

Introduction

Jonah

a. Date

Since 2 Kings 14:25 relates Jonah to the reign of Jeroboam II, the events in the Book of Jonah took place some time in Jeroboam's reign (793–753 B.C.). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

b. Outline

Some commentators propose the following outline:

1. Jonah's Disobedience (1-2)
2. Jonah's Obedience (3-4)

One alternative that probably better captures the book:

1. God's Mercy on Disobedient Jonah (1-2)
 - a. God pursues the selfish prophet (1)

¹ Notes prepared with help of The Master's Seminary BI 501 Bible Survey syllabus.

- b. God saves the selfish prophet (2)
2. God's Mercy through Disobedient Jonah (3-4)
 - a. God's mercy on the Ninevites (3)
 - b. God's dealings with the bitter prophet (4)

Suggested Preaching/Teaching Outline:

(Jonah 1): 4 Features of God's Mercy towards Sinners

- 1) The uncomfortable, unmerited (unearnable) mercy of God (1-2)
- 2) The disciplining, pursuing mercy of God (3-13).
- 3) The unexpected, surprising mercy of God (14-16)
- 4) Lastly- God's miraculous rescuing mercy (17)

(Jonah 2): 7 truths on God's discipline

- 1) God's discipline isn't usually the kind of discipline we want (1:17)
- 2) God tenderly hears our prayers in discipline & trials (1-2)
- 3) God's discipline grows us in humility (3)
- 4) God's discipline produces endurance (4)
- 5) God's discipline helps us feel our weakness & dependence (5-7)
- 6) God's merciful discipline refines our worship of Him (8-9a)
- 7) God's discipline shows us his monergistic mercy (9b-10)

(Jonah 3): How God uses people for his purposes

- 1) The ordinary servant of God (1-4)
- 2) The extraordinary power of God (5-10)

(Jonah 4): God desires that we share his compassion for the lost

- 1) God's servant furious at the mercy of God (1-5)
- 2) God's servant fathered by the mercy of God (6-11)

c. Major Themes

1) The Sovereignty of God (1:4, 17; 2:10; 4:6, 7, 8)

a. God's sovereignty over events (1:4, 17, 2:10)

b. God's sovereignty over the salvation of the lost (3:5)

- Jonah 3:5 records the largest known real revival in history.

Jonah 3:5-10 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*.

Jonah 3:4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

2) The Merciful Compassion of God (1:6, 15-16; 2:2; 3:10; 4:2, 6, 10-11)

3) The Disobedience of Jonah (1:3; 4:1, 9)

4) God Uses Flawed People (1-4)

5) The Sufficiency of God's Word (1-4)

d. Purpose: Though Jonah was a flawed servant, the sovereign Yahweh extended extraordinary mercy to Gentiles.

e. Interpretive Issue

Jonah 4:11 "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.."

f. Bibliography

- Richard Phillips, *Jonah & Micah, Reformed Expository Commentary*
- John MacArthur, *Jonah & Nahum: Grace in the Midst of Judgment*
- Sinclair Ferguson, *Man Overboard: The Story of Jonah*