

## ~JONAH 1 (353)

(Jo'nah) [Dove]

### .. Would The Ninevites Repent In Sackcloth At Jonah's Warning

- **Son of Amittai. A prophet of Yehowah from Gath-hepher.**
- **He it was that restored the boundary of Israel from the entering in of Hamath clear to the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Yehowah the God of Israel who spoke by means of his servant **Jonah** the son of Amittai, the prophet that was from Gath-hepher. (2 Kings 14:25)**
- **A border city in the territory of Zebulun.**
- **Next the third lot came up for the sons of Zebulun by their families, and the boundary of their inheritance came to be as far as Sarid. (Joshua 19:10)**
- **And from there it passed over eastward toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and went out to Rimmon and was marked out to Neah. (Joshua 19:13)**
- **In fulfillment of Yehowah's word spoken through **Jonah**, Israel's King Jeroboam II succeeded in restoring the boundary of Israel from the entering in of Hamath clear to the sea of the Arabah the Salt Sea.**
- **In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Jehoash the king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Jehoash the king of Israel became king in Samaria for forty-one years. (2 Kings 14:23)**
- **And he continued to do what was bad in Yehowah's eyes. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he caused Israel to sin. (2 Kings 14:24)**
- **He it was that restored the boundary of Israel from the entering in of Hamath clear to the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Yehowah the God of Israel who spoke by means of his servant **Jonah** the son of Amittai, the prophet that was from Gath-hepher. (2 Kings 14:25)**
- **And the Arabah and the Jordan and the border, from Chinnereth to the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, at the base of the slopes of**

Pisgah toward the sunrising. (**Deuteronomy 3:17**)

- So it appears that **Jonah** served as a prophet to the ten-tribe kingdom sometime during the reign of Jeroboam II. He is evidently the same person Yehowah commissioned to proclaim judgment against Nineveh.
- And the word of Yehowah began to occur to **Jonah** the son of Amittai, saying; (**Jonah 1:1**)
- Get up, go to Nineveh the great city, and proclaim against her that their badness has come up before me. (**Jonah 1:2**)
- And, therefore, also the writer of the book bearing his name.
- Instead of following through on his assignment to preach to the Ninevites, **Jonah** decided to run away from it. At the seaport of Joppa, he secured passage on a ship bound for Tarshish, generally associated with Spain, over 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) West of Nineveh.
- And the word of Yehowah began to occur to **Jonah** the son of Amittai, saying; (**Jonah 1:1**)
- Get up, go to Nineveh the great city, and proclaim against her that their badness has come up before me. (**Jonah 1:2**)
- And **Jonah** proceeded to get up and run away to Tarshish from before Yehowah, and he finally came down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid its fare and went down into it, in order to go with them to Tarshish from before Yehowah. (**Jonah 1:3**)
- Hence he prayed to Yehowah and said; Ah, now, O Yehowah, was not this an affair of mine, while I happened to be on my own ground? That is why I went ahead and ran away to Tarshish, for I knew that you are a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness, and feeling regret over the calamity. (**Jonah 4:2**)
- After boarding the decked vessel, **Jonah** fell fast asleep in its innermost parts. Meanwhile, the mariners, faced with a divinely sent tempestuous wind that threatened to wreck the ship, cried to their gods for aid and cast articles overboard to lighten the vessel.

- The ship captain awakened Jonah, urging him also to call on his god. Finally the mariners cast lots to determine on whose account the storm had arisen.
- Evidently Yehowah then caused the lot to single out Jonah. Upon being questioned, Jonah confessed to having been unfaithful to his commission.
- Not wanting others to perish on his account, he requested that he be thrown into the sea. When all efforts to get back to land failed, the mariners did to Jonah according to his word, and the sea stopped its raging.
- And Yehowah himself hurled forth a great wind at the sea, and there came to be a great tempest on the sea, and as for the ship, it was about to be wrecked. (Jonah 1:4)
- And the mariners began to fear and to call for aid, each one to his god. And they kept hurling out the articles that were in the ship to the sea, in order to lighten it of them. But Jonah himself had gone down to the innermost parts of the decked vessel, and he proceeded to lie down and go fast asleep. (Jonah 1:5)
- At length the ship captain came near to him and said to him; What is the matter with you, sleeper? Get up, call out to your god! Perhaps the true God will show himself caring about us, and we shall not perish. (Jonah 1:6)
- And they began to say to one another; Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account we have this calamity. And they kept casting lots, and finally the lot fell upon Jonah. (Jonah 1:7)
- So they said to him; Do tell us, please, on whose account it is that we are having this calamity? What is your work, and from where do you come? What is your country, and from which people are you? (Jonah 1:8)
- At that he said to them; I am a Hebrew, and Yehowah the God of the heavens I am fearing, the One who made the sea and the dry land. (Jonah 1:9)
- And the men began to fear greatly, and they went on to say to him; What is this that you have done? For the men had come to

know that it was from before Yehowah that he was running away, because he had told them. (**Jonah 1:10**)

