

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

THE MINOR PROPHETS:

THE PROPHECY OF JONAH, PART 1

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Obedience to God is possible for sinful people because God gives us the grace to obey and to respond rightly to his will. But what happens when God's people reject his grace and resist his will? Have you ever run from God? Have you ever not liked his will, and thought that what he was calling you to do would be virtually impossible for you to perform? Have you ever felt angry with God?

The Prophet Jonah felt this way. In fact, when he was called by God to preach salvation through repentance to the City of Nineveh, he responded by "running from the presence of the LORD" (we are told this two times in 1:3 as part of our introduction and also in 1:10; cf. Genesis 3:8; 4:16). Jonah runs away from the presence of the LORD like Adam and Cain before him!

In our story, unlike Elijah or Elisha the prophet Jonah is not a hero, but rather an anti-hero. Professor Gerhard von Rad wrote: "God is here glorified not through his ambassador, but in spite of his ambassador's complete refusal" (Quoted in Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT, pg. 175). Jonah is a prophet we can all sympathize with (if we are honest before God), but one that we cannot easily respect and/or follow. At the end of the story, Jonah is revealed as the self-centered, self-righteous fool before God (as we are many times when we question God's will).

The Prophecy of Jonah is very popular book of the Bible. Like the story of Zacchaeus, we are taught this "big fish story of repentance" from Sunday school classes as children. Herman Melville wrote in his classic book *Moby Dick*: "Shipmates, this book containing only four chapters—four yarns—is one of the smallest strands in the mighty cable of the Scriptures. Yet what depths of the soul does Jonah's deep sealine sound! What a pregnant lesson to us in this prophet! What a noble thing is that canticle in the fish's belly! How billow-like and boisterously grand!"

How billow-like and boisterously grand is right! If Obadiah and his prophecy is the most obscure and unknown by most people, contrastly Jonah's Prophecy is the most recognizable, well-known, and considered billow-like and boisterously grand by most people.

How is Jonah's prophecy different from other books within *The Book of the Twelve*?

(1) In contrast to the other prophets in *The Book of the Twelve*, Jonah's prophecy is not detailed on the actual content of the prophecy, but is more focused on the prophet and his relationship to God.

We might remember long sermons by Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards because we have their full written manuscripts, but in the Prophecy of Jonah, the content of his sermon is one line: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (3:4). A short sermon, but extremely effective and powerful by God’s grace (the Word of God will not go forth and return to him empty or void, Isaiah 55:11 ff)!

What is the summary of the story? We all know it! Jonah, a prophet of Israel, is called to preach repentance to the pagan Assyrian capital city of Nineveh. Jonah runs from God rather than preaches; he actually goes “west young man” which is the opposite direction from Nineveh to the East.

Jonah goes to sea only to be tossed over because of God’s “chasing after him”. When he is tossed over, he experiences the depth of the sea and is swallowed by a great fish. The great fish (or “whale” as some say - - but literally from Hebrew it should be translated a “great fish” *dag gadol*) provides him a refuge at the bottom of the depths as close to death and the underworld as a man can ever go (Jonah continues to “go down”; he *yadas!*). In the belly of the great fish, Jonah cries out to God recognizing his sovereignty and praising God for his grace. Jonah goes to preach and many in Nineveh repent, including Nineveh’s king. But Jonah does not rejoice; rather he grows angry with God for showing mercy.

Jonah’s Prophecy: Is it Fact of Fiction? What Kind of Genre is the Book of Jonah? What is the date of Jonah’s prophecy? (2)

You may recall from C. S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters* how Screwtape said to his apprentice Wormwood: “Jargon, not argument is your best ally against the Christian faith.” Unfortunately, jargon rather than good argumentation has prevented many modern folks from taking the Book of Jonah seriously because they have believed Screwtape’s lies. One commentator wrote: “Screwtape has long been busy convincing humans to dismiss the Book of Jonah as nothing more than an amusing story about Jonah and the “whale.” It is easy to assume that a story about a man who though swallowed by a fish lives to tell the tale can safely be ignored. But Screwtape’s jargon must not be permitted to win the day” (Joyce Baldwin, *The Minor Prophets*, pg. 543).

Although the story feels almost mythical in its description of the great fish and the depths of the sea, the story is not fiction (**2a**), but truly historical and the Prophet Jonah lived and served YHWH (or rather ran from YHWH) during the reign of King Jeroboam II who reigned over Israel from 786-746 B.C. (8th century).

