
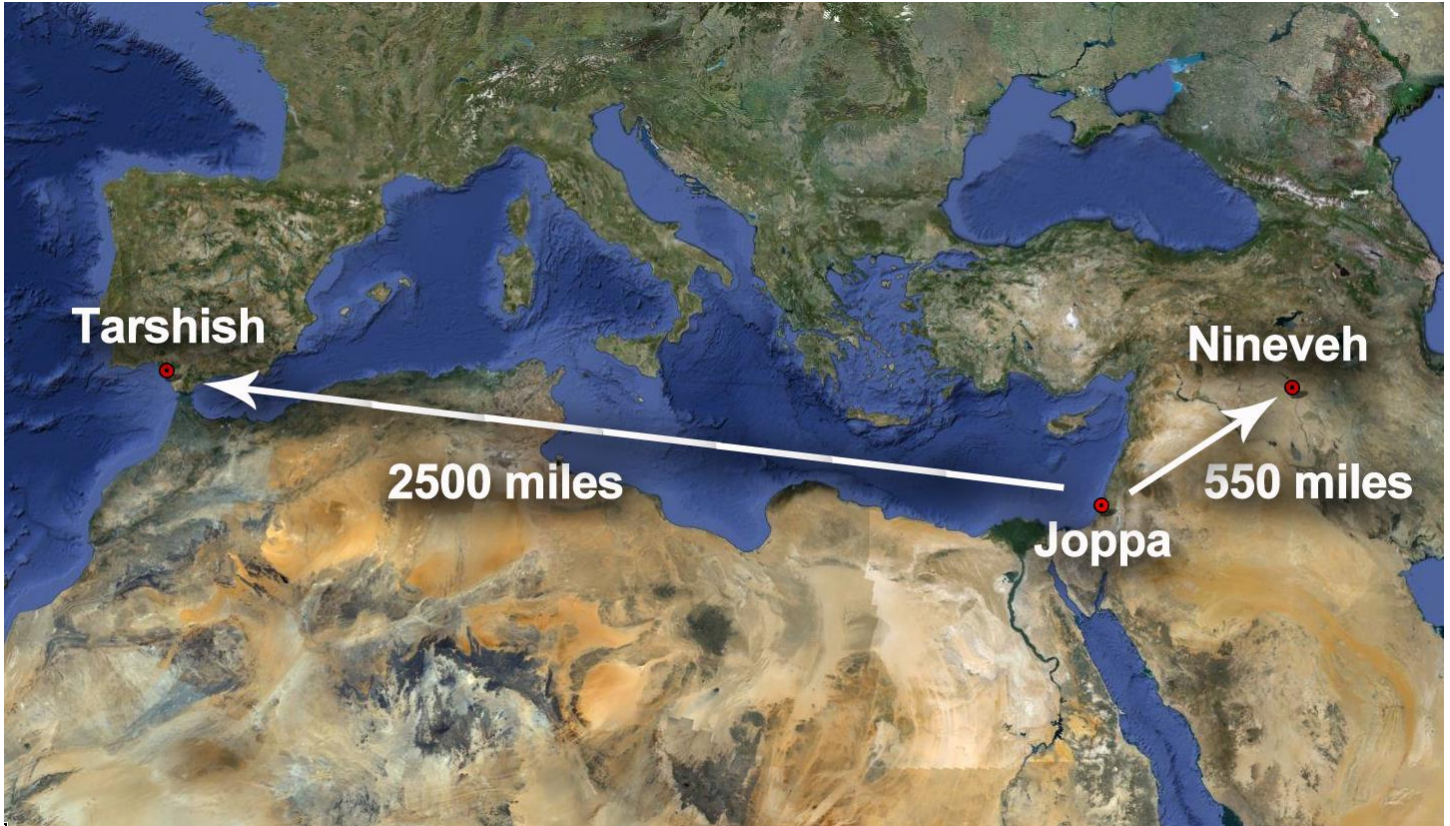


Day 1




 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

*Jonah Flees From the LORD*




Source: [https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-3l1MAiMbdTI/UEAU5VEj\\_KI/AAAAAAAAA7A/Y5QMxeScDp8/s1600/Jonah+Runs+with+Distances.jpg](https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-3l1MAiMbdTI/UEAU5VEj_KI/AAAAAAAAA7A/Y5QMxeScDp8/s1600/Jonah+Runs+with+Distances.jpg)

