

Jonah, Commentary and Application in Outline Form

By James Moriello, Firm Foundation Christian Church, 2014

1. Introduction
 - a. Literal events, according to Jesus, Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-31
 - b. 5th of the 12 Minor Prophets, in sequence
 - c. Author: Jonah
 - d. Date: about 780 BC
2. 1:1, "Jonah the son of Amittai"
 - a. Cf. 2 Kings 14:25, for context and additional information
 - b. From Gath Hepher, 4 miles NE of Nazareth in Galilee
 - i. John 7:52, Pharisees conveniently overlooked Jonah
 - c. Prophesied during the reigns of Amaziah in Judah and Jeroboam 2 in Israel (2 Kings 14:23-25)
 - d. Apparently there were other prophecies of Jonah not recorded in Scripture
3. 1:2, "Nineveh"
 - a. Assyrian city on Tigris River (modern day Iraq near Mosul)
 - b. Founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-11)
 - c. 800-745 BC, was dealing with internal strife and engaged in localized warfare, contrast with the relative prosperity in Israel and Judah at that time
 - d. Nahum later prophesied its destruction, calling it the "bloody city" (Nahum 3:1), because of its fierce and wicked inhabitants
 - e. "wickedness", sin known to God, and the Lord sends Jonah to warn the wicked
4. 1:3, "from the presence of the LORD"
 - a. To "Tarshish", in Spain, opposite direction of Nineveh
 - b. Psalm 139:7-11, what Jonah was trying to do can't be done
 - c. Better to obey God, which is easier in the long run, pitfalls to avoid, e.g.'s
 - i. Marrying outside the faith
 - ii. Children out of wedlock
 - iii. Unfaithfulness to prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, Christian service
 - d. God will ask us to do things we may find disagreeable
 - i. To grow us in the faith
 - ii. To test our obedience
 - e. Words to spiritual runners
 - i. 2 Timothy 4:7
 - ii. James 1:2-8

- iii. 2 Peter 1:5-11
- f. We can run from our own communion with the Lord, but still cannot escape His presence entirely, forfeited blessings, apply and consider in our own lives
- 5. 1:4-9, The Storm at Sea
 - a. Verse 4, God comes calling when we are out of His will
 - i. On those occasions, we sooner or later find ourselves in a tempest
 - b. Verse 5, men call to false gods, but the man who knows the true God is on vacation (spiritually speaking)
 - i. God doesn't take vacations
 - ii. Apply: resting in the Lord wherever we go, the peace which comes with knowing we are in God's will, the false peace which comes with being content to be out of God's will
 - c. Verse 6, "call on your God"
 - i. God's man must be reminded to pray?
 - d. Verse 7, lots, Cf. Proverbs 16:33
 - e. Verse 8-9
 - i. Do the people we know, know Whom we serve?
 - 1. If not, are we really serving?
 - ii. Jonah forced to testimony and confession of faith
 - iii. Holy fear as a motivator
- 6. 1:10-16, Jonah thrown into the Sea
 - a. Verses 10-11
 - i. Our disobedience affects others
 - ii. People perish when God's people do not speak
 - b. Verse 12
 - i. Jonah despairs, self condemnation, 'pity pot'
 - c. Verse 13,
 - i. Men try to save Jonah's life along with their own
 - ii. Actions of unbelievers more commendable than those of Jonah
 - d. Verse 14
 - i. The first recorded prayer in the book, by unbelievers
 - ii. Cry out for mercy, mercy the theme of the book
 - e. Verse 16
 - i. Godly fear leads these men to salvation
 - ii. Not because of God's man but in spite of God's man
 - iii. Redemptive purpose as an overriding factor in human events
 - iv. No other explanation, God gets the glory

