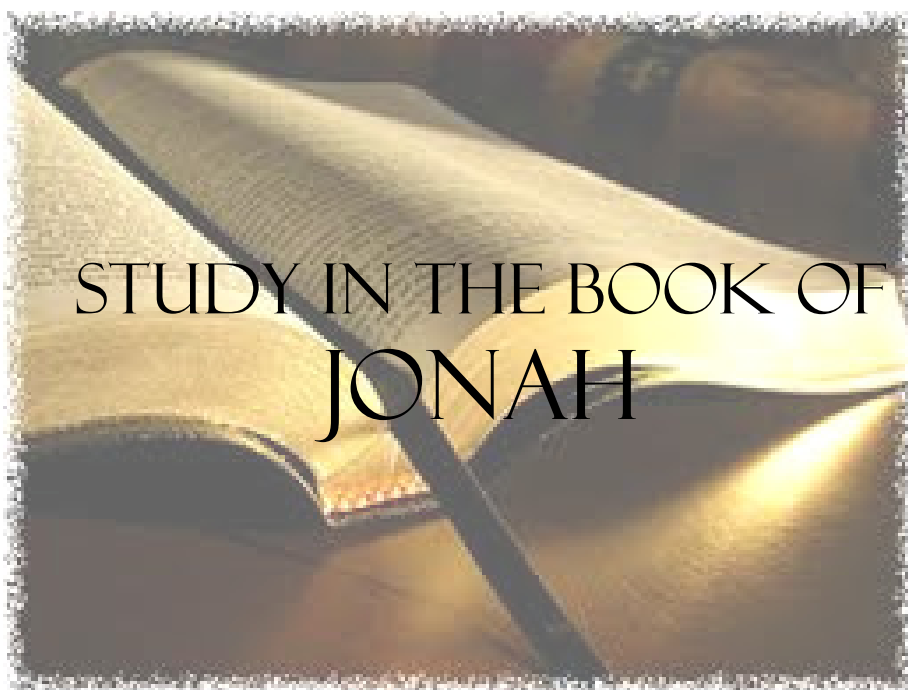


*Footprints*



CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



By: Rev. Luis Esteves

Footprints into Africa

## OUTLINE

### JONAH (Chapter 1– 4:10)

1. CALL AND RESPONSE (1:1-3)
  - A. THE CALL (1:1-2)
  - B. THE RESPONSE (1:3)
    - a) **Fear**
    - b) **Inadequacy**
    - c) **Selective**
2. GOD AND PEOPLE IN MOVEMENT (1:4-2:9)
  - A. GOD’S MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE REBEL
    - a) **In Jonah’s case**
      - i) Through trouble
      - ii) Through people
    - b) **In other cases**
      - i) Through blessing
      - ii) Through creation
      - iii) Through other means
  - B. THE REBEL’S MOVEMENT TOWARDS GOD
    - a) **Acknowledgement of failure**
    - b) **Recognition of the danger**
    - c) **Heartfelt cry for help**
  - C. GOD MOVES AGAIN
  - D. THE REBEL RESPONDS WITH PRAISE
3. MESSAGE SENT MESSAGE RECEIVED (2:10-3:10)
  - A. MESSAGE SENT (2:10-3:4)
    - a) **The message recommissioned**
    - b) **The message proclaimed**
  - B. MESSAGE RECEIVED (3:5-3:10)
    - a) **Nineveh repented**
    - b) **God relented**
4. FOR WHOM SHOULD GOD BE CONCERNED? (4:1-11)
  - A. ACCORDING TO THE JONAH’S OF THE WORLD ONLY THEIR KIND OF PEOPLE (4:1-3)
  - B. ACCORDING TO GOD ALL HIS CREATURES (4:4-10)

# **JONAH**

## **STUDY 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **(1) WHAT KIND OF WRITING? (Genre)**

God communicates with us through normal language, but often He uses different styles of language.

