

## The Book of Jonah

### Chapter Three – Jonah's Revival

#### Nineveh

- Located near modern Mosul, Iraq, over 500 miles from Jonah's home in Gath-hepher
- A capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and considered to be one of the largest cities in the world at that time, if not the single largest.
  - Jonah 4:11 says 120,000 inhabitants, possibly just speaking of children. Modern historians estimate around 100,000 inhabitants.
- Walls - 7.5 miles long surrounded city, 15 gates, 30 feet high, 50 feet thick, built on top of 20 ft retaining walls.
- Major buildings include a palace for Sennacherib and the temple of Ishtar.
- Name perhaps come from the *Nina* meaning fish or a goddess associated with fish. In cuneiform, *Nina* is represented as fish in a house.

#### Timing of Chapter 3

- How much time passes between Jonah exiting the whale and him hearing the second call to go to Nineveh?
- The way I have heard most teach/preach is that Jonah went straight towards Nineveh.
- Reasons there could be delay include:
  - Jonah went home thinking the punishment of the whale ended the original call, thus the need for a second call from God.
  - Jonah went to Jerusalem to pay the vows that he spoke of in 2:9.
  - According to Luke 11:30 Jonah was a "sign" to the Ninevites. Perhaps the story about Jonah's adventure at sea needed time to permeate their city, so that when he appeared and spoke they instantly recognized who he was.

#### Notes on Chapter 3

- vs. 1-2 – Jonah receives another opportunity to obey God.
  - I'm glad God is a God of second chances!
    - See Peter, John Mark, and so many other examples.
- vs. 3 – "three days' journey" – either to walk around or through the entire metropolitan area and not just the walled portion.
  - Here we are, almost 3,000 years later, still describing distance with how long it takes to cover it!
- vs. 4 – His sermon is five words in Hebrew.
- vs. 4 – B.H. Carroll – "The 'yet' here indicates God's attitude toward a sinner. Though he thunders the law of Sinai over the sinner's head, it is only that the sinner may be prepared to hear the voice from Calvary. 'Yet forty days and 'Nineveh shall be overthrown,' but the 'forty days' furnish space for repentance."

- vs. 5 – thus begins the greatest revival yet seen. Thousands upon thousands of all classes humbling themselves before God.
- vs. 6 – From GotQuestions.org – “Sackcloth and ashes were used in Old Testament times as a symbol of debasement, mourning, and/or repentance. Someone wanting to show his repentant heart would often wear sackcloth, sit in ashes, and put ashes on top of his head. Sackcloth was a coarse material usually made of black goat’s hair, making it quite uncomfortable to wear. The ashes signified desolation and ruin.”
- vs. 9 – Note that they are desperately and wholly throwing themselves upon the mercy of God.
- vs.10 – This is Jeremiah 18:7-8 in action.

### **Notes on God Repenting in vs. 10:**

God did not repent (“change mind or course”) because He was wrong. He would have destroyed Nineveh just as He destroyed the world in the Flood. But in that course headed toward destruction God’s actual desire (the repentance of man, not their destruction) occurs. Now the condition that triggered His wrath has changed completely. Now the condition exists for Him to act mercifully toward man.

Whatever God did it would have been right and just. To say He knew they would repent that that His threat was empty means that God was not truthful. God would have destroyed Nineveh had they not repented. But they repented so He did not have. We see this in how we who were enemies of God (Romans 5:10), and thus under His righteous condemnation, could instead receive salvation through Christ when we receive it in faith.