, his commission is still to evangelize the Assyrians, “**Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you**”
23. We see the same 3 imperatives as in the 1st commission of 1:2, “**Arise, go to and proclaim**”.
24. There is a slight prepositional change following the verb “**proclaim**” from עֲלֶיָּהּ (al w/3/s/f/suff. – **against it**) in 1:2 to אֵלָיו (el w/3/s/f/suff. – “**to it**”) in our verse.
25. This insinuates that God is opening the doors to the possibility that the Ninevites might respond appropriately to the decree.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

26. God's plan for **Jonah** and the Ninevites remain unchanged.
27. This again points to God's relentless pursuit in providing grace for +V believers as well as potentially +V unbelievers.
28. Principle: God does not let +V lack in opportunity to benefit from His grace.
29. Four times we see **Nineveh** described as a "great city" in this book. Jon.1:2; 3:2,3; 4:11
30. This to emphasize its geo-political influence over the Assyrian Empire.
31. The primary difference between the 1st and 2nd commission is the fact that God now tells **Jonah** that a specific **proclamation** (decree) is to be issued.
32. Yet he is not immediately told the precise nature of this prophetic "**proclamation**" as per the words, "**which I am going to tell you**".
33. This was to re-test **Jonah**.
34. Will he submit to God's authority and go to **Nineveh** and **proclaim** God's word no matter the content and exactly as instructed?
35. Or will he try to run again or otherwise seek to water down or change the message?
36. Often (if not always) when the believer fails a test, they will face the same kind of test later in the future.
37. OT prophets were tested as to their fidelity of commission.
38. Some obeyed, some didn't.
39. Some lost their lives for disobedience. Cp.1Kgs.13:11-26
40. **Jonah** was to go specifically to **Nineveh** and he was not to ad lib or alter the content on a whim.
41. Verbal restraint was required and he was to proclaim exactly what he would be told.
42. The text supports the principle that legitimate, adjusted prophets spoke the truth on God's behalf not their own. Deu.18:20-22; Jer.26:1-2; 2Pet.1:20-21
43. Moses lost SG₂ for not communicating to the Exodus exactly as God told him at Meribah. Num.20:1-13 cf.vss.8-12
44. That **Jonah** rebelled against authority, his test now is will he acclimate to authority?
45. This is a primary issue for any servant of God.
46. *Review the Doctrine of Authority.*

THE BOOK OF JONAH

EXEGESIS VERSES 3 – 4:

JONAH OBEYS

וַיִּקָּם יוֹנָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־נִיְנוּהַ כַּדְבַר יְהוָה וַיֵּנִיחָהּ
הִיְתָה עִיר־גְּדוֹלָה לְאֱלֹהִים מִהֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:3 **So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD.** וַיִּקָּם + יוֹנָה (waw - consec + qum - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "So he arose/stood up/prepared"; + yonah - n/proper) וַיֵּלֶךְ + אֶל + נִיְנוּהַ (waw - consec + halak - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "and he walked/went"; + el - prep. + niyneweh - n/proper; "to Nineveh") כַּ + דְּבַר + יְהוָה (kiy - prep.; "according to"; + dabar - n/comm/m/s/constr. + Yahweh - n/proper; "the word of the Lord") **(Revised) Now Nineveh was a great city to God, a journey of three days.** וַיְהִי + נִיְנוּהַ + הָיָה + עִיר + גְּדוֹלָה + לְ + אֱלֹהִים (waw - conj.; "Now"; + niyneweh - n/proper + hayah - v/Qal/PF/3/f/s; "it was"; + -ir - n/comm/f/s/constr; "a city"; + gadol - adj/f/s/abso; "a great one"; + lamed - prep. + elohiym - n/comm/m/pl/abso; "to God") מִהֶלֶךְ + שְׁלֹשֶׁת + יָמִים (mahalake - n/comm/m/s/constr.; lit. "a journey of" cp.3:4; shalosh - adj/m/s/constr.; "three"; + yom - n/comm/m/pl/abso.; "days")

THE PROCLAMATION

וַיִּחַל יוֹנָה לְבֹא בְּעִיר מִהֶלֶךְ יוֹם אֶחָד וַיִּקְרָא
וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אַרְבַּעִים יוֹם וַיֵּנִיחָהּ נְהַפְכֶתָ:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:4 **Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk;** וַיִּחַל + יוֹנָה (waw - consec + chalal - v/Hiph/IPF/3/m/s; "and he caused to (lit.) bore through/pierce"; + yonah - n/proper; + lamed - prep. + bo - v/Qal/inf/constr; "to enter"; + bet - prep. + d.a. + -iyr - n/comm/f/s/abso; "into the city") מִהֶלֶךְ + יוֹם + אֶחָד (mahalake - n/comm/m/s/constr.; " a journey of" + yom - n/comm/m/s/abso.; "day"; + -echad - adj/m/s/absol; "one": lit. "a journey of one day" or "one day's walk") **and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."** וַיֹּאמֶר + אַרְבַּעִים + יוֹם + נְהַפְכֶתָ (waw - consec + qara - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "and he

THE BOOK OF JONAH

cried out"; + waw - consec + -amar - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "and he said") אָרַבַּעַיִם + עוֹד
 + וְיִ (-od - adv.; "yet/beside/undoubtedly"; denotes continuance + -areba-iyim -
 adj/pl/absol; "forty"; "yom - n/comm/m/s/absol.; "days") י + וְיָנִיחַ + וְהִפְּךָ (waw - conj.
 + niyneweh - n/proper; "and Nineveh"; + haphak - v/Niphal/ptc/f/s/abso.; "it will be
 overturned/overthrown)

ANALYSIS VERSES 3 – 4:

1. That **Jonah** has learned his lesson on the folly of rebelling against God’s directive and geographical will is now made evident in vs.3a, “**So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord**”.
2. His experience under severe DD on the high seas was sufficient to drive home the importance of his MPR as a prophet (dissemination of BD under God’s geographical will) in the eyes of **God**.
3. It is now clear to **Jonah** that all other concerns or problems aside, abandonment of his ministry is not the answer and only brings certain judgment (ultimately SUD).
4. With his skin bleached out from the gastric juices of the fish, he will have a perpetual reminder to help him keep his STA overruled in this area of his life for the future.
5. Principle: God may impose severe DD on the +V believer having long lasting effects when the arrogance of their STA is so potentially strong it endangers them with imminent reversionism. Exs.: David in operation Bathsheba and no rest in his household (2Sam.12:9-14); Paul and the thorn in the flesh (2Cor.12:7-9)
6. Application: The layman’s MPR of ministry is the assimilation of BD under their right P-T/local church. Joh.10:1-5
7. Application: To abandon your MPR is a certain road to destruction (SUD). Heb.10:25-27
8. **Jonah** ceases what he his doing and then makes the approximately 500 mile trek to **Nineveh**. Map 7 “*The Assyrian Empire*”
9. By foot or pack animal it is a trip taking ~20-25 days.
10. **Jonah** then describes the significance and size of this metropolis, “**Now Nineveh was a great city to God, a journey of three days**”.
11. His description is presented in both spiritual and physical realities.
12. The NAS “*exceedingly*” is literally in the Hebrew “**to God**/ לָ + אֱלֹהִים - lamed + elohiym”.
13. It was literally “**a great city to God**”.
14. Jonah’s view of the **city** transcended beyond its normal position of Assyrian influence and power to God’s view of it as something exceptional.
15. Size, wealth and power do not impress an omnipotent and omnipresent **God**; these things only impress men.
16. **Jonah** recognizes its importance to **God** as to the reason and purpose of his being sent.
17. This as to the obvious latent (potential) +V that **God** knows resides there.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