7. 1:17, God provides for Jonah's deliverance
 - a. "the LORD had prepared", in His providence, Hebrew does not demand a new creation here
 - b. "a great fish", probably a whale
 - c. "three days and three nights", Cf. Matthew 12:40, 16:4
 - d. Divine care
 - i. Salvation from death
 - ii. Jonah walked away from the Lord, but the Lord did not walk away from Jonah, though he be under discipline
 - iii. Blessing of reaching bottom
 - e. Nature of the fish and ability to survive in its belly peripheral questions
 - i. Doubts arise from unbelief in the all powerful God (Matthew 19:23-26)
8. 2:1-9, Jonah's prayer from inside the fish's belly
 - a. Poetic, reminiscent of Psalms
 - b. Verse 1, Jonah hedged in for prayer, Psalm 139:5
 - c. Verse 2, God hears prayers even from there, Psalm 139:7-12
 - d. Verse 3, God who authors providence, not men (contrast with 1:15)
 - e. Verse 4, sin separates, repentance restores
 - f. Verses 5-6, poetic description of Jonah's ordeal
 - g. Verse 9, "Salvation is of the LORD"
 - i. Timeless truth, all dispensations
 - ii. Not of works, Jonah saved through God's merciful actions, in spite of his own guilt (Ephesians 2:8-9)
9. 2:10, The Lord's response
 - a. "spoke to the fish", fish listen better than people sometimes
 - b. Jonah cast onto dry land, Bible doesn't say where (irrelevant)
 - c. Relevant: Jonah is going to get a second chance
10. 3:1-2, Jonah is called again
 - a. Clean slate, not reminded of his sin
 - i. Apply Isaiah 43:25, and 1 John 1:9
 - b. Lesson learned, Psalm 51:3 applied
 - c. Second chance given to do the same thing, to make it right this time
 - i. Apply when you have received such a second chance
 - ii. Gratefulness enjoined, at providential opportunity
11. 3:3-4, Jonah preaches at Nineveh
 - a. Observance is prompt this time
 - b. "great city", in terms of both its geographical area and population

- c. "three day journey in extent"
 - i. "in extent" italicized, supplied by translators to clarify meaning
 - ii. Taken with verse 4, "first day's walk", meaning is clear
 - iii. Three day preaching tour around the city
 - d. The simple message
 - i. 8 word sermon
 - ii. John 3:16, a 25 word sermon, its effects throughout history on millions
 - iii. Apply: keeping the gospel simple, discipleship is progressive from there
12. 3:5-10, The Ninevites believe and repent
- a. Verse 5, religious awakening, the divine method for accomplishing (Cf. Romans 10:14-17)
 - i. Word of God
 - ii. Preacher
 - iii. Faith Response by the hearers
 - b. Discuss: real versus counterfeit awakenings (2 Corinthians 11:13-15 applied)
 - i. Real are Christocentric
 - ii. Real have lasting results
 - c. Verses 5-6, "fast", "sackcloth", "ashes", outward expressions of inward humility
 - d. Verses 7-9, royal proclamation
 - i. Contrast with Judah under Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25:2, 14)
 - ii. Contrast with Israel under Jeroboam 2 (2 Kings 14:23-24)
 - iii. Apply: Jews and Gentiles (Cf. Romans 11), compare re: OT and NT
 - iv. Example of revival under Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:24-33), note parallels
 - e. Verse 10, "God saw their works"
 - i. Works prove the genuineness of faith, conversion, and repentance
 - ii. Ephesians 2:8-10, key on verse 10
 - iii. James 2:14, 24
 - f. Verse 10, "God relented", was merciful and withheld judgment
 - i. True conversion stays God's wrath
 - 1. For the believer, eternal results
 - 2. For the nation, for the present time
13. 4:1-4, Jonah is angry and resentful
- a. Instead of rejoicing, bitterness
 - b. Role of national jealousy
 - c. God's work overrode Jonah's heart
 - d. Murmuring and complaining, yet Jonah considers his anger righteous
 - i. God calls out the prophet in this, the first time

14. 4:5-11, A lesson on thankfulness for God's mercies

- a. Verse 5, Jonah goes outside the city to pout
- b. Verse 6, a "kikayon" plant prepared to give Jonah shade
- c. Verses 7-9, the small mercy of the plant is missed, but the discomfort at its absence is magnified, dissatisfaction and entitlement mentality
 - i. Some see the silver lining not the cloud, some see the cloud only
 - ii. Discontent with God's blessings epidemic among Christians
 - 1. Apply: Be a positive Christian
 - iii. God calls Jonah out the second time
- d. Verses 10-11
 - i. Jonah's pity on a plant contrasted with God's pity on a city of 600,000
 - ii. 120,000 children and infants
 - iii. Livestock, yes, His eye is on the sparrow

15. Postscript

- a. Jonah's personal testimony to lessons learned, no sugar coating the details
- b. God is sovereign over all human events
- c. God is eager to show mercy to all
- d. Spiritual awakening is possible
 - i. In the most unlikely places
 - ii. With the most unlikely people

16. Works consulted

- a. Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, NKJV, Thomas Nelson, Inc, 1982,
- b. Thompson's Study Bible, Frank Charles Thompson, B.B. Kirkbride Bible Company, Inc, 1903, repr. 1997
- c. Jonah: Meeting the God of the Second Chance, O.S. Hawkins, Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune NJ, 1990
- d. A Commentary on the Minor Prophets, Homer Hailey, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1972