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Jonah - Not a Children's Story

Main Verses: ````html`

- [Jonah 1:1](#)
- [Jonah 4:2](#)
- [Jeremiah 1:2](#)
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- [2 Kings 14:23-25](#)
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- [1 Kings 18:27](#)
- [Exodus 34:6](#)

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home. Today, I want to talk about and actually start a journey into into a very exciting book known as the book of Jonah. Yeah, I hear you guys excited too. That's great. No, it's okay. You don't have to fake it. I know Jonah is not really the most exciting book that we have ever wanted to get up in the morning and say, you know what? I want to read about a big old fish today. But the book... is about more than that. A lot more, and we're going to talk about that today. And first things first, I want to show you guys

resources because I may say some stuff today that you're going to be like, that's not what I believe. And that's okay. I didn't believe it either at one point in my life. We're all still learning and growing depending on what information we have and what God is putting before us and so on and so forth. So I like to give resources. That way, if you're upset with me, you don't have to stay upset with me. You can stay upset with the people who taught me. Right? It's a blame game. And so here's a few sources. If you guys are interested in studying one of the shortest books of the Bible... I mean, this is like takes you three or four minutes to read. It's a fantastic little read. But I know all of you guys have actually read it instead of watching VeggieTales. The first one is Dr. Walter Brueggemann. If you have not heard of Walter Brueggemann, he is like, he's 84 years old, 85 years old. And he is literally like the Yoda of Old Testament theological theology. This is what he's been doing his whole life. He's devoted his life to God, to Yeshua, and writing books about the wonders of God's Word. And so a very fantastic, awesome, fantastic commentary is in his theological introduction to the Old Testament under the section of Jonah. Definitely worth checking out if you really want to dig in. Another one is John Walton. You guys know John Walton? Yeah. You should know John Walton. I talk about John Walton a lot. John Walton's awesome. John Walton loves to slay sacred cows, but in a way that's actually edifying. And so in the Zonament Bible Backgrounds commentary, under the section of Jonah, John Walton did the introduction to that. Awesome thing to check out. Also, Dr. Tim Mackey. You may know Dr. Tim Mackey from such things that are very popular now, like the Bible Project. Any of you guys ever seen the Bible Project? Go to the little links here. Ed Every single person needs to go home today and Google the Bible Project and spend four minutes watching one of his little videos. He is a college professor, a seminary student. And he's awesome. He did a whole series on Jonah that was very edifying to me. And he was one of the resources I used. And of course, Jack Sasson, which he wrote a commentary on Jonah that had a few cool things in it. So these are some great resources if you actually want to dive in and geek out on Jonah a little bit because I know that's what everybody wants to do at the beginning of their day. And so we know the story of Jonah, right? The story of Jonah goes something like, there was Jonah and he was a prophet. And God told the prophet, you need to go to the Las Vegas of the ancient Near East. And you need to walk in there and you need to tell those guys to repent. For I am God and I want you to do this. And Jonah got scared because he doesn't want to go to Nineveh. He's afraid for his life and whatnot. And so he decides to, depending on which children's book you've derived the story from, he either snuck on a ship or he purchased the ticket on the ship honestly, which is actually what the Bible says. And he boards the ship and he takes off for Tarshish. And on the way to Tarshish, the waves break up, and there's a huge change in the weather, and the sailors that he's boarding with, they're actually not sailors, most of us know them as the pirates, who don't do anything, right? The pirates who don't do anything. Most of us know the story with them in it, and they finally chuck him overboard, and And then they're trying to come and get him because he's a hose overboard. And they're trying to get him back in. And then a big whale or fish, mainly a whale in our stories, swallows him. And he finds himself for three or four days in the belly of a fish. And he's kind of making a little apartment down there. You know, he's making a little chair out of like squid beaks and fish guts and stuff. And he has this little candle out and he's reading his Bible, repenting to God in the belly of the whale. until he repents and God accepts his repentance and you know causes the the fish to throw up God uses that term to vomit a lot throughout Scripture and and and I can't help but think it's like kind of on purpose and so in this story I think it is and he vomits them up on the shore and and Jonah is of course yay God yay me I am righteous now I am forgiven and I am gonna

