

The Triumph of Mercy
Biblical Theology 101

Book of Jonah; Coast School of Theology; Earl Miles; August 19, 2018

Author: *Who wrote this book?*

- We don't know for sure, but Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet in the story may have done so. (1:1)
- Jonah means 'dove.' Amittai means 'truth.'
- He came from Gath-Hepher near Nazareth in Galilee.
- He prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom of Israel (793-758 BC). – 2 Kings 14:25
- Jewish tradition has it that he was the son of the widow of Zarephath whom Elijah raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:8-24).
- Tarshish was possibly in southern Spain (as far west as you could go).
- The book is considered 'satire': the exposure of human vice or folly (which is ironic and laughable).

Setting: *When and where did the events in this book take place?*

- Northern Kingdom of Israel and to the east, the Assyrian empire.
- Assyria was weak at this time but would destroy the northern kingdom in 722 BC.
- Nineveh was founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:6-12).
- Nineveh was about 500 miles NE of Israel (located in Northern Iraq).
- They worshiped the fish goddess Nanshe and the fish god, Dagon, who was half man and half fish.
- The Assyrians were infamous for their cruelty and were enemies of Israel and Judah.
- It was finally destroyed 150 years after this in 612 BC as Nahum prophesied.

Story: *What do we have in this book?*

1. The First Call (1:1-2)

2. The Storm (1:3-6)
3. The Lot (1:7-16)
4. The Fish (1:17-2:10)
5. The Second Call (3:1-2)
6. The Message (3:3-4)
7. The Repentance (3:5-10)
8. The Prayer (4:1-4)
9. The Plant (4:5-6)
10. The Worm (4:7)
11. The Wind (4:8)
12. The Lesson (4:9-11)

Significance: *Why is this book in the Bible?*

- It's true (it really happened).
- It's a living parable.
- It rebukes Israel's narrow view of salvation.
- It rebukes Israel's unbelief in the message of God's prophets.
- It rebukes 'the elder son' syndrome: 'He doesn't deserve mercy!'. - Luke 15:11-32
- It highlights the reality that sanctification is usually a slow process no matter what the factors.
- It highlights the reality that no one is beyond hope and God uses means to bring about their repentance.
- It foreshadows Christ's death, burial and resurrection. – Matthew 12:38-41; Matthew 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-32

Theology Proper: *How is God pictured in this book?*

- He controls nature.
- He brings life out of death.
- He has a heart of love and mercy to all. – Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36; James 2:8-13