18. That **Jonah** views the **city** in such terms indicates that he expects that some of the Ninevites will respond to his message.
19. This in contrast to any view that **Jonah** had no realistic expectations at all in this regard.
20. Often a misconception based on his antagonistic response to their response to his evangelizing in 4:1.
21. To understand this leads to a clearer understanding as to why he really became so up-tight after the fact.
22. As we will see, it was not the fact that “some” repented, but the fact that a sufficient number repented delivering the empire from national destruction (4:2).
23. A perception he initially surmised as possible, but hoping against hope as not probable.
24. The final phrase “**a journey of three days**” provides a picture as to the geographical size of **Nineveh** that was located on the East bank of the Tigris.
25. Jonah’s description in this regard has stirred up much controversy.
26. Through archaeological excavations, the wall of the **city** proper has been measured to be only about an 8 mile circuit.
27. In addition, a Captain Jones made a trigonometrical survey in 1854 estimating that allotting to each inhabitant 50 sq. yards, the **city** might have contained 174,000 inhabitants. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
28. Yet, if the 120,000 persons that could not discern between their right and left hands are the number of children only in 4:11, this suggests a population of about 600,000.
29. Possible solutions have been advanced to include:
 - A. The Bible is inaccurate (the “higher criticism” types).
 - B. The 3 day walk is the time **Jonah** took to evangelize the **city**.
 - C. Jonah’s itinerary included the neighboring cities of Calah, Resen between **Nineveh** and Calah, and Rehoboth-Ir (Gen.10:11).
30. The 1st is stupid, the 2nd speculation and the 3rd is mitigated against by the fact that the singular term “**city/עִיר** - -ir” refers to a specific **city** not including surrounding cities. Cf.Jos.10:2; 18:24 *as distinguished from outlying villages*.
31. The most practical solution is that there was a large extension of the city outside its walls.
32. This is highly probable based on the extant ruins discovered Southeast along the banks of the Tigris as far as Calah (~20 miles) and northeast as far as Khorsabad (~12 miles). *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
33. With any sizable extension northwest, a **city** circumference of 60 miles is easily feasible.
34. While the outlying cities may have been adjacent or urban enclosures in the vast metropolis, they remained independent in identification and **Nineveh** otherwise laid claim to any other citizenry contiguous to the **city** proper.
35. The point here is if **Jonah** was to make an evangelistic circuit of the entire **city**, it would have taken him **3 days** minimum.
36. However, his only recorded itinerary provided is seen in vs.4a, “**Then Jonah began to go through the city one day’s walk**”.
37. The phrase “**began to go through the city**” would be literally rendered in the Hebrew, “*he caused to bore through (pierce) for the purpose to enter the city*”.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

38. Some interpreters take the Hiphil causative verb “*to bore through*”/לָלַחַל – chalal” to insinuate that **Jonah** first scouted out the **city** before determining where he would speak.
39. However the literal meaning of the word is to “penetrate or thrust through” as through an object or substance in as straight forward and shortest route possible to accomplish an objective.
40. The form is used to described the piercing of arrows and resultant wounds (1Sam.31:3), of plowing furrows for farming (Gen.9:20) and sexual fornications of the Exodus (Num.25:1).
41. The following infinitive “*to enter*”/לָבֹא – lamed + bo-“indicates that the purpose for Jonah’s “piercing” was parallel to inserting himself into **the city** precincts.
42. In other words, his “ *boring through*” was how he determined to enter into **the city**.
43. This colorful language denotes that **Jonah** determined his circuit of travel to be a straight line course **through Nineveh** as far as “**one day’s walk**”.
44. Jonah’s approach to evangelizing **Nineveh** was by making a bee line **through the city** covering as much distance expeditiously as possible in **one day’s** time.
45. He possibly used its main artery of commercial travel as the platform of his evangelizing eastward along the Tigris River.
46. There is no indication that **God** placed any specific timetable on his mission, only to go to **Nineveh** and proclaim God’s message.
47. His idea is to get it done as quickly as possible minimizing his travel circuit and effort, yet fulfilling his obligation to **God**.
48. This answers why **Jonah** mentions previously that it would take 3 **days** to fully encompass **the city**.
49. **Jonah** contrasts the size of **Nineveh** to his time spent evangelizing to show it would have taken at least 3 **days** to minimally canvas **the city**, but he only afforded it 1 **day**.
50. Yet, there is no condemnation by **God** and indicates his ministry otherwise was adequate.
51. This approach fits the profile of one that is willing to accept the conversion of some, but not willing to accept national recovery (cp.4:2).
52. His thinking was to “plant the seed” in a “row of volition” to satisfy the possibility of a sparse conversion, but not go out of his way in further effort.
53. Jonah’s learned lesson on grace in his ordeal in the Mediterranean Sea was sufficient for him to apply it to the Assyrians to a certain extent, but not in the magnitude of what **God** has in mind.
54. He is now willing to apply some grace, but only to a point.
55. **Jonah** continues to reserve some of his own self-righteous standards as to how far the grace of **God** should be implemented.
56. In his thinking it is one thing to cut the Assyrians a little slack from eternal condemnation (cp.3:8), but a whole other issue of letting them off the hook experientially as a nation under God’s judgment.
57. And he sure wasn’t going to go out of his way to try and see if enough of them were willing to repent to make national recovery.
58. This is the attitude with some believers of willingness to apply grace, but not in full accord with BD.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

