

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH *continued*

Lord (**Hebrews 5:9; Acts 4:12**); 7. Jonah despised God for showing grace toward repentant sinners (**Jonah 4:2**); Jesus modelled God's grace toward repentant sinners (**Luke 19:10**); 8. Jonah lacked concern for the salvation of people from other nations (specifically the Ninevites); Jesus loved the world so much that He gave His life to ransom people to God (**Revelation 5:9**, illustrated **John 4**); 9. Jonah was angry enough to die because of God's grace toward sinners (**Jonah 4:3**); Jesus was compassionate enough to die because of His love for sinners (**1 John 3:16**); 10. Jonah cared intensely about a plant that provided him comfort (**4:10-11**); Jesus cared about a whole multitude of people enough to deny Himself and His comfort to reconcile them to God (**2 Corinthians 5:18**).

(ii) IT'S PURPOSE WITH RESPECT TO COMMISSION – or, THE INSTRUCTIVE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK. Jonah's experience told the nation of Israel about the largeness of the heart of God: God's heart is larger than the borders of Israel. Jonah was one of the few prophets to be raised up in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. But, after a spell of prophesying at home (cf. **2 Kings 14**), he was sent overseas. Assyria (and its capital Nineveh) symbolised all that heathenism was in that day. Yet it was to this place that God sent a preacher; **Jonah 1:1-2; 4:11**. Few parts of the Bible emphasise so clearly that God is sovereign in all evangelism, and He is evangelistic in the exercise of His sovereignty. Therefore this book addresses itself to the missionary involvement of Christians. Sinclair Ferguson has depicted it as, "a book which speaks to the hearts of missionaries of Christ – a mini orientation course for overseas evangelism."

MEETINGS THIS WEEK



- Morning Worship – 11.30am:
"Introduction To Jonah"
- Evening Service – 7.00pm:
"Faith Wonders At The Cross"
- Wednesday – 8.00pm:
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study
- Friday – 8.00pm:
50th Anniversary Rally in

Commemoration of the Opening of the New Building on Ravenhill Road / Ardenlee Avenue in October 1969.



50TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING THIS FRIDAY

This Friday evening Martyrs Memorial FPC marks the 50th Anniversary of its presence on its current site. A warm welcome is extended to friends, new and old, to join with us on this occasion. A new DVD will be shown (the short version – a longer version will be available to purchase at a later stage), Rev. William McCrea will preach and other ministers associated with the witness in Martyrs will be taking part. Supper will be served by McKees afterwards. Come along and enjoy a trip down memory lane – and some super fellowship!



INTRODUCTION TO JONAH

Jonah 1:1.

Everybody likes a good story. And **the Book of Jonah** is primarily a story, complete with twists and turns and surprises. However, while there are advantages for teaching when we come to a book that has such a familiar story-line as Jonah, there are some disadvantages too. One difficulty is **i. FAMILIARITY**: because we know this book, we may assume that no more benefit can come from it; **ii. FRIVOLITY**: because Jonah is basically a story-line, we are tempted to think that there is no real depth to its message. However, as Scripture, Jonah fits with **2 Timothy 3:16-17** and is profitable for *“doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* This study provides **an Introduction to the Book of Jonah** – the necessary ‘spadework’ and ‘blockwork’ appears here.

A **Basic Outline** will help with remembering the contents:

1. **REBELLION**, A LESSON ABOUT GOD’S PATIENCE – ch1.
2. **REPENTANCE**, A LESSON ABOUT GOD’S PARDON – ch2.
3. **REVIVAL**, A LESSON ABOUT GOD’S POWER – ch3.
4. **REMONSTRANCE**, A LESSON ABOUT GOD’S PITY – ch4.

[1] THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BOOK OF JONAH.

Bible critics have constantly argued that this book is fantasy and fable. However, we insist that the book of Jonah is **simple, factual, historical narrative**. For several reasons:
(i) **INTERNAL EVIDENCE**: THERE IS NOTHING IN THE BOOK OF JONAH THAT SUGGESTS ITS CONTENTS ARE NOT HISTORIC FACT. Jewish tradition, the Bible scholars of the early Church, as well as the fearless leaders of the Reformation, all accepted this book as true. Jonah and his prophetic ministry is referenced in the historical book of **2 Kings (14:25)**.
(ii) **INFINITE ENDORSEMENT**: BECAUSE OF THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Three times in the gospel records our Lord makes reference to Jonah (**Matthew**

12:38-41, Matthew 16:4 and **Luke 11:29-32**) – and He is careful to endorse the most contentious events of these four chapters – being swallowed by the fish + Ninevite repentance!
(iii) **ILLUMINATING EXAMPLE**: BECAUSE JONAH IS A TYPE/ PICTURE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. **Matthew 12:38-41** (and the other gospel references) present Jonah as a type of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. *“I rather venture to consider Jonah himself as an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore his writings became very sweet as the record of His typical character.”* (Robert Hawker).

[2] THE SINGULARITY OF THE BOOK OF JONAH.

This little book is unique. Though numbered among the prophets, the book of Jonah is more of a story than a prophecy: the only prophecy appears in **Jonah 3:4**. Unlike Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc (where the focus is on the message the prophet preached), Jonah is a story about the prophet himself. However, the name of God occurs more than 40 times (NB. esp. **Jonah 4:2**). If we can get a clear picture of the providence, patience, pity and the sovereignty of our God in the life of this man, we will derive a unique blessing from this unique book!

[3] THE SCHEME OF THE BOOK OF JONAH.

The fundamental purpose of this book can be considered under two main headings: (i) **IT’S PURPOSE WITH RESPECT TO CHRIST – THE PROPHETIC, OR CHRISTOLOGICAL, PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK**. In **Matthew 12:40-41** our Lord makes it plain that those strange occurrences in Jonah’s life have the great prophetic purpose **of pointing us to Jesus**.
E.g.: 1. Jonah and Jesus preached a message of repentance (**Jonah 1:2, 3:1-4 ... Acts 3:22; Mark 1:14-15**); 2. Jonah ran from the calling God gave Him (**Jonah 1:3**); Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father’s will (**Psalm 40:7-8; John 17:4**); 3. Jonah slept on a ship during a storm caused by his own disobedience and offered up his life to save those on the ship (**1:4-12**); Jesus slept on a ship during a storm, calmed the storm, and would later offer up His life to save those who were disobedient (**Mark 4:35-41**); 4. Jonah claimed to fear the Creator God who had authority on earth (**Jonah 1:9**); Jesus is the Creator God with the supreme authority over all the earth (**John 1:3; Matthew 28:18**); 5. Jonah spent 3 days inside the belly of a great fish because of his own sin (**Jonah 2**); Jesus spent 3 days in the belly of the earth because of our sin (**Matthew 12:40-41**); 6. Jonah knew that “Salvation is of the Lord” (**Jonah 2:9**); Jesus’ name means “Jehovah saves” – and He is the only source of salvation from the