



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Introduction—Nineveh: The Most Cruel Capital

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2012

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Jonah 1:1-2, 3:5-9

*“And the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, 2) ‘Arise, go to Nineveh the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.’ 3:5) Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. 6) When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes. 7) And he issued a proclamation and it said, ‘In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. 8) But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way, and from the violence which is in his hands. 9) Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?’” (NASB)*

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > JUNE 6-8: JONAH 1:1-3 THE PATRIOTIC PROPHET AND GOD'S GRACE UPON HIS ENEMIES
- > JUNE 13-15: JONAH 1:3-4 THE PROPHET FLEES FROM THE CAPITAL

Jonah's name means, "dove." His father's name is equally significant, meaning, "the truth of God." Jonah had proven his prophetic office by proclaiming the truth and establishing greater peace in Israel. Even while Israel was in rebellion against God and following the idolatry established by the first king of the northern tribes of Israel, God had mercy upon them. Jeroboam II, their king, not only was granted a forty one year reign, "He restored the boarder of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was of Gath-hepher. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, which was very bitter; for there was neither bond nor free, nor was there any helper for Israel" (II Kings 14:25-26). Because he had encouraged their success in expanding their borders, Jonah, the non-controversial, patriotic prophet had all of Northern Israel rejoicing with him in his popular prophecies. Now the famous prophet from Galilee was being told by God to perform another successful mission, but he did not like it at all and showed his distain by fleeing the opposite direction!

"THE MAIN MESSAGE OF THE BOOK, ITS CENTRAL AND DOMINANT THEME, IS THAT OF THE BIBLE ITSELF. GOD'S LOVE IS EVER SEEKING TO SAVE THOSE WHO ARE RIGHTLY DOOMED TO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT."

CHARLES FEINBERG

What was Jonah known for in Israel? Is Jonah the only prophet who directly disobeys God? Why is Nineveh called a "great city?" How big was it? What was it's population? What was the "wickedness" of these people? Why had God decided to destroy it? Were there any other cities in the Old Testament that received a similar warning? Does this book describe the greatest revival in the History of the world? Does Jonah picture an entire nation in his in His insolence against God?

"THE OBJECT OF JONAH'S MISSION TO NINEVEH WAS TO COMBAT IN THE MOST ENERGETIC MANNER, AND PRACTICALLY TO OVERTHROW, A DELUSION WHICH HAD A SEEMING SUPPORT IN THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL TO BE THE VEHICLE OF SALVATION." CARL KEIL

### I. THE HISTORY OF NINEVEH

One of Shem's sons (Noah's grandson, probably born on the ark) was Asshur (Gen. 10:22), who first founded

### BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 13900 NOBLEWOOD PLAZA

THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – RT. 10&301 SHONEY'S, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA – 8<sup>TH</sup> & MAIN – 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

# Virginia

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Assyria. He probably fled from Nimrod and Babel in order to worship the God of Noah with his family and friends. Soon the wicked Nimrod (a great grandson of Noah by Ham), who had begun his kingdom with Babel and its tower in rebellion against God, “*went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh*” (Gen. 10:10-12). This seems to be the first conquering act of war after the destruction of mankind by the flood because of their evil and violence. Nineveh eventually became Assyria’s chief city and capital. There was perpetual war between Assyria and Babylonia from the time of Nimrod until Assyria was finally defeated about 609 BC. That war probably began by those seeking to serve the God of Noah constantly being oppressed by those who followed Nimrod and served his gods. In the bitterness of the conflict, they all turned to false gods and Abraham (born @ 2135-25 BC) is called out by God to serve Him again with his family.

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“BETWEEN THE TIME OF NIMROD AND JONAH (ABOUT 14 CENTURIES), THERE HAD BEEN MANY CHANGES IN THE REGION WITH ALMOST PERPETUAL FIGHTING AND MOVEMENTS AMONG THE NATIONS.”  
HENRY MORRIS

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### II. THE HORROR OF NINEVEH

The entire history of Assyria is filled with a reign of violence, terror, torture and killing conquered peoples and they proudly carried home parts of their enemies’ bodies as souvenirs of war. The king of Nineveh would usually bring the severed head of a recently conquered king home, raise it on a pole in the midst of his royal banquet commemorating his victory and finally put it over the gate of Nineveh where it slowly rotted away. The opposing generals would get even worse treatment. “The Elamite general, Dananu, was flayed alive, then bled like a lamb; his brother had his throat cut,

and his body was divided into pieces which were distributed over the country as souvenirs. It never occurred to Ashurbanipal (the Assyrian king) that he and his men were brutal; these clean cut penalties were surgical necessities in his attempt to remove rebellions and establish discipline among the . . . turbulent peoples, from Ethiopia to Armenia, and from Syria to Media, whom his predecessors had subjected to Assyrian rule; it was his obligation to maintain this legacy intact. He boasted of the peace that he established in his empire, and of the good order that prevailed in its cities; and the boast was not without truth.”<sup>1</sup> There seemed to be no act of cruelty which these conquerors had not employed!

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“OUT OF THE WHOLE CATALOGUE OF THEIR SINS,  
CONSCIENCE SINGLED OUT VIOLENCE.”  
ALBERT BARNES

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### III. THE HARDNESS OF JONAH

Though Israel had not yet been conquered by the Assyrians, they had come close and the expansion of Israel’s borders which Jonah had pursued earlier was only made possible because the Assyrians had killed or carried away captive the peoples around them. Jonah feared the Assyrians as much as any of the people of his day and wanted nothing to do with the criminal empire and was delighted that God would destroy them in forty short days! This patriotic prophet had more pity on a plant than on an entire city containing more than 120,000 children who didn’t know their right hand from their left!

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“THEIR WICKEDNESS IS COME UP BEFORE ME.’ THIS PICTURE OF NINEVEH MAKES ONE THINK OF THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMMORAH.” CHRISTIAN WEISS

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<sup>1</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Part 1, Our Oriental Heritage*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 269.

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Have you repented of your sin or are you still under the judgment of God?
- 2) Are you more interested in your own patriotism and comfort than the multitude of lost souls around the world?
- 3) We will thank God for all eternity that He has pity! But do we?