Even though we can date Jonah’s time of writing, he may have actually penned the prophecy at a later time (so the definite time of Jonah’s life and mission to Nineveh would be during the time of King Jeroboam of Israel in the 8th century (**2b**), but we cannot necessarily know for sure the definite time of Jonah’s *writing* of his prophecy). As Professor Allen commented: “The period of the prophet of 2 Kings 14:25 ca. 780 B.C., is not necessarily the time when the book was produced” (Allen, NICOT, pg. 185).

Although the Book of Jonah might have a literary feel like a fictional myth, it is best to understand the genre as **prophetic didactic history (2c)** (a sub-genre of historical narrative). The Book of Jonah is a true historical account of a true Prophet of Israel that has a didactic-teaching purpose to communicate theological truths to Israel and the world. Because the Prophecy of Jonah is **prophetic didactic history** we should ask what lessons are we to learn from the book; the purpose of Jonah's prophecy is to teach lessons to God's people that we will consider further later (D.V.)

Our Lord Jesus himself affirmed and recognized the story of Jonah as a true historical account in his teachings recorded in two of the gospels (Matt. 12:39-40; Luke 11:29-30). As conservative Old Testament scholar Gleason Archer wrote: "...It is important to come to terms with these clear statements by the Lord Jesus [concerning the historicity of Jonah] and to realize that one cannot reject the historicity of Jonah without also rejecting the authority of Christ" (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, pg. 320).

The ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus included the story of Jonah in his history of the Jewish people (*Antiquities*, 9:206-214) recognizing it as true history from very early times of Biblical interpretation. Unfortunately, it was not until the 19th century that biblical scholars began to suggest that Jonah was myth or mere allegory.

Jonah's prophecy begins with a phrase in Hebrew literature that teaches us that what follows should be understood as history: "Now the word of the LORD (YHWH) came to Jonah the son of Ammittai..." (v. 1). Because of this specific reference we can know the time and approximate date of Jonah's prophetic ministry and where he was from.

ESV 2 Kings 14:25 He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.

We should also compare this historical opening with other historical Hebrew texts (found in the Minor Prophets or *Book of the Twelve*) as well as in the historical books of 1 Kings regarding the prophetic ministry of Elijah:

ESV 1 Kings 17:8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you."

The name Jonah [Heb. hn" Ay] means "dove". The Bible teaches us that Jonah was from Gath-Hepher in the area designated to the Tribe of Zebulun (or el-Meshded; 2 Kings 14:25) which is located northeast of Nazareth. Jonah prophesied the expansion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel which was a time of prosperity and peace (which we have learned in our previous sermons this took place during Jeroboam II's reign; Dillard and Longman, pg. 391-92).

Brief History of the Assyrian Empire

Where was Nineveh? (3a) Nineveh has been a great pagan city since ancient times. The Book of Genesis teaches us that it was one of the settlements of the sons of Ham (the son of Noah):

*ESV Genesis 10:11-12: From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and
12 Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.*

Nineveh was one of the principle cities of Assyria along with Calah and Assure and eventually became the royal residence for the King of Assyria Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076).

What was the great empire of Assyria like during the 8th century when Jonah was called to preach to the capital city of Nineveh? Under the leadership of Ashurnasirpal II (a mouthful!!; 883-859 B.C.) and Shalmaneser III (ca. 859- ca. 824), Assyria became a great and wealthy empire; this was one of the golden ages of Mesopotamian history!

After Shalmaneser, the Assyrian Kingdom experienced division and dissolution (no kingdom but Christ's last forever!). Assyria's experience was to be a humble empire for almost 100 years where the nation would be marked by decline and eclipse. That is, until Tiglath-pileser III (ca. 745- ca. 727) who would once again use his great military leadership and power to forge an ancient Near Eastern empire ready to conquer the world (read more history from Minor Prophet Introduction sermons).

Tiglath-pileser's new policy towards nations that opposed Assyria was "total conquest, accompanied by the deportation of the populations and the establishment of Assyrian provinces under an Assyrian administration" (Baker, Alexander, Waltke, *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*, pg. 81). It was the Assyrian Empire under the reigns of Shalmaneser V (ca. 727 B.C.) and Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) that destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel's capital city of Samaria in 722 B.C.

What is the significance of the City of Nineveh in Jonah's prophecy? (3b) Nineveh was the royal residence and capital of the Assyrian Empire (like the City of Rome, or Athens, or Samaria, or Jerusalem). Because Nineveh the capital city was the seat of Assyria's power structure, the name of the city had the connotation of being Israel's sworn enemy who had defeated and destroyed Samaria.

