



**Title:** Jonah 180 – the God who pursues  
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## Introduction

The book of Jonah a fascinating book. A book of repentance. 180. Written 750BC, yet it has a message still relevant for us all.

Jonah 1:1–2 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

## Background

### Jo - the Super prophet

Few of the Old Testament prophets saw any fruit for their labours. Mostly they were ridiculed or ignored altogether, but still they kept going. Jonah was an exception in two ways. First, he was spectacularly successful, both at home and abroad. Second, he deeply resented the task God had appointed him and, for that reason, he ran away (or resigned).

Jonah brought a positive message from the Lord at a time of national idolatry and immorality. Jeroboam II, like the many kings before him, led his people into sin and consequent misery. Yet the Lord sees their suffering and, steps in to give relief. (God's amazing mercy) Jonah is directed to prophesy that the country's borders would be restored. That is indeed what happened. No doubt Jonah's popularity rose as he prophesied and soared off the graph as the prophecy was fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> (2 Kings 14:25-26)

### Assyria & Nineveh

Jonah 1:3 (NKJV) <sup>3</sup> But 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.

- “**They want My name, but not My presence**”

**Assyrians:** The Assyrians worshipped the vicious god Ashur and a multitude of other gods and goddesses. Assyrian brutality and cruelty **were legendary**. The Assyrians were known to impale their enemies on stakes in front of their towns and hang their heads from trees in the king's gardens. They also tortured their captives—men, women, or children—by hacking off noses, ears, or fingers, gouging out their eyes, or tearing off their lips and hands. They reportedly covered the city wall with the skins of their victims. Rebellious subjects would be massacred by the hundreds, sometimes burned at the stake. Then their skulls would be placed in great piles by the roadside as a warning to others. Jonah decided that he would rather quit the prophetic ministry than preach to such people.<sup>2</sup>

Yet God loves them!

### The backslidden prophet

**Root of the problem:** “Seek first my kingdom” - Jonah loved his own people, at the exclusion of everyone else.

Jonah and your average Christian has a lot in common.

Jonah 1:9 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> 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.”

<sup>1</sup> Mackrell, P. (2007). *Opening up Jonah* (18). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., Butler, T. C., & Latta, B. (2003). *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (942). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

## **Storms & sinking ships** - The God who stills the storm, also sends it.

Jonah 1:4–5 (NKJV) <sup>4</sup> *But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.* <sup>5</sup> *Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.*

**Disobedience leads to pain.** \*Titanic - many ships sinking. Pride.

**The effect of disobedience:** Jonah's disobedience had great effect on other lives.

## **The God who pursues**

Jonah 1:13–17 (NKJV) <sup>13</sup> *Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them.* <sup>14</sup> *Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You."* <sup>15</sup> *So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.* <sup>16</sup> *Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.* <sup>17</sup> *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.*

**We are each being chased by God.**