do my duty and be in the profit of to this big bad city because no weapon formed against me, Father. That's right. I'm going in there like a boss and I'm going to make these guys repent. And he walks in the city and the whole city repents and everybody gets saved and God loves everybody and Jonah's a good person and now we're a good person and the end of the story happily ever after with rainbows and unicorns and so on and so forth. Anybody ever heard this story of Jonah growing up? That's the story that we grow up. Those are the stories that are in our children's books and on our televisions and in the back of our minivan television screens when we're driving long distances. And this story that I just told you does not appear in its wholeness anywhere in the Word of God. The story of Jonah... It's not a children's story. It wasn't made. It wasn't written for children. It was written for very mature audiences. And it was written for a mature audience that God wanted to mature more. And that's what we're going to be speaking about today. The story of Jonah is a very complex book, even though it's so small. And it's subversive and it's filled with conviction. If you read it, I believe like the author writes it to be read by. And when we take stories in the Bible, which we commonly do because we want to teach our children about the Bible and so we want to pave a great foundation for them... and I'm not pointing fingers because I am guilty of this. We tend to take stories... that have a very mature subject matter, and what do we do to feed them to our children so that they have a foundation? We water them down, and we take the things that aren't so great, and that's too much for you, son. You don't need to read them. We take that, and we water the stories down, and so we make all the stories pretty much seem like, okay, you need to just be a nice guy and say thank you and please and don't hit people and don't say bad words, and you'll be a good believer because that's what the story represents. Noah's flood. I was listening to a podcast with a couple of professors, people with doctors in front of their names who have spent their life studying the Bible, and they were discussing how to teach your children about the Bible. And there is no right or wrong way, as you can guess, but they were talking about how they're conflicted at times for such stories as Noah's Ark. I mean, I got that painted on my son's wall. What are you talking about? What's wrong with Noah's Ark? And essentially, it's the story, if you don't know anything about the Bible and you tell the story of Noah's Ark, and one professor was saying, remember, the child doesn't know anything about the Bible, right? Knows about God, knows prayers because he hears us pray. But now I'm going to tell you a story about our God, and it's basically a story that God got really ticked off of the world and drowned everybody. The end. And Noah was saved. I mean, just to put it bluntly. And so I found that very interesting because I've never thought about that. And so how is it that we're supposed to take the stories we need to teach our children as a foundation, but not water down stories that don't need to be watered down, but do we think those stories are too mature? And it was just a very interesting paradox. Because Scripture tells us to teach our children. I'm going off on a tangent, and I apologize. But is that not interesting? An interesting point of view, whether we agree or disagree with it. Jonah, if you've ever read Jonah, or if you're going to read it this afternoon and not tell anybody, it's a quick read, and you will find that it is a very mature book, especially after we discuss it today.

Jonah, I'll go ahead and give you a heads up. Jonah is a book that shows the small-heartedness and rebellion of God's people. In contrast, it shows the small-heartedness and rebellion of us, you and me, in contrast to the greatness and totality of who God is and his compassion and mercy and love and agenda for the world. And that's the biggest way I can sum up the book of Jonah. Because the book of Jonah is supposed to be convicting when you read it. And it's fascinating. But we tend to just pass over it and gloss over it because we've heard it so many times and we end up making the entire book about Jonah and one

other, basically protagonist, like one other main character in the book. Who is it? Jonah and the, and there's like two verses that mention the whale. I mean, come on. I guess it was a big part in the story, but the whale was not a main character. It was just something that happened. But we make the whole book about that, and it's fascinating because as I listen to other teachers talk about their struggles with it being infused in us as a children's book and not really relevant to us, they talk about how, you know, have you ever read your child the children's book? And I'm, VeggieTales and everything, and they're like, they leave the entire fourth chapter out of the book for the children's story. And I'm like, they're right. I've never noticed that. Like the fourth chapter when Jonah is arguing with God about how merciful he is and how God shouldn't be so loving and merciful to everyone. He should just be loving and merciful to him and his people and the people that are his and that maybe keep his tour. Why is God so loving to everybody else? You're not supposed to love our enemies as much as you love me, God. And the book does not end in a happy ending. It just ends there. Turn the page. Michael, I mean, what? The author of Jonah was a genius in his literature and the way he wrote because the book is supposed to be convicting towards us and it's supposed to cause us to think and it's supposed to say, wow, is that how I am? And I'm really excited to read this story. And I want to build this up because I'm kind of, I'm excited to go further into the story. But you have to allow me to geek out a little bit to tell you about the book and what we know about the book and how it was written. But I'm really excited about Jonah because Jonah is a book in the what? In a collection of literature and poems and narratives and such. The Bible. It's a book that's in the Bible, and the Bible is the word of who? God. It's the Word of God. So I'm excited to read a story that is the Word of God, but it's also a piece of a larger collection of the Word of God. Why? Because the Word of God is the story, as believers we believe from Genesis to Revelation, it is the story of essentially Yeshua and how God came and poured out the radical love, radical forgiveness, radical grace of the world and established his kingdom on earth through the person of Yeshua. And that's what the Bible is about. It's a story about God's love for us. And I know sometimes I talk and people are like, man, Matt, you sure do sound like you're in church. No, I'm just reading the Bible. And that's who our God is. And we make the mistake of picking out one angle of who our God is one piece of his personality and we make the mistake of forming that as our image of God of who we view him as and That is wrong because there are many aspects of who our God is. He's not some simple mortal He is greater and so I'm very excited about going forward in the story because of that and and so as we dive into this book of Jonah and We're going to see how the story of the book of Jonah, and I'm going to give you like a spoiler alert. The story of the book of Jonah is about God's redemptive grace and mercy. And we're going to see how we as the people who are supposed to be carrying that same mercy to the world are selfishly holding it back as if we own the resource. And so if you turn with me, if you have your scriptures, you can turn with me to Jonah. and turn to chapter 1, whether you have one of the cell phone Bibles or Bibles or whatnot. I have my verses here. And we're going to start in the very first verse as we explore this wonderful book known as Jonah. Let me know when you guys get there. I heard a couple uh-huhs. And I see a couple people. I'm not going to stare at you for long, but I see a couple people who just, I mean, maybe I didn't bring it. That's fine. I'll have a verse. So you guys got it. So I want you to put your finger on verse 1. Are you ready for verse 1? You ready? Here we go. I'm going to read it. And it says, Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Stop. He didn't say stop. I'm telling you to stop. We're going to set up a gate right here, and we're just going to gate around this one verse right now because it's very important because Verse 1 is trying to tell us something. What is

