

## Jonah 1

Verse 1

**The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,**

Jonah was a prophet of the Lord around 810 to 790 BC.

See 2 Kings 14:25

**<sup>23</sup> In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and reigned for forty-one years. <sup>24</sup> He did evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not abandon all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, into which he misled Israel. <sup>25</sup> He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.**

See chart 105

	King	Began	Ended	Years
10	Jehu	841	814	28
11	Jehoahaz	814	798	17
12	Jehoash (aka Joash)	798	782	16
13	Jeroboam II	793	753	41
14	Zechariah	753	752	6 months
15	Shallum	752	752	1 month
16	Menahem	752	742	10
17	Pekahiah	742	740	2
18	Pekah	752	732	20
19	Hoshea	732	722	9

The word Jonah means "dove" and the word "Amittai" means truth, thus, Jonah son of Amittai means "mourning dove, son of truth".

We are not told how the word of the Lord came to Jonah but the writer of Hebrews gives a general description of how this happened.

See Hebrews 1:1

**God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,**

Verse 2

**<sup>2</sup>“Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.”**

Nineveh, the capital of the Assyria, was founded by Nimrod.

See Genesis 10:11

**<sup>6</sup>The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. <sup>7</sup>The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. <sup>8</sup>Now Cush fathered Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. <sup>9</sup>He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.” <sup>10</sup>And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. <sup>11</sup>From that land he went to Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, <sup>12</sup>and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.**

The size of Nineveh is mentioned in chapter three as "three day's journey".

See Jonah 3:3

**<sup>3</sup>So Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk.**

Given the size of the city it would be comparable to Chicago or Houston in the United States of America.

We are also given a clue to the population of the city in chapter 4.

See Jonah 4:11

**<sup>11</sup>Should I not also have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 people, who do not know *the difference between their right hand and their left,* as well as many animals?”**

There are differing interpretations concerning the population because of the way in which it is stated. What does it mean when it says, “who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left”?

1. Some think this refers to the very young, those who are 5 years of age and under.
2. Others believe this refers to young children who have not yet reached an age of accountability to differentiate between right and wrong. This would extend the age depending on the maturity of the child.
3. Others say, “It refers to both children and adults who, despite being physically capable, lacked divine understanding of moral righteousness, thus being lost or "innocent" in a spiritual sense.”

Given the physical size of the city it would seem that this must be referring to the young children, either number one or two above, not the general population. Using that assumption the population could have been around 600,000 people.

The city of Nineveh had its beginning when Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, built the beginning of this great city. This would have been around 3,000 BC.

See chart 110

<b>Ch</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year</b>
1-2		Creation		5340
1-2	Adam & Eve	Created		5340
3		The Fall		
4	Cain & Abel	Birth		
4	Seth	Birth		5110
5	Noah	Birth		3698
6	Noah	first son is born	500	3198
11	Arphaxad	Birth		3096
11	Shelah	Birth		2961
11	Eber	Birth		2831
10	70 Nations appear after the flood			From 3097
11	and before the Tower of Babel			to 2697
11	Peleg	Birth (see 10:25)		2697

The wickedness of Nineveh was well known in the ancient world because of the cruelty they showed toward their captives in war. It is well documented that the Assyrians often skinned their victims while they were still alive. War is a cruel reality in this life but there are rules or boundaries even in war. Killing the enemy is often a necessity in time of war but torquing your captives is a sin in the eyes of God. War crimes are often overlooked by mankind but God will punish individuals and nations that commit such crimes. In the case of Nineveh their war crimes and other sins had reached the heavens and God threatened the city of Nineveh with destruction.

Verse 3

**<sup>3</sup> But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the Lord.**

See map 115



Knowing the power of God, why would a prophet of God try to run away from Him? In the case with Jonah we don't have to guess why he did this because in chapter 4 he tells the Lord why he ran away from His presence.

See Jonah 4:2 – 3

<sup>2</sup> Then he prayed to the LORD and said, “Please LORD, was this not what I said when I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in anticipation of this I fled to Tarshish, since I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in mercy, and One who relents of disaster.

Jonah fled in the opposite direction so it would be physically impossible for him to preach God’s message of repentance to the people of Nineveh. Unfortunately, he never considered the possibility that God might use a large fish to bring him back. We should all remember that God has an unlimited imagination.