Thus it is important to note that Jonah was called to preach the gospel to the nation that had destroyed his homeland of Israel. Perhaps we can liken it to a former Confederate general who after the defeat of his homeland was called by God to preach the gospel to the "Yankees" in the North (to use a 19th century example of the feelings of reluctance to say the least that would have accompanied the imagined Confederate's call and commission). Like Robert E. Lee being called to preach to Tecumseh Sherman, was Jonah's call to preach to Nineveh.

Although Nineveh enjoyed a long time of prosperity and power, the city of Nineveh eventually fell in 612 B.C.

Jonah's Prophecy is a Literary Masterpiece

Jonah's prophecy is a literary masterpiece! Jonah's prose is highly stylized and there is a strategic repetition of certain key terms (known in literature as a *Leitwörter* like a *Leitmotif* in music). Desmond Alexander calls the Book of Jonah "one of the

masterpieces of Biblical literature” (*Jonah*, pg. 51). My friend and fellow presbyter Bryan Estelle wisely counsels God’s people when considering Jonah’s classic artistic masterpiece: “This is what makes a classic: wonderful literary artistry mixed with many layers of meaning that motivate reading a book more than once. Consequently, a person ought to read a classic thoughtfully, slowly, repeatedly. A classic endures the test of time. The book of Jonah is a classic” (*Salvation through Judgment and Mercy*, pg. 2).

What is a Leitwörter? (4) A strategic repetition in literature of certain key terms, words, and/or verbs. An example of a *Leitwörter* is found in the repetition of the Hebrew verb “rise up” [~Wq]; God commands Jonah to “rise up” (1:2) and late when the storm assaults the ship, the captain tells Jonah to “rise up” to pray and seek God (ironically!); God commissions Jonah again after his experience in the great fish to “arise and go to Ninevah” (3:2-3). There are similar *Leitwörter* such as “great” (Heb. lAdG" adj. great/1:2, 4, 10, 13, 3:2; 4:6), “to appoint” (Heb. hn"m' vb. appoint, count, number, reckon, assign/1:17; 4:6-8); “go down” (Heb. dr;y" vb. come or go down, descend/1:3 (2x), 6; 2:6- see Dillard and Longman, pg. 393 for more literary analysis).

The book should be divided into two acts (with no intermission!) with two scenes for each act (first act begins with 1:1-2 and the second act begins with 3:2-3). The first act of Jonah’s story is on board a ship running from God and in the belly of the fish (chapters 1-2). The second act is chapters 3-4 and in this part Jonah preaches and Nineveh repents then the last part we are left with Jonah struggling with God’s thoughts and ways being higher and different and more perfect than his thoughts and ways (cf. Isaiah 55:5ff).

Outline of the Book of Jonah-How should we outline the Book of Jonah? (5)

- I. God’s commission to Jonah and Jonah’s rejection of his call (1:1-3)
- II. Jonah’s flight from the LORD and the LORD’s pursuit (1:4-17)
- III. Jonah’s prayer of thanksgiving and deliverance from the LORD (2:1-10)
- IV. God’s commission renewed by God, Jonah’s preaching of repentance, Nineveh’s response of faith (3:1-9)
- V. Jonah’s anger at God for his allowing Nineveh to repent and the LORD’s instruction about his character to Jonah (3:10-4:11)

Theological Message of Jonah- What do we learn about God? (6)

As we have learned earlier, because Jonah’s prophecy is the genre of *prophetic didactic history* we should ask what lessons to learn from it. We can begin to think about these lessons by asking what the Book of Jonah teaches us about God. Too many times in the history of interpretation has the student been focused on the great fish (or whale) rather than how God is revealed! As Pastor G. Campbell Morgan said: “Men have been looking so hard at the great fish that they have failed to see the great God.”

There are two important verses that reveal God’s character in Jonah:

ESV ***Jonah 1:9*** *And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."*

ESV **Jonah 4:2** *And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.*

God is Sovereign Creator (6): As in the other prophets of *The Book of the Twelve*, the Book of Jonah reveals that God is the Creator God, the LORD who made heaven and earth. God is Creator and LORD over all creation and all creation is accountable to him for the way they live. It is interesting to note how God reveals his sovereignty not only in salvation in the Book of Jonah (2:9), but also in how he uses creation to perform his will.

For instance, when Jonah runs from God, the Bible says that YHWH “hurled a great wind upon the sea” (v. 4) that threatened the ship and her crew’s life. Also, when Jonah is thrown into the sea, he goes down to the depths and God “appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah (v. 17), again revealing that God rules over his creation and his creatures for his own purposes. At the end of the Book of Jonah, God “appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah” (v. 6) and God “appointed a worm” (v. 7) showing his great power and sovereignty over his creation from the greatest and most formidable sea to the smallest worm- ***-all creation serves God’s purposes and will!***

Why don’t his people? That is what Jonah’s prophecy is about!!