verse 1 trying to tell us about the story that we're supposed to read? That the word of the Lord came to a prophet. Can we say prophet? A prophet by the name of Jonah, right? And so this is a book of prophecy, right? It's a book of poetic prophecy, like Isaiah and Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Amos and Micah. I mean, it starts out the same way. Jeremiah 1-2 says, The word of the Lord came in the days of Jerusalah, the king of Ammon, king of Judah. The word of the Lord came. Isaiah 38-4 says the same thing. Ezekiel 1-3 starts out with the same thing. The word of the Lord came explicitly to Ezekiel. Micah 1-1, next page over, Micah. The word of the Lord came to Micah. So this is how all of the other books in the Bible that display and record prophetic poetry, if you will, start out. But something is wrong with this book, and we're soon going to see in the next few verses, something's wrong in the book of Jonah because it's not a prophet writing the book. It's not the prophet writing the words of the Lord that came to him. And so right off the bat, it's throwing us for a loop. It's like, this isn't how the other prophetic books start out. Why is this one starting out this way? I'm going to assert that the writer or the author of the book of Jonah intentionally does things throughout the book to make us go... Well, that's a little weird, but okay. And as we keep reading through the book, I'm going to assert that this was done intentionally to get your attention and grab your attention more. You see, the book of Jonah is the only book in the Bible that is written about a prophet. We have lots of books written by a prophet, right? Thus saith the Lord. But this is the book that's a story about a prophet. And so right then and there, it's very unique in its setup. And we think that it's going to be a prophetic word, but as we lead, it goes into a storyline, which is kind of weird, but entertaining. We like stories. Who likes stories? You guys are so excited about this, I know. So let's just jump in. We're about to jump into the next verse. And I'm going to quote Dr. Walter Bergman, one of the guys I really look up to in a lot of his research. I don't agree with everything, but who does? I like the way that he approaches the Bible. And he says something. He says that, I have it here. He says that when reading the book of Jonah, we need to ask two questions. Number one, just like any other book of the Bible, we need to ask what type of literature are we reading when we open the book of Jonah. So when we open up Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, we know that we're reading kind of like a biography of who Yeshua was. When we open up Genesis, we know that we're reading different types of narratives, a lot of different poetry, a narrative that's going on. Song of Solomon, erotic poetry. I mean, there's all kinds of different... types of literature in the Bible. And so it's important that before we go to read it, we don't want to open up Song of Solomon and be like, this is going to be an autobiography about someone. Mm-mm. And so what type of literature is Jonah? And number two, what type of character is Jonah? Who is this guy? And we're going to learn more. Now, there's many opinions on Jonah, and this was something I've been studying for a little while, and I just recently was reignited in my passion about this book because of the impact it can have in our lives. There's many opinions about the book of Jonah in Christian academia and scholarship. Many different opinions, but there's two big ones, two big ones. Two big ones that either falls under this one or falls under that one. And the first one is that the book of Jonah is a historical narrative. There's many Orthodox Christian scholars that believe it's a historical account of Jonah and Nineveh. And it's at least semi-historical. Obviously, there's some stuff in there that's exaggerated for the story, but it's a mainline story about Jonah going to Nineveh. And despite some of the negatives of that, it does have its pros and its opinion, if you're interested. And the other opinion is more popular than not, is that Jonah has something more in it. It's something more than simply a story about someone. There's something more that if we get our fingertips in and we scratch a little bit and we can dig up under, we might find something that's a lot bigger than we

