

# THE BOOK of JONAH:

- Almost *universally* accepted as one of the earliest prophets
- A contemporary of Joel, Amos, and Hosea
- A 'self-contained' story—like Ruth, or Job; a SINGULAR, LINEAR NARRATIVE

## 'The Outstanding Missionary Handbook of the Old Testament'

*"Jonah is the most beautiful story ever written in so small a compass. It contains [just] 48 verses, 1328 English words... [and yet here] There is growth of character, a distinct plot worked out without haste or crudity. Only a great artist could've hit on a perfect proportion between dialogue and narrative."*

**(Charles Reade, British author & playwright)**

**3 PART STUDY:  
DATA  
ABOUT JONAH  
SUMMARY  
OF JONAH  
LESSONS  
FROM JONAH**

# **DATA ABOUT JONAH:**

**In the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), the Minor Prophets (Hosea–Malachi) appear as one writing, *'The Twelve'***

**WRITTEN BY JONAH** - *"There is no persuasive reason to theorize about an unknown author."*

*"Two opposing views are held on the historicity of [this Book]... On one hand, it is regarded as an imaginative work with a moral lesson, and that the ancient prophet is chosen as its hero for his known anti-Assyrian bias... On the other hand, it is regarded as genuinely historical, and it is claimed that Jesus believed it to be so [Matthew 12, 16, and Luke 11]."*

**Dr. Graham Scroggie | 'Know Your Bible'**

# **DATA ABOUT JONAH:**

**JONAH = 'pigeon,' 'dove'**

## **ONLY MENTIONED in 2 KINGS 14:23-25:**

**"In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hepher."**

**THE ONLY O.T. PROPHET SENT TO PREACH TO THE GENTILES**

# **DATA ABOUT JONAH:**

**The BOOK doesn't CONTAIN a PROPHECY**

*"The story IS the message."*

*"[This] story is full of stereotyped characters who... do the exact opposite of what you would expect. The prophet, a man of God, rebels... The sailors, who are supposed to be immoral pagans... turn to God... The king of the most murderous empire on Earth humbles himself because of Jonah's five-word sermon... This story fits... with what we would today call satire—stories about well-known figures in extreme circumstances, using humor and irony to critique their stupidity and [flawed] characters."*

# **SUMMARY OF JONAH:**

- JNH 1:1—3: **“Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.”**
- JNH 1:17: **“[But] the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”**
- JNH 2:2: **“In my distress I called to the LORD, and He answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry.”**
- JNH 2:10: **“So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.”**
- JNH 3:3—4: **“So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh... And Jonah [entered] the city... [and] cried out, saying, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”**
- JNH 3:10: **“Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.”**
- JNH 4:1: **“it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.”**
- JNH 4:4: **“Is it right for you to be angry?”**

# **SUMMARY OF JONAH: NINEVEH**

**“Nineveh was one of the greatest cities of antiquity. With 1,200... 200-foot-high towers, and surrounded by a 100-foot-high wall [so wide] that 3 chariots could drive atop it side-by-side. 60 miles in circumference, enough corn grown inside to feed the entire population... There were magnificent palaces, with courtyards of more than 100 acres. Hanging gardens filled the city... Temples, palaces, libraries, & arsenals abounded to adorn & enrich the city beyond belief.” (Jon Courson)**



# **SUMMARY OF JONAH: NINEVEH**

**"Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery. Its victim never departs. The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots! Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear. There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses—they stumble over the corpses—because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries." (Nahum 3:1-4)**



**"THE BLOODY CITY"**

# SUMMARY OF JONAH: NINEVEH

**"Reliefs with people being impaled, decapitated, flayed, and tongues pulled out... people being made to grind the bones of their dead ancestors, and vultures plucking out the eyes of the dead!"**

**"Thousands of tablets uncovered in the Mesopotamian valley show abysmal superstition. Hundreds of sorcery incantations have been brought to light."**

(James Montgomery Boice)