59. Too often believers are not willing to truly forgive others' repentant past failures and re-extend a full hand of fellowship experientially. Ex. Incestuous Corinthian's return to church – 2Cor.2:5-11
60. **Jonah** continues to carry STA resentment (bitterness) towards these people.
61. While he should have had the attitude that if **God** saw fit to totally grace them out, he should too, he still limits his own grace orientation.
62. **Jonah** at this point in the narrative serves as an example of the stubbornness of the STA even with otherwise adjusted +V believers.
63. Even after the affects of severe DD because of certain STA areas, it is relentless in imposing its sinful standards upon us.
64. Principle: The STA is not eradicated in this life and certain trends the believer must battle throughout and to overcome it can often be a slow and painful process.
65. In his heart, **Jonah** still desires to see God's wrath upon this nation as his message is designed to relate, "**and he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown'**".
66. He provides no further details concerning his message.
67. His omission of further details indicates that it was only on this portion of his message that he was really focused on.
68. The test for **Jonah** continues in his grace orientation.
69. Obviously, **Jonah** would have included the mechanics for salvation to any that might repent as a result of this decree.
70. This is evidenced in vs.5 stating that the "*people of Nineveh believed in God*".
71. The "why" and by "whom" of their destruction was probably also included. Cp.vss.8-9
72. It becomes obvious that **Jonah** feeds off this terse decree as indication that though some may be saved, **God** still has intentions to wipe Assyria out under judgment.
73. This in spite of the subtle hint in the 2nd commission that Jonah's message was not now directed "**against**" **Nineveh** (1:2), but rather "**to it**" (3:2).
74. Obviously **Jonah** didn't want to hear this and dismissed it as irrelevant.
75. This emulates the blindness of believers that do not want to hear all of BD.
76. The decree that **God** instructed him to proclaim in route to **Nineveh** has aroused a certain assumption by **Jonah**.
77. He assumes that **God** is going to ultimately capitulate to his way of thinking that the Ninevites should get it in the neck.
78. He is "hung up" in thinking that his standard of what the Ninevites deserve is absolutely right (reflects the stubbornness of the STA to facilitate hmvwpt cf.Rom.8:7).
79. He tries to second guess **God** and the end results.
80. This is an example of believers that always want to conclude that **God** thinks the way they do. Cp.Isa.55:9
81. **Jonah** has drawn an "opinion" on what God's will is in the matter apart from the full compliment of BD and insight into volition.
82. He reflects the kind of believer that likes to impose on others certain ideals on how they think **God** should respond to their lives, but they really don't know squat what is going on in the hearts and minds of their targets.
83. With this mindset, he will not exert any unnecessary effort other than to warn **Nineveh** in a quick and precise fashion.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

84. Whereas **Jonah** totally rebelled initially to God's commission, he now abuses his commission by trying to play **God** over the Ninevites (in his MA). Cp.1Pet.5:1-3
85. This as a result of not completely isolating his STA in the matter and thus not fully oriented as an example of God's grace extended to those that repent.
86. He probably felt a sense of gratification and elation to be telling these enemies of her doom that would happen within a mere 40 days.
87. The irony is that while he drew a wrong assumption, it probably enabled him to do his present assignment with some zeal.
88. Here is text proof of **God** using an imperfect believer commissioned to office to disseminate His word adequately to obtain its intended results.
89. Even Jonah's erroneous MA does not interfere with the impact of the truth; he proclaimed the truth as instructed by **God** and it has its intended results.
90. Principle: Maintaining integrity of disseminating the truth will carry the communicator a long ways in the ministry in spite of individual STA problems.
91. On that end, **Jonah** passed the test to go to **Nineveh according to the word of the Lord** and cry out to it "*the proclamation which I am going to tell you*" (3:2).
92. The Niphal verb "**will be overthrown/haphak**" means to overturn or overthrow.
93. It is the same term used to describe the complete destruction and desolation of Sodom and Gomorrah. Cp.Gen.19:24-25,29; Deu.29:22; Lam.4:6
94. Something spectacular was planned for **Nineveh** when the 40 **days** were up.
95. **Jonah** could have embraced one of two possibilities (what he could have hoped for).
96. He embraces the one he preferred.
97. He should have desired and embraced the one that happened.
98. Especially as he had just been a beneficiary of the administration of "chesed/mercy" based on repentance.
99. This is always God's first choice for sinners. 2Pet.3:9
100. Even as a mature believer, **Jonah** still has room to grow; for him in the area of grace orientation.
101. As grace oriented believers, our desires and compassions for others is that they will make the adjustments to **God** and receive maximum blessing and forgiveness as **God** sees fit (cp.Rom.9:15-16); not according to our own proclivities (cp.Col.3:12-13).
102. Failure to do so will only produce self-righteous condemnation.
103. Freedom from judgment is the reason the grace of **God** in truth is provided. Cp.Rom.6:22,23 cf.Joh.8:32

THE BOOK OF JONAH

CONVERSION OF THE NINEVITES VSS.5-10

THE GENERAL POPULACE

EXEGESIS VERSE 5:

וַיֵּאֱמְנוּ וַיִּזְכְּרוּ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרְאוּ צוֹם
וַיִּלְבְּשׁוּ שָׂקִים מִגְדוֹלָם וְעַד־קִטְנֵיהֶם: WTT Jonah 3:5

^{NAS} Jonah 3:5 **Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; 7 + אמן + איש + נינוה**
+ ב + אלהים (waw - consec. + -aman - v/Hiph/IPF/3/m/pl; in the Hiphil means "they
believed"; in the Qal it means "to confirm/support/uphold"; in the Niphal it means "to be
established/be faithful"; + -iysh - n/comm/m/pl/constr.; "the people of"; Lit. "men" but
would include females; + niyneweh - n/proper; + bet - prep + -elohiym -
n/comm/m/pl/abso.; "in God") **and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the
greatest to the least of them.** 7 + קרא + צום (waw - consec. + qara- -
v/Qal/IPF/3/m/pl; "and they called out for"; + som - n/comm/m/s/absol.; "a fast/fasting")
7 + לבש + שק (waw - consec. + labesh - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/pl; "and they dressed up
in/became clothed in; + saq - n/comm/m/pl/abso.; "sackcloth"; thick course cloth usually
dark and made from goat or camel hair) 7 + גדול + 7 + עד + קטן (min - prep. +
gadol - adj/m/s/constr. w/3/m/pl/suff; "from the great ones of them": + waw - conj.
"even"; + -ad - prep. "as far as"; + qaton - adj/m/s/constr w/3/m/pl/suff.; "the least
ones/insignificant ones of them")

ANALYSIS VERSE 5:

1. In spite of Jonah's truncated approach in evangelizing, a phenomenon of historical precedence occurs, "**Then the people of Nineveh believed in God**".
2. Jonah's stern message found fertile soil (+V).
3. The prophecy of impending destruction was received with the seriousness it deserved.
4. And that by the vast majority of its residents.
5. The phrase "**believed in God**" has been questioned as to its intent; faith only in the message (the obvious), simply faith in the existence of **God** or inclusive of saving faith.
6. The phrase itself answers the question as to their faith transcending Jonah's message as it recognizes that **God** was speaking through him.
7. Their follow-up repentance evidencing remorse and true humility further speaks loudly of a **people** that then engage in Ph₂ application evidencing Ph₁ faith.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

