

I. **NAME AND PERSONALITY OF THE PROPHET.**

- A. The name *Jonah* means "dove."
- B. Jonah is mentioned in 2Kgs. 14:25 making him a person of history.
- C. Jonah is a real person, as named by Christ in Mt. 12:38-42.
- D. Jonah predicted the restoration of Israel's ancient borders under Jeroboam II.
- E. All we know of the text of Jonah's preaching is in 3:4.
- F. Jonah was a narrow-minded bigot of a patriot to Israel. This is evident in his unwillingness to preach to the Assyrians, and of his attitude after their repentance.
- G. Jonah is a prophet who hoped that he would fail in his mission.

II. **DATE OF THE BOOK AND THE PROPHET.**

- A. The date of the book is best determined by the reign of Jeroboam II which would mean from 782 - 753 B.C. It is believed that 2Kgs. 14:25 took place in the early days of that period.
- B. The dominant world power at this time was Assyria and their capitol was Nineveh.
- C. History tells us that at the time of Jonah's preaching the Assyrians were having a hard time due to drought, famine, and general unrest with wars with revolting providences. This could help explain their quick response to Jonah's words.
- D. Some have viewed the book as:
  - 1. Mythical (not a true story, fiction).
  - 2. Allegorical (a story invented to teach a moral lesson).
  - 3. Historical (only proper view if we believe in the words of Jesus).
- E. Jonah was an early contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Micah.

III. **OUTLINES OF THE BOOK OF JONAH.**

- A. Simple outline:
  - I. Running from God--Flight to Tarshish--Disobedience.
  - II. Running to God--Prayer from fish's belly--Repentance.
  - III. Running with God--Preaching in Nineveh--Obedience.
  - IV. Running ahead of God--Waiting under the gourd--Bigotry.
- B. Supplemental Outline:
  - I. Jonah's First Call and His Disobedience.
    - A. God's commission and Jonah's flight (1:1-3).
    - B. The great storm and Jonah's confession (1:4-10).
    - C. The storm calmed (1:11-16).
  - II. Jonah's Miraculous Rescue.
    - A. The great fish (1:17).
    - B. Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving (2:1-9).
    - C. Jonah's deliverance (2:10).
  - III. Jonah's Second Call and His Obedience.
    - A. God's renewal of the commission (3:1-2).
    - B. Jonah's preaching and its results (3:3-9).
    - C. God's mercy to Nineveh (3:10).
  - IV. Jonah's Displeasure and a Divine Rebuke.
    - A. Jonah's anger at Nineveh's repentance (4:1-5).
    - B. The gourd vine and its lesson (4:6-11).

#### IV. THEME AND MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF JONAH.

- A. The theme of the book of Jonah is: **God's willingness to save the heathen if they repent.**
- B. The message of the book of Jonah is: **Jehovah is the one Universal God, the God of the whole earth and the Universe.**

#### V. PRACTICAL LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE.

- A. Jonah is the most practical of the prophets because of its sharpness and easiness to see of the lessons to be learned.
- B. You cannot run away from God.
- C. When God enjoins a disagreeable duty it is far easier to go and do it than to run away from it.
- D. You can (only temporarily) limit God by your disobedience.
- E. God will be gracious if you repent.
- F. It is possible to hate what God hates and not love what He loves.
- G. We are foolish to consider another's good conditions as hurt to self.
- H. "All things work together for good" if we will yield to His purpose. Good can come out of evil circumstances.
- I. Our concern should be with souls, not gourds.
- J. The tragedy of narrow-minded patriotism.

#### VI. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

- A. Jonah has a really bad attitude. Identify what things made his attitude wrong.
- B. Many of us say we want to hear from God, but what if what we hear from God isn't what we want to hear? How did Jonah respond when he heard from God but didn't like the message?
- C. What have you heard from God (through his Word or in prayer) that has been difficult for you to hear and accept?
- D. Jonah seems to have forgotten what it was like to be lost and without hope. What can help us to remember what our lives were like or would be like apart from God's work in our lives?
- E. God never deserted Jonah even in his rebellion. What evidence have you seen of God's care in your life?
- F. Jonah 3:10 says that God "repented" or "relented." How does this fit in with God's sovereignty?
- G. Is there anyone toward whom you have a bad attitude like Jonah did? How does it affect you to think of God possibly using you for good in that person's life?
- H. What do we learn about God from the fact that He is willing to offer forgiveness to even the worst of people when they repent? What does this teach us about ourselves and our standing before God?