

Jonah's Mission to the Assyrian City of Nineveh (c. 760 BC)

Jonah 1–4

Jonah Flees from the Presence of the LORD

1:1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying,
 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."
 3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.
 4 The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.
 5 Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten *it* for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep.
 6 So the captain approached him and said, "How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps *your* god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish."

Jonah is Thrown into the Sea

7 Each man said to his mate, "Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity *has struck* us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.
 8 Then they said to him, "Tell us, now! On whose account *has* this calamity *struck* us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"
 9 He said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land."
 10 Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, "How could you do this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.
 11 So they said to him, "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?"—for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.
 12 He said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you."
 13 However, the men rowed *desperately* to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming *even* stormier against them.
 14 Then they called on the LORD and said, "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, O LORD, have done as You have pleased."
 15 So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging.
 16 Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

A Great Fish Swallows Jonah

17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah's Prayer

2:1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,
 2 and he said,

"I called out of my distress to the LORD,
 And He answered me.
 I cried for help from the depth of Sheol;
 You heard my voice.

3 "For You had cast me into the deep,
 Into the heart of the seas,
 And the current engulfed me.
 All Your breakers and billows passed over me.
 4 "So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight.
 Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.'
 5 "Water encompassed me to the point of death.
 The great deep engulfed me,
 Weeds were wrapped around my head.
 6 "I descended to the roots of the mountains.
 The earth with its bars *was* around me forever,
 But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.
 7 "While I was fainting away,
 I remembered the LORD,
 And my prayer came to You,
 Into Your holy temple.

8 “Those who regard vain idols
Forsake their faithfulness,
9 But I will sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving.
That which I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation is from the LORD.”

10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3:1 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.”

The People of Nineveh Repent

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. [[Matt 12:39–41](#); [16:4](#); [Luke 11:2](#)]

Jonah’s Anger and the LORD’s Compassion

4:1 But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry.
2 He prayed to the LORD and said, “Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.
3 Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.”
4 The LORD said, “Do you have good reason to be angry?”
5 Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city.
6 So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.
7 But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered.
8 When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah’s head so that he became faint and begged with *all* his soul to die, saying, “Death is better to me than life.”
9 Then God said to Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “I have good reason to be angry, even to death.”
10 Then the LORD said, “You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and *which* you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.
11 Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”

Amos’ Prophecy to Israel – Part 1 (c. 760 BC)

Amos 1–2

Title and Theme

1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

2 He said, “The LORD roars from Zion

And from Jerusalem He utters His voice;
And the shepherds' pasture grounds mourn,
And the summit of Carmel dries up."

Oracle against Syria

- 3 Thus says the LORD,
"For three transgressions of Damascus and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they threshed Gilead with *implements* of sharp iron. [cf. [2 Kgs 10:32–33; 13:1–7](#)]
- 4 "So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael
And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad.
- 5 "I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven,
And him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden;
So the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir,"
Says the LORD.

Oracle against Philistia

- 6 Thus says the LORD,
"For three transgressions of Gaza and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they deported an entire population
To deliver *it* up to Edom.
- 7 "So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza
And it will consume her citadels.
- 8 "I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,
And him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon;
I will even unleash My power upon Ekron,
And the remnant of the Philistines will perish,"
Says the Lord GOD.

Oracle against Phoenicia

- 9 Thus says the LORD,
"For three transgressions of Tyre and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they delivered up an entire population to Edom
And did not remember *the* covenant of brotherhood.
- 10 "So I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre
And it will consume her citadels."

Oracle against Edom

- 11 Thus says the LORD,
"For three transgressions of Edom and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because he pursued his brother with the sword,
While he stifled his compassion;
His anger also tore continually,
And he maintained his fury forever.
- 12 "So I will send fire upon Teman
And it will consume the citadels of Bozrah."

Oracle against Ammon

- 13 Thus says the LORD,
"For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead
In order to enlarge their borders.
- 14 "So I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah

And it will consume her citadels
Amid war cries on the day of battle,
And a storm on the day of tempest.

- 15 “Their king will go into exile,
He and his princes together,” says the LORD.

Oracle against Moab

- 2:1 Thus says the LORD,
“For three transgressions of Moab and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.
- 2 “So I will send fire upon Moab
And it will consume the citadels of Kerioth;
And Moab will die amid tumult,
With war cries and the sound of a trumpet.
- 3 “I will also cut off the judge from her midst
And slay all her princes with him,” says the LORD.