8. Jonah's choice of phraseology to indicate their saving faith is not foreign to Jewish and Biblical description.
9. Act.16:34 describes the salvation of the Philippian (cp.16:12) jailer and his household with this phrase (in the Greek).
10. Paul describes Abraham's belief in **God** as saving faith in Rom.4:3 cf. Gal.3:6 following the LXX translation of the Hebrew text of Gen.15:6 that in turn uses the term Yahweh (the Lord).
11. Furthermore, James borrows from Gen.15:6 to teach Ph₂ faith plus application as essential to the CWL or Ph₂ righteousness as evidence of Ph₁ faith. Jam.2:23
12. Jonah's choice of terms in our verse is designed to bridge their Ph₁ faith in God the Son as the coming Messiah with their Ph₂ faith of willingness to then apply repentance as to their evil actions.
13. It is the combination of both that will ultimately facilitate God's experiential deliverance for them as a nation (Jon.4:10).
14. The more concise phrase "in God/ בְּאֱלֹהִים – bet + elohiym" is used repeatedly in Psalms to describe the believer's orientation to **God**. Psa.44:8; 56:4,10,12; 62:7; 63:11; 78:7 cp.78:22 for non-belief.
15. The Ninevites **believed** all Jonah had to say to include the call to Ph₁ salvation.
16. In order to be forgiven of sins the individual unbeliever must believe in Christ for that is the only way to wipe the slate clean.
17. One of the blessings associated with the SAJG is that **God** forgives the believer all past offenses. Luk.1:77; 24:47; Act.2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 26:18; Eph1:7; Heb.9:22
18. This is the "washing of regeneration" in Tit.3:5.
19. There is no way persons can be forgiven of their sins apart from the work of Christ.
20. The unbeliever cannot be forgiven simply by abandoning his sinful lifestyle.
21. He is still accountable for his past.
22. Only by faith in **God** and His Son can unbelievers be spared temporal and eternal wrath.
23. Jonah's message was one of both.
24. The only way they could avoid either was to believe in Jonah's **God**.
25. And that meant a lot more than simply becoming monotheistic in their religion.
26. Jesus cited the conversion of the Ninevites in Mat.12:41 as being a rebuke to His own generation that had much more light and still remained in unbelief.
27. How could "*the men of Nineveh* rise up and *condemn*" the "*generation*" of Jesus' day if they had not become believers in saving truth?
28. Moral reformation apart from faith in Christ will not suffice.
29. Jonah's audience heard the good news and realized the necessity to turn from the evil that put the nation in extreme historical jeopardy.
30. It behooves us to further analyze the scenario surrounding Jonah's evangelizing of the Ninevites.
31. This is contrast to the modern fundy mentality of successful evangelization.
32. First and foremost, Jonah is sent by **God** geographically to an area where latent +V exists.
33. Jonah (nor any other Biblical example of evangelizing that I know) does not operate willy nilly going wherever the mood strikes him.
34. The adjusted evangelist is truly led by **God** under the filling of the H.S.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

35. We further observe that it was not necessary for Jonah to canvas the neighborhood going door to door invading people's privacy.
36. In fact, Jonah abbreviated his tour of duty simply sowing the seed in a terse, precise and expedient manner as possible.
37. The message itself did not try to placate or cater to his audience nor have any "salesmanship" or "showmanship" characteristics attached to it.
38. He didn't have to entertain the audience, fraternize with them nor appeal to their approbation.
39. Jonah simply proclaimed the truth of BD as **God** instructed and let the truth fall where it may.
40. Obviously Jonah's personality or having a "win as many as possible for Jesus" mentality was not an issue or present to say the least.
41. BD and applying God's directive will for one's life is all the motivation needed.
42. The key to his successful ministry was based on two primary facets: The truth of BD and +V.
43. Christ Himself taught that if people are not receptive to the truth of BD, we are to move on. Mat.10:14; Mar.6:11; Luk.9:5; 10:11 cp.Act.13:51 of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch
44. Application: When evangelizing, stick with the spiritual issue at hand; if an unbeliever the SAJG and if a reversionist believer, R_B and the MAJG under MPR.
45. Though Jonah only spoke to a fraction of the population, the positive soil responded and his message spread like wild fire.
46. Jonah provided the "spark" and +V became the fuel for further +V.
47. Jonah's stingy approach in disseminating his message did not result in the loss of eternal life for the countless other unbelievers not directly hearing his words.
48. Principle: No one will go to hell that would otherwise believe.
49. Principle: **God** will place the evangelist before the right people at the right time and will otherwise "cover the bases" to ensure all +V receives a gospel hearing.
50. The conversion of the multitudes of **Nineveh** is indeed unprecedented.
51. Not only did they make the SAJG, but they followed through with the appropriate Ph₂ application of repentance, "**and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them**".
52. The outward token of their inner humiliation before **God** was their call for fasting and putting on of **sackcloth**.
 - A. Fasting and the putting on of **sackcloth** was an outward sign of sorrow, remorse and/or distress. Cf.1Kgs.21:27; 2Kgs.19:1; Est.4:1,3
 - B. Fasting was often connected with a special petition to **God**. Ezra 8:21-23
 - C. **Sackcloth** was a thick coarse cloth typically made of goat or camel hair.
53. These things were not the basis for forgiveness but were the outward evidence of their inner transformation.
54. This phenomenon took place city wide and involved all classes of society **from the most influential to the least significant** of the population.
55. We have here a prime example of reversion recovery outside Israel of an entire civilization.
56. An example in proportion to date that has no other recorded comparison.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

57. These **people** constitute a rebuke to all generations and civilizations that perished in their sins.
58. No Assyrian inscription mentions a religious awakening but this is to be expected as any record would have subsequently been destroyed by future reversionistic rulers.
59. As per the introduction to this book, Ashurdan III was ruling at this time (771-754 BC).
60. The plagues of 765 and 759 BC, coupled with military defeats in the North and the great eclipse of the sun in 763 BC could have all had bearing softening the hearts of these pagans.
61. Then there is the statement of Jesus in Luk.11:30 that “*Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites*” as Jesus was to His generation.
62. We know that as the antitype Jonah was a sign of potential national destruction apart from saving faith in Jonah’s message as Jesus message as Messiah was to Israel.
63. However, we might ask was there anyway physically that Jonah appeared to the Ninevites as a sign as the resurrection was the physical evidence pointing to Jesus?
64. Any tangible evidence would naturally revert back to Jonah’s experience in the fish.
65. As noted, the gastric juices of the fish would have bleached out his skin to a parchment white.
66. A condition and look begging for an explanation by his audience.
67. It is not unfeasible to assume that Jonah in all honesty related his experience to those that asked.
68. With the confession of his disobedience of the 1st commission and the stamp of his deathly looking skin as validation of God’s judgment, enough evidence to convince at least some as to the veracity of his mission would be expected.
69. Otherwise, while not explicitly known, the people came to know of his experience either through previous word of mouth or another form of witness on his behalf.
70. Some speculate that the sailors on the ship might have actually been in **Nineveh** to corroborate as eyewitnesses to his person.
71. Others speculate that news of Jonah’s ordeal might have spread from Israel through merchant travel as another venue.
72. We will find out when we get to Ph₃.
73. *Review the Doctrine of the SAJG.*