realized. We might find something that's a lot bigger than four chapters. Now, when we think of four chapters, Jonah is not like four JR Token chapters. I mean, this is like four paragraphs, basically. I mean, it barely takes up a page, page and a half. And so what they suggest is that... They tend to call this type of book, this opinion, a parable narrative. Basically, meaning that it is a story that is a parable. And it's meant to give a deeper meaning so that we can apply it to our lives. And the opinion is that it is actually satire. That the book of Jonah is heavily satire. In the fact that there is one person that is constantly hitting a brick wall, almost to a point where it's comedy, but you don't want to laugh because it's the word of God. You don't want to snicker at stuff. But things just keep happening, and it's just like, what? Why is that happening? And of course that main character is Jonah. I heard one of the guys I was listening to speak about, yeah, the opinion is basically it's like a Saturday Night Live episode where you have a satire and you have, you know, typically you're laughing at someone who depicts something about you, but you're laughing at it, and it's actually you're laughing at yourself. American culture, for example. And so that's the opinion. Yeah. It's fascinating. I didn't understand that opinion. How can someone say that it's a parable narrative? We know it's history when I was doing these studies a while back. And then I started looking into details in the book of Jonah, and it's fascinating because the author of the book of Jonah really... He didn't give a lot of details in the book. For example, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah. I mean, everybody who's mentioning historical accounts, and if they mention a king, they mention the name of the king, and they mention all the people in the kingdom about the king, right? You know who the king they're talking about is because obviously they're talking about the truth of a historical account of what's going on, the message of God that they're giving. And then in the story of Jonah, we have the king of Nineveh. Do you guys know what Nineveh was? Nineveh was the biggest, baddest capital of Assyria. It was re... What's it called when you rebuild something? You re... not renew it. What is it? Reconstruct? When you take your house and make it better. Renovate. Remodel. Thank you. Remodel. Renovate. Renovate. Forgive my words. King Asher Nassar-Pal the second, it was a 9th century king in Assyria, he's the one who renovated Achala and Nineveh and made them really big and awesome, put lots of statues in them and just made them beautiful. So of course this book was, or at least the account of Jonah is somewhere in the 7th century. But they were the biggest, baddest culture and kingdom that had oppressed Israel for hundreds of years and really oppressed the northern kingdom when God sent them to take them away and scatter them. And so you have to remember who this was. This was... Nineveh, the capital of the United States of America in the ancient Near East. And the author's writing about this story, and he's trying to get a point across to the readers. And when he mentions the king of Nineveh, I don't think it was by mistake. He said, just the king of Nineveh. Didn't even mention his name. Wow, what if I wanted to know his name? Maybe the writer thought it wasn't important because that's not what he was focusing on. And so, as we go further, I want to invite you guys, whether your opinion is that it's a historical account or that it's a parable narrative, either way, I want to assert that we're going to find a lot of satire in the book. And that's going to further what the message of the book is about. Okay. Everybody good? Everybody's good? Okay. Fantastic. I'm excited to get into it. So, how many of you guys have... have ever heard of Jonah as a satire? Anybody? Anybody ever even considered reading the book as kind of like a satire? So it's going to have a lot of really exaggerated things in it, a lot of big stuff, explosions that probably wouldn't normally happen in a regular story. Anyone ever remember that, what is it, Adam West Batman? And so Batman comes in, and if you've ever seen a fight, and you punch someone, I mean, it's dramatic, right? Right? But not with

the Adam West Batman. If you punch someone, the screen explodes into colors. Bam! Wow! Boom! And that's to further exaggerate the messing up of Joker, right? The word gadol in Hebrew, which means big or high priest, gadol, or the talit, gadol, right? Big, big, big. is most used in this book than like anywhere else in the Bible. Big, big, big, big ship, big sea, big fish, big city, big, big, big. Everything's big. And I want you to notice that when we begin reading this in this series. And so I picked out and I just random, like I kind of random, these aren't the best examples. Oh, I forgot to put it up on the screen. Here we go. Here is an example of light satire in the Bible. So can I can we go on this journey real quick? Okay, i'm glad I have your permission because you can't go anywhere hear this word you cows of bashan Everybody say heifers heifers cows of bashan. Who are you who are on this mountain of samaria? So he's talking about cows on samaria, right? Come to bethel and transgress to gilgal and multiply your transgression bring your sacrifices every morning your tithes every three days I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. So you have cows with shiny teeth. I So God is speaking about, he's talking to a bunch of cows in Samaria, but if you read the chapter, he's not. He's talking to the people who live in Samaria, and the husbands are not very good husbands, and the rich women that live on Samaria are not repentant in their ways, and so God decides to call them the Hebrew word heifers. You bunch of heifers. All this stuff I've done to you, clean teeth, I mean everything. You're not going to return to me. Now some of us would snicker when we read that if we understand the context. It's a type of light satire. It's just kind of thrown in there. Amos was full of it. Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord. Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord. Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light. And so he's going to describe to us how the day of the Lord is going to be prophetically, right? As if a man fled from a lion. Anyone ever fled from a lion? Anyone ever pretend like they fled? Anyone fled from a mad cat before? I fled from an angry cat before. You know the cat I'm talking about I fled from before, right? So this is a cat, and I... A lion, much more dramatic. As if a man fled from a lion, and then a bear met him. Oh, goodness! You can just see it in like a show. And then a bear met him, or went into a house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. Dagnabbit! This is how the day of the Lord is going to be for you. Or if we really, can we read the word of God today? I want your permission to read the word of God today. Thank you. So on Mount Calmar, there was a famous incident where Elijah the prophet went up and he was going to slay the 450 prophets of Baal, right? And he has a competition. He doesn't just kill them. He has a competition on whose God is greater because he knows his God is going to be greater and Baal-Hadad is not going to be that great of a God, right? Because he doesn't exist. But all these Israelites have converted and started worshiping him. So they, of course, they build the two pillars of fire and everything's happening. And the prophets of Baal are screaming to Baal-Hadad saying, hey, bring down your fire. I know he's coming. And they're looking at Elijah like, just wait a second. He's coming. He's like, yay, come on. Like they're dancing, cutting themselves, screaming. And Elijah is mocking them. All right. If someone's being mocked in a story, it's not good or bad. It's just that it adds to satire type of literature. And do we remember what Elijah says to them about their God? You gave me permission. And at noon, Elijah mocked them saying, cry. for he is a God, obviously. Either he's musing or maybe he's going to the bathroom and just, you know, maybe he got stuck or something. He'll be out here in a few minutes. Maybe your God's just relieving himself. Don't worry. Just keep cheering. Oh, he'll hear you in the bathroom and come out running. Oh, sorry, guys. You know, maybe he went on a walk. Perhaps he's asleep and he must be awakened. We're not supposed to laugh at the Bible, but this was written specifically for us to kind of like, that's right. through the story with this guy who just keeps