- Finally they said to him; What should we do to you, in order, that the sea may become still for us? For the sea was continually growing more tempestuous. (**Jonah 1:11**)
- So he said to them; Lift me up and hurl me into the sea, and the sea will become still for you, because I am aware that it is on my account that this great tempest is upon you. (**Jonah 1:12**)
- But the men tried to work their way through, in order to bring the ship back to the dry land, yet they were unable, because the sea was continually growing more tempestuous against them. (**Jonah 1:13**)
- And they proceeded to call out to Yehowah and to say; Ah, now, O Yehowah, may we, please, not perish because of the soul of this man! And do not put upon us innocent blood, since you yourself, O Yehowah, have done according to what you have delighted in! (**Jonah 1:14**)
- Then they lifted up **Jonah** and hurled him into the sea, and the sea began to halt from its raging. (**Jonah 1:15**)
- As **Jonah** sank beneath the waters, seaweed wound around his head. Finally his drowning sensation ceased, and he found himself inside a large fish.
- **Jonah** prayed to Yehowah, glorifying him as Savior and promising to pay what he had vowed. On the third day the prophet was vomited out onto dry land.
- Now Yehowah appointed a great fish to swallow **Jonah**, so that Jonah came to be in the inward parts of the fish three days and three nights. (**Jonah 1:17**)
- In time Yehowah commanded the fish, so that it vomited out **Jonah** onto the dry land. (**Jonah 2:10**)

#### ·· **Would The Ninevites Repent In Sackcloth At Jonah's Warning**

- Commissioned a second time to go to Nineveh, he undertook the long journey there. Finally **Jonah** started to enter into the city the

walking distance of one day, and he kept proclaiming and saying; Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown.

- Then the word of Yehowah occurred to **Jonah** the second time, saying; (**Jonah 3:1**)
- Get up, go to Nineveh the great city, and proclaim to her the proclamation that I am speaking to you. (**Jonah 3:2**)
- At that, **Jonah** got up and went to Nineveh in accord with the word of Yehowah. Now Nineveh herself proved to be a city great to God, with a walking distance of three days. (**Jonah 3:3**)
- Finally **Jonah** started to enter into the city the walking distance of one day, and he kept proclaiming and saying; Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown. (**Jonah 3:4**)
- Whether **Jonah** knew Assyrian or was miraculously endowed with ability to speak that language is not revealed in the Bible. He may even have spoken **Hebrew**, his proclamation later being interpreted by ones(**s**) knowing the language.
- If spoken in Hebrew, **Jonah's** words could have aroused great curiosity, with many wondering just what this stranger was saying.
- Some critics think it incredible that the Ninevites, including the king, responded to **Jonah's** preaching.
- And the men of Nineveh began to put faith in God, and they proceeded to proclaim a fast and to put on sackcloth, from the greatest one of them even to the least one of them. (**Jonah 3:5**)
- When the word reached the king of Nineveh, then he rose up from his throne and put off his official garment from himself and covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the ashes. (**Jonah 3:6**)
- Furthermore, he had the cry made, and he had it said in Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his great ones, saying; No man and no domestic animal, no herd and no flock, should taste anything at all. None should take food. Even water they should not drink. (**Jonah 3:7**)
- And let them cover themselves with sackcloth, man and domestic