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE KING'S CONVERSION

EXEGESIS VERSE 6:

וַיִּגַע הַדָּבָר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ נִיְנְוֵה וַיִּקָּם מִכִּסְאוֹ וַיַּעֲבֹר
אֶדְרֵתוֹ מֵעָלָיו וַיִּכַּס שֵׁק וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־הָאֶפֶר:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:6 (Revised) **When the word reached the king of Nineveh,** וַיִּגַע + נַגַּע + דָּבָר + (waw - consec + naga - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "When it reached/touched"; + d.a. + dabar - n/comm/m/s/absol.; "the word"; subject of the verb "reached") אֶל + מֶלֶךְ + נִיְנְוֵה (el - prep.; "unto"; omitted in NAS; + melek - n/comm/m/s/constr.; "the king of"; + nineweh - n/proper) **then he arose from his throne,** וַיִּקָּם + קוּם + מִן + כִּסֵּא (waw - consec; "then"; omitted in NAS; + qum - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "he arose"; + min - prep. + kisse- - n/comm/m/s/constr. w/3/m/s/suff.; "from his throne/seat of honor"; lit. "from the throne possessed by him") **and laid aside his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes.** וַיַּעֲבֹר + אֶדְרֵת + מִן + עַל + (waw - consec.; "and"; omitted in NAS; + -abar - v/Hiph/IPF/3/m/s; lit. "caused to pass over/do away/take away"; hence, "he caused to lay aside/discarded"; + -adderet - n/comm/s/constr. w/3/m/s/suff.; "his robe/mantle"; + min - prep; + -al - prep. w/3/m/s/suff.; "from upon him") וַיִּכַּס + כִּסָּה + שֵׁק + וַיֵּשֶׁב + עַל + דָּבָר + אֶפֶר (was - consec; "and"; omitted in NAS; + kasah - v/Piel/IPF/3/m/s; "he completely covered himself"; intensive stem; + saq-n/comm/m/s/absol; "with sackcloth"; + waw - consec + ya-shab - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "and he sat"; + -al - prep. + d.a. + -epher - n/comm/m/s/abso.; "upon the ash")

ANALYSIS VERSE 6:

1. The news of the events in **Nineveh** quickly extended to the ears of the reigning monarch (Ashurdan III), as vs.6 opens, “**When the word reached the king of Nineveh**”.
2. It was Calah that was the capital of Assyria in this time in history, which was located ~20 miles East of **Nineveh**, also on the Tigris river.
3. Later the capital would be relocated to **Nineveh** proper under Sennacherib ~689 BC.
4. In Calah would reside **the Assyrian king** in his palace and as the seat of government for the present.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

5. If Jonah's itinerary indeed followed a main artery along the Tigris as mentioned in vss.3-4, it would have brought him very near to Calah in one day's time.
6. It is not unfeasible therefore that the **king** became privy to the event of Jonah's evangelizing on the same day.
7. "**The word**" in view obviously emphasizes Jonah's message of impending destruction and call to saving faith, yet would also encompass the citizens' reaction in vs.5.
8. For a **king** otherwise not privy to the actions of his subjects is hard to fathom.
9. The Hebrew term "**reached/naga**" has a root meaning "to touch or strike".
10. It emphasizes the impact that +V (citizen's reaction) and BD (Jonah's message) now have upon the soul of the highest authority over Assyria.
11. The **king** himself also had latent +V and the influence of other +V coupled with the doctrine at hand are sufficient to bring him to repentance.
12. Principle: The believer's applications in embracing of BD and disseminating the truth will appeal to other potential +V in their periphery.
13. Ashurdan III is another example of a chain reaction brought about by +V to +V.
14. While it does not explicitly state that Asshurdan became a believer, his reference to God in vs.9 implies a revealed faith towards Him.
15. Upon hearing the news, **the king** immediately makes evident his own repentance.
16. A series of connective clauses describes outwardly his inward transformation.
17. His soulful humility is manifested as "**then he arose from his throne, and laid aside his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes**".
18. This **king** traded the regal of his own power for the abasement of meekness in his orientation to God's sovereignty.
19. Ash became his **throne** and **sackcloth** his **robe**.
20. His combined actions symbolize his surrender to the truth and God.
21. No doubt his faith in Jonah's message produced a logical conclusion in his thinking, "What benefit is ruling a kingdom that God is going to destroy?"
22. The truth of Jonah's message forced this **king** (as well as the general populace) to contemplate a do or die situation.
23. Is this not what the gospel proclaims? Joh.3:36
24. For some +V to surface, God is free to force their hand in making a choice in the face of a life or death situation. Ex. the thief on the cross, Luk.23:39-43
25. **Ashes**, like wearing **sackcloth** pictures one's misery, mourning, shame, humility and repentance towards God. Psa.102:9; Job 2:8 – misery, mourning; 2Sam.13:19 – shame; Gen.18:27; – humility; Job.42:6; Mat.11:21 – repentance
26. With the king's conversion, a most crucial hurdle is crossed for Nineveh's deliverance.
27. For Assyria to retain a –V recalcitrant monarch, national recovery could have been severely hampered.
28. His conversion will help "grease the skids" so to speak.
29. The king's input towards national recovery is next revealed in vss.7-9.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE ROYAL EDICT VSS.7-9

EXEGESIS VERSES 7 – 9:

וַיִּזְעַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִינְוָה מִטַּעַם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּגְדֹּל לֵי
 לֵאמֹר הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה הַבְּקָר וְהַצֹּאן אֶל־יִטְעֲמוּ מֵאוֹמָה
 אֶל־יִרְעוּ וּבָיִם אֶל־יִשְׁתּוּ:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:7 **And he issued a proclamation and it said,** ו + זעק + ו + אמר (waw - consec + za-aq - v/Hiph/IPF/3/m/s; lit. "And he caused to cry out/call out"; in the Hiphil stem it carries the idea of assembly; hence his words have the force of addressing the citizens as a whole and thus "he issued a proclamation"; + waw - consec + amar - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "and he said"; emphasizes that the proclamation is the words of the king) **"In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles:** ב + נִינְוָה + מִן + טַעַם + הַ + מֶלֶךְ + ו + גְּדוֹל + ל + אִמְרָא (bet - prep + nineweh - n/proper; "In Nineveh"; + min - prep + ta-am - n/comm/m/s/constr.; lit. "from the taste of"; indicates the ability to ascertain; hence, "from the discernment/judgment of"; translated "by the decree of"; + d.a. + melek - n/comm/m/s/abso; "the king"; + waw - conj + gadol - adj./m/pl/constr. w/3/m/s/suff.; "and the great ones of him/his nobles; + lamed - prep + amar - v/Qal/inf/constr; "to say"; not translated in NAS) **Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing.** הַ + אָדָם + ו + הַ + בְּהֵמָה + הַ + בְּקָר + ו + הַ + צֹאן (d.a. + -adam - n/comm/m/s/absol; "the man"; + waw - conj + d.a. + behemah - n/comm/f/s/absol; "the beast/four-footed animals"; here domestic; + d.a. + baqar - n/comm/m/s/abso; "cattle/herd"; + waw - conj + d.a. + tso-n - n/comm/s/abso.; "flock", sheep or goats) אֶל + טַעַם + מֵאוֹמָה (-al - neg. + ta-am - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/pl/jussive; same as above translated "by the decree of", here used lit. "do not let taste"; + me-umah - n/comm/m/s/absol; "anything/nothing"; used 28x) **Do not let them eat or drink water.** אֶל + רָעָה + ו + מַיִם + אֶל + שְׁתּוּ (-al - neg. + ra-ah - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s/jussive; "do not let graze/pasture"; + waw - conj + mayim - n/comm/m/pl/abslo.; "and waters"; + -al - neg + shata - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/pl/jussive; "do not let drink")

THE BOOK OF JONAH

וַיִּתְכַּסּוּ שְׂקִים הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה וַיִּקְרְאוּ
 אֶל־אֱלֹהִים בְּחֹזֶקָה וַיֹּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדַּרְכּוֹ הַרְעָה וּמִן־הַחַמָּס
 אֲשֶׁר בְּכַפֵּיהֶם:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:8 "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; כסה + ו +
 + שִׁק + הַ + אָדָם + ו + הַ + בְּהֵמָה (waw - conj + kasah -
 v/Hithpael/IPF/3/m/pl/jussive; "But completely cover himself/must be covered"; inten-
 sive-reflexive; + saq - n/comm/m/pl/absol; "with sackcloths"; + d.a. + -adam -
 n/comm/m/s/absol; "the man"; + waw - conj + d.a. + behemah - n/comm/f/s/abso; "and
 the beast") and let men call on God earnestly ו + קרא + אֵל + אֱלֹהִים + ב +
 חֹזֶקָה (waw - conj + qara- - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/pl/jussive; "and let men call out"; + -el -
 prep + elohiym - n/comm/m/pl/absol.; "to God"; + bet - prep + chozeqah -
 n/comm/f/s/absol; "with force/earnestly/with zeal") that each may turn from his
 wicked way ו + שׁוּב + אִישׁ + מִן + דַּרְכּוֹ + הַ + רַעָה (waw - conj + shub -
 v/Qal/IPF/3/m/pl/jussive; "and let him turn"; + -ish - n/comm/m/s/absol; "each man"; +
 min - prep + derek - n/comm/s/constr. w/3/m/s/suff.; "from the way of his"; + d.a. + ra-
 ah - adj/f/s/absol; "evil/evilness") and from the violence which is in his hands. ו + מִן
 + הַ + חַמָּס + אֲשֶׁר + ב + כַּף (waw - conj + min - prep + d.a. + chamas -
 n/comm/m/s/absol; "and from the violence"; + -asher - rel.pro. + bet - prep - caph -
 n/comm/f/dual/constr.; w/3/m/pl/suff.; "which is in/by his hands")

מִי־יָדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ
 וְלֹא נִאֲבָד:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:9 "Who knows, מִי + יָדַע (miy - interr.pro.; "who?"; + yada- -
 v/Qal/Ptc/m/s/absol; "knows for certain/can tell/perhaps") God may turn and relent,
 and withdraw His burning anger ו + שׁוּב + ו + נָחַם + הַ + אֱלֹהִים (shub -
 v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "He will turn"; + waw - consec + nacham - v/Niphal/PF/3/m/s; "and
 repent/change His mind"; + d.a. + elohiym - n/comm/m/pl/absol; "the God") ו + שׁוּב +

THE BOOK OF JONAH

וַיִּזַן + וַיִּרְרָן + שָׁאָה (waw - consec + shub - v/Qal/PF/3/m/s; "and He will turn/withdraw"; min - prep + charon - n/comm/m/s/constr.; "from the burning of"; + -aph - n/comm/m/s/constr. w/3/f/s/suff; lit. "nostril"; "His anger/displeasure"; the closest antecedent for the feminine gender suffix is "hands" vs.8; emphasizes that God expresses His anger through the power of His hands/omnipotence) **so that we shall not perish?"** וַיִּזַן + וַיִּרְרָן (waw - conj + lo- - neg + -abad - v/Qal/IPF/1/comm/pl; "that we will not perish/be destroyed")

ANALYSIS VERSES 7 – 9:

1. The king obviously further reflects upon Jonah's message in his humbled state while sitting on the ashes (vs.6).
2. Stripping himself of all pride, his thinking is now translated to a manner conducive to the humility appropriate before Jonah's Sovereign God.
3. With a true fear of **God**, he is on the fast track to wisdom he believes appropriate facing the potential of God's wrath upon Assyria. Cp. Pro.9:10; Pro.15:33
4. His wisdom is manifest through a doctrinally oriented determination to issue a **decree**.
5. Just as with Jonah in his watery ordeal, what the **king** thinks is crucial to the situation.
6. He concludes that the spontaneous action of the citizens and his person evidencing their humility and repentance should immediately become law for his kingdom.
7. Logic reigns that he should now use his authority to consolidate his subjects under the principle of a law he assumes necessary to appeal to **God**.
8. This in contrast to any lingering arrogance or rebellion producing irrational behavior with STA human viewpoint reasoning (he acts as one in fellowship).
9. He characterizes a new believer with a minimal doctrinal frame of reference using common sense to exploit the doctrine to his fullest advantage.
10. Application: What good is an expanded frame of reference in doctrine if you are not going to apply what you already know?
11. He emulates that true repentance is not just lip service or genuflecting, but the will to place into action the appropriate measures in obedience to **God**.
12. With his new +V now surfaced, he takes action "**And he issued a proclamation**".
13. The phrase "**he issued a proclamation**" in the Hebrew is the Hiphil verb "za-aq" meaning "**caused to call out**".
14. In the Hiphil stem it has the idea of assembly and indicates that what he **said** was applicable to all his subjects.
15. The content of the edict is then recorded for us beginning "**and it said, 'In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles'**".
16. The **decree** would have been broadcast throughout **Nineveh** with utmost haste.
17. Interpreters note that only **Nineveh** is addressed, rather than the whole nation.
18. The most logical conclusion is that **Nineveh** was the city-state representative and its fate would determine the fate of the entire nation.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