God is gracious to those who repent (6): God also reveals himself as gracious, merciful, slow to anger and abounding steadfast love for those who repent and turn from their sins to love and obey him by His grace (4:2).

Repentance is an important message and theme in Jonah’s prophecy. God cares for repentant Gentiles, too! Jonah’s prophecy actually contrasts God’s mercy extended to the Gentiles and a reluctant Israelite who does not want to offer mercy to sinners. We are reminded that even when men are unfaithful, God is faithful to make his word known and reveal himself to those who are repentant.

It is important to note that Jonah represents Israel at this time in redemptive-history. Israel has been called to be a light to the nations and make God’s Kingdom known to the world. However, like Jonah, Israel is reluctant and is out of relationship with God and his purposes for the repentant nations. Jonah is no mere Israelite, but an important prophet of God who is called to be the very mouthpiece of YHWH (see our introduction sermons).

If the most spiritual and gifted in Israel- -a very prophet of God- -can run from God and be angry with him when he shows mercy to the nations- -what kind of spiritual predicament is Israel in? How can God have mercy on this imperial pagan power who has constantly threatened Israel’s existence? Because God is gracious to those who repent.

If profane sailors and wicked Ninevites could repent, so could Israel! (cf. 1:5ff; 3:5ff). We should not underestimate Jonah’s plight and be willing to sympathize with him. As stated before, Nineveh was responsible for destroying Jonah’s homeland and he had

perhaps been witness to the sinful and cold-hearted treatment of many women and children by the Assyrians. In fact, the Prophet Nahum describes the abominable sinfulness of Nineveh as a message of the LORD; Nineveh is described as a “bloody city”:

ESV Nahum 3:1-7: Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder- no end to the prey! ² The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! ³ Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end- they stumble over the bodies! ⁴ And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms. ⁵ Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame. ⁶ I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. ⁷ And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her? Where shall I seek comforters for you?

Through this experience of a reluctant ministry to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, Jonah comes to understand God’s character much better. In fact, he says (in line with God’s revelation to Moses in the Book of Exodus when God revealed his glory):

ESV Jonah 4:2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

ESV Exodus 34:6-7: The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

God is just and merciful to the repentant (6): Although sin must be punished and God is just to do so in his sovereign rule over mankind, nevertheless, God is free to exercise mercy and compassion on those who repent. Rather than show justice (what the sinful people deserve) God can also show mercy and compassion. Remember the words of God through Moses to Pharaoh recorded for us by the Apostle Paul in Romans 9?

ESV Romans 9:14-16: What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

God is a “missionary God” (6): God is revealed as a “missionary God” whose concern for salvation is for the world- -not merely for Israel (that’s us!!). Abraham was called to be the “Father of many nations” and the Prophecy of Jonah reveals God’s heart in this way. To put it in New Testament terms, God desires that his people would go in His authority to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Matt. 18:18-20) as Jesus reveals more clearly in the “Great Commission” (the “ends of the earth” include not only Nineveh but because of God’s grace, Washington D.C.!).

One commentator wrote: “[The Book of Jonah’s] purpose was to expose absurdity by the irony of satire, the absurdity of specifically Jonah, who, as an arrogant isolationist, holds the God of heaven and earth in his pocket, all the while making pious noises about his

universal reign and the breadth of his compassions. It is an absurdity into which religious people easily lapse, quite unconsciously, of course” (*The Minor Prophets*, ed. McComiskey, Quoted in Baldwin, pg. 547).

As the Apostle Paul taught further in the New Testament, the problem of sin was not merely something the pagan Gentile nations were guilty of, but Israel too was guilty before God and in need of God’s grace, mercy and redemption in Jesus Christ (see Romans 2:1-3:23):

ESV Romans 2:17-24: ¹⁷ But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God ¹⁸ and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; ¹⁹ and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth- ²¹ you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. ²⁴ For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

All (both Jews and Gentiles) fall short of the glory of God- Romans 3:23

Yet God can and will show grace to all those who repent:

ESV Acts 10:34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality...

ESV Romans 3:29-30: Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

We must understand that the reason why Jonah gets so angry at God for allowing the wicked pagan city of Nineveh to repent is that he had forgotten the mercy of God that had been extended to him and to all of Israel who believed (cf. Jonah 4).