Verses 4 - 6

<sup>4</sup> However, the Lord hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea, so that the ship was about to break up. <sup>5</sup> Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried out to his god, and they hurled the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten *it* for them. But Jonah had gone below into the stern of the ship, had lain down, and fallen sound asleep. <sup>6</sup> So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.”

**Miracle number 1** A great storm

God created a great wind to arise in order to form a storm that would put all of the crew in danger. The sailors immediately attributed the violent storm to the wrath of one of their gods which indicates that they were from multiple pagan nations. They also threw the cargo overboard to lighten the load in hope of saving the ship.

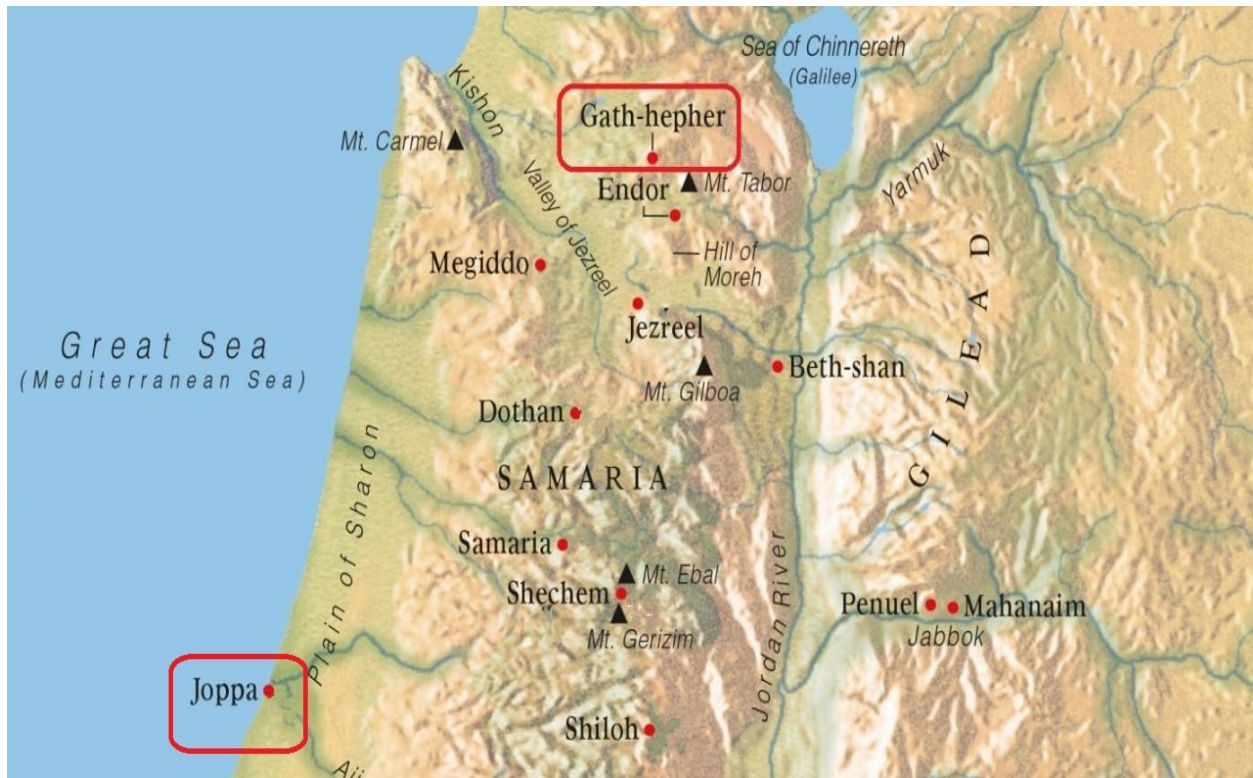
While the crew fought to save the ship the Captain found Jonah asleep below deck near the stern (rear) of the ship. This is somewhat reminiscent of Jesus in a similar situation.

See Mark 4:38

<sup>37</sup> And a fierce gale of wind developed, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling *with water*. <sup>38</sup> And yet Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they \*woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

Jonah was probably tired given the long trip from Gath-hepher to Joppa which would have taken about three days. This is based on the fact that these two towns were about 60 miles apart.

