



A Course
In
**JONAH, STUDIES
IN**

Prepared by the
Committee on Religious Education
Of the
American Bible College

Pineland, Florida 33945

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INTRODUCTION

As you study the Scriptures you will find that it is of the greatest importance to approach the Bible in a reverent attitude of mind, looking upon it as the inspired Word of God, and not just an ordinary piece of literature. If the Bible is studied in the same manner as one studies Shakespeare, Milton or some historical work, it may be found interesting and profitable. But by this approach, the Bible student, persistent though he may be, will never find its rich treasures. The Apostle Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14) For the profitable study of the Word of God, the right spiritual attitude is indispensable. The Bible student may read large portions of the Bible with little benefit, unless he makes it his own by personal appropriation and feeds upon it.

Dr. R. A. Torrey in his book, HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE, writes "— to master the general contents of the book. The method of doing this is very simple. It consists in merely reading the book through without stopping and then reading it through again, and then again, say a dozen times in all, at a single sitting." The first reading will allow the student to see the Bible book's general theme. The next reading will allow the student to observe the sections, and the successive readings will enable the student to observe the section details.

Both Jonah and Nahum were contemporaries and their prophecies deal with the destruction of the Assyrian Empire and in particular the great city of Nineveh which took place in August 612 B.C.

Jonah's theme is God's dealing with a disobedient prophet, Jonah. It is an ideal Old Testament example of our sovereign God's chastisement and deliverance of his servant. It is an important book in that it displays the preconceived ideas and emotions involved therein in a man of God and how God sometimes uses a man in spite of his personal desire.

The *Jonah, Studies In* course is formatted in the expository method with most of the material coming from reputable scholars. This method is utilized in order that the student may see God's progressive dealing with Jonah. Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method allows contributing writers to occasionally condense a passage in their own paraphrase. This should not be construed to imply that A. B. C. is correcting God's Word.

During this course the student is required to read ten times through the entire Book of Jonah.

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I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JONAH

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THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JONAH

THE WRITRE

Nothing is known of the writer of this prophetic book except Jonah means “dove” (cf. Hos. 7:11; 11:11) and was a Hebrew prophet. What we learn about him is through this book and a statement made about him in II Kings 14:25. His father’s name, Amittai, (1:1) means “truthful.” Jonah was of the tribe of Zebulun, in the northern kingdom of Israel, and of the village of Gath-hepher, located about two miles northeast of the city of Nazareth. Jeroboam II was King of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) during Jonah’s ministry when Jonah correctly prophecyed that Israel’s boundaries would be extend under Jeroboam II as recorded in II Ki. 14:25.

THE DATE and LOCATION

Second Kings 14:25 indicates that Jonah gave a prophecy that was fulfilled during the reign of Jeroboam II who reigned from 793-753 B.C. This prophecy came when Assyria was becoming a world power and an eminent threat to Israel. This makes Jonah contemporary with both Hosea and Amos (cf. Hosea 1:1 and Amos 1:1) of Israel and Isaiah and Micah of Judah. It is probable that Jonah began his prophetic ministry at the closing time of Elisha.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Jeroboam II [793- 753 B.C.], in whose reign Jonah prophesied, was the most powerful king in the Northern Kingdom (cf. 2 Kings 14:23-29).

Earlier the Assyrians had established supremacy in the Near East and secured tribute from Jehu (841-814 B.C.) [of Israel]. ...However, after crushing the Arameans, the Assyrians suffered temporary decline because of internal dissension. In that temporary setback of Assyrian imperialistic hopes, Israel’s Jeroboam was able to expand his nation’s territories to their greatest extent since

the time of David and Solomon by occupying land that formerly belonged to Aram (northeast toward Damascus and north to Hamath).

However, the religious life of Israel was such that God sent both Hosea and Amos to warn of impending judgment. Because of Israel's stubbornness, the nation would fall under God's chosen instrument of wrath, a Gentile nation from the east. ...This prophecy was fulfilled in 722 B.C. when Sargon II carried [King Hoshea and] the Northern Kingdom into captivity (2 Kings 17:6, 7). ...Jonah [was] reluctant to preach in Nineveh. He feared he would be used to help the enemy that would later destroy his own nation.¹

Nineveh was located on the east side of the Tigris river across from modern Mosul, Iraq about 250 miles northwest of modern Baghdad. During Jonah's time the population of the Assyria Empire is estimated to have been about 600,000.

MESSAGE

The book of Jonah is different from the other prophetic books, because it gives only one sentence of what the prophet Jonah preached. Instead, this book tells how Jonah disobeyed the Lord and refused to warn Nineveh that it was going to be destroyed. Jonah even wanted the city to be destroyed, because it was the capital city of Assyria, a hated enemy of Israel. But the Lord corrected Jonah; then Jonah went to Nineveh and preached the Lord's message.²

Jonah shows that God has always had concern for the unconverted heathen. Likewise, it reveals God's concern for Israel in that because of the revival in Nineveh produced by Jonah's preaching, the Assyrian captivity of Israel was postponed some 130 years. Thus, the book is written to Israel as an example of God's longsuffering, and yet a warning of future judgment.

Purpose: The purpose of the prophecy of Jonah is to show the sovereignty of God at work in the life of an individual (the prophet,

Jonah) and His concern for a heathen nation. The book also shows, in oblique fashion, God's care and preservation of His own people, and that the way to avert national catastrophe is a concentrated missionary effort towards one's enemies.³

OUTLINE

- I. JONAH FORSAKES GOD'S CALLING (1:1-2:10).
 - A. Jonah Rejects God's Will (1:1-16).
 1. God Has a Plan for Jonah (1:1, 2).
 2. Jonah Refuses God's Plan (1:3).
 3. God Has a Plan for Jonah's Disobedience (1:4-16).
 - B. Jonah is Chastised by God (1:17-2:10).
 1. Jonah's Judgment in the Whale (1:17).
 2. Jonah in Repentance (2:1-10).
 - a. Jonah in Prayer (2:1-9)
 - b. God Delivers Jonah to Nineveh (2:10).
- II. JONAH'S OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL (3:1-4:11).
 - A. Jonah Preaches God's Message (3:-10).
 1. Jonah Reveals God's Word to Nineveh [Proclamation] (3:1-4).
 2. Nineveh Responds to God's Warning [Salvation] (3:5-10).
 - B. Jonah's Complaint and God's Correction (4:1-11).
 1. Jonah's Displeasure With God (4:1-3)
 2. God's Example to Jonah 1 (4:4-8).
 3. God's Rebuke to Jonah 1 (4:9-11).

A SIMPLER OUTLINE OF JONAH

- Chapter 1 — Jonah Runs from the Lord.
Chapter 2 — Jonah Prays to the Lord.
Chapter 3 — Jonah Repents and Goes to Nineveh, and the Ninevites Repent.
Chapter 4 — Jonah Is Angry Because the Lord Showed Mercy to Nineveh.

¹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY, O.T. EDITION*, (Chariot Victor Publishing, 1995), pp. 1,461-1,462.

² *The Contemporary English Version [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995 by the American Bible Society.

³ Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, *KJV Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed.*,

LOCATIONS OF ISRAEL AND NINEVEH



END OF SAMPLE

