



Jonah - Lesson 5 - Chapter 3 - The Salvation of Nineveh

Jonah was a “prophet” of the Northern kingdom of Israel. (Gath-hepher 2 Ki 14:25, Josh 19:13)

A prophet is not simply someone who foretells the future, but someone who speaks as the mouthpiece of God Himself to mankind

Jonah is sent on a very personal mission to a hostile gentile nation.

Jonah was not the only prophet to foretell destruction against gentile Nations.

150 years later both Zephaniah and Nahum predicted destruction of Nineveh.

Zephaniah 2:13 And He will stretch out His hand against the north And destroy Assyria, And He will make Nineveh a desolation, Parched like the wilderness.

Nahum 1:1 The oracle of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

Assyria was destroyed by the Babylonians in 612 BC.

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Jonah's Hesitancy

•**Nahum 3:1** Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies and pillage;

- leading away prisoners one a line with hooks in their noses
- Chopping off victims hands, feet, ears and noses.
- Cutting off heads and making piles of them
- Impaling people alive (notably the “gallows” from Esther is actually an impaling stake)
- Skinning people alive
- Gouging out the eyes of defeated peoples and sending them ahead into the next territory

(The Bible Knowledge Commentary, pg 577; Maier, The Book of Nahum: A Commentary, pg 292)

Assyrian brutality is similar to the Holocaust as well as modern day Islamic groups.

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Jonah 3:1-10

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you." 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk. 4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." 5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. 6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. 7 He issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. 8 "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. 9 "Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish." 10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

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The Second Call - Verses 1&2

Jonah 3:1-2

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you."

- 1:1 "The word of the LORD came to Jonah..."
- 2:1 The words of Jonah to the "LORD" (Jonah's prayer from the fish.)
- 3:1 "The word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time..."
- 4:2 The words of Jonah to the "LORD" (Jonah's complaint)

Up to this point in the book, we do not even know what the content of Jonah's proclamation is supposed to be.

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Jonah's Response - Verse 3

Jonah 3:3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk.

1:2 Arise, go to Nineveh...

1:3 Jonah arose... (But that's as far as his obedience went!)

3:2 Arise, go to Nineveh...

3:3 Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD.

Jonah went, but had his heart attitude changed?

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The Word of the LORD to Nineveh - Verse 4

“Yet 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown”

“overthrown”

Hebrew - *hāpāk*

LXX – *katastrephō*

The Hebrew *hāpāk*

to turn oneself, turn, turn back

to change oneself

to be perverse

to be turned, be turned over, be changed, be turned against

to be reversed

to be overturned, be overthrown

to be upturned

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The Word of the LORD to Nineveh - Verse 4

“Yet 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown”

How should we understand this message?

- 1) The message clearly alarmed the Ninevites.
- 2) In verse 10 we read that God relented concerning the “calamity”, therefore the sense of destruction is definitely correct.

Is it possible that God intended the message to be somewhat ambiguous?

Are we going to be turned around or overturned?



Bridge out ahead. Turn around NOW!



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Nineveh's Response - Verses 5 – 9

Jonah 3:6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes.

Humility

Genesis 18:27 And Abraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes.

Job 42:6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.

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Nineveh's Response - Verses 5 – 9

Nineveh responded with fear.

Fear is a beginning point. (It is connected to a proper orientation to God.)

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...

Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life...

Life is what God is drawing men towards.

John 17:3 says that “this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, even Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

The Spirit is the one who prepares hearts.

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The Result - Verse 10

God relented, and He did not do it.

Does God change His mind?
Is God's sovereignty mechanical?
Do humans have personal choice?

We don't need to try to elevate our thinking above God's mind!

God is a personal God.

He is a God who allows Himself to be affected by His creatures.

God is a relational personal being.

He clearly loved the Ninevites and desired that they respond to Him!