Most often the prophetic writings are sermons (preaching).

These sermons address generally two issues:

- i) The sin of the people and the call to repentance.
- ii) The hope of the coming Kingdom.

But the Book of Jonah is different.

The book of Jonah is not a sermon, it is the story of a part of Jonah's life.

The story communicates lessons to us.

#### **(2) WHEN DID IT TAKE PLACE?**

We do not really know when it was written.

In the light of **2 Kings 14:25** – “**He was the one ... His servant Jonah son of Amittai.**”

We can conclude that Jonah lived during the 41-year long rule of King Jeroboam.

The Second of Israel (The Northern Kingdom), from **786 to 746 BC**.

#### **(3) WHAT WAS THE POLITICAL SITUATION?**

One thing that is relevant to us is that at that time the super power in that region was Assyria, they were the enemies of Israel, and they threatened the very existence of Israel. (The capital city of Assyria was Nineveh.) Thus, Jonah had to go and preach in the centre of the enemy.

#### **1. CALL AND RESPONSE (1:1-3)**

##### **A. THE CALL (1:1-2)**

We are told that the Word of the Lord came to Jonah with a commission, to go to Nineveh and to preach against it.

(They were a very violent people – their wickedness was to be judged by his message.)

##### **B. THE RESPONSE**

Jonah's response to the call was to flee to Tarshish, which was in the opposite direction to Nineveh. So Jonah wants to escape God's call.

At this point, it might be helpful for us to think about the kinds of things that prevent professing Christians from heeding God's call on their lives.

\* **There is a Jonah in each one of us!**

##### **a) Fear**

This could prevent us from obeying the Lord.

**Luke 22:60-62 – PETER**

- b) **Inadequacy**  
Exodus 3:4 – MOSES  
 The Lord reveals His strength through our weakness.
- c) **Selective**  
 We are selective in what we are prepared to do and in what we are not prepared to do.

## 2. **GOD AND PEOPLE IN MOVEMENT (1:4-2:9)**

I am a subject – not an object, therefore God honours me as a person – not as a thing. God relates to me as a person.

In this section we have God and Jonah in movement (in conversation / in relating) – (A relationship between two persons).

### A. **GOD’S “MOVEMENT” TOWARDS THE REBEL**

- a) **In Jonah’s case**
  - i) Through trouble  
 The Lord wants to bring Jonah to his senses and so he caused a storm, which threatened to sink the ship.  
**See Amos 4:12 – “The Lord did ‘this’ ... But you did not repent.”**
  - ii) Through the people  
 God used the sailors on the ship to bring Jonah to his senses.
- b) **In other cases**
  - i) Through blessing  
**Romans 2:4 – ... do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you to repentance.**  
**Acts 14:15 – “Men why are you doing this? We too are only men, humans like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in ...”**
  - ii) Through creation  
**Romans 1:20 – “... Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood ... so men are without excuse.”**  
 There is a general revelation of God through His creation. God wants to reveal Himself to us – to reach out to us – He did this most clearly to us through Jesus Christ.

### B. **THE REBELS “MOVEMENT” TOWARDS GOD**

In the belly of the fish, Jonah remembered and spoke of the danger he was in – in the sea. He was drowning and the recognition of the danger he was in caused him to call out to the Lord for help.

\* **There is definitely a Jonah in ME: Thank God for his grace.**

- a) **Acknowledgement of failure (v.12)**
- b) **Recognized the danger (v.2:1)**

c) **Heartfelt cry for help (2:2-7)**

C. **GOD MOVES AGAIN**

God sent rescue. Jonah could not help himself and cried out to the Lord.  
GOD REACHED OUT AND JONAH RESPONDED.

D. **THE REBEL RESPONDS WITH PRAISE (2:8-9)**

Jonah had a new desire to serve the Lord, but he was not perfect by any means. The **Psalm of Jonah (2:2-9)** records the crises, the psalm records the divine rescue, and in the psalm, he expressed his renewed commitment to the Lord in the vow of praise.