making the wrong choices over and over and over again, and calamity after calamity, you know, he goes on a ship, they waste his ticket fare, he's out to sea, big storm, then he falls asleep, and then the crew is, you know, all mad and everything, and then they realize he's the one, and then he's like, I'm it, so he wants to do this self-sacrificial junk because he doesn't want to go to Nineveh and he'd rather die, so he jumps into the sea and Finally, he'll get his way because he's about to die. No, no. The whale catches him, prevents him from dying somehow, which way or another. And then he is stuck in the belly of a fish. And then he's still forced to go to Nineveh, walk in there to where he doesn't want to go. And he gives the shortest sermon. The sermon that he gives to the Ninevites is like, depending on how you count the Hebrew words, four or five Hebrew words. It is shorter than the command God told him to go to Nineveh. and he gives this sermon, fine, there, I did it, and he walks out, and everybody in this town repents. If that wasn't bad enough for him and his agenda, because he didn't want to go, and we're going to talk about that in a minute, why he didn't want to go, not only did the people repent, the cows repented and put on sackcloth and ashes. The animals of the city repented along with the people of Nineveh. And so he's just over here like, And he goes back out of the city and sits on the hill and he sits down watching the city as if it's going to be obliterated and he just ends up just telling God, I just want to die. I don't want to be here. I hate this. I hate this. I hate this. This is wrong. I want to die. But then the story that drags the reader through this is intentionally supposed to turn the finger that we're pointing at Jonah's and, ah, you're such a bad guy. You're such a wrong person. You're misrepresenting God and you're not faithful at all. And you're barely repented at times. Gosh, I'm glad I'm not like you. And it turns the finger around on you. Indiana Jones or Star Wars? Indiana Jones, raise your hand if you like Indiana Jones. Okay, Star Wars? It's the worst of the examples. So remember in The Force Awakens, right, when Han Solo finally gets rekindled with his son, right, and he meets his son face-to-face, and it's been so long, and his son, you guys know what I'm talking about? Right? And he meets his son face-to-face, and he's fixing to give his son a hug, and his son looks like he's fixing to give him a hug, and they're going to be father and son forever and ever, and the story's going to be a happy ending, and this is wonderful, and we know exactly what's going to happen, and then Okala Rin, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, That's how the story of Jonah is supposed to be to the readers. You're supposed to read it, and it's supposed to be going one way, and yes, I got this. Yeah, Jonah, I know how this ends. This is great. And then the lightsaber comes out at the end. When you read the story of Jonah, because I know everyone is probably going to run home and reread it this afternoon, think of that. Okay? Okay. So we're finally back to Jonah 1.1, and it's now—go back here— Oh, yeah, I had a little joke in here. I missed it. You guys know why I love Jonah so much? Because just like I love John 11:35, it's my favorite verse. That's why Jonah is my favorite book because it's the shortest book of the Bible. I love it. So here we go. So now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai. You guys know what Jonah means. We're going to start the satiric, the satire narrative now. So you guys know what the word Jonah means, right? It means dove. Beautiful, white, graceful, just like the one that came out of heaven for Yeshua, just the dove, right? Jonah. Dove. Son of Amittai. So Amittai comes from the root Amen, which could either mean truth or it could also mean, it's also used throughout Scripture in compound words to mean faithful or faithfulness. So let's just choose that word. Jonah the faithful. More like a hawk, you know what I mean? Like a vulture. I mean, just, what? What? And so right off the bat, we have the author kicking us into gear because Jonah is a real person. Of course, we know that Jonah is a real person. And he's mentioned in the Bible elsewhere. You guys know where? It's in 2 Kings 14, 23. And this is the