<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to Jonah, son of Amittai: <sup>2</sup> "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

-  The Book of Jonah was written by the Prophet Jonah probably in the 5th to 4th century, BC.
-  Nineveh was approximately 500-miles northeast from Israel. It was an arduous journey. Yet, Jonah chose to travel westward in the opposite direction – as far as he could go. His selected destination was Tarshish, an estimated 2,500-miles from Israel.
-  Two famous Old Testament prophets were Elijah and his successor Elisha. Scholars speculate that Jonah could have been one of Elisha's followers referenced in 2 Kings 6:1 as the "company of prophets".

**2 Kings 6:1**


The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us."

 Jonah was expressly named in the Jewish history of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 14.

**2 Kings 14:21-25**

<sup>21</sup> Then all the people of Judah took Azariah [also called Uzziah], who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. <sup>22</sup> He was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after Amaziah rested with his ancestors.

<sup>23</sup> In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. <sup>24</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit. <sup>25</sup> He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher.

 Jesus used the example of the Prophet Jonah to speak to (and against) the religious leaders of His time (and to us).

**Matthew 12:38-45**

<sup>38</sup> Later a few religion scholars and Pharisees cornered him. “Teacher, we want to see your credentials. Give us some hard evidence that God is in this. How about a miracle?”

<sup>39-40</sup> Jesus said, “You’re looking for proof, but you’re looking for the wrong kind. All you want is something to titillate your curiosity, satisfy your lust for miracles. The only proof you’re going to get is what looks like the absence of proof: Jonah-evidence. Like Jonah, three days and nights in the fish’s belly, the Son of Man will be gone three days and nights in a deep grave.

<sup>41-42</sup> “On Judgment Day, the Ninevites will stand up and give evidence that will condemn this generation, because when Jonah preached to them they changed their lives. A far greater preacher than Jonah is here, and you squabble about ‘proofs.’ On Judgment Day, the Queen of Sheba will come forward and bring evidence that will condemn this generation, because she traveled from a far corner of the earth to listen to wise Solomon. Wisdom far greater than Solomon’s is right in front of you, and you quibble over ‘evidence.’

<sup>43-45</sup> “When a defiling evil spirit is expelled from someone, it drifts along through the desert looking for an oasis, some unsuspecting soul it can bedevil. When it doesn’t find anyone, it says, ‘I’ll go back to my old haunt.’ On return it finds the person spotlessly clean, but vacant. It then runs out and rounds up seven other spirits more evil than itself and they all move in, whooping it up. That person ends up far worse off than if he’d never gotten cleaned up in the first place.

“That’s what this generation is like: You may think you have cleaned out the junk from your lives and gotten ready for God, but you weren’t hospitable to my kingdom message, and now all the devils are moving back in.” [The Message (MSG)]

Q1. Why did God ask Jonah to go to Nineveh?

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Q2. Based on your understanding (do no internet research), do you think the Ninevites, in general, worshipped the one true God? Or did they worship pagan deities and idols?

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Q3. Jonah was a prophet of God, a Jewish religious leader. Did the Jews consider their relationship with God an exclusive association between God and Jews? Or did the Jews share the Word of God with surrounding people groups?


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Q4. Based on God’s command to Jonah, did God want the Jews to share His love with other people-groups?

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Day 2


 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

 “God’s care for the Gentiles and their susceptibility to His voice, was the purpose of Jonah’s mission. He is a prophet of Israel, because the lesson of his history was for them, though his message was for Nineveh . He first taught by example the truth which Jesus proclaimed in the synagogue of Nazareth, and Peter learned on the housetop at Joppa, and Paul took as his guiding star. A truth so unwelcome and remote from popular belief needed emphasis when first proclaimed; and this singular story, as it were, underlines it for the generation which heard it first. Its place would rather have been among the narratives than the prophets, except for this aspect of it. So regarded, Jonah becomes a kind of representative of Israel; and his history sets forth large lessons as to its function among the nations, its unwillingness to discharge it, the consequences of disobedience, and the means of return to a better mind.” [©Expositions Of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/maclaren/jonah/1.htm>]

