

CHASING JONAH

Session One – JONAH'S REBELLIOUS HEART

The Time

Jonah ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 BC), a time of economic prosperity for Israel, but also idolatry and moral corruption. Jonah likely preached in Nineveh around 759 BC.

The Assyrians

Assyria was Israel's most lethal enemy: cruel, barbaric, and idolatrous, with a history of conquest. The Assyrians defeated Israel in 722 BC.



(Ashurnasirpal II [883-859 BC] shown in picture)

The City

Nineveh, "the bloody city." (Nahum 3:1), founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:11), later became a key Assyrian city in the 14th thru 7th centuries BC. Struck by two plagues and experienced a total solar eclipse shortly before Jonah arrived .

Studying Chapter One

Interpretive Issues:

- 1) The book is an accurate **historical** account.
- 2) The genre is didactic prophetic **narrative** (like Hosea 1 and Ezekiel 4-5).
- 3) Jesus affirmed the book's **historicity** and purpose (Matthew 12:39-42).
- 4) The central message of Jonah is an urgent call to Israel to **repent**.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER ONE:

- a. God commands Jonah to **preach** (1:1-2)
 - message for Nineveh not mentioned
 - focus is Jonah's actions and those around him
- b. Jonah disobeys God and runs (1:3)
- c. God **pursues** Jonah (1:4)
- d. Pagan sailors fear God (1:5-8)
 - sailors show discernment and contrast
 - Jonah is spiritually oblivious
- e. Jonah talks the talk (1:9)
- f. Jonah would rather die than **repent** (1:10-12)
- g. Pagan sailors show compassion on Jonah (1:13)
- h. Pagan sailors pray to God (1:14-15)
 - respond to God despite Jonah
- i. Pagan sailors sacrifice to God (1:16)
 - worshiped and made vows for deliverance
- j. God intervenes for Jonah (1:17)
 - **undeserved** mercy from God