**"THE BLOODY CITY"**

# SUMMARY OF JONAH: NINEVEH

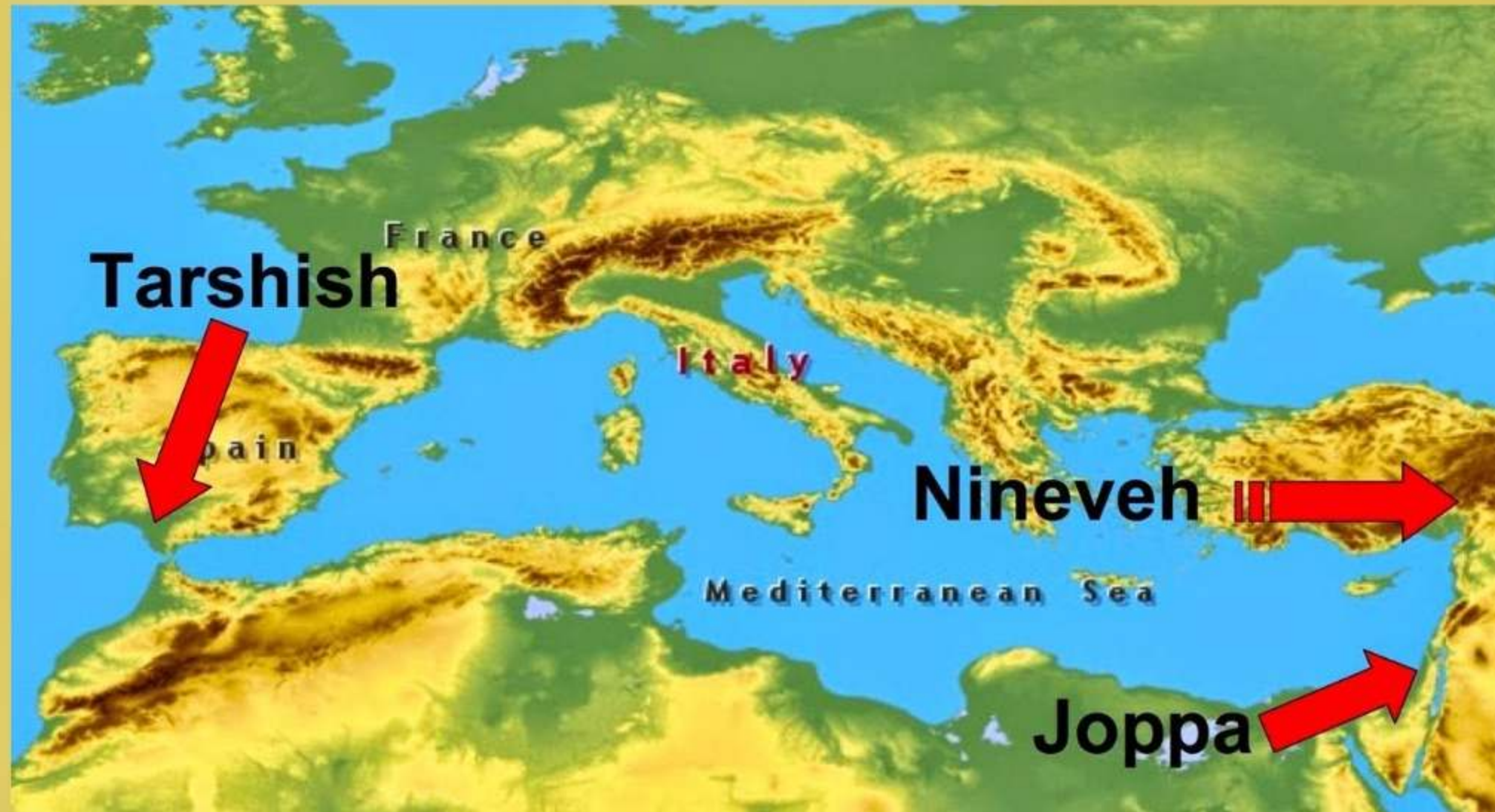
**"Imagine a Jewish man in New York during World War II hearing God say, 'I'm going to bring judgment on Germany. [But] I want you to go to Berlin and tell Nazi Germany to repent.'" (David Guzik)**



**A GOOD COMPARISON**

# SUMMARY OF JONAH:

**JNH 1:3: "Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD."**



# **SUMMARY OF JONAH:**

**JNH 1:4-12: "...the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea... so that the ship was about to be broken up. Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god... But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship... and was fast asleep."**

**VS. 7: "And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us?"**

**VS. 9: "So 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." Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them."**

**VS. 11: "Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?"—for the sea was growing more tempestuous. And he said to them:**

**"Pick me up and throw me into the sea..."**

# **SUMMARY OF JONAH:**

**JNH 1:17: "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."**



**POWERFUL OLD TESTAMENT  
PICTURE OF THE DEATH &  
RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

**MATT. 12:40: "For 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."**

**"the SIGN of the prophet Jonah" (MATT. 12:39)**

**"a greater than Jonah is here." (MATT. 12:41)**

# **SUMMARY OF JONAH: JONAH'S PRAYER**

JNH. 2:2: "Out of the belly of SHEOL I cried..."