only other place in the Bible. Where is it? What do we got? Let's see here. Yeah, it's hard to read. Where Jonah is mentioned. And so this incident right here predates the book of Jonah by quite a bit. And so when the author of Jonah was writing this story, this character fits and it's wonderful. So it says that in the 15th year of Amaziah, the son of Joash, the king of Judah, Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king of Samaria and reigned 41 years. Do you guys remember who Jeroboam was? Jeroboam was a really good guy, right? Who rebelled against the monarchy of Israel and split the entire kingdom in half and didn't want 10 out of the 12 tribes to go back to Jerusalem to worship. So he set up Tel Dan and the other place with the two golden calves and put in a mock priesthood. That was Jeroboam. Okay, so you guys set? We're good? And he did evil in the sight of the Lord. He did what? Not a good guy. Worse than his father. This is Jeroboam II, right? Or than his ancestor. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin. This is who it's referring back to. This is who he's named after. He restored the territory of kingdom from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of Arabah, according to the word of the Lord of Israel, which he had spoken through his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath-Hephar. And so this is God's attempt to try to help Israel out. But nevertheless, before the book of Jonah was written, this was who Jonah was. Jonah was the prophet that went and gave a good report of land expansion to the evilest king that ever ruled over the northern kingdom. In fact, it's at the end of Amos and Amos 7 that he's actually talking about when he's hinting at Assyria coming in and taking back all the land around Samaria, which this prophecy set up. So Jonah's prophecy set up, and it was short-lived because of their sinning. It was minus what would not have happened type of thing. But the divine Lord orchestrated it, but all the same, Jonah, before the book of Jonah was written... When the people first opened up the book of Jonah and saw Jonah, they thought of that guy, that guy. Couldn't have been a prophet to, like, Judah or somewhere else. Sure, I mean, obviously it's what God spoke to him, but to Jeroboam? And so that's just a little bit of history to get you rooted to enter into the book, and so on and so forth. Okay. And so we have this book starting out, and it's Jonah receiving the word of the Lord. And the next verse is Jonah 2, which I don't have up there. You can turn to verse 2. It's right there next to your finger. Just slide your finger down a half inch. And God tells Jonah, he says, Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me. So God wants Jonah, this Jonah, to go to Nineveh, this wicked city, a city that their violence and their evil has come up before him. And Nineveh was pretty bad folk. I was going to throw in some, like, reliefs. from the Battle of Lachish and so on and so forth that Assyria recorded. It was a battle that Assyria recorded of them defeating a Judean city and exiling all the people out. And the reliefs that they have on their wall that they had in their palaces and such, when you walk in, you see all these things where of them getting bodies carved in the wall, the Judeans up on spikes, right? So to show them off, or the pyramids of heads that they would put up outside the cities, the decapitated heads to show that they'd been there, or they have reliefs of them getting knives out to start filleting and skinning the people that they had conquered. Assyrians were not these great homeboy, like, these are evil folk, right? And... And yeah, and so in verse 3, we continue. But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and he went down to Joppa, the port in Israel, and found a ship to go to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. And so Jonah is about to run away from the mission that God told him. So notice that God told him to go, and he went, but he went down, and he pulled his wallet out and said, I'm going. I'm going. and away from there. And we're going to discuss that in just a minute. Just to give you guys kind of a map, if you're interested.

So here is Israel, and this is about where Joppa is, right there. Okay, everybody see that? That little land right there is Israel. And about 500 or so miles northeast is Nineveh, the capital of Assyria at the time. That red dot up there. Tarshish is not just like over here in Greece or down in Egypt or in Africa. Tarshish is way over here at the tip of Spain. This is the end of the known world. Jonah, if he knew about America, he would have went to America. He went to as far as he possibly could, 2,500 miles or so, whatever, way over here. How was Jonah running? Why did he want to get away so bad? And so I always like with, and maybe when I present things that are more academic, I like to watch how other teachers have presented them to make sure I'm not presenting it wrong or I don't say something or misspeak or whatnot. And I came across one guy that was talking about, you know, Jonah knew the Ninevites were horrible people and that he was scared and he didn't want to go there because he might die Right. Do you guys think you might die if you walked in there and be like, hey guys, you guys need to repent Might die and so this this this guy was asserting that Jonah was saying that you know Jonah didn't want to go to the city of Nineveh because he was scared for his life and he was scared that they might kill him or fillet him or chop him up or whatever and And that is simply not true when we read the book of Jonah. It never says that he's scared of the Ninevites, or it never says that he didn't want to go because he was scared. I mean, God, I'd love for them to be saved. That'd be great. We can have a Holy Ghost moment, baptism, the whole thing. That'd be awesome, but... But I'm too scared to go. We'll just go to the end of the book, spoiler alert. In Jonah chapter 4, it says this. After the whole incident, this is what Jonah is yelling at God saying. He says, So Jonah was mad, right? And guess who he's mad at? Who do you think? He's mad at God. And he prayed to the Lord and said, Oh, Lord, is not this what I said? He's mad, right? Is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish, because I knew the Ninevites were going to kill me. I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and that you would essentially bestow your grace and mercy on the Ninevites. That's not what I watched in that movie with the asparagus and tomato. Not that I remember. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh because he knew God's love was the most unstoppable power that the world had ever seen. He's quoting actually Exodus when God said, I am abounding in mercy and love and so on and so forth after he gave the tour at the bottom of Sinai. And Jonah's up here like, I knew that your love would overcome and I didn't want to go. Well, why wouldn't you want to go, Jonah? Because he didn't want the Ninevites to experience the grace and the mercy and the love of the Heavenly Father. Remember I was talking about that lightsaber? Yeah, look at you. We're going to talk about this in a few weeks, but how many of you guys have someone that if you had the opportunity to speak the Word of God to and to tell someone about the mighty God that you serve and how... Trespasses in your life can be forgiven, and with his spirit they can be overcome, and you can be remade into a new creation and raised to life in the Son of God. How many of us have that one person that we're like, meh, meh, I don't like them. I don't like them. Some scholars, and I appreciate this, whether I agree or not, these are just opinions. Some scholars believe that the book of Jonah was actually written in the Persian period. So after the Babylonian exile ended, after Assyria had come and gone, the Babylonians took them over, and after the Babylonians took all of Judea into captivity, and after the Persians came and they ended the exile, they didn't end the exile, they still had control over Judea. They just allowed the Jews to go back to Judea as a Persian-governed province, if you will. And so you have all these, if this is true, if you have all of these Judeans going back to their homes, and they might be kind of mad because if you're going back from a life of imprisonment and slavery and you're the second generation of that,