Oracle against Judah

- 4 Thus says the LORD,
“For three transgressions of Judah and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they rejected the law of the LORD
And have not kept His statutes;
Their lies also have led them astray,
Those after which their fathers walked.
- 5 “So I will send fire upon Judah
And it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem.”

Oracle against Israel

- 6 Thus says the LORD,
“For three transgressions of Israel and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they sell the righteous for money
And the needy for a pair of sandals.
- 7 “These who pant after the *very* dust of the earth on the head of the helpless
Also turn aside the way of the humble;
And a man and his father resort to the same girl
In order to profane My holy name.
- 8 “On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar,
And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.
- 9 “Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them,
Though his height *was* like the height of cedars
And he *was* strong as the oaks;
I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below.
- 10 “It was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt,
And I led you in the wilderness forty years
That you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.
- 11 “Then I raised up some of your sons to be prophets
And some of your young men to be Nazirites.
Is this not so, O sons of Israel?” declares the LORD.
- 12 “But you made the Nazirites drink wine,
And you commanded the prophets saying, ‘You shall not prophesy!’
- 13 “Behold, I am weighted down beneath you
As a wagon is weighted down when filled with sheaves.
- 14 “Flight will perish from the swift,
And the stalwart will not strengthen his power,
Nor the mighty man save his life.

- 15 “He who grasps the bow will not stand *his ground*,
The swift of foot will not escape,
Nor will he who rides the horse save his life.
- 16 “Even the bravest among the warriors will flee naked in that day,” declares the LORD.

Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation La Habra, Calif. Used by permission. All rights reserved. For Permission to Quote Information visit <http://www.lockman.org>.

Chronological Notes

1) Jonah.¹

- A) Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 as having prophesied the restoration of the “border of Israel from Lebo Hamath in the north to the sea of Arabah in the south.” This took place during the reign of Jeroboam II (793n–753n BC).
- B) A few years after the death of Jeroboam II, Menahem became tributary to the Assyrian King Pul (2 Kings 15:19). Thus we can assume that in the time of Jeroboam II, the Assyrians were no strangers to Israel. Assyria had frequent contacts with Palestine. Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076) had extended the conquests of Assyria westward toward the Mediterranean Sea. In 853 BC at Karkar, Shalmaneser II fought a confederation of kings including Ahab of Israel; later Jehu (841n–814n) was compelled to pay tribute to Assyria.
- C) Nineveh was the last capital of the Assyrian Empire located on the east bank of the Tigris River, and was destroyed in 612 BC through a military alliance of Medes, Babylonians and Scythians. Nimrod had been its founder (Gen 10:9–11), and the city is mentioned in early Babylonian cuneiform tablets. By “Nineveh the great city” the Hebrews designated both the city itself and its neighboring communities (Gen 10:11ff.). The description of the size and importance of the city in Jonah harmonizes with secular and archaeological records.
- D) Several Assyrian kings reigned in Nineveh during the time of Jonah’s ministry as a prophet:
- (1) Adad-nirari III (810–783)
 - (2) Shalmaneser IV (782–773)
 - (3) Ashur-dan III (772–755)
 - (4) Ashur-nirari V (754–745)
 - (5) Tiglath-pileser III (744–727)
- E) If Jonah appeared in Nineveh during the reign of Ashur-dan III, then the plagues recorded in Assyrian history in 765 and 759, and the total eclipse of 763, could have been regarded as portents of divine wrath which prepared the city for Jonah’s message. Thus a date of c. 760 for the story is probably near the mark.

2) Amos.²

- A) Amos ministered during the reigns of King Jeroboam II of Israel (793n–753n BC) and King Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah (791t–740t BC), specifically two years before “the earthquake” (Amos 1:1). Zechariah also referred to a notable earthquake during the reign of Uzziah (Zech 14:5). Josephus wrote that an earthquake occurred when Uzziah entered the temple and was struck with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16–20).³ However this may be simply Jewish tradition. Archaeological excavations at Hazor and Samaria point to evidence of a violent earthquake in Israel about 760 BC.⁴ So perhaps Amos ministered about 760 BC. This date may account for the omission of the name of King Jotham who ruled as coregent with Uzziah from 750–740 BC. Thus Amos was a contemporary of the other eighth-century prophets: Jonah, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.

¹ Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*, 167.

² Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Amos*, 2.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 9:10:4.

⁴ Y. Yadin, et al., *Hazor II: An Account of the Second Season of Excavations, 1956*, pp. 24, 26, 36–37; and Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah—An Archaeological Commentary*, p. 21.