

Purpose

To show the extent of God's grace — the message of salvation is for all people

Meaning of Name

"Dove"

Date Written

Approximately 785-760 BC

Setting

Jonah preceded Amos and ministered under Jeroboam II, Israel's most powerful king (*2 Kings 14:23-25*). Assyria was Israel's great enemy; it conquered Israel in 722 BC. Nineveh's repentance was short-lived, for it was destroyed in 612 BC.

Key Verse

"Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?" *Jonah 4:11*

Key Places

Joppa and Nineveh

Special Features

This book is different from the others because it tells the story of the prophet and does not center on his prophecies. It is also mentioned by Jesus as a picture of his death and resurrection (*12:38-42*).

An Overview (4 Chapters)

- Jonah Forsakes His Mission (*1:1-2:10*)
- Jonah Fulfills His Mission (*3:1-4:11*)

Major Themes

- *God's Sovereignty*: Although the prophet Jonah tried to run away from God, God was in control. By controlling the stormy sea and a great fish, God displayed His absolute, yet loving guidance of all things.
- *God's Message to All the World*: We must not limit our focus to our own people. God wants His people to proclaim His love in words and actions to the world. He wants us to be His missionaries wherever we are, wherever He sends us.
- *Repentance*: When the reluctant preacher went to Nineveh, there was a great response. The people repented and turned to God. This was a powerful rebuke to the people of Israel, who thought they were better but refused to respond to God's message. God doesn't honor sham or pretense. He wants the sincere devotion of each person. It is not enough to share the privileges of Christianity; we must ask God to forgive us and to remove our sin. Refusing to repent shows that we still love our sin.
- *God's Compassion*: God's message of love and forgiveness was not for the Jews alone. The Assyrians didn't deserve it, but neither do we. God loves each of us, even when we fail Him. But He also loves other people, including those not of our group, background, race, or denomination. When we accept His love, we must also learn to accept all those whom He loves. We will find it much easier to love others when we truly love God.