do you like the people who took your parents out of their home? Probably not. So you're going back home with a chip in your shoulder about Assyrians, Babylonians, probably even still about Persians. And then here comes this book, this divinely inspired book that comes out and talks about, guess what? I'm sorry you're upset that God loves the people you hate just as much as he loves you. But your job in the beginning was to be a light to all nations. And don't think just because you had a bad experience with some person that you can forfeit that vocation to not continue spreading the message of reconciliation that God has not just for you, Jonah. Quit being racist. Not just for you, Jonah, but for the entirety of his own creation.

Because that is what Israel was charged to do. That is what our vocation is. The book of Jonah is not something to mess around with because it's filled with points and lessons that are to this caliber. God calls Jonah to go. And as I said before, he does go, but he doesn't fulfill the commandment to go to Nineveh. He doesn't fulfill the thing that God told him to do. He gets his money, he hops on a boat, pays for his fare, and he gets off on his mission trip to Tarshish. Just keeps going. How many of us have ever heard the call of God in our life? Um... How many of us have ever heard God speak to us in our life? Maybe even during this time, during this season of Elul. How many of us have heard the Father speak to us and say, you know what? I know that you have a plan for your life. And I know that you have all these big ideas for your life. And I know that you probably want to be a big old bad famous prophet like Jonah, right? But you don't get to pick and choose what I use you for if you have committed yourself to me. That was Jonah's mistake. Jonah was a prophet, heard from God, right? We don't know the backstory of what happened between 2 Kings and here, but he was picking and choosing what he was trying to do to mold his own career as a prophet of God. I will go speak to them, them, then you want northern tribes, I'll go speak to them, southern tribes, I will go prophesy to the evil king of the north, I'll go there, right? Golden calves and everything, let me do it. Nineveh, mm-mm, that's on my resume, I'm incapable of, nope, yes, Jonah. Because you're mine. We talked about that a couple weeks ago. You're mine. Some of us may say, I'm not a prophet. You might not be, but you're a follower of Yeshua, right? Very enthusiastic. Awesome to hear. Are you a follower of Yeshua? Amen! Which means you've been bought. You've been redeemed. Which means you're His. You're a believer in His kingdom. You're a covenant member in His kingdom. Which means your vocation hasn't changed. It's to be a messenger of reconciliation, just like Paul says, and to be a light unto the nations. Priest, if you will, to the world. Amen. On God's behalf. Where do we get off trying to put the energy into molding how we want our life to look like when the reality is if we've truly given it away to the king of kings, it's no longer ours. Despite how badly we may disagree with his decisions at times. David disagreed with a lot of stuff God did. But you don't run. You listen and you obey. Very simple. The Shema, right? We listen and obey. We hear and obey. And so this is kind of an introduction to the book, and I hope you guys will go home and read it this afternoon. How many of you guys are going to read it this afternoon? Three. Fantastic. How many of you guys are going to read the book of Jonah this afternoon? Raise your hand. Make a vow. Okay, you're done. You've got to do it. Ben is turning two in two weeks. And one of the most recent words he's learned, which is really funny and cute, is, no, no, no. He can't barely say anything else. But he can say, no, no, no. And it's really cute when he says, no, no, no. Anyone else have kids when they start saying like, no, or stuff like that? That's really cute. Oh, you know, no, no, yes, yes, yes, right? And until we actually want him to start listening to us because he's our son, right? And don't play near traffic. Benjamin, come back here. No, no, no. You know, whip that tail. Get back here. And it's now turning into that it's no longer cute. It's now dangerous. It's now rebellious. And he's not listening to what we're trying to do for his life