See Map 120



The Captain wanted Jonah to call out to his God just as all the other men on board had called out to their gods, hoping that one of the gods might be concerned about them and they would not perish.

Verses 7 - 9

**7 And each man said to his mate, “Come, let’s cast lots so that we may find out on whose account this catastrophe *has struck us.*” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account *has this catastrophe struck us?* What is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country, and from what people are you?” 9 So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”**

The casting of lots was a fairly common practice among Jews in the Old Testament and it seems that the pagan religions of that time also used it. The men had called on their gods for help and had not received an answer so they agreed to cast lots to find out who was responsible for their misfortune.

We can see from this that people of that time believed there was a strong correlation between people’s sin and their suffering. This idea was still prevalent in New Testament times as can be seen in the case of the blind man in John chapter 9.

However, Job, Solomon and Jesus all refuted the belief that all suffering is the result of sin but it seems that this manmade doctrine persisted for many centuries. In any case the lot fell on Jonah and this storm was the result of his sin. Jonah quickly admitted he was a Hebrew and confessed that His God made the sea and dry land. When the crew heard this they were struck with fear because it was the sea that was the source of their fear and Jonah had offended the God who created the sea.

A belief in the One True God demands a belief in a 6 day creation as outlined in chapter one of Genesis but many “Christians” of our time have been brainwashed into believing that a manmade religion known as Evolution is somehow compatible with Creation. They have forgotten that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and have replaced it with evolution which teaches “all things were created by time, chance, and the laws of nature working on matter”. Evolution needs no God and teaches there is no God.

Verses 10 - 14

**<sup>10</sup> Then the men became extremely afraid, and they said to him, “How could you do this?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. <sup>11</sup> So they said to him, “What should we do to you so that the sea will become calm for us?”—for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy. <sup>12</sup> And he said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, because I know that on account of me this great storm *has come upon you*.” <sup>13</sup> However, the men rowed *desperately* to return to land, but they could not, because the sea was becoming *even* stormier against them. <sup>14</sup> Then they cried out to the Lord and said, “We earnestly pray, O Lord, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life, and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, Lord, have done as You pleased.”**

When Jonah told the men that he was fleeing from the Lord they were filled with fear and scolded him for putting them in this perilous situation. Despite their fear these “pagan sailors” acted in a commendable manor by trying their best to reach land rather than throwing Jonah overboard as he had suggested.

It was good that Jonah offered his life in order to save their lives but it would have been more meaningful if he wasn’t the one who put them in this unfortunate predicament to begin with.

When it became obvious that they would have to throw Jonah overboard they pleaded with the Lord that they would not perish on Jonah’s account and not to hold them responsible for his death.

Verses 15 - 16

**<sup>15</sup> So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.** **<sup>16</sup> Then the men became extremely afraid of the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.**

**Miracle number 2** The sea became calm after Jonah was thrown into the sea.

This miracle had a definite impact on the men and they instinctively knew that this was a miracle from a God that had control over the sea. This prompted them to sacrifice to the Lord and to make vows in His name. The men did not wait until they reached land but instead offered a sacrifice while still at sea. Some of the animals which were kept on board for food were used for the sacrifice. The fact that they also made vows to the Lord is an indication that this miracle and the event as a whole would not be soon forgotten.

Verse 17

**<sup>17</sup> And the Lord designated a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights.**

**Miracle number 3** A great fish swallowed Jonah

Miracles take place because God overrides the normal operation of one or more physical laws. A person cannot survive in the stomach of a fish for 3 full days (3 days and 3 nights) unless several natural laws are suspended. Therefore, there is no need to try and explain how this happened but simply accept it because it is the word of God. Can science explain a virgin birth? No. Can it explain the resurrection of Christ? No. So why do we believe in these miracles? Because God has told us that these things have taken place and God can't lie. Science can only explain what happens in the physical universe it has no answers for what takes place in the heavenly realm. Since God created the physical universe he can override any of the natural laws any time He desires to do so. We know that Jesus believed this be an actual event.

See Matthew 12:38-40

**<sup>38</sup> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." <sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves a sign; and so no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup> for just as Jonah was in the stomach of the sea monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.**