3. **MESSAGE SENT, MESSAGE RECEIVED (2:10–3:10)**

A. **MESSAGE SENT (2:10–3:4)**

a) **The messenger recommissioned (2:10–3:4)**

Jonah was brought back to the starting point, as far as his commission was concerned.

Jonah did not experience any negative consequences because of his disobedience, but this is not always the case. Sometimes we must live with the consequences of our disobedience, even after we have repented. (i.e.: David)

In the case of Jonah, it pleased God to rescue him from death and to bring him back unhurt to the starting point.

b) **The message proclaimed (3:3-4)**

Jonah went into Nineveh and preached the message that God had told him to preach.

Nineveh is the messy world of un-belief and opposition, of evil, and corruption and violence.

Nineveh is the world where God's people find themselves and where they need to minister to the world.

\* The simple message woke them up.

They realized that they needed help otherwise they would be judged – just as we all need help today.

The message Jonah preached was a message of judgement.

B. **MESSAGE RECEIVED (3:5-10)**

a) **Nineveh repented (v.5-9)**

Something far greater than the big fish took place; Nineveh REPENTED!!

i) The people heard the Word.

ii) The people believed the Word.

This indicates that when they heard the Word they came to their senses.

• The unbeliever is in darkness because of his own heart.

iii) The people acted on the Word in two ways:

a. They expressed sorrow for their sins in a culturally appropriate way by declaring a fast and putting on sackcloth.

This is how they expressed repentance.

b. They turned from their sinful actions (v.8b)

God is interested in justice – which is more than religion. God is looking for a new life!

God changed His mind, and He saw the repentance of the people, and He responded by mercifully withholding His judgement.

- \* The message of judgement is not final – in the prophetic literature. God responds to His creatures. The things that are set and pre-determined are God's arrangement of how He governs.  
i.e.: If you sin and do not repent, you will be judged.

**b) God relented**

This description of God's relenting raises issues concerning the way God works. The way He governs and interacts with His world.

The Bible is more concerned with how God is relating with His world, but not so much about who God is within Himself. The Bible is concerned with what is relevant to His people. The Bible reveals that God is both unchangeable and changeable.

He is unchangeable in the sense that God always deals with His world in a way which is consistent with His Covenant (God's Framework).

His arrangements with His World.

God will never be untrue to His Covenant with the world.

Hence, we speak of God's faithfulness (trustworthiness and consistency).

He does not break His own Constitution.

This faithfulness is revealed for instance in **Jer 18:7-10** – **If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of it's evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I planned"... SEE THE REST!**

God's dealings with humans show a remarkable integrity.

God always acts according to His established Covenant with His World.

**See Romans 9:11** – **You cannot tell God how to govern the world.**

People are not in the hands of a pre-determined destiny. On the contrary, there is this personal interaction between God and people. So that what people do is meaningful and God responds to what people do and say. I.E.: Prayer is effective – because God hears our prayers. There is this personal interaction between God and me. Like a father and his child.

We are not robots – and neither is He.

Retain the aspect of a personal relationship between man and God.

**HOLD ON TO IT!**

God is unchangeable in His compassion towards city of man.

God loves us and wants to save us, and He does what is needed to save us.

4. **FOR WHOM SHOULD GOD BE CONCERNED? (4:1-11)**

**Chapter 4** reveals the fundamental lesson of this book of Jonah. The story has been leading us to this point.

The essential lesson concerns the question, “For whom should God be concerned?”

Under the right circumstances, I will find Jonah in me. Jonah is in everyone.

**A. ACCORDING TO THE JONAH’S OF THIS WORLD ONLY THEIR KIND OF PEOPLE (4:1-3)**

Jonah’s reaction to the conversion of Nineveh was anger, not joy (v.1).