 “Jonah sullenly resolved not to obey God’s voice. What a glimpse into the prophetic office that gives us! The divine Spirit could be resisted, and the Prophet was no mere machine, but a living man who had to consent with his devoted will to bear the burden of the Lord. . . . Jonah represents the national feelings [Israel] which he shared. Why did he refuse to go to Nineveh? Not because he was afraid of his life, or thought the task hopeless. He refused because he feared success. God’s goodness was being stretched rather too far, if it was going to take in Nineveh. Jonah did not want [Nineveh] to escape.” [©Expositions Of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/maclaren/jonah/1.htm>]

<sup>3</sup> But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

 Tarshish: “This is the name of a Phoenician port in Spain... It was founded by a Carthaginian colony, and was the farthest western harbor of Tyrian sailors [from the City of Tyre]. [Source: <http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/tarshish.html>]

 Joppa: “a town in the portion of Dan, on a sandy promontory between Caesarea and Gaza, and at a distance of 30-miles northwest from Jerusalem.” [Source: <http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/joppa.html>]

Q5. Why did Jonah disobey the Lord by running in the opposite direction?

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Q6. Since Jonah had money for the fare and there was a ship traveling in the direction he wanted to go – some might argue that Jonah was in God’s will – after all, God did not stop Jonah but allowed him to flee. When we clearly know God’s direction for us (e.g., from the Bible), yet easy circumstances seem to tell us to go in another direction, is that God talking to us? Why?

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<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. <sup>5</sup> All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.

Q7. These were seasoned sailors; do you think that they had experienced storms before? Do you think that this storm was especially violent?

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Q8. In the phrases “the ship threatened to break up” and “they threw the cargo into the sea”, did people suffer economic losses (from Jonah’s decision) and who suffered those losses?

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Q9. While the “sailors were afraid”, what did Jonah do?

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Q10. Were the sailors successful, when “each cried out to his own god”? Why? Or why not?

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**Day 3**

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<sup>6</sup> The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

Q11. Do you think these seasoned sailors were panicked?

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Q12. Do you think the sailors were amazed that anyone could be sleeping?

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<sup>7</sup> Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

Q13. Was “casting lots” a normal thing to do at this time in history? And if so, why?

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**Leviticus 16:2, 5, 7-10**

<sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die... <sup>5</sup> From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering... <sup>7</sup> Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. <sup>8</sup> He is to cast lots for the two goats - one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. <sup>9</sup> Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. <sup>10</sup> But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.


**Psalms 22:18**

They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

**Matthew 27:35**

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Day 4

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<sup>8</sup> So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

Q14. Do you think that these sailors recognized Jonah as a man of God? A Hebrew?

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<sup>9</sup> He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."  
<sup>10</sup> This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)

Q15. From this “witness encounter,” do you think the sailors would remember who Jonah’s God was?

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<sup>11</sup> The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

Q16. If the sailors were panicked before, is it possible that their “panic” reached new depths?


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<sup>12</sup> "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

Q17. Jonah seems to know with certainty how to cause the storm to abate. If you were the captain of the ship, what might you be thinking about this time?

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*Day 5*

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**13** Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.

Q18. They were pretty sure that Jonah was the cause of their problems, why did they now try to “row back to land”?

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**14** Then they cried to the LORD, "O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased."

Q19. Between Jonah and the storm, did the Lord make believers out of the sailors and other passengers? How can we tell?

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**15** Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.

Q20. What went through the sailors' minds as they sentenced a man to certain death by throwing him overboard and then the seas “grew calm”?

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Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

<sup>16</sup> At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

Q21. Do you think the sailors would have returned to their previous pagan gods/idols?

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<sup>17</sup> But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

Q22. What do you imagine Jonah experienced?

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Q23. Today, if we think of Jonah as you or me, what are our take-aways from reading about Jonah’s experience? We have free-will to make our own decisions . . . what do you think our role in this world should be?

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**Matthew 28:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’

**Matthew 22:35-40**

<sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Q24. Our Lord Jesus commanded, “go and make disciples of all nations” in Matthew 28:19. Does your answer to question-23 support the Lord’s command? What can you do to improve your witness to the Gospel of our Lord? Will you do it?

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