As Professor Allen wrote: “The greatness and goodness of God are enhanced against the background of Jonah’s meanness and malevolence. Look out at the world, pleads the author, at God’s world. See it through God’s eyes. And let your new vision overcome your natural bitterness, your hardness of soul. Let the divine compassion flood your own hearts” (NICOT, pg. 194).

Jonah was the type of believer who is glad to receive God’s mercy and love, but then once they have been reconciled to God expect him to destroy their enemies and show his justice rather than his grace. Jonah and all of Israel were the recipients of God’s grace by faith, but they did not believe that God could show others grace. And that is precisely another area where God’s thoughts are not our thoughts (cf. Isaiah 55:8ff): God calls us to himself and shows us mercy, then he tells us to take this good news to our worst enemies- -to tell them too to believe upon the LORD Jesus Christ and they will be saved!

Jonah in the Teaching of Jesus- How do we read, study and interpret Jonah Christocentrically? (7)

What is foreshadowed and illustrated in Jonah becomes reality in Christ (Estelle, pg. 3). In the New Testament, Dr. Luke records for us concerning Jesus' ministry that many in Israel had witnessed (and even marveled, cf. Luke 4:22; 7:9; 8:25; 11:14!) at Jesus' Kingdom signs, but most of them had rejected the King himself. Jesus says to them in response to their unbelief:

“This generation is an evil generation. I seek a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah” (v. 29).

Jesus is saying by using the term “this generation” that all of Israel at the time of Jesus was in spiritual bankruptcy and unbelief.

So, Jesus says basically: “You want a sign that the Kingdom of God is present in me? I will give you a sign to show you the Kingdom!” Jonah the Prophet's period was characterized by repentance from Gentiles (the Ninevites) when they saw that Jonah had undergone a powerful salvation experience “from the dead” that only God could have performed and responded to his preaching of repentance from sin.

The sign that you will be given is unrepentance and folly in Israel! As Jonah preached to Ninevah (the Gentile Nations), they repented of their sins and turned to the Living God. In other words, as Ninevah realized that Jonah had been in the belly of a whale for three days and when he returned only through the power of God, the Ninevites repented and turned to God.

Jesus' great sign for all to see will be that after he preaches and makes known the Kingdom he will be killed and be in the heart of the earth for three days. Like Jonah, he will return and this sign will serve to show men that only the power of God could accomplish this and all the world will be without excuse that God has vindicated the truth of Jesus' identity as the Divine Son!

As Greydanus wrote: “The Lord does not state here that Jonah's preaching was a sign and that His own preaching will be a sign, but Jonah himself and his experiences were the sign.”

In Matthew's Gospel chapter 12, verses 38-41 we read:

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." ³⁹ But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ***40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*** ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Jesus' resurrection will be the sign that Jesus is who he says he is! Another aspect of the sign however is that many Gentiles will believe and many in Israel (like Jonah and his time period) would be judged for their disbelief.

There are several facets to Jesus' message of the "sign of Jonah" but another aspect could be that Jesus is saying that as the Gentiles in Jonah's day experienced repentance and salvation, so through his death and resurrection many Gentiles will experience the same. In Jonah's day the repentance of the Gentile Ninevites eventually was the reason why Israel was destroyed in 722 B.C. Jesus is probably saying that another aspect of the sign is that in the same way that this occurred in Jonah's time so it will also occur in Jesus' ministry.

In other words, as Jonah's mission led to the salvation of the Gentiles and the destruction of Israel, so too did Jesus' mission lead to the salvation of the Gentiles and the destruction of Israel. Is this not the thinking of Jesus as revealed in Dr. Luke's Gospel as well as the Apostle Paul's teaching in his letter to the Romans?

Jesus says to those in Jerusalem who are rejecting Him as the Messianic King:

Luke 19:42-44: "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.

The Apostle Paul explained in Romans the salvation that has come to the Gentile pagans because of Israel's rejection of the Gospel:

^{ESV} Romans 11:11-15: So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. ¹² Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! ¹³ Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴ in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

Why does the Book of Jonah end with tension and not resolution?

^{ESV} Jonah 4:10-11: And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Because we are to reflect on the goodness, mercy and compassion of God and do the same. In fact, we are to find the goodness, mercy, and compassion of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus, we see clearly God's goodness, mercy and infinite compassion for all who repent and believe the Gospel!

Jonah is in many ways like the elder brother in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son that was taught to the Pharisees who could not and would not receive repentant sinners (Luke 15:24ff). We must receive and restore those who are lost and who have repented at the

hearing of the Gospel. We must rejoice and kill the fattened calf and thank God that one who was lost has NOW been found- -even if they are Ninevites!!

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