He is angry with the Lord, because the Lord showed compassion and mercy to Nineveh. These qualities of the Lord, which should bring forth praise and thanksgiving, are made a cause for complaint.

In the thinking of Israel, God was understood to show compassion and mercy to Israel. But He must judge those who were not Israel.

This understanding was evident among religious establishments of Jesus’ day. The religious establishment did not believe that salvation was extended to those they considered to be sinners (selective salvation).

**B. ACCORDING TO GOD ALL HIS CREATURES (4:4-10)**

a) We are told that Jonah sat in a shelter and watched the city, perhaps still hoping that the Lord would destroy the city (v.4-5).

b) In v.6, the Lord provided a vine, which gave Jonah very beautiful shade (comfort) – deep shade.

c) V.7-8 tells us that the worm ate the vine, and that as a result Jonah became very unhappy.

This shows that Jonah wants God to show concern and mercy – but only if it suits him.

d) God reveals the way He works with people is totally different to the way humans would envisage (expect). God’s ways are different to those of men. I.E: Love your enemy, the first shall be last, the last shall be first, etc.

God’s Kingdom does not make sense to the natural man / woman.

Every one of God’s creatures is of concern to Him (is valuable to Him), because they are His creatures. The world is His garden.

**GOD LOVES HIS GARDEN – HE WILL NOT GET RID OF IT, HE WILL RESTORE IT.**

He makes it grow.

The Lord loves His creatures so much that He will go after one lost sheep, because he loves that lost sheep, and is concerned for that lost sheep.

In the case of Nineveh, the Lord sent Jonah to preach a message of Judgement, all the while (all the time) longing for the city to turn to Him.

**Luke 13:34** – “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

- \*     **At the centre of God’s heart (His being) is NOT judgement.  
He longs to save His creatures.  
At the centre of His being is this love – mercy.**

The story ends with a question:

**“Should I not be concerned about that great city?”**

## **SUMMARY/ CONCLUSION**

### **KNOWING GOD AND KNOWING YOURSELF**

**John Calvin** declared that, “True wisdom is to know God and to know yourself.”

The book of Jonah helps us to know ourselves and to know God.

#### **1.     KNOWING OURSELVES**

The essence of prophecy is to expose who we are. (We are sinners.)

(We need salvation – we need Jesus.)

Jonah is truly a Prophetic Word because it reveals what we are truly like. It reveals that there is a bit of Jonah in all of us.

##### **A.     ALL OF US ARE REBELS**

Note that Jonah is a believer, yet he rebels against God.

At certain times in our lives, we see this rebellion when we do not want to do what God wants us to do.

##### **B.     ALL OF US ARE UNGRATEFUL AND MERCILESS**

Jonah’s reaction to the salvation of Nineveh revealed his lack of mercy – his lack of grace.

Even though he himself had been shown mercy by the Lord, he shows no mercy.

##### **C.     ALL OF US DISDAIN THOSE WE CONSIDER REAL SINNERS**

We are often prejudiced of those we think are “real sinners”.

#### **2.     KNOWING GOD**

##### **A.     God’s passion, His dream, is to have a people for Himself.**

**2 Peter 3:9** – ...” God does not want anyone to perish, but He wants everyone to come to repentance.

- \*     **Why are people not saved? – because they prefer the darkness.**

##### **B.     GOD IS A GOD OF MERCY AND COMPASSION**

**Psalm 10:3-8** – “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.”



This mercy and compassion is bound up with God's patience, giving people the time to repent and the opportunity to repent.

Of course, if people will not repent (turn), then there comes a time when God gives them over to judgement.

\* **The sinner cannot stand before God – God is a consuming fire.**

**C. GOD USES PEOPLE AS HIS CO-WORKERS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES**

God chooses to do this – He might as well have used angels instead of Jonah – He chose Jonah to give the simple message of Judgement.

Paul sowed, Apollos watered, and God the increase.

HALLELUJAH !! AMEN