19. The next item of interest is the mention of the king's **nobles** in support of his edict.
20. Two alternate explanations have been suggested:
 - A. It could be a show of total consensus (solidarity) by the ruling administration.
 - B. It may be evidence of a weak **king** that needed help of his **nobles** to back his authority.
21. Two things seem certain: It is a wise man that seeks wise counsel (Pro.1:5; 12:15) and his **nobles** were indeed behind **the king** implying the conversion of even his administration.
22. The mention of the **nobles** should not be taken that the **king** in some way deferred his authority to them in the matter.
23. The opening phrase of vs.7 makes clear that the words of the **proclamation** were those of the king's, not the **nobles**.
24. While he may have conferred with them, it was obviously of his own initiative, no matter who might speak on his behalf or not.
25. On the surface, the king's edict may have seemed crazy to the rest of the nation not eyewitnesses to these events.
26. Especially a law that went against the very grain of national policy.
27. He is declaring that a nation with a history of following paganism, immorality and violence as a predator nation rising to world power must change its course 180 °.
28. It seems more probable that the witness of the **nobles** was a support statement that the **king** had not gone insane as seen in their agreement with him.
29. In addition, the administration is addressing a situation as in a national disaster or impending disaster.
30. Solidarity of administrative authorities during times of crisis is crucial for success.
31. The first order of law called for a very intense fast, "**Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water.**"
32. While many (if not most) of the Ninevites were already fasting (3:5), the king's command required everyone to fast, whether converts or not.
33. Principle: Law should be based on what is right/moral, not public opinion, and should not be open to compromise or immunity to any that disagree or don't believe.
34. Principle: A righteous legal system is imperative for any nation seeking God's approbation.
35. The fast extended beyond the citizens and was imposed even on the cattle and livestock.
36. While this may seem strange by modern western standards, the inclusion of animals was a sign of total and effective supplication (entreaty) in the Semitic or Asian mind.
37. The fast was designed to produce an image of seeking maximum mercy upon both life and livelihood. Cf.Est.4:16
38. The deprivation of physical sustenance necessary for life in fasting is to reflect one's humility in dependency on God for life in their prayers. Cp. Deu.8:3; Mat.4:4
39. This fast was extreme and no one or animal was allowed to even **taste** something let alone **eat**, while also being deprived of **water**.
40. While the duration of the fast is not mentioned, it would have logically been limited to a few days at most.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

41. Keeping the animals from grazing and away from H₂O would have produced an audible setting of animals in need crying (mooring, ba-a-a-ing and na-a-a-ing) and thus emulating the mood of national remorse.
42. It has been noted that the Assyrians were renowned breeders of cattle and sheep.
43. The suffering physically and emotionally was designed as a token of the complete sincerity of their repentance.
44. The vision of this fast was of a people willing to sacrifice even that most physically essential for life in appeal to God's mercy (spiritual reigns over physical in priority).
45. In addition to the fasting ritual, a second directive is given, "**But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth**".
46. Whereas fasting emphasizes prayer petition, the **sackcloth** emphasizes their works evidencing true mourning, remorse, shame and humility. Gen.37:34; 2Sam.3:31; 13:19; Mat.11:21
47. The wearing of this scratchy cloth symbolized their repentance outwardly for their evil as a nation.
48. Based on the gravity of their sins, this is a time for remorse, not joy. Cf. Jam.4:8-11
49. That the king's law went beyond superficial ritual without reality is then made clear in his remaining commands of vs.8, "**and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands**".
50. The calling upon **God** and turning **from** their wickedness and **violence** parallels their fasting and wearing of **sackcloth** applying reality to their ritual.
51. They are called upon to pray to **God** with force/gusto/zeal.
52. They are to pray with the same drive they would have to secure food and **water** their bodies would demand experiencing maximum deprivation.
53. They are then enjoined for each one to **turn from his wicked way** and more specifically **from** their marquee vice of Assyrian brutality.
54. It is not enough to engage in outward penitence (contrition/regret/sorrow) as personified by the **sackcloth**, but a real repentance to cease from their evil STA activity.
55. **God** always prefers reality over ritual. Cp. Psa.51:16-17; 21:3
56. The adjective "**wicked way/ra-ah**" looks to their evil in general such as idolatry and other STA vices.
57. The "**violence**" in each person's "**hands**" describes how the Assyrians treated foreign peoples in conquest and slavery.
58. As noted in the Introduction to Jonah, their tactics towards others were of intimidation and fear and included some of the most vile and cruel methods of torture (skinning people alive, etc.).
59. This brutality carried over into everyday life right down to how servants were treated and the foreigners in their midst.
60. They showed no compassion in their predatory philosophy.
61. It is of special interest to note that the **king** immediately acknowledged that this sin stood out on God's hit list for Divine judgment.
62. Possibly Jonah might have brought this out into the open.
63. Or maybe the scar tissue of the soul was removed upon conversion injecting a stinging inner rebuke of conscience. Cf. 1Tim.4:2
64. It wouldn't take a brain surgeon to put two and two together that God's aggressive character towards them might have to do with their aggressive nature towards others.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

65. In either case, the Assyrians were a cruel and oppressive race and this was fostered by royal example.
66. The **king** now acts as a righteous shepherd beginning with the recognition of his personal guilt before **God**.
67. The only way their civilization could be spared is for **men** everywhere to turn from this vice in particular and otherwise turn over a new leaf.
68. Their outward applications complimented their prayerful entreaties and were their only hope of temporal survival.
69. The 40 day delay gave the people time to demonstrate a new cultural approach.
70. In vs.9, the **king** then reflects uncertainty with respect to God's response, "**Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?**"
71. The doubt is to be expected as this new convert is not familiar with God's gracious character (lack of frame of reference).
72. What is hoped for is that **God** will **turn** and literally *repent*/nacham (change of mind) and reverse his posture of **burning anger**.
73. The change of mind ascribed to **God** is an anthropopathism to teach that **God** relents favorably or unfavorably based on man's willingness to align with **God** or not.
74. This term is used 3x in Jonah: 3:9,10; 4:2.
75. **God** knew from eternity past that Assyria would make the adjustment and He did not change His mind in mid-stream, as we might apply this term to **man**.
76. The root meaning of "nacham" reflects the idea of "breathing deeply" (sighing), hence the display of one's feelings such as sorrow, compassion or comfort.
77. This verb is translated "repent" 38x in the OT with the majority of use in reference to **God**. Ex.Gen.6:6,7
78. The most frequently used verb employed to indicate man's repentance is "shub", the term translated "**turn and withdraw**" in vs.9.
79. The idea here is that **God** might reverse His course towards judgment and instead exercise compassion paralleling man's willingness to repent and overrule the STA.
80. God's plan is etched in eternal granite and that plan calls for application of grace to those that respond to it.
81. God's "nacham" illustrates His readiness to facilitate mercy towards +V in lieu of judgment that would be demanded otherwise and vice versa towards -V.
82. God's repentance does not violate the doctrine of His immutability.
83. Jonah's message made clear that the population was looking down the barrel of God's "**burning anger**" and apart from pulling in their evil horns, principally their brutality, they were facing imminent destruction.
84. Too, knowing Jonah's attitude, he probably gave them no special grounds for encouragement that even if they did repent, they would be spared.
85. This too may explain in part the king's vague confidence.
86. The fact that this nation turned to Jonah's **God** is all the more remarkable in that they had to also break from the deep-seated prejudices of their worthless gods (religion).
87. They had to judge everything they had been conditioned to believe as worthless and only an outside Deity could possibly help their plight.
88. The interpretation of their religion was that brutality was a good thing, just like Islamic justification of murder in the name of Allah.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