so that we can ingrain in him the things that we've been put in charge over him to grow him in a steady, mature, strong child to an adult. That... Isn't always about us and our children. It's how God trains us up in the same way and it's fascinating because we love Ben loves to play with big Legos and he dumps them out on the floor and so we always have cleanup time anyone have cleanup time with toddlers always goes great, right? And so I'm like, okay Ben, it's time to clean up the Legos and he'll go and I say Ben go pick up the Legos and clean them up and so he'll go and he will pick up the Legos and He is obeying the commandment that I have proceeded out of my mouth, and I am proud. And he walks over to the bin of Legos, and he kind of swings his arm over it, and he does not let go, and he walks around with it. Benjamin, clean up the Legos. Pick up the Legos. As if he knows, I am picking up the Legos. And I love that because... It's like me sometimes. I'll be honest. Can I just throw me into the bus? Because I know you guys probably won't, and I know we all struggle kind of with the same thing sometimes. When we see a commandment of God, whether in the Torah or whether it's through prayer or a direction that we should go, isn't it amazing how even in the status that we're supposed to have as believers of the one true God and the Son, Yeshua, isn't it amazing how at times we get all joned up and we're like, okay... I will keep the commandment, but I don't really want to fulfill it. I will pick up the Lego because I'm picking up the Legos, Dad. But we never really want to fulfill the commandment of what the Father's intent is. And it's amazing because I feel like that was Jonah. And I'm reading into the text here. That's okay, I guess. Because Jonah was a prophet. Obviously, he had done work for the Lord. We know that in 2 Kings. He was a prophet of God. He was fulfilling things. The vocation that God gave him. Or at least he was keeping it, but he wasn't fulfilling it. What are the areas in our life where God is telling us to either go and fulfill this commandment, maybe it's in scripture, or maybe it's something that he's been hinting to us in that still small voice that we always love to just kind of ignore because it's easy to do at times. You know, what we're going to do is turn on the radio. I don't want to do that. Or we'll say, okay, well, I'll do it. but I won't really do it. I won't really fulfill it. This is exactly what Yeshua fought with the Pharisees. Yeshua was radical. That's my word. That's my new word for Yeshua. The more I study this revolutionary, the revolutionary son of God, king of Israel who came to earth and established the kingdom of heaven on earth, he was just radical in how he did things. And that's what... What led people to want to always kill him? Always, just always trying to kill him. No, it's too radical. Even the Torah, even the way that Yeshua taught the Torah, he wasn't changing the Torah, but the Pharisees thought he was changing the Torah because he wasn't interpreting it the way that they thought it should be interpreted. Or as long as they do A, B, and C. I mean, I even tithe the mint right here. I go to my herb garden every day and I tithe it. Keep in the law. Mm. Yeshua's over here like yeah, but you're not fulfilling nothing. What is that doing taking your little ounce of mint to the temple? Mm-hmm God's child Yeshua's over here like what you have not imitated a single thing that God has wanted you to imitate from his reflection But you think you're all high and mighty you think you're all I'm a Jonah you think you're all everything because oh I kept it I'm still keeping the Torah and Why are you not showing the love of God and the grace of God to the world around you? And I swear, if Yeshua was here today, I swear he'd just be... This is not a New Testament concept, guys. The God of the Old Testament is my Father, and he's the same God. And if we read the entirety of scriptures, we see that. We see the heart of God. So I ask you today, during this month of Elul, as we're getting close to Tishri, we're getting close to Yom Kippur, we're getting close to Sukkot, Are there areas in your life that God is convicting you that maybe you've been keeping, but you haven't been fulfilling? Because that's what Yeshua showed us as an

example how to do, to fulfill the commands of God with all of our hearts, with all of our souls. That's what loving God looks like. And so I know I can do all kinds of cheesy sermon series and themes about, you know, running away from God and, you know, a fishy situation having to do with Jonah. But I want to leave you guys with that, and I hope that at least some of you guys may have gotten at least intrigued about the book of Jonah, because we're going to start digging into it more, and I'm really excited about it. But I'd like for you guys, just if you can try, try. And if you don't agree with it, you don't think it's a satire, that's fine, don't. But I find that the story, as it is written by the author in the Bible, comes alive if we can look at it as if it's something more than simply a recounting of a guy who got eaten by a fish and spit up on the beach. There's more in there. Why? Because there should be. Because it is the Word of God, and it's a story that he's given to us to study, to read, and to permeate within ourselves. Hey everybody, I'm Matthew VanderRills, pastor at Founded in Truth Fellowship. And if you enjoyed this message and would like to see more messages like this one, please subscribe to our YouTube channel by clicking [here](#). If you'd like more information about what we do and who we are, or if you'd like to partner with us to make a donation, you can do so with this link [right here](#). Hope you guys have a great week and we'll see you next time. Shalom.

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