VS. 6: "The earth with its bars closed behind me forever;  
Yet You have brought my life [up] from THE PIT..."

## **ANCIENT REFERENCES TO THE ABODE OF THE DEAD**

*"Pointing towards the Messiah... death did not hold [Jonah]; after three days and nights of imprisonment, he [will be] alive and free."*

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VS. 6: "The earth with its bars closed behind me forever;  
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**DID JONAH ACTUALLY DIE???**

MATT. 12:40: "JUST AS ['in the SAME WAY AS'] Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish"

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"Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."  
1 Cor. 15:20

"...the firstborn from the dead."  
Col. 1:18

# **SUMMARY OF JONAH: JONAH'S PRAYER**

**JNH. 2:2: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice."**

**JNH. 2:3/5: "For You cast me into the deep...The deep closed around me..."**

**JNH. 2:4: "I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple."**

**Psalms 18:6: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple."**

**Psalms 42:7: "Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me."**

**Psalms 31:22: "For I said in my haste, 'I am cut off from before Your eyes'; nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried out to You."**

**JONAH KNEW  
GOD'S WORD!**

# **SUMMARY OF JONAH:**

**JNH. 2:10: "So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land."**

**JNH. 3:1-2: "Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.'"**

**COMPARE WITH  
JONAH 1:2**

# SUMMARY OF JONAH:

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**"Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel...  
Go and make disciples..."** (Mar. 16:15 | Matt. 28:19)



**WHO  
HAVE  
WE NOT  
GONE  
TO?**

*"This fish swam from somewhere in the middle of the Mediterranean... with a human being in his belly... [all the way] BACK to the place where God wanted Jonah." (Jon Courson)*

## **SUMMARY OF JONAH:**

**JNH. 3:3: "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.**

**VS. 4: "And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!'"**

**JUST  
FIVE  
WORDS!**



# **THE REVIVAL of NINEVEH:**

**JNH. 3:5-10: "The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. [And] word came to the king... and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water... let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God... let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands." – "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it."**

**JNH. 4:11: "...that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons..."**

# THE REVIVAL of NINEVEH:

JNH. 3:5-10: "The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed their faith, put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least, down to the king... and he arose from himself with a fast and prayer."

**"MANY CLASSIFY THE  
REVIVAL WHICH JONAH  
BRINGS TO NINEVEH AS  
ONE OF THE GREATEST  
OF ALL TIME."**

...great city, in which are more than one  
hundred and twenty thousand persons..."

...the  
...he did not do it."

## THE REVIVAL of NINEVEH:

*"In the three documented cases of men being swallowed by whales, all three... emerged in the same condition. Due to the gastric juices in the stomach, they looked like hairless albinos – pure white with not even an eyelash or eyebrow to be found."* **(Jon Courson)**



# SUMMARY OF JONAH:

JNH. 4:1: **“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly,  
and he became angry.”**

*“Not only was this strange, it was very strange, because Jonah was upset at the success of his preaching... [and] the language in the original Hebrew is [very] strong.” (David Guzik)*

**Jonah = ‘The Angry Prophet’**

*“Dispositionally, Jonah is regarded as strong-willed, fretful, pouting, hasty, and clannish.”*



# **EFFECTIVENESS in MINISTRY?**

**Jonah preached 5 WORDS:**

**120,000 PEOPLE REPENT**

**JEREMIAH preached 40 YEARS:**

**0 CONVERTS**

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**“Who do the crowds say that I am?” – “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah...”**

***JESUS WAS NEVER MISTAKEN FOR JONAH!***

# AN OBJECT LESSON:

**JNH. 4:5-8: "Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side... [and] he made himself a shelter and sat under... the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the LORD... prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So, Jonah was very grateful for the plant."**

**"But, as the morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. And it happened—when the sun arose—that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. [And] he wished death for himself, and said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.'"**