DELIVERANCE FROM JUDGMENT

EXEGESIS VERSE 10:

וַיִּרְאֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדֶּרְכָם
הֲרַעַה וַיִּנָּחֵם אֱלֹהִים עַל־הֲרַעַה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם
וְלֹא עָשָׂה:

^{NAS} Jonah 3:10 **When God saw their deeds,** וַיִּרְאֵהוּ + אֱלֹהִים + אֶת + מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם (waw - consec + ra-ah - v/Qal/IPF/3/m/s; "When He saw"; + d.a. + elohiym - n/comm/m/pl; "the God"; + -et - sign of d.o. + ma-aseh - n/comm/m/pl/constr. w/3/m/pl/suff.; "their deeds/works") **that they turned from their wicked way,** כִּי + שָׁבוּ + מִן + דֶּרֶךְ + הַרְעָה (kiy - conj. + shub - v/Qal/PF/3/comm/pl; "that they turned back"; min - prep. + derek - n/comm/s/constr. w/3/m/pl/suff.; "from the way of their"; + d.a. - ra-ah - adj/f/s/absol.; "the evil") **then God relented concerning the calamity** וַיִּנָּחֵם + אֱלֹהִים + עַל + הַרְעָה (waw - consec + nacham - v/Niphal/IPF/3/m/s; "then He repented/relented"; + d.a. + elohiym - n/comm/m/pl; "the God"; + -al - prep + d.a. + ra-ah - adj/f/s/absol; "concerning the calamity") **which He had declared He would bring upon them.** אֲשֶׁר + דִּבֶּר + לַעֲשׂוֹת + לָהֶם (-asher - rel. pro.; "which"; + dabar - v/Piel/PF/3/m/s; "He declared"; + lamed - prep. + -asah - v/Qal/Inf/constr; "to do"; "; + lamed - prep. w/3/m/pl/suff.; "to them") **And He did not do it.** וַיִּלֹּא + עָשָׂה (waw - conj + lo- - neg. + -asah - v/Qal/PF/3/m/s; "And He did not do it")

ANALYSIS VERSE 10:

1. Jonah fast forwards some 40 days and provides the ultimate result as to the verdict passed down by **God** upon the Ninevites.
2. During this time, they were on trial so to speak as to providing the evidence of true national repentance.
3. Application: **God** will test man's volition evidencing the true character of their soul.
4. Via omniscience and omnipresence, **God** observed the Ninevites' sincerity, "**When God saw their deeds**".
5. "**Their deeds/works**" were all the things they did to show that their faith and repentance was real.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

6. The following causal clause, “**that** (conjunction *kiy* – *because*) **they turned from their wicked way**” provides the conditional evidence of their sincerity necessary for God’s pardon.
7. The pardon was conditional as God’s justice demanded an experiential adjustment to stop their STA activity. Cp.Deu.28:vss.1-2 cf.vs.15
8. Ph₁ salvation alone was insufficient to call off God’s wrath in time.
9. “**Their wicked way**” included all the things that destined them for God’s wrath including the vices of their idolatry and often state-sponsored violence.
10. These were a merciless, violent and bloody people.
11. They boasted in their terror as noted in the inscriptions of the Assyrian monarchs.
12. They ruled by terror and intimidation.
13. **God** held them accountable and planned that they would reap violence from His hands.
14. So close did they come to the edge, yet, “**then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them**”.
15. Again, we see the verb “*nacham*”, here translated “**relented**” as language of accommodation to illustrate God’s compassion or change of mind.
16. His relenting is based on His gracious character that is made possible because of the work of Christ on the cross.
17. His essence requires that He forgive based on the doctrine of propitiation.
18. The Ninevites exploited this doctrine experientially and by isolating their STA’s nationally enjoyed maximum forgiveness in time as well as eternity.
19. National reversion recovery requires that they humble themselves and forsake the evil that has put them under destruction. Cp.2Chr.7:14
20. The lesson for Jonah and Israel was that **God** would do this for all peoples, not just the chosen ones.
21. Further it was to demonstrate that even from among the heathen, **God** could prepare a people for Himself if He should so choose.
22. This was realized in the present dispensation of grace anticipated by OT prophecy. Deu.32:21; Isa.65:1; Hos.1:10; 2:23 cf. Rom.9:25-26; 10:19-20
23. This facilitates that Jonah in typology was a sign to illustrate the judgment against Israel via Christ’s ascension ushering in its successor dispensation.
24. The Ninevites readiness to listen to the word of **God** proclaimed by Jonah and the vigor of their repentance showed the depth to which they had sunk in idolatry and vice.
25. The Assyrian people obtained a new lease on life.
26. They removed themselves from God’s permissive and overruling will of wrath “**And He did not do it**”.
27. Under +V, they are now oriented to God’s directive will.
28. They soon no doubt slipped back into the STA trends as their subsequent history shows.
29. The empire lasted about a century and a half until it was overthrown in 612 BC by the combined armies of the Median king Cyaxares and the Babylonian king Naboplassar (Nebuchadnezzar’s father).
30. Assyria’s heyday came soon after this notable event (over the next 100 years plus).

THE BOOK OF JONAH

31. The irony is that Assyria's recovery placed them in the position as God's whipping post for Israel in the defeat of the Northern Kingdom in 721 BC. 2Kgs.17:3
32. This just some 40 years away from the events of Jonah.
33. Prior to this, Tiglath-Pileser (745-727 BC) took the tribes east of the Jordan (Samaria) into Assyrian captivity. 2Kgs.15:19 cp.1Chr.5:25-26
34. As previously noted, some historians record that Ashurdan III was a weak king during the time of Jonah (analysis vss.7-9).
35. A diminutive notation against his person could be expected in the annals of Assyrian history by the arrogance of kings that followed him in reign considering him weak and passive.
36. By all spiritual accounts, he was probably the greatest king Assyrian enjoyed in rulership over them throughout their history.
37. This Assyrian king and his subjects are good examples that **God** provides opportunity to acclimate to His plan before carrying out His righteous judgment.