- animal, and let them call out to God with strength and come back, each one from his bad way and from the violence that was in their hands. (**Jonah 3:8**)
- Who is there knowing whether the true God may turn back and actually feel regret and turn back from his burning anger, so that we may not perish? (**Jonah 3:9**)
  - In this regard the remarks of commentator **C. F. Keil** are of interest: The powerful impression made upon the Ninevites by Jonah's preaching, so that the whole city repented in sackcloth and ashes, is quite intelligible, if we simply bear in mind the great susceptibility of Oriental races to emotion, the awe of one Supreme Being which is peculiar to all the heathen religions of Asia, and the great esteem in which soothsaying and oracles were held in Assyria from the very earliest times.
  - And if we also take into calculation the circumstance that the appearance of a foreigner, who, without any conceivable personal interest, and with the most fearless boldness, disclosed to the great royal city its godless ways, and announced its destruction within a very short period with the confidence so characteristic of the God-sent prophets, could not fail to make a powerful impression upon the minds of the people, which would be all the stronger if the report of the miraculous working of the prophets of Israel had penetrated to Nineveh. [**Commentary on the Old Testament, 1973, Vol. X. (Jonah 3:9), pp. 407,408**]
  - After 40 days had passed and still nothing had happened to Nineveh, **Jonah** was highly displeased that Yehowah had not brought calamity upon the city. He even prayed for God to take away his life. But Yehowah answered Jonah with the question; Have you rightly become hot with anger?
  - Then the word of Yehowah occurred to Jonah the second time, saying; (**Jonah 3:1**)
  - In turn Yehowah said; Have you rightly become hot with anger? (**Jonah 4:4**)
  - The prophet subsequently left the city and, later, erected a booth for himself. There, to the East of Nineveh, **Jonah** watched to see what would befall the city.

- Then **Jonah** went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and gradually he made for himself there a booth, that he might sit under it in the shade until he would see what would become of the city. (**Jonah 4:5**)
- When a bottle-gourd plant miraculously grew to provide shade for **Jonah**, the prophet was very pleased. But his rejoicing was short-lived.
- The next day, early in the morning, a worm injured the plant, causing it to dry up. Deprived of its shade, **Jonah** was subjected to a parching east wind and the hot sun beating down upon his head. Again, he asked to die.
- Accordingly Yehowah God appointed a bottle-gourd plant, that it should come up over **Jonah**, in order to become a shade over his head, to deliver him from his calamitous state. And Jonah began to rejoice greatly over the bottle-gourd plant. (**Jonah 4:6**)
- But the true God appointed a worm at the ascending of the dawn on the next day, that it should strike the bottle-gourd plant, and it gradually dried up. (**Jonah 4:7**)
- And it came about that, as soon as the sun shone forth, God also went on to appoint a parching east wind, and the sun kept striking upon the head of **Jonah**, so that he was swooning away, and he kept asking that his soul might die, and he repeatedly said; My dying off is better than my being alive. (**Jonah 4:8**)
- By means of this bottle-gourd plant **Jonah** was taught a lesson in mercy. He felt sorry for the bottle-gourd plant, probably wondering why it had to die. Yet **Jonah** had neither planted nor cared for it. On the other hand, being the Creator and Sustainer of life, Yehowah had much more reason to feel sorry for Nineveh.
- The value of its inhabitants and that of the cattle was far greater than that of one bottle-gourd plant. Therefore, Yehowah asked **Jonah**; For my part, ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there exist more than one hundred and twenty thousand men who do not at all know the difference between their right hand and their left, besides many domestic animals?
- And God proceeded to say to **Jonah**; Have you rightly become hot with anger over the bottle-gourd plant? At that he said; I

have rightly become hot with anger, to the point of death. (**Jonah 4:9**)

- But Yehowah said; You, for your part, felt sorry for the bottle-gourd plant, which you did not toil upon or make get big, which proved to be a mere growth of a night and perished as a mere growth of a night. (**Jonah 4:10**)
- And, for my part, ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there exist more than one hundred and twenty thousand men who do not at all know the difference between their right hand and their left, besides many domestic animals? (**Jonah 4:11**)
- That **Jonah** must have got the point is indicated by the candid portrayal of his own experiences.
- It may be that sometime later **Jonah** met at least one of the persons who had been aboard the ship from Joppa, possibly at the temple in Jerusalem, and learned from him about the vows made by the mariners after the storm abated.
- At that the men began to fear Yehowah greatly, and so they offered a sacrifice to Yehowah and made vows. (**Jonah 1:16**)
- And as for me, I said; I have been driven away from in front of your eyes! How shall I gaze again upon your holy temple? (**Jonah 2:4**)
- But as for me, with the voice of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed, I will pay. Salvation belongs to Yehowah. (**Jonah 2:9**)

**See Also JONAH, BOOK OF**  
**See Also NINEVEH**