# LESSONS FROM JONAH:

*"This is the first time [in the story] we see Jonah happy... Even though the plant was just a plant... Jonah had no personal... investment in the plant except for what it provided for him at the moment. When God took the plant and its... shelter away from Jonah, he missed the plant so much that he wanted to die."* **(David Guzik)**

*"Jonah is pleased because at last, after all the compassion of God for other people, God finally [did] something for Jonah. Selfish? Of course. And petty, too!"*  
**(James Montgomery Boice)**

*"Jonah allowed... a silly thing like a plant to become an idol. [And] In spite of all we... do to keep them green [in our lives], their leaves turn more and more yellow, until—at last—they droop and die."* **(F.B. Meyer)**

# LESSONS FROM JONAH:

**"In [Abraham's] seed all the nations of the earth [shall] be blessed..."**

Genesis 22:18 [*'The Abrahamic Covenant'*]

*"[This is] one of the most profound theological concepts in the [Bible]. [That] God loves ALL people and desires to share His forgiveness and mercy with them. Israel had been charged with REVEALING [this] message, but somehow did not grasp the importance of it."*

*"Instead, Israel became **NATIONALISTIC** and **EXCLUSIVISTIC**, and **REFUSED** to fulfill [their divine] mission."*

# LESSONS FROM JONAH:

*"Israel became **NATIONALISTIC** and **EXCLUSIVISTIC**,  
and **REFUSED** to fulfill [their divine] mission."*

*"This failure [of Israel... to fulfill their divine mission] led to extreme religious pride. And Jonah, [would have shared a] strong commitment to [the] same 'nationalistic' philosophy."*

**"In [the Book of] Jonah [is] the SEEDBED of New Testament Pharisaism."**

*"The object of the [Book of Jonah was] to correct [this] extreme form of Jewish nationalism... and proclaim the mercy of God for Gentiles..."*

**(Dr. Graham Scroggie)**

# **LESSONS FROM JONAH:**

**JNH. 4:2: “[Jonah] said, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.”**

**Jonah was ANGRY... because HE KNEW GOD was going to SHOW MERCY... to people that JONAH THOUGHT DIDN'T DESERVE it**

## **TWO MAIN PROBLEMS:**

**Jonah CLEARLY thought he DESERVED God's grace**

**Jonah did NOT understand the 'universal nature' of God's grace**

# LESSONS FROM JONAH:



**AMAZING**

**“Teacher, the LAW commands that [she] should  
be put to death!” (John 8:4–5)**

**THEY WERE RIGHT!**

**“Teacher, the LAW commands that [she] should  
be put to death!” (John 8:4–5)**

**HERE'S THE CONUNDRUM:**

**GOD WROTE THE LAW**

**JESUS IS GOD**

**AS GOD (WHO WROTE THE LAW)**

**JESUS CHOOSES NOT TO DO**

**WHAT THE LAW (WHICH GOD WROTE) SAID**

**INSTEAD, HE SHOWS GRACE**

**It's easy to say *"love your enemies..."* – When we ALL have a TENDENCY to SURROUND OURSELVES with people who THINK, BELIEVE, SPEAK, and PRIORITIZE EXACTLY the way WE do**

**What do we do when we are CONFRONTED by people who THINK, SPEAK, ACT, BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY from us... RELIGIOUSLY, POLITICALLY, NATIONALLY, SEXUALLY, RACIALLY?**

God asks: **“Is it right for you to be angry?”**

JNH. 4:9: **“It is right for me to be angry, even to death!”**

VS. 10: **“But the LORD said [to Jonah]: You have had pity on [a] plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And, Should I not pity Nineveh (the BLOODY city!)...”**

“Jonah CALLED on the mercy of God, and ENJOYED the mercy of God when it was extended to Jonah. But now, he RESENTS the mercy of God it when it is extended to people [Jonah thinks doesn't deserve it]. – What if God treated Jonah the way Jonah wanted God to treat the people of Nineveh?”

“It's FUN to SPECULATE on ALL THE REASONS Jonah might not have wanted to go to Nineveh... but, it's MORE important to consider why WE won't go and share the GOSPEL with people we are uncomfortable with.”

“God told Jonah to go and preach to Nineveh; [but] every Christian has the same command in Matthew Chapter 28... And, with Jonah's example before us... AS THE CHURCH... we have even LESS [of a] reason [for disobedience] than Jonah did.”

(David Guzik)

**JONAH TEACHES